UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Los Angeles

Organized Workers and the Making of Los Angeles, 1890-1915

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in History

by

Jeffrey D. Stansbury

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I dedicate this dissertation to my wife, Gretzel Stansbury,

and to the late Eric Monkkonen who was the original chair of my committee.

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Acknowledgments

Any dissertation whose writing has taken as long as mine must owe an intellectual debt to more people than its author can possibly thank. Many have offered my project their impromptu comments, encouraging or cautionary. I send them gratitude in bottles cast upon the sea, to wash up where they will.

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This dissertation simply could not have been written without the support and prodding of my family and my wife, Gretzel Stansbury. Economically and emotionally she has seen me through a long stretch of reduced income with her own earnings. My project was important to her, and she made sure I didn't lose sight of it in a life full of other commitments--too many, perhaps. In the self-indulgent way that the epithet is usually applied, Gretzel is not an "understanding wife," and I thank her profoundly for that.

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was published in the *Los Angeles Times* on April 29, 2001 and generated unexpected financial support for my research. Other friends and labor activists whose insights made me a better Ph.D. candidate were Bob Gumpert and Sandy Cate, Cristina Perez, Norm Weinstein, David Koff, Jerry and Elaine Tucker, David Elsila, Rudy Acuña, Judy Greenfield, and Bert Corona.

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My *L.A. Times* article caught the attention of Kent Wong, whom I had known during my union work in Los Angeles as a founder and leader of the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance. In his capacity as director of the UCLA Labor Center Kent told me about the dissertation grants then being offered by the University of California's Institute for Labor and Employment (ILE). With letters of recommendation from my committee chair Eric Monkkonen and Bernie Garcia, Region 5 director of the Utility Workers Union, I applied for and received a $15,000 grant to continue my research and writing. Former AFL-CIO Region 6 director Dave Sickler, Goetz Wolff of the L.A. County Federation of Labor, and Peter Olney (then with the ILE) also provided strong support and encouragement for my application. To all the above I am thankful.

As I set out to research my dissertation topic in 1997-98 I learned to my dismay that some of the key source materials Grace Stimson used in her groundbreaking *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles* (1955) had been lost. It was particularly frustrating to do without the 1875-1919 minutebooks of L.A.'s first craft union, Typographical No. 174, and the 1909-16 minutebooks of the L.A. County Central Labor Council. Stimson had mined them principally for evidence of "pure-and-simple" craft unionism, whereas I had a hunch they would reveal signs of early industrial unionism and radical labor politics. But they were nowhere to be found. Fortunately Gretzel and I had become friends with Lenny Potash, then a staffer with the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), and his wife Cricket. In mid-1999 Lenny was rooting through stacks of old documents at the County Labor Federation while trying to bring some order to its library. He called me one day to report that both sets of missing minutebooks had been found. I cannot begin to express my jubilation at this bit of news from Lenny.

The minutebooks were turned over to the Urban Archives Center at the California State University's Northridge campus. There, under the guidance of archivist Robert G. Marshall, I spent the last half of 1999 electronically recording hundreds of passages from the early history of trade unionism in Los Angeles.

Bob Marshall was one of dozens of archivists, curators, and other collections managers who provided invaluable materials for this dissertation and to whom I am indebted for their attentiveness, patience, and advice. I hope the following roster is complete:

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• Tom Sitton, John Cahoon, and staff, Seaver Center, Los Angeles Museum of Natural History.

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Oettinger, K.B. and **Jeff Stansbury** (1972), *Population and Family Planning*, International Association of Schools of Social Work, New York.

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Stansbury, Jeff (December, 2003). "Don't Get Hung Up on Density--L.A.'s Progressive-Era Unions Didn't and Look at What They Accomplished," talk presented at an Institute of Labor and Employment leadership school, Oakland, California.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Organized Workers

and the Making of Los Angeles,

1890-1915

by

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Three social forces set out to grow Los Angeles as the 19th century ended: free-market capitalists clustered around *L.A. Times* publisher Harrison Gray Otis, a coterie of entrepreneurs and professionals who called themselves "progressives," and organized workers. Each group strove to direct the rewards of growth to classes it favored, and each pursued a competing vision of the city.

The story of Otis and his free-market allies has often been told. So has the story of L.A.'s progressives. Both celebratory accounts have been shaped by the hardy American mega-narrative that privileges elites as the makers of history. Skewed by the same mega-

narrative, the story of L.A.'s unions has also been told and retold as a tale of defeat, inconsequence, and woe. The conventional wisdom about progressive-era Los Angeles thus overcredits elites for the city's achievements, submerging the equally powerful role of organized workers.

This dissertation resurrects the political legacy of wage-earning men and women in 1890-1915 Los Angeles and offers a more realistic view of the progressives with whom they contended. Through thick archival research, it identifies and presents the voices of individual workers and progressives, reconstructs their conflicts, and assesses their impact on key growth elections and the capacities of the modernizing city.

Three revelations flow from this revisionist history of Los Angeles during its reign as "the citadel of the open shop":

First, for better or worse, California owes its predilection for direct democracy (initiatives, referenda, and recalls) to the L.A. workers who fought longer and harder for this reform than any other group--precisely because it was an *outsider's* weapon.

Second, organized workers were the most consistent and effective campaigners for the municipally-run systems of water and power that benefit Angelenos today.

Third, the political struggles of L.A.'s unions a century ago fundamentally reshaped their city, forcing it into the market as a manager of great enterprises and making it much more democratic than it otherwise would have been. In so doing these unions demonstrated that the capitalist state, which constrains workers as a matter of course, has at times been sharply constrained by them.

Introduction

"Political scientists, sociologists, and historians working on the problems of American state formation, by not addressing the city, indirectly also piqued my curiosity. And my own attempt at a synthesis of city history, America Becomes Urban, *made me attend more carefully to the nature of the U.S. city as a corporate entity in a political situation very different from those of cities in most other nations....For one thing, they were active, not just reactive. As corporate entities, they could take rather grand economic actions. But they were also political entities, whose actions were the outcome of internal political contests and debates..."* --Eric Monkkonen [1]

My research for this study originally focused on the multinational, multiethnic and gendered makeup of the Los Angeles labor force in the Progressive Era (1890-1915) but quickly shifted to its present subject when the archival materials I was studying revealed a hitherto neglected series of workingclass achievements against great odds during those years. Most impressive were the labor movement's leadership in the protracted and ultimately successful fight for direct democracy (the initiative, referendum, and recall) and a municipally owned and managed water supply and hydroelectric system, all of which remain part of the city's heritage today. Direct democracy has had a profound effect on the governance of Los Angeles, making it much more responsive to ordinary citizens. Municipal ownership of large, money-making infrastructural resources greatly amplified the local state's administrative capacities and its role in the market economy. As irony would have it, these political feats are the legacy of an organized workforce that was largely skilled, white, and male!

Readers may find the structure of this dissertation somewhat unusual. I wrote it to resurrect the deeds of a forgotten working class, yet its first 240 pages amount to a revisionist history of the Los Angeles progressive movement. Asking why this happened is a fair question. Midway through my research I discovered that the most durable creations of the city's organized workers a century ago took shape in a public arena progressives had set out to control. The reforms they championed and the laws they enacted once in

power were anathema to organized labor. It expended much of its political energy fending them off. Moreover the democratic, enterprise-owning city government that organized workers hoped to midwife forced them into even sharper conflict with progressive reformers, especially on the issue of a state responsive to demands from below versus a state-for-itself. For these reasons what unionized workers achieved cannot be understood apart from their defensive and aggressive combat with the reform movement as portrayed, respectively, in Parts 1 and 2 of this dissertation. The narrative begins with the progressives and ends with organized workers because I thought it wise to move from relatively familiar historical actors to ones that have been scrubbed from the historical record.

What follows on these pages is a work of history, not of sociology or political science. We historians are noted, praised, cursed, and pitied for our habit of compulsively backing and filling around the points we want to make--it's called "historicizing" and it resembles nothing so much as an excavator working a plow and backhoe. To historicize what organized workers accomplished in Los Angeles a century ago requires a further brief discussion of the obstacles they faced and the social forces they contended with.

The Old Guard

Their main obstacle in the workplace was the country's most implacable and best organized "open-shop" coalition. It fought them on the job with blacklists and firings, in the political arena with purchased politicians, and it treated employers who signed union agreements almost as harshly. At intervals in Part 1 of my study this phalanx of interlocking organizations rears up to smite one union initiative or another.

The open-shop coalition represented capitalists large and small, but its leading figures leaned more toward the former, drawing funds and political support from the city's electric companies, other utilities, metal firms, key builders, and railways (excluding, at the

era's outset, the Southern Pacific). The coalition's chief propagandist was Harrison Gray Otis, editor and publisher of the *Los Angeles Times*. As one of the country's most dogged disciples of "industrial freedom" and the "free market", he never seemed discomfited by the fact that the police strikebreakers he praised and the open-shop coalition he inspired had warped the local free market beyond recognition.

Fred C. Wheeler, a union carpenter, labor organizer, and socialist who championed the public ownership of utilities in Los Angeles a century ago, did as much as any of his contemporaries to discredit the free-market worldview. As the lone unionist elected to the city council in the quarter-century between 1890 and 1915, he helped lead the labor movement's successful 1914 campaign for a public power system. Wheeler persuaded his fellow council members--none of them socialists--to structure the bond ballot in a way that would not skew the vote in favor of the private utilities.[2] His comments on public ownership in April of that year could have been uttered with equal cogency and merit during California's statewide 2000-01 power crisis:

> "[W]ith the great corporations that have come into being and which have been allowed to go unbridled, we say it is about time we would take from them their great power....it is time we should put a check on those corporations and they should be taken by the people and run in the interests of the people and for the people. When power runs riot, when it becomes oppressive, it is...the duty of the people not only to regulate it, but abolish it entirely if it is necessary. The case before us shows the utter incompetence of the system of private ownership which looks for but one thing, and that is private profit. I think you gentlemen will all agree with me that the system under which we are living naturally gives vent to this commercial anarchy...." 3

Progressives

Arrayed against this popularly dubbed "Old Guard," and Otis, were two forces for political change--organized labor and the progressive movement which emerged from the 1890s' Free Harbor campaign. Progressives spoke of themselves as defenders of all Angelenos in all neighborhoods, but in reality they represented small- and middling-scale capitalists and professionals who lived on the city's west side. If we judge them by their

public pronouncements, they sought to dampen the class hostilities that had flared up nationally during the 1870s and 1880s and locally from 1890 onward. What most of their leaders actually set out to do, however, was clear a path for their own capture of the municipal government and, once lodged there, to insulate themselves as far as possible from the electorate. They campaigned successfully to shrink the franchise, end ward voting, and install at-large elections, a professional civil service, a "business-like" administration, and commission government. In all these undertakings their avatar was not the celebrated John R. Haynes, who camped on the movement's left wing, but Free Harbor campaign hero, editor, and Municipal League founder Charles Dwight Willard.

The class constituencies of both the Old Guard and progressive reformers overlapped. That is the reason they stopped sniping at each other during strikes and other episodes of labor militancy and made common cause against the most dangerous of the dangerous classes. Personally, Otis couldn't abide progressives but he welcomed their support in crises. The progressives' bugbear was not the one they publicly vilified to mobilize the electorate—a moribund railroad "machine"--but a working class in motion. As they climbed toward four years of political hegemony (1909-13), progressives acted as if organized labor was rattling the electoral rungs just below them. It was so far from actually doing so that it did not elect one of its own to the city council until 1913, the year the progressives' grip on power began to crumble. Workers waged constant battles against the open shop, won a few, lost most, and never stopped fighting. In the public arena, however, their extraordinary success *as political outsiders* spooked progressives and permanently changed the city.

Unionized Workers

The heretofore little-noted triumphs of organized labor set forth in Part 2 of this dissertation arose from the class conflicts described above. Since Los Angeles was the na-

tional citadel of the open shop, with both the Old Guard and most progressives lined up against them, one marvels at the fact that the city's unions created so enduring a legacy. They were a tenacious, contentious lot, those skilled building, metal, printing, and other tradesmen as well as culinary, garment, and many other proto-industrial workers, all grouped in councils that were themselves proto-industrial and populated by a sizeable minority of laborers and other unskilled workers. By and large the 1890-1915 Los Angeles labor movement was no club for the standoffish, "pure-and-simple" craftsmen pilloried by some historians of the 1960s and 70s. Far from the Washington DC headquarters of the American Federation of Labor, a large fraction of L.A.'s organized workers rejected its political voluntarism and remained, throughout the era, one of the most radical groups of city wage workers in America. Their lodestars were the cooperative commonwealth agitation of the Knights of Labor and Populists who preceded them and the democratic socialism that attracted many in their ranks and leadership after 1900.

All three social forces here described united on one thing alone: growing the city. They all supported a high-debt, high-tax policy carried out through very large bond issues marketed mostly by banks and investment houses in New York. Thanks to the 1879 California constitution which the statewide Workingmen's Party played an indispensable role in drafting, L.A.'s voters had to approve each bond issue by at least a two-thirds majority. This "home rule" constitution also authorized large and middle-sized California cities to govern themselves through their own charters. Both these stipulations, the legacy of 1870s workers and small farmers at the constitutional convention in Sacramento, made the Los Angeles electorate an unusually active force in the city's growth. The labor movement immeasurably bolstered this upwelling from below by leading the long fight for three direct democracy measures--the initiative, referendum, and recall--which were finally lodged in the city charter in 1902-03 with strong support from Haynes. Meanwhile

organized workers found themselves engaged in an even longer campaign for municipal ownership of the city's water supplies, followed by construction of a 240-mile aqueduct from the Owens Valley and the city's ownership and distribution of the hydropower generated by its drop in elevation.

During the 1910-14 agitation for public power the growth consensus broke down. Splits sundered the business community as well as the progressive and labor movements, but overall it was the vast majority of the city's unions that led the fight for kilowatt socialism while Otis and the three private power companies fought a losing battle against it. The decisive vote to build a municipal hydroelectric system took place on May 8, 1914. In this crucial campaign and many others the archetypal labor leader was the aforementioned Fred Wheeler, a socialist carpenter elected to the city council the year before.

A Dearth of Allies

Reforms similar to those adopted by Los Angeles were imposed on municipal governments by coalitions of middle-class progressives and union activists in many other American cities during the last decade of the nineteenth and early years of the twentieth centuries. Historian Richard Schneirov has written extensively about the example of 1890s Chicago where, he says, "urban progressivism did not spring from any one class or stratum, but rather should be seen as an essentially political formation, a cross-class coalition of reformers responding to the class-rooted great upheaval."[4] This was not the case in Los Angeles. Here progressives and workers viewed each other with suspicion, the workers' colored by anger, the progressives' by anxiety. The L.A. progressive movement was steeped in elite mugwumpery yet still managed to pull off some popular reforms. Beyond the purview of the last century's historical scholarship, the city's most consistent, deep-going reformers were union activists, some of them socialists, many not. The only coalitions they joined were congelations of the moment, hastily assembled on behalf of a

ballot issue or charter reform and just as hastily allowed to melt away, and even during those moments the unions funneled most of their troops into their own independent agitation. Long-range formal cooperation with the business community or the progressives was out of the question for them. This is a telltale truth about Los Angeles a century ago, not gainsaid by the fact that progressive and workingclass voters often cast their ballots the same way.

Otis and the Old Guard cannot be categorized as reactionaries; their work for a city-owned harbor and aqueduct was energetic, forward-looking, and effective. On the more salient issue of what sort of municipal state was best for Los Angeles, however, they were standpatters. Otis stood for the least possible government compatible with constraining unions and financing infrastructure. This left the most profound contention over reinventing city governance to organized labor and the progressives.

The Municipal State as Contested Territory

The interwoven progressive and union narratives of Parts 1 and 2 embody two visions of the municipal state, one regulatory, professional, and semi-autonomous, the other managerial and democratic. (By democratic I mean open to pressure from below not only through periodic elections but through the initiative, referendum, and recall; by managerial I refer to the city government's ownership and operation of all natural monopolies, especially the gas, electric, telephone, and water services.) Neither L.A.'s unions nor its progressives got exactly the state they desired, but both helped shape it in important ways that can still be seen today. Commissions do much of the work of the present Los Angeles city government. Its civil service operates by professional norms. Its regulatory powers are extensive, though frequently co-opted by the industries it regulates. On the other hand voters still constrain the mayor and council through the exercise of direct democracy, and in its Department of Water and Power Los Angeles possesses the largest mu-

nicipal enterprise of its kind in the nation, albeit one that has become semi-autonomous.

Part 3 of this study ponders some consequences of the struggle to reshape L.A.'s municipal government a century ago. No urban or labor historian has examined the role organized workers played in that struggle. What they achieved has vanished from the memories of Clio's profession, modern Angelenos, and, saddest of all, the city's much-revived labor movement.

A Friendly Historiographical Amendment

A summary of the ways historians and political scientists have dealt with progressive-era unions in Los Angeles will hopefully be instructive here. Their full-length works and monographs contain a wealth of useful insights into the city's early twentieth-century labor regime, its ethnically and occupationally diverse working class, union locals, central and trade councils, collective bargaining, strikes, boycotts, police oppression, anti-picketing ordinances, and political skirmishes. At the same time these studies remind us that the questions historians don't ask can be just as revealing as the ones they pursue.

Most narrative histories of the progressive-era working class in Los Angeles focus on the siege waged against it by the *L.A. Times,* the Merchants' & Manufacturers' Association, and other champions of the open shop. In these studies the city's labor movement recoils into defensiveness and defeat. The municipal state they evoke serves *only* capitalism and is unsparingly hostile to unions. It is also, for the most part, an unprobed entity. The same can be said of more theoretical works by political scientists. Neither they nor the labor and urban historians of whom I speak ask whether the local state was *sui generis* disputed territory and, if so, what the quarrels over it were all about. Here I refer to the nature and function of the municipal state itself, not to the concessions it granted to various classes, organized groups, and individuals during the progressive era. In a 1992 study entitled "How the Urban West Was Won," Steven Erie approaches a useful analysis when

he describes the early 20th-century shift from L.A.'s "night-watchman" state to one that actively promoted infrastructural, economic, and population growth, but he neglects key aspects of the struggle among entrepreneurial capitalists, monopoly capitalists, middle-class reformers, and workers to remake city government.

Similarly, most histories of progressive-era Los Angeles either celebrate or debunk the titanic struggle that progressives said they were waging against a bipartisan machine run by the Southern Pacific Railroad, public utility monopolies, and the vice industry. Whether celebrants or debunkers, historians have credited progressives for the series of political reforms that took root in Los Angeles and then spread throughout California--among them the initiative, referendum, and recall; nonpartisan elections; a winking regulation of monopoly; and municipal ownership of public utilities.

My own excavation of this historical terrain has brought me face to face with a radically different city. I have found, first of all, that the slaying of Dragon Machine by Progressive Saint George was the story Los Angeles reformers told themselves over and over in the years 1890-1920, told anyone else who would listen, meticulously wrote down, and left for future scribes in scores of journals and well-organized personal collections at UC Berkeley, UCLA, Stamford University, and other archives. The mythic polarities of this oft-told tale have been accepted as gospel truth by a majority of the city's political and labor historians. A contrary view, barely hinted at, emerges from the pages of Grace Heilman Stimson's influential *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, published in 1955. Until recently no one followed up on her lead, however. A 2001 UCLA dissertation by Merry Ovnick throws a more skeptical light on the city's progressive movement, signaling that a clear-eyed historical reappraisal may yet upend a long line of hagiographies.[5]

Both the "night-watchman" and the later managerial stage of the Los Angeles city-

state rivaled Scrooge in the stinginess of their welfare provision. Erie has made too much of this fact, calling it a defeat for the labor movement. Los Angeles, he says,

> "cannot be considered a prototype for postwar liberal growth regimes balancing redistributional demands against economic imperatives. The western city devoted nearly all of its resources to economic development, not to social welfare. Having destroyed political machines and labor unions, Los Angeles could conduct its great experiment in state-assisted development largely free from working-class demands for greater welfare spending." 6

What Erie overlooks is the compelling fact that in the early years of the 20th century welfare spending was *not* a demand of L.A.'s working class. Its most organized contingents, the unions, belittled public and private charity and did almost nothing to oppose the county policy of least relief. As for "destroyed...labor unions...," Erie echoes a long line of political scientists and historians who have written off L.A.'s progressive-era labor movement without studying its newspapers, minute-books, and other archival records. Had he done so, he might have learned that the city's unions opposed the recruitment of a reserve army as tenaciously as they fought for free labor bureaus, public jobs for the unemployed, higher wages, shorter hours, and the right to organize. These struggles--focused on the workplace rather than on consumption--preempted the demand for greater welfare spending. Their intensity did not wane after 1911, when ironworkers James and John McNamara confessed to the dynamiting of the *L.A. Times* (and rang the death-knell for unionism in orthodox periodizations) but continued to roil the city until both the labor and the progressive movements lost their way during World War I.

The same historical condescension that slights the defensive toughness of L.A.'s workers a century ago dismisses out of hand their durable contributions to the economic growth and governance of the city. Because most historians of Los Angeles assume the city's unions took ill sometime after 1900 and became comatose after 1911, it does not occur to them to ask what hand workers played, if any, in creating California's tradition of direct democracy and the city's systems of public water and power. This prolonged

study in denial began seventy years ago with the publication of Ira B. Cross' *A History of the Labor Movement in California.* In his lone chapter on Los Angeles, Cross painted a morose picture of unionism beaten down by the McNamara confessions, the resulting 1911 defeat of socialist mayoral candidate Job Harriman, the open-shop alliance, an overwhelming supply of laborers, and public rancor which Cross did not and could not document.[7]

Saddling L.A.'s unions with popular hostility has been the peculiar habit of most historians trudging the path that Cross blazed. Grace Stimson, an indefatigable writer who recorded labor's struggles from the 1880s to World War I, asserted throughout her *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles* that "public opinion" turned a stony face toward the workers' movement. Like her successors she offered no persuasive evidence for that claim and, indeed, one can find counter-evidence in the behavior of juries, crowds at union parades and struck firms, and voters in labor-led charter and bond elections.

Juries sided with organized labor against moral reforms and refused to convict most unionists arrested under a draconian 1910 anti-picketing law. In the rare reports of Los Angeles crowds reacting to class conflict--during the 1894 Pullman and 1903 railway strikes, for example--they were clearly sympathetic to labor. This is not to say that the public was decisively pro-union: the routine failure of union candidates to win city elections argues otherwise. But scores of comments made *en passant* by Cross, Stimson, Louis and Richard Perry, George Mowry, Thomas Clark, and other historians about widespread antipathy to labor not only lack documentation; they often equate newspaper editorials with popular thinking and fail to analyze the class coefficients of hostility and sympathy. "Public" opinion was not a monolith but a current of conflicting views. It is worth noting that the dust had barely settled from the horrific October 1, 1910 bombing of the L.A. Times building--blamed on organized labor by Otis and his allies--when large

crowds cheered 10,000 union members as they marched solemnly through the city.[8]

A decade after Cross eulogized the L.A. labor movement his conclusions were broadcast to a much wider audience by Carey McWilliams in *Southern California: An Island on the Land.* McWilliams, a colorful attorney, prose stylist, and historian whose forte was clearly not archival sleuthing, made the mistake of repeating the judgment of the very open-shop forces he detested:

> "The dynamiting of the *Times*, more particularly, the plea of guilty entered by the McNamaras, aborted the labor movement in Los Angeles. It set back by twenty years a movement which, even in 1911, was dangerously retarded in relation to the growth of the community. The serious consequences of this abortion largely account for the subsequent political pathology of Los Angeles." [9]

In the 1960s Louis and Richard Perrys' *A History of the Los Angeles Labor Movement, 1911-1941* picked up the gloom-saying where McWilliams left off. It wrote off the post-1911 working class with phrases like "the sterile years," in effect warning other historians off original research into the subject.[10] Later scribes duly took note.

Even in their defensive mode L.A.'s unions were neither "domesticated" as Erie assumes nor "anemic" as labor historian Thomas R. Clark has put it.[11] These judgments fail to convey the stubborn industrial fight against great odds that workers and their unions put up in the century's first decade and a half. Fighting hard and losing most of the battles is brave and perhaps even foolhardy, but not anemic.

The Pitfalls of Conventional Wisdom

Why have the L.A. labor movement's accomplishments flown under the radar of urban scholarship? I can think of three reasons:

First is the tendency to work within an accepted paradigm instead of doing primary research on actors who may not be highly valued by that paradigm. This is an occupational hazard every historian faces, myself included.

Second, there is a tendency among historians as well as present-day observers to equate a union's ability to leverage politics with its industrial density and strength on the

shop floor. This assumption seems reasonable, but just as the Hotel Workers, Janitors, and other L.A. unions have disproved it in our own time, so the Central Labor Council and its affiliates disproved it a century ago. Their political and economic legacy far outshines their workplace victories against the open shop--hard-won as those rare victories were. This legacy is a potent gift to union workers today, if only they would grasp it. Density is not everything.

Third, conventional thinking about historical actors may overprivilege groups that elected their members to government offices while ignoring those whose candidates failed of election but nevertheless left an indelible imprint on events. Until 1913, despite repeated attempts, L.A.'s unions failed to seat any worker or socialist in the mayor's chair, the city council, or the board of education. Yet they carried the modern era's first successful effort to municipalize the city's water supply, launched the nation's first successful recall of a city councilman, stumped for the aqueduct construction bonds in the 1906 political campaign when most progressive voices fell silent on the issue, played a strong hand in several revisions of the city charter, and in 1914 turned out the highest vote margins for the city's public power system. Some of these accomplishments would have been inconceivable, others extremely difficult, without direct democracy--the outsider's route to city hall which organized labor pioneered and then successfully championed with John R. Haynes.

Giving a Workingclass Legacy Its Due

To the extent that political scientists and historians continue to focus on what L.A.'s reformers accomplished while in power, they will overlook what organized workers accomplished while conventional power eluded them.

In turn-of-the-20th-century Los Angeles, the most fateful struggle set progressives against organized workers, not against the Southern Pacific and the ward machine known

variously as the "Octopus" and the "push". This seminal combat led progressives to hedge their commitment to direct democracy, shy away from full-blown municipal ownership, constrict the franchise, enact civil service, and moral reforms whose leit-motif was the imposition of time-discipline on workers, and enter into what proved to be a fatal alliance with the Otis and Old Guard. On the other hand the same combat spurred workers and their unions to seek a broader franchise, lead the campaign for direct democracy, resist moral reforms, and demand municipal ownership more tenaciously and with greater effect than any other class.

Charles Dwight Willard, Katherine Philips Edson, Meyer Lissner, and other progressives set out to mitigate the harsher aspects of industrial capitalism, notably those that might destabilize the system. Labor activists like Wheeler and John Murray fought for municipal ownership as the only viable antidote to monopoly and corruption. Frances Nacke Noel, a reformer and trade union ally who was decidedly *not* a progressive, worked tirelessly for minimum wage, child labor, public parks, and other social reforms. Pursuing their incompatible visions, these two political forces wrestled over the form and function of municipal government. To the degree that present-day Los Angeles owns and operates its own electric power system, periodically reinvents itself through initiatives and referenda, and turns a democratic face on the world, it owes a heretofore unrecognized debt to its early twentieth-century working class.

Did the class antagonisms that drove organized workers and progressives into warring camps a century ago set Los Angeles apart from other American cities? Much recent scholarship argues in the affirmative. But rather than frame this dissertation as the latest in a long line of tributes to L.A. exceptionalism, I hope it will encourage historians to take a fresh look at primary sources for the union/progressive nexus in cities of their choosing. Perhaps they will find that Los Angeles was not so exceptional after all.

Notes

1 Monkkonen, Eric H., *The Local State: Public Money and American Cities*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, 1995, pp. 5-6.

2 "Bond Issue Will Be Voted On By the People as One Proposition," *Citizen* (a labor weekly), March 6, 1914, p. 1.

3 "Councilman Fred C. Wheeler Flays Greed of Private Ownership...," *Citizen*, April 3, 1914, pp. 1-2.

4 Schneirov, Richard, "Rethinking the Relation of Labor to the Politics of Urban Social Reform in Late Nineteenth-Century America: The Case of Chicago," *International Labor & Working Class History* 46 (Fall, 1994), pp. 94-95.

5 Stimson, Grace Heilman. *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,* University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1955; Ovnick, Merry A. "Progressive Wordcrafting, Organization and Success, 1906-1909" and "Successful Tacticians, Questionable Crusaders, Historybook Heroes," chapters 10 & 16, respectively, from Ovnick's UCLA dissertation, 2001. (Title to come)

6 Erie, Steven P. "How the Urban West Was Won: The Local State and Economic Growth in Los Angeles, 1880-1932," *Urban Affairs Quarterly* v. 27, no. 4 (June, 1992), p. 548.

7 Oblivious to the political role of L.A.'s unions, Cross stated that they had "steadfastly refused to enter politics as a separate party" when in fact they had fielded labor parties on three occasions after 1898. [Cross, Ira B. *A History of the Labor Movement in California,* Chap. XIV: "The Labor Movement in Los Angeles," University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1935, pp. 282-88.]

8 Stimson, Grace Heilman. *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,* University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1955, pp. 101, 104, 174, 196, 350, 352; Clark, Thomas R. "The Limits of Liberty: Courts, Police, & Labor Unrest in California, 1890-1926, Ph.D. dissertation, UCLA, 1994, pp. 234, 239-40; Mowry, George E. *The California Progressives,* University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1951, p. 50.

9 McWilliams, Carey. *Southern California: An Island on the Land,* Peregrine Smith Books, Salt Lake City, UT, 1983 (orig. Duell, Sloan and Pearce, New York, 1946).

10 Perry, Louis B. and Richard S. Perry. *A History of the Los Angeles Labor Movement, 1911-1941,* University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1963, p. viii. A similar eulogy is delivered by Herbert Shapiro in "The McNamara Case: A Crisis of the Progressive Era," *Southern California Quarterly,* v. 59, no. 3 (Fall, 1977).

11 Clark's statement here is "Moreover, compared with San Francisco, the Los Angeles labor movement appeared anemic." He concentrates on the city's oppression of unions and locates worker's resistance in a "language of rights." [Clark, Thomas R. "The Limits of Liberty: Courts, Police, & Labor Unrest in California, 1890-1926, *Ph.D. dissertation,* UCLA, 1994, p. 230. See also pp. 233-40, 456-61.]

Part 1

Organized labor in its defensive mode against the progressive blitz.

1.
Progressive Reform, Labor, and the Old Guard

Fred Wheeler's insistence that some corporate abuses required a sterner remedy than regulation exposed a key fault line between organized labor and progressivism in early twentieth-century Los Angeles. It is true that a handful of progressives like John R. Haynes threw themselves unequivocally into the battle for municipal ownership of water, power, telephone, and electric railway systems, while some workers sought little more than city control of rates and service. But in their main thrust the two movements ground abrasively against each other. Through regulatory laws and commissions, progressives sought to rein in what they saw as the excesses of capitalism while encouraging it to become more efficient. Unions hoped to eradicate monopoly root and branch, placing the major urban utilities in the hands of a reformed, democratically elected local government. Only in their desire for a growing city did the two movements find common ground, but they differed profoundly over how growth should be achieved.

Each of these movements in its own way had to contend with a third array of social forces--the political front men and cadres of monopoly capital known variously as the "push," the overrated "Espee" (Southern Pacific Railroad) machine, and the "Old Guard" led by *Times* publisher Otis. With his encouragement, a cluster of anti-union "open-shop" groups arose in Los Angeles around the turn of the century. The two most energetic were the Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association (previously just a booster organization) and the Citizens Alliance, but they were backed up by many others including the Founders' & Employers' Association, Associated Jobbers, Builders Exchange, Los Angeles Realty Board, dozens of specialized organizations in the various industries, and, on occasion, the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce. They used weapons similar to those found

in other cities but deployed them more aggressively. The companies they represented locked out their workforces at the first sign of union activity, fired and blacklisted pro-union employees, hired police deputies as strikebreakers and recruited other strikebreakers nationally, advertised for workers in eastern and midwestern newspapers even during recessions to build up a local reserve army of the unemployed, forced new hires to sign "yellow-dog" contracts,[1] and placed spies in unionizing shops.

Union activists fought the Old Guard tooth and nail from 1890 to 1915 in what Carey McWilliams called a "total engagement...," not "partial and limited but total and indivisible; all of labor pitted against all of capital."[2] Most progressives condemned the Old Guard "machine" during election campaigns and, once in office, joined forces with it to suppress labor.

Who were the Los Angeles progressives?

The majority were men, but middle-class women exerted a strong independent force that embraced "municipal housekeeping" while pushing beyond it in campaigns for a statewide minimum wage, the suffrage, and the Americanization of immigrants. Women progressives became influential by banding together in a dovetailed network of political organizations. These included the California Federation of Women's Clubs (founded in Los Angeles), Civic Association, Friday Morning Club, Mothers' Congress, Woman's Relief Corps, Ebell Club, Women's Progressive League, Women's City Club, Political Equality League, Votes for Women Club, and Business Woman's Civic Club. Some reforms demanded by women, especially those affecting mothers and children, predated the progressive era. So did the durable reform careers of Caroline M. Severance, Mary Gibson, and Mrs. R.L. Craig, among others.[3]

A gendered division of labor marked L.A.'s progressives. Women dominated social reform, in part because of their traditional concern for health and welfare but even more because most male progressives studiously ignored the job and living conditions of the working class. Where one might expect women to take the lead--in moral reform--they did not. Here the Mothers' Congress and Women's Christian Temperance Union were outperformed by the Municipal League, Civic Righteousness League, Church Federation, Ministerial Association, other interest groups, and city prosecuting attorneys--all largely male and more militant than their distaff allies in the policing of public morals. Women were notable for their absence in the two remaining fields of progressive agitation--developmental and structural reform--with the single great exception of the campaign for women's suffrage.[4] Overall, then, progressive reform in Los Angeles had a more masculine cast than recent scholarship has unearthed in other large cities.[5]

Like many southern Californians of their day, the men and women who took up the progressive banner were born mostly elsewhere and mostly into Protestant homes imbued with the entrepreneurial spirit. A few were Jewish.[6] By the time they reached or came of age in Los Angeles, however, entrepreneurial capitalism was playing second fiddle to monopoly in the political as well as the economic arena. Most Los Angeles businesses were of modest size, but large enterprises capable of administering prices had arisen in oil, the gas and electric public utilities, and especially the railroads.[7]

The specter of a city held hostage to monopolies and oligopolies alarmed both its entrepreneurs and their allies in law, politics, journalism, the clergy, and other professions. Together these classes and subsets of classes gave rise to progressivism.[8] In his 1992 essay "How the Urban West Was Won," Steven P. Erie describes the first stages of this process:

"A junior partner at best to machine power, the city's downtown business establishment increasingly did not share the vision of a railroad-controlled Los Angeles. The land boom of the 1880s, triggering a fivefold increase in population, had produced a new territorially based local elite of merchants, bankers, publishers, and large-scale real estate developers and investors. This new local elite (the so-called boomers of the 1880s) viewed the railroad's regional transportation monopoly, exorbitant rates, and political power as potent brakes on Los Angeles' future development--and on their own business and real estate investments." 9

Big business was the progressives' *bête noir*e--and their golden opportunity.

Crucible of Reform: The Free Harbor Fight

This opportunity first presented itself on a grand scale during the "free harbor" fight of the 1890s. Under Collis P. Huntington, the Southern Pacific Railroad had hauled all the overland freight to and from Los Angeles until 1886, when a major rival, the Santa Fe, arrived. Espee still monopolized rail traffic between the city and the harbor at San Pedro and Wilmington, but in 1890 a St. Louis syndicate built a competing line, the Terminal Railway. Just as threatening to Huntington was a determined bid by the city's business establishment to secure federal funds for a breakwater and dredging that would open the inner harbor at Wilmington to trans-Pacific ships. He doubted that Espee could engross the resulting flood of commerce through the harbor, so he devised an audacious scheme to replace San Pedro with a deep-water port further north at Santa Monica, where he had owned track since 1878. Quietly buying up the waterfront there, he had his engineers build a long pier while he lobbied Congress and the White House to shift their attention from San Pedro to Santa Monica.[10]

The ensuing struggle pitted the feared rail monopoly against the increasingly well-organized merchant capitalists of Los Angeles; it galvanized the city for two decades. Because it was largely an intramural fight between capitalists, and because the labor movement had just come under attack by the *L.A. Times,* the city's unions played a welcome but secondary role in the campaign. "Both the Labor Congress and the Council of Labor, and all but one of the Los Angeles unions, went along with the majority in favor-

ing San Pedro in opposition to 'a great monopoly which has held Southern California by the neck since its infancy,'" observes Grace Heilman Stimson in her seminal *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles.*[11]

After lengthy deliberations and much wavering between the demands of the competing parties, the United States Congress voted for San Pedro. Despite his many friends on Capitol Hill, Huntington lost his Congressional battle against the San Pedro site in 1896 and lost his battle on the ground in April, 1899 when the Army Corps of Engineers laid the cornerstone for the San Pedro breakwater. But Espee was not done. Over the next six years it bought out the Terminal Railway and enough of the waterfront to bar other rail carriers from the port. Its ally in these matters was the San Pedro Board of Trustees, ever ready to favor Espee with enabling legislation. Only through the 1906 annexation of a sixteen-mile-long, half-mile-wide "shoestring strip" to San Pedro followed by a voter-approved consolidation with San Pedro and neighboring Wilmington in 1909 and trustee-ship over their tidelands in 1911 did Los Angeles finally gain clear access to the harbor.[12]

Its foothold there remained meager and precarious, however, as the Southern Pacific again moved to control traffic from the waterfront. On its few hundred feet of frontage the city began to build public docks, warehouses, and rail spurs.[13] What emerged from this 20-year saga of anti-monopoly struggle was a hybrid, or compromised, form of public ownership. The new Los Angeles Harbor Commission ran the off-loading facilities but refused to back organized labor's demand for a municipal railway from the port to the city, choosing instead to work with and regulate the private carriers. The rates it charged were so low that taxpayers, not the shippers, railroads, and jobbers who used the port, had to finance most of its improvements.[14] By contrast the municipally-run water and power systems of Los Angeles, monitored much more closely by organized labor, stimulated

growth just as vigorously as the harbor but generated enough revenue to finance themselves.

The free harbor fight took on the glow of a foundation myth for the city's progressives in the opening decades of the twentieth century. It generated their first leaders, many of whom stayed active up to and beyond World War I. It steeped them in anti-monopoly rhetoric, led them to fear and exaggerate the baleful influence of the Southern Pacific "machine" on local and state politics, and disposed them to think of themselves simultaneously as "the best men" and as champions of all "the people". The free harbor fight also schooled Los Angeles progressives in what they believed were the virtues of regulating, as opposed to expropriating, businesses.

This was understandable, for many of them were merchant or manufacturing capitalists themselves, albeit small to middling ones who chafed at Espee's rates and saw its engrossing habits as no less a barrier to the city's growth than the wage and hour demands of organized labor. Other progressives were professional men, ideologically and economically sympathetic to capitalist enterprise. Their headquarters during the 1890s campaign against an Espee-run harbor as well as the 1906-09 city consolidation drive was, appropriately, the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce.

The Chamber was founded in 1888. At its earliest organizational meetings most of the movers and shakers were merchants who had little impact on L.A.'s subsequent history, but men with more staying power soon came to the fore. One of them was *Times* publisher Otis. Armed with the personality of a fighting cock, he led a titanic struggle against organized labor from 1890 to his death in 1917. It was Otis who moved the resolution that made the Chamber a permanent force in the city's economic and political life, and he was elected one of its first vice-presidents.[15] Within this new forum he forcefully advocated the San Pedro option, arguing that the Southern Pacific favored Santa Monica only

because it monopolized the frontage there. But his role as *Times* publisher was even more decisive. "The reasons for Otis's interest in the harbor question remain unclear," writes William Deverell in *Railroad Crossing*. "He may, as Southern Pacific officials suspected, have had business dealings with the Terminal Railway; perhaps he owned land in San Pedro....In any event, Otis and the *Times* served in tandem as leading propagandists of the San Pedro campaign."[16]

Otis figured so prominently in the struggle at the harbor and in the media blitz for the Owens River aqueduct a decade later that some scholars consider him a progressive. Political scientist James W. Ingram III, for example, ranks him unqualifiedly as a developmental reformer because he made his newspaper the carrot and the stick of municipal growth during the entire quarter-century from 1890 to World War I. But his inclusion in the reform pantheon is surely misconceived. True developmental reformers believed growth had to be promoted in the right way, else it would make the city unlivable, set class against class, and trap "the best men" in a withering crossfire. Out of this worry came their appeals to "the people" and their self-definition as the people's representatives. Of course they were as class-bound as the most rapacious tycoon, but that is what they believed. Otis did not for one minute think like them. He championed development, certainly, but not developmental reform other than the crudest deployment of the state to discipline labor or build infrastructure--and once built, to abandon it to private capital. His foe in the free harbor fight, the Southern Pacific Railroad, became his political ally on more than one occasion after the turn of the century. In the venom he spat out at labor he was a class warrior without equal. His was an *anti-reform* position. The reform position favored municipal development of the harbor, the aqueduct, and electric power, but it also sought to regulate the rates and practices of the companies that stood to profit from these public resources.

Otis despised this as "meddling", and it made not a whit of difference to him that he had once fought shoulder to shoulder with reformers who held such views. A man of cavernous resentments, he was scathing toward Meyer Lissner and other progressives who launched the Good Government Organization in 1909. It was insufferable enough to sit across the table from a union leader who, after all, had the pedigree of a snake, but it was a damn outrage to face one of your own who had betrayed his class. This was your typical Good Government man, whom Otis habitually tweaked in print and in public as a "Goo-Goo," a "pharisaical purifier," a "pestiferous reformer," and a "chronic, professional busybody."[17]

Nevertheless, as we shall see, Otis, the progressives, and the Old Guard closed ranks with the *clank!* of a bear-trap whenever a resurgent grassroots movement threatened their common interests. That reformers so readily embraced the aims and methods of this consummate anti-reformer, and did so more than once, exposed the narrowness of their class outlook. It also proved fatal to their project by the early years of World War I.

Charles Dwight Willard: The Archetypal Progressive

No one embodied the progressive virtues and biases more emphatically than the movement's leading propagandist, Charles Dwight Willard. As tough as he was tubercular, Willard not only stamped L.A.'s progressive years with the self-serving interpretation that has laced itself through most subsequent histories, but he took part tirelessly in the era's political coups. A 1912 photograph shows him thick of eyebrow and mustache, in eyeglasses, hair parted straight down the middle (a true Progressive cut!), leaning on his elbow, cheek-in-hand. He fixes the lens with a steady stare. His hand is fisted.[18]

Willard left the Midwest for Los Angeles in the early 1880s, carrying with him the patrician outlook of his New England ancestry and the tubercle bacilli that often rioted in

his lungs and eventually killed him. In 1885 and 1886 he helped sponsor the annual Merchants' Association's Fiesta de Los Angeles,[19] an evocation of a fictionalized romantic past that boomers used (among many other devices) to draw tourists and surplus labor to the city. He wrote short stories and an occasional newspaper article during this period.

Soon, however, Willard's activities took on a sharper edge. He joined the L.A.'s second Chamber of Commerce in 1888, quickly emerged as its secretary, and worked with Otis to make that organization a dynamic force in the promotion and growth of Los Angeles. His baptism of fire came at the harbor. Under his direction the Chamber helped lawyer Thomas E. Gibbon organize the Free Harbor League. Together they developed the alliances and tactics that ultimately frustrated the Southern Pacific's plan to monopolize the city's maritime trade at Santa Monica.[20]

The free harbor fight, for which Willard was justly celebrated by his and the next generation of progressives, marked the high point of his leadership in matters economic. Thereafter, influenced perhaps by his reading of Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward,* he turned his attention to the political consequences of Espee's power in southern California. His crusade against the "machine" stoked his oratory and consumed his energies for the next 13 years, winning the admiration of younger reformers such as Meyer Lissner, Russ Avery, Edward A. Dickson, and Marshall Stimson. In December, 1909, bedridden with disease, he penned the following note; it was read to six hundred Good Government partisans who had gathered at Levy's Cafe to celebrate their unprecedented capture of every municipal office in that month's city elections:

> "....For all that we loved Los Angeles, we could not close our eyes to the truth: that it was bound with double chains of a political and commercial serfdom. With an almost superhuman effort, we tore loose our harbor, only to see the bonds knitting again about it. We entered upon vast civic enterprises, but it was with fear and trembling lest they be stolen from us. In the inmost citadel, in the city government itself, our worst enemy ruled with an almost absolute power. We could not respect our city, we could not respect ourselves, while this continued. But it is over at last. Our city

is free! The enemy is dislodged, defeated and driven forth, and now we can say with full hearts, 'Los Angeles is perfect. She is peerless among the cities of the world." 21

Here we have progressive rhetoric at its most incendiary, and fanciful. The devil driven from his den (the eastside wards and by extension the city council) was, of course, the Southern Pacific political machine--except that it was never quite the machine Willard, Lissner, Stimson et. al. made it out to be. Unlike the great political rings of New York, Chicago, and St. Louis, this one could or would not offer the L.A. working class either patronage or small acts of charity.[22] Its operatives lobbied and doubtlessly paid for influence at local Republican and Democratic party nominating conventions, yet from 1896 to 1906 they could elect just one machine candidate out of six![23] After the free harbor fight, these weaknesses notwithstanding, Willard transformed Espee's noxious political reputation into the progressives' ticket to city hall--and every other reformer followed his lead. Their true "worst enemy" during these years was not the "machine," but the organized working class. The reformers' political acts, and their private correspondence, make this historical fact clear.

A gifted rhetorician, Willard found time in his hectic schedule to sing the praises of his own Municipal League as well as of fellow progressives like Haynes and Gibbon. They loom larger than life in his essays, flawless and heroic. His quality as a writer ensured that his view of progressivism would be taken seriously by historians, especially those who shared his class outlook, and it is one reason they have routinely failed to dig for counterfactuals and alternative interpretations in the less felicitous prose of his working-class rivals.

Enroute to the 1909 electoral triumph, Willard launched or figured prominently in every organization that set out to modernize Los Angeles while catapulting his fellow progressives into power. In 1896, he founded the nonpartisan League for Better City

Government, whose 5,000 members campaigned for a revised charter featuring a stronger mayor, professionalized city commissions and boards, fewer elective offices, an embryonic merit system for appointments, and the elimination of wards in favor of at-large city council elections. These reforms, envisioning a more "businesslike" and less democratic city government, failed in the special election of January 20, 1897[24] but became the core of progressivism's municipal agenda.

Willard quit his Chamber of Commerce post soon thereafter to take over the editorship of the *L.A. Express*. This crusading daily agitated for progressive causes until the city election of 1913, when its publisher, Edwin T. Earl, split with Lissner, Stimson, and Avery over the devil's bargain they had secretly struck with Otis and the Old Guard to defeat the mayoral candidate of organized labor.[25] Besides the *Express,* Willard's prose style soon found an outlet in the only slightly less partisan *Pacific Outlook,* which he founded with Avery, Stimson, and Lissner and served as chief contributing editor.[26] This journal merged with its northern California counterpart in 1911 and thereafter was known as the *California Outlook.* To an extraordinary degree it voiced the hopes, fears, and philosophy of the Los Angeles progressives, never more vividly than in this 1911 passage from Willard:

> "In the 'I Won't Works,' with whom Fresno has lately been at loggerheads, we find the true, American proletarians, discontent, radicalism, fanaticism, homelessness, houselessness, hopelessness and all. If Marx and Engel [sic] were right the I.W.W.s are the consummation of the capitalist system and, when it has wrought its perfect work, all society will be made up of such as these on the one hand and the Rockefellers, Elinses, Carnegies, Fricks and Harrimans on the other. Inviting prospect isn't it! The question at issue is, shall we leave these 'forces' blindly to work out their unintelligent worst for mankind or shall we take them in hand, modify them, train them and consciously ordain that they restore that equality of opportunity which promises enough for all who try and room to spare with all artificial barriers burned away. It is up to us to prevent Socialism by making Capitalism lead to something better." [27]

Ironically, "I Won't Works" was the term of contempt Harrison Gray Otis reserved for the Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.). That the leading progressive journal ech-

oed it may surprise some students of the era--but it was not the first or last instance in which the Old Guard and the reformers were joined at the lip.

Willard, the Municipal League, and Their Centrality

A seminal event for twentieth-century L.A. progressivism was the creation, in 1901, of the Municipal League. Its first president was Joseph O. Koepfli, who had also run an open-shop cracker company and the anti-union Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association (M&M), but its executive secretary and guiding force for the next 13 years was Charles Dwight Willard.[28] Under his strong hand, the League doggedly set out to reshape city government through charter reforms, legislation, and the election of the "best men" from the ranks of business and the professions. It remained an imposing force in city politics well into the 1930s and served, during the progressive era, as the general headquarters for many other reform groups.

In the months before the Municipal League's emergence Willard recruited a who's who list of businessmen and activists as its members--about 500 stalwarts in all. The businessmen's forte was politics, the activists' was canvassing and petitioning. "The Municipal League was so well organized that it could furnish a petition for a referendum on twenty-four hours notice with 5,200 names on it," observed L.A.'s leading progressive, John R. Haynes, who sat on its executive committee though his views kept him well to the left of Willard.[29] With its able cadre, the League pursued an agenda of middling reforms that bore Willard's stamp, especially his belief that L.A. had to steer a perilous course between the Scylla of monopoly and the Charybdis of militant trade unionism.[30]

It was Charybdis that made Willard set a low threshold for what he felt was too much democracy. Organized labor had long campaigned to write the initiative, referendum, and recall into the city charter, and Haynes had lent his considerable prestige to this effort.[31] But direct democracy, as the three reforms were called, sent a shiver through the leading

progressive organization. The latter's raison d'etre was prying open city government to the best citizens, *not* the great rabble. Yet it could hardly echo Otis, who reviled direct democracy as a stain on republican government, without irreparably tarnishing its reform credentials. "During its early years, the Municipal League was...extremely cautious in its methods and its policies," states Albert Howard Clodius, whose 1953 study, "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles," remains invaluable for its insights into progressivism. The League, he says, withheld an endorsement of the recall during the charter election of 1902, and only cautiously endorsed the initiative and referendum. Years later Willard wrote enthusiastically about direct democracy, but in 1904 the League "disapproved" the union-led recall of city councilman J.F. Davenport.[32]

Characteristically, the League's campaign for charter revisions stressed efficiency over democratic responsiveness. In the 1902 election, it persuaded voters to adopt civil service exams for several city departments, strengthen the mayor's hand by having him name the commissioners who carried out many executive functions, and replace single-member wards with at-large voting for the Board of Education.[33] Two years later, in a follow-up charter vote, the League helped lead a successful campaign to extend the civil service city-wide, create a Public Works Board appointed by the mayor, shorten public utility franchises from 50 to 21 years, and move city elections to years in which there were no statewide or presidential races.[34]

This drive to reshape city government by making it more centralized, more scientific, and less responsive to both Espee and the voters involved the type of reform that lay closest to Willard's heart. The local state, he said, "was controlled absolutely by the Republican machine that...took orders from the Southern Pacific Railway. The local Los Angeles boss, who named most of the city officers, was a known employee of the Southern Pacific. There was not much small grafting in the city government, but incompetence

and mediocrity ruled, and the utility corporations got such privileges as they desired, usually with the connivance of influential citizens."[35]

All the 1904 charter revisions aimed to weaken the political influence of the railroad and the public utilities--up to a point. By bringing the street superintendent's office under the new Public Works Board, and then electing its own candidate to that post, the League denied Espee its most significant foothold in city government.[36] But Willard was wary of pushing the barons of capital too far, especially Henry Huntington, whose electric railways had spurred L.A.'s breakneck growth and knotted together the city and its suburbs. Though he resented Huntington's threat to stop laying track unless the 21-year franchise limit was repealed, Willard accommodated the great man. A delegation of realtors descended on the 1906 charter revision committee, of which Willard was a member, and urged it to lengthen the franchise term by 12 years. "You know and we know that Henry E. Huntington, who has done as much or more for Los Angeles than any other living person, will not build new lines or extend old ones because of the short life of the twenty-one year grant," one of them warned the freeholders on Sept. 28. Acting as the charter committee's spokesperson, Willard promised the realtors that the Municipal League would look favorably on their proposal. The voters did not. That December they spurned the 33-year franchise amendment by a three-to-one ratio.[37]

Moving city elections to odd-numbered years was one of many progressive reforms in the name of nonpartisanship that nudged Los Angeles politics a little further from popular opinion and a little nearer the agendas of well-organized, well-heeled forces like the Municipal League. Its effect was similar to the replacement of wards with at-large voting in that it required more money and more effort to get a winning number of electors to the polls. Almost immediately it curbed voter turnout for municipal races.

"The re-scheduling of municipal elections to the odd years followed the lines of a fa-

mous statement by Theodore Roosevelt," observes political scientist Ingram. "The Bull Moose once pointed out that it was inappropriate to allow national party labels to enter into local politics. In 1904, the voters of Los Angeles passed a charter amendment giving the officers elected in 1906 a three-year term; this change moved the municipal elections to the odd years and effectively sliced turnout in local contests by 50%. Whether reformers were consciously lowering voter participation or this was an unintended consequence of their attempts to establish nonpartisanship, the result was the same. Depression of turnout, it has been pointed out, is the most reliable way to control outcomes after the introduction of the secret ballot."[38]

Willard's great passion was political combat, and changing the institutional structures in which it occurred, but this preoccupation did not blind him to the currents of social and moral reform then rippling through Los Angeles. Like John R. Haynes, Rev. Dana W. Bartlett, and *Express* publisher Edwin T. Earl, he worried about the morals and miseries of the poor. It did not occur to him that their escape from misery required militant self-organization, and he wrote about them with sympathy, not empathy. But at least he pondered their predicament--and that, for his time and place, was novel. Dismissing the idea that the poor were alone responsible for their poverty, he declared the following in a Pacific Outlook editorial:

> "That society is rich enough to abolish poverty; that most contagious diseases could be stamped out of existence by concerted effort; that 90 per cent of all crime could be abolished in two generations, if rightly dealt with; that panics are the business men's fit of hysterics; that most sickness is unnecessary; that strikes and riots are relics of personal warfare--like dueling; that child labor is a social crime, and that the vast majority of the people of this nation want honest government, clean beautiful cities in which to live, and education and proper protection for their own and all others' children...." [39]

At Willard's direction, the Municipal League and the College Settlement Association persuaded Mayor Owen McAleer to create a Housing Commission in 1906. Its first task was to rehabilitate the crowded, unhygienic house courts where many Mexicans, Rus-

sians, and other recent workingclass immigrants lived virtually without public services. Willard helped draft an ordinance, adopted by the city council later that year, that imposed new standards on tenants and landlords, set up a system of inspections and fines, and authorized the demolition of the worst courts.[40] The new law was poorly enforced.

Like Haynes, Willard was too secular a personality to boost moral reform with the zeal of the clergymen and ideologues who populated the Civic Righteousness League, Ministerial Alliance, Anti-Saloon League, Sunday Rest League, and Morals Efficiency Committee (a title only a progressive could conjure up). But each man, in his own way, planted one foot part-time in the moral reform movement. Haynes led the Morals Efficiency Committee with Rev. Bartlett, Parley M. Johnson, Nathan Newby, and kindred notables who set out to roust blind pigs, punch-boards, grab-bags, nickel slots, dance halls, and houses of ill repute forever from the streets of the city.[41] Liquor struck this physician, real estate speculator, and stock investor as the root of many evils, but he knew all-out prohibition was doomed in Los Angeles and did not pursue it. After a 1905 initiative to ban saloons failed, he said he would settle for a reduction in their number from 200 to 100, not more than one per block, a halt to the loss-leader tactic of offering patrons free lunches, and a six p.m. closing time. Haynes' weapon of choice against booze was the Gothenburg system, in which a private syndicate would take over a limited number of saloons at a maximum five percent profit and donate its excess net income to the city. Reportedly successful in Sweden, this remedy made no headway at all in Los Angeles.[42]

Willard, for his part, represented the Municipal League in its defense of sobriety, prudence, and other progressive virtues. The League routinely hectored non-reform city councilmen for their unwillingness to limit saloons to a small area, stop private clubs from dispensing liquor, abolish prize fights, bar youths under 17 from penny arcades, pool halls, and "low (burlesque) theaters, and halt racetrack gambling and even racing

itself at Ascot Park and other tracks.[43] Whether Willard was speaking for the League's moralist wing or was personally committed to this attack on workingclass pleasures is hard to say. His ally Meyer Lissner insisted that "saloons and good government cannot exist together." Willard never said anything so definitive, but he did identify the liquor industry as a key element of the Espee machine.[44] His most important gift to the teetotaler's cause turned out not to be a moral reform at all, but a structural and political one. In December, 1906, the city council allowed saloons to locate anywhere within the liquor zone without the consent of nearby property owners. It tried to immunize this statute against referenda by calling it an "emergency" measure, whereupon the Municipal League sued for an injunction on the grounds that no emergency existed. The court held for the plaintiff, and the council's three-year-old strategy for thwarting the city charter's referendum clause came to an abrupt end.[45]

The Harper Recall

Willard's finest hour, after his stint in the Free Harbor fight, came late in 1909 when the Municipal League resolved to oust mayor Arthur C. Harper. This decision sizzled with irony. The League struck at Harper with the recall, a weapon it had previously scorned. It chose this weapon because the next regular election would not come until December, 1909--thanks to the odd-year charter amendment that Willard himself had pushed through.

Believing the mayor's sins were too horrendous to wait that long, Willard convened two meetings of business and professional men on January 20 and February 1, 1909. "The Harper administration had been thoroughly unsatisfactory," he wrote the following year. "He was surrounded by a coterie of saloon men and vice promoters: Gambling and social evil were unchecked, and the Mayor was known to be interested in a number of

commercial projects, the stock of which had been systematically marketed among the saloons and vice agencies."[46]

At the Jan. 20 meeting, with Willard serving as its secretary, speaker after speaker assailed Harper for conniving with the Police Commission to promote vice in Los Angeles. Just as odious was Harper's appointment of police chief Edward Kern to the Public Works Board, charged with overseeing the $23 million bond issue voters had authorized in 1907 to build the Owens River Aqueduct. Almost without exception the nearly 200 invitees summoned by Willard on Jan. 20 believed that with Kern and another Harper crony sitting on the Board, the city's great new enterprise would drown in graft. They voted 205 to 5, with 5 abstentions, to recall the mayor.[47]

The Municipal League immediately launched a canvass for the requisite 9,000 recall signatures. It obtained 11,000 in just 12 days.[48]. Midway through the petition drive, it invited representatives of the Chamber of Commerce, Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association (M&M), and City Club to meet with its own delegates on February 1. As exclusive and machine-like as any party convention run by Espee, this gathering chose George Alexander, a septuagenarian Civil War veteran and former county supervisor with an independent voting record, as its candidate to replace Harper in a March 26 recall election.[49]

Most union activists and the Socialist Party found little to like in Alexander's nomination. As a supervisor he had treated them coolly, and his selection by a closed circle of invitees notable for the ill will it bore organized labor heightened their suspicion of him. On the other hand Alexander could expect some support, however reluctant, from workers who recognized his honesty and were as fed up as the Municipal League with Harper's corruption. Among them were Thomas D. Fennessy and Ben C. Robinson, both former presidents of Typographical Union No. 174.[50]

The socialists decided to field their own recall candidate, Fred C. Wheeler. One of L.A.'s most popular union activists, he had done stints as a carpenter, Populist, railway strike leader, AFL organizer, city charter reviser, champion of public water and power, foe of U.S. armed intervention in Mexico, newspaper columnist, tireless candidate for local and state offices, and president of the L.A. Central Labor Council. Wheeler was a reformer's reformer, though no historian of Los Angeles has thought to include him in that pantheon. [51]

Shortly before election day, Harper resigned. *Express* publisher Edwin T. Earl had damned the mayor's association with gambling, prostitution, and saloon interests. Now, thanks to some effective sleuthing, he had dug up proof that Harper and Kern were profiting from a red-light syndicate. Kern quit the Public Works Board as soon as he saw the evidence against him. Harper left office a few days later, on March 11. In the chaos that followed his departure, remnants of the Southern Pacific machine tried to install former city council president George A. Smith as interim mayor, but the council chose former Chamber of Commerce president William D. Stephens instead. Recall foes then sued to cancel the March 26 election on the grounds that it was no longer needed. Willard's Municipal League and Meyer Lissner's young Good Government Organization both insisted that the election be held--and Superior Court Judge Walter Bordwell agreed. "When a question arises whether a public official shall be elected by a vote of the people or by some other method," he ruled, "all doubts must be resolved in favor of a popular vote. It is a right that must be guarded by the people."[52]

During the final weeks of the campaign Alexander drew heavy financial and organizing support from the Municipal League, Good Government Organization (G.G.O.), and other elements of Los Angeles progressivism, including reform groups in the Democratic Party.[53] Wheeler's backers were a few dozen unions and the Socialist Party. Relations

between these forces were testy. Many socialists could not forgive the unions for sponsoring a rival left party in the 1906 city elections. Others, led by Job Harriman, had begun an edgy rapprochement with organized labor, but this would not succeed in uniting the two groups until 1910-11.

"The G.G.O....enjoyed abundant funds and strong networks of support through various civic, social, and economic institutions," observes Daniel J. Johnson in a 1996 paper on ward politicians and working-class voters in Progressive-Era Los Angeles. "The Socialists, on the other hand, were virtually penniless, their internal organization on the point of collapse, with only a handful of followers in the city. Yet, the Socialists did have one advantage: working-class hostility towards the middle-class reform movement. The G.G.O.'s arrogant refusal to include working people in its councils, its association with class-biased moral reform, and charges of collaboration with the city's corporate reformers, all worked against [its] ability to win over blue-collar constituencies."[54]

Republican regulars, stunned by Bordwell's decision, offered no mayoral candidate; the election had boiled down to a duel between Wheeler and Alexander. On March 26 Wheeler captured five of the city's nine wards, including all but one of the eastside wards with large workingclass populations. Thanks to lopsided majorities in the silk-stocking precincts, however, Alexander defeated the intrepid union carpenter by a scant 1,700 votes out of some 26,830 cast.[55]

Alexander began his term as recall mayor by naming Typographical No. 174's Ben Robinson to the Fire Commission--the first significant city post held by a union member in two decades. Because Robinson had led the union that had battled the *L.A. Times* nonstop since 1890, his appointment seemingly rebuked the open-shop movement.[56] Those who thought so included many labor activists, but they were sorely mistaken. The new mayor was far more conservative than his predecessors. A good city government, he

wrote just before taking office, should protect capital investments, nurture a stable business climate, and *in so doing* assure workers the chance to earn a living.[57] Over the next four years Alexander demonstrated his belief that the needs of capital not only superceded all others but required the ongoing suppression of organized labor. His regime became the ultimate guarantor of the open shop.

All this flowed from Willard's decision in the waning weeks of 1908 to oust Harper and clear a path to power for his fellow progressives. With no labor candidate in the field after the recall, Alexander sailed through a long-scheduled primary election in November, 1909. He handily defeated his Democratic and Republican opponents in the December 7 runoff, winning a two-year term and a fair number of workingclass votes in the process. Good Government Organization candidates running with him swept every seat on the city council and board of education as well as every other elective office in the city government.[58] "This is the culmination of a long fight," Willard wrote his sister. "It smashes a big hole in the Southern Pacific machine here and opens the way for a clean-up all over the state. And it isn't any sudden or accidental wave of reform--it is a veritable reform machine--a perfect model of its kind--built up slowly with a vast amount of general public education."[59] Brilliant at seizing power, the progressives proved much less adept at holding it. Their four years at the helm would, however, leave a mark on Los Angeles almost as durable as that of the labor movement they feared and disdained.[60]

Charles Dwight Willard and the Proletarian Menace

The 1909 recall campaign sharpened organized labor's distrust of Angelenos who dubbed themselves "nonpartisans" and "progressives". Three years earlier the *Union Labor News* had characterized the Non-Partisan Party as "the result of a difference of opinion between pigs in the public trough."[61] Labor's worst fears were confirmed, its benefit-of-the-doubters rudely shaken, by the mass arrests of brewery and metal trades strikers

that followed soon after Alexander's election. Since Willard played so pivotal a role in the progressive ascendancy, the question that begs to be asked is what did he think of the working class? More particularly, what did he think of the *organized* working class whose political daring seemed to defy its weakness in industry?

Willard's concern for less fortunate Angelenos made him a rarity in early 20th-century Los Angeles progressivism. He did not believe for one minute, however, that their poverty, low wages, or shabby homes bespoke the exploitation of one class by another. Rather he imputed such wretchedness to the backwardness of the poor and the imperfections of government, both of which he and his fellow reformers had a duty to correct. This attitude, patronizing and naive from a century's distance, seemed noble in Willard's day. It was, in fact, a fine example of *noblesse oblige.* People of his persuasion sprinkled charity and helpfulness on the poor, but they shuddered when the lower classes took matters into their own hands. From this reaction sprang Willard's hostility, sometimes subtle, often not, to trade unions. His view of labor fell in the mid-range of progressive opinion, to the right of Haynes and to the left of open-shop businessmen like Joseph O. Koepfli,[62] Niles Pease,[63] O.T. Johnson,[64] and Stoddard Jess.[65] For our purposes this makes him an excellent model of mainstream progressive thinking in early 20th-century Los Angeles. He was no rabid union-hater like many who traveled under the progressive banner, but he saw unions as a nuisance at best and a political menace at worst.

Nuisance-avoidance led Willard to spurn whatever counsel workers might have offered the reform organizations he helped create or guide. In 1897, months after founding the elite League for Better City Government, he and his colleagues proposed a set of city charter amendments that concentrated more power in the mayor's office and less in the hands of voters. Wary not just of the amendments but of the motives of the men who had framed them, some labor activists wondered if they had been "hatched in private" to cre-

ate a "a rich man's charter". Willard's response was astonishingly tone-deaf: he defended the revisions on the grounds that they had been studied and approved by over 100 business and professional men. "Workingmen may not have found these explanations altogether convincing," observes Clodius in a riveting understatement. As noted above, the charter amendments failed at the polls.[66]

The most generous thing one can say about Willard's attitude toward labor activists in 1897 was that for him they simply *weren't there.* They counted for naught.[67] This blind spot brings to mind Marx's thumbnail description of bourgeois socialists like Proudhon who, he said, "want all the advantages of modern social conditions without the struggles and dangers necessarily resulting therefrom. They desire the existing state of society minus its revolutionary and disintegrating elements. They wish for a bourgeoisie without a proletariat."[68] Though tunnel-visioned, Willard's view was not yet malicious. Compare it with the devious and openly hostile reason he gave a dozen years later when his Municipal League barred labor representatives from the two meetings that launched Mayor Harper's recall. The city's unions, he said, *were practically a political party* and as such could not be allowed a role in any nonpartisan gathering.[69] His "political party" designation was so patently false that no one, including Willard's fellow reformers, believed it.[70] Indeed, it was the Municipal League that had acted "practically" as a political party when it sought to substitute its own candidate--chosen in private caucus by fifteen business and professional men--for a sitting mayor. All this happened despite assurances by League president Koepfli that its candidate would represent all L.A.'s citizens, not merely its businessmen.[71]

The L.A. Central Labor Council and its member unions viewed Willard's rebuff as an insult and took no formal position on the recall. The Socialist Party went further. Unwilling to support Harper because of his suppression of free speech rights, it nevertheless

saw Willard and his ilk as a profoundly anti-workingclass clique. "A body of individuals known as the Municipal League...appointed themselves the guardians of the morals of Los Angeles," it declared in its southern California weekly newspaper, *Common Sense.* "They called a meeting, very exclusive, to which no workingmen were invited....They started the recall petition, which but a short time before they had denounced as a 'socialist vagary'....The meeting that nominated Alexander was composed chiefly of men who were active workers in organizations that have bitterly fought the workingmen of this city."[72] It was at this juncture that the socialists nominated Fred Wheeler to run against Alexander.

The Central Labor Council's hands-off stand encouraged individual union members to deal with the recall in different ways. Some ignored it. Others damned the Municipal League in letters to the *Los Angeles Record,* the only daily newspaper that routinely took up workingclass causes in progressive-era Los Angeles.[73] A few supported Alexander. Larger numbers backed Harper and Wheeler. The Harper recall, and the Alexander regime's suppression of brewery and metal trades strikers a year later, turned the labor movement's longstanding suspicion of Willard, Lissner, Avery, Stimson, and company into outright revulsion. It also nudged many unionists and the Socialist Party toward a formal political alliance after years of alienation followed by a wary coexistence. This alliance would, in turn, drive progressives into the camp of the Old Guard with grim consequences for their movement.

Willard could not have foreseen this disastrous outcome when he snubbed the city's unions in 1909, but he must have known they would not take this rebuff lightly. What made him risk their retaliation? Specifically, what changed his benign neglect of union workers in 1897 into the fear and loathing he felt toward them twelve years later?

The answer is that in the years of progressive ascendancy L.A.'s labor movement had

supplanted "the machine" as the reformers' worst nightmare. Overrated from the start, Espee's political apparatus was already crumbling by 1906; the 1909 elections simply delivered its *coup de grace.* Meanwhile the city's unions had led the fight for a municipal water system, had helped plant direct democracy in the city charter, had played a prominent role in the elections of 1902 and 1906, had championed the Owens River aqueduct more forcefully than the progressives, and were now demanding that Los Angeles generate and distribute its own electric power. In all these undertakings organized labor had challenged not just the reformers' self-proclaimed right to run the city but their vision of what the city should become. While the reformers sought the friendly regulation of capital and businesslike efficiency at city hall, the unions sought public control of the city's infrastructure and a much more democratic municipal government.

Willard was understandably aghast at the prospect.

When did he realize that the labor movement had become a formidable foe? His dark epiphany seems to have occurred during the election campaign of 1906. In that year the battle between unions and open-shop forces reached a fever pitch. "[T]he Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association consummated its partnership with Otis and other antiunion employers, making possible complete financial and moral aid to struck firms, and economic warfare against employers prone to deal with unions," states Stimson. A Citizens' Alliance, formed two years earlier as a phalanx of employers and their supporters, backed up the M&M. The full arsenal of open-shop weapons came into play: "black lists, advertisements for 'independent' workingmen, replacement of union by nonunion employees, lockouts, open-shop declarations, importation of strikebreakers, use of Mexican and Negro labor, nonunion employment bureaus, and cancellation of union contracts." [74]

Despite this all-out offensive by employers, the Central Labor Council and its affiliates organized 16 new locals in 1906. Brewery workers signed closed-shop contracts with all

their firms, and 60 union printers struck dozens of small job shops for an eight-hour day. Supporting them were the International Typographical Union (ITU), which paid strike benefits, and 83 pressmen and press feeders.[75] Otis, whose *L.A. Times* had not had a printers' union since 1890, took umbrage at the walkout. He rallied the 55 job shops in his Employing Printers' Association, drew the M&M and Citizen's Alliance into the dispute, and helped recruit nonunion printing tradesmen from the East and "special" guards from the Police Department. "Although the exact number of specials provided cannot be determined," states Thomas Clark in a recent study, "press reports suggested that one to three officers guarded any printing shop that made a request."[76] Undaunted, the members of Typographical Union No. 174 kept their picket lines moving through a long summer.

Longshoremen struck to halt the unloading of non-union ships at the harbor that June. When the San Francisco branch of their union went back to work in August, they not only stayed off the job but demanded a $5 monthly wage increase and continued boycotting nonunion vessels through October, long after the strike in the northern city was settled. Work stoppages on the docks had always infuriated the San Pedro lumber companies, the region's newspapers and politicians, and the capitalist class as a whole because home and commercial construction played a decisive role in the Los Angeles economy. This walkout also drew heavy judicial fire, provoking the first and only labor injunction aimed at L.A. county strikers during the first decade of the 20th century.[77] It was obtained by the lumber companies to interpose the police between peaceful pickets and strikebreakers. "Picketing," declared L.A. Superior Court Judge N.P. Conrey, 'implies a state of war," and he intended to put an end to it. His injunction failed to stop the strike.

The city's carpenters' unions, meanwhile, had hurled a potent challenge at dozens of building contractors and fabricators represented by the Mill Owners' Association, Master Builders' Association, and Builders' Exchange. Setting September 1 as the deadline for

the closed shop, 50-cent minimum hourly wage, and 44-hour work week in their trade, they backed it up with a threat to quit this most construction-driven of all American cities. "In the 'open shop' plan, as at present, carpenters work in mixed crews in many instances," declared the *L.A. Record.* "This will be prohibited under the 'closed shop' rule. Union and non-union carpenters will not work side by side." [78]

The threat to head out to San Francisco, San José, Fresno, and other northern California cities was a credible one, for carpenters' eight-hour wages there averaged about $4.50. Indeed, many craftsmen began to leave Los Angeles before the end of July. "The carpenters never take a backward step when once they have acted," Fred Wheeler, financial secretary and manager of Local 158, declared midway through the tense standoff. "Many of the contractors [are] already paying the $4 wage, and I think the rest will accept the conditions, which are fair.' Joining 2,300 union carpenters in this pressure campaign and eventual walkout were 350 bricklayers and large numbers of plasterers and building laborers.[79] When some contractors balked at the Saturday half-holiday, more craftsmen headed north.

Willard Belabors Labor Day

The broad scope and intensity of the printers,' longshoremen's, and carpenters' strikes by themselves must have alarmed Willard, but they posed the lesser of the two threats he now felt from organized labor. A far greater danger to progressive ambitions, he realized, was the unions' bold entry into the 1906 political campaign with its December 3 general election date. Angered by the Citizens' Alliance's threat to boycott any employer who met union demands, 6,000 workers overflowed Simpson Auditorium on January 27. Speakers at the stormy meeting denounced Otis, the Citizens' Alliance, and the M&M for "delivering the city government to Huntington, Otis, the gas, electric, and telephone monopolies and other combinations and persons seeking to place unjust burdens upon

the...taxpayers of Los Angeles." By acclamation the crowd agreed to launch an Anti-Citizens' Alliance.[80]

This organization was unfortunately named and fortunately short-lived. Guided by seasoned labor activists Arthur Vinette of the Carpenters, Lemuel D. Biddle of the Machinists, and John Murray, Francis Drake and James S. Roche of the Printers, it transformed itself into the Public Ownership Party on February 21 with support from a rump wing of the socialists.[81] The Public Ownership Party (POP) immediately began organizing the eastside wards. Its leaders agreed to back the city's construction of a $23 million, 240-mile aqueduct from the Owens Valley. The platform they were drafting also argued forcefully for public control of the electricity they wanted to flow from the aqueduct's generating plants.[82] Brash and enthusiastic, the new party shook both Charles Willard and Harrison Gray Otis. They vented their displeasure by trying to sabotage one of the largest Labor Day celebrations the unions had ever organized in Los Angeles.

A week before September 3, Harrison Gray Otis and his chief deputy, M&M secretary F.J. Zeehandelaar, set in motion a plan to have certain well-known merchants keep all their employees at work on Labor Day. Railway magnate Henry Huntington agreed to order his crews to mount an anti-union parade that morning. "All the details of the plot were carefully gone over by Zeehandelaar, who personally visited every merchant thought to be an enemy of organized labor," reported the *Union Labor News*.

But these acts of subversion never happened. The Labor Day plot was exposed by two daily newspapers, both rivals of the *Times*. Seven of the city's wealthiest merchants hastily conferred with Otis. They warned the bantam publisher that he and Huntington could not possibly generate a strong turnout for their march and would suffer ridicule for trying. The result, said the *Union Labor News*, was well known. On Labor Day Otis left town. [83]

Willard's scheme was less flamboyant but no more successful. He and Maurice H.

Newmark were the top officers of the Associated Jobbers of Los Angeles, an organization that had emerged from the free harbor campaign in which both men prominently served.[84] Founded on November 3, 1899 by the city's leading merchants and manufacturers, it immediately plowed into one of those chronic intra-capitalist squabbles that formed the economic substrate of progressivism. The railroads--most oppressively the Southern Pacific but also the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fé--had long charged L.A. shippers discriminatory rates. This practice intensified after the free harbor fight. The Associated Jobbers doggedly challenged the roads in the public press and the courts, winning more equitable tariffs for its members.[85]

By the fall of 1906 Willard and Newmark had trained their sights on the rising labor movement. Newmark was one of many businessmen who had broken with the regular Republicans in July to form the Nonpartisan Committee of 100. This elite group of progressives would soon nominate its own candidates in a bid to capture the mayoralty and city council.[86] Nearly all of Willard's political allies sat on the Nonpartisan Committee, and he very much wanted their slate to succeed. For the first time, however, a labor-based political party had moved into the electoral arena with popular issues and the potential to win a substantial number of votes. The unions were also mobilizing their rank and file for the largest Labor Day parade, rally, and festival in the city's history. During the rally they planned to lay the cornerstone for a new labor temple that would tower over the Times-Mirror building and most other structures in L.A.'s business district.[87]

Willard and Newmark undertook to wreck the 1906 Labor Day celebration--and do it so thoroughly that the unions' political ambitions would look hopeless. The Associated Jobbers represented 87 companies, including the city's major employers. Many were non-union, but some of the largest had been organized.[88] By keeping their workers off the streets on September 3, they might drastically thin out the Labor Day parade, prevent

non-union workers from joining in, and turn an expected union triumph into a dismal failure. Willard and Newmark polled the jobbers on the question and, a few days before September 3, announced the results in the following letter:

> "'To the Members of the Associated Jobbers:
>
> "'The vote taken among the members on the question of observing some holiday early in September--whether it should be Labor Day...or Admission Day (Sept. 9) resulted in the choice of Admission Day by about a two-thirds majority.
>
> "'The members of the association are therefore requested to observe Monday, September 10, as a holiday (the 9th being Sunday), and to close their places of business on that day.
>
> "'Respectfully,
>
> M.H. Newmark, Pres.
> C.D. Willard, Sec'y.
> The Executive Committee'"

Nearly 50 manufacturing plants represented by the Founders' Association likewise ordered their workers to stay on the job on September 3, as did the Southern Pacific and Santa Fé railroads.[89] For reasons unknown--did Willard and Newmark get cold feet after Otis's plot was exposed?--the act of sabotage failed. Nearly 11,000 workers and eleven brass bands marched through downtown Los Angeles on Labor Day, flanked by noisy crowds on the sidewalks and rows of grim faces at the corporate office windows.[90] With much fanfare the Labor Temple's cornerstone was troweled into place. A huge Chutes Park picnic followed, enjoyed by union and non-union workers alike. The day was, in every sense, the success that Willard had tried to forestall. The *Union Labor News,* a labor weekly, summed it up thusly: "Contractors became thoughtful as the long column of twenty-five hundred carpenters passed their office windows. Capitalist politicians wondered if a great working class political machine had not suddenly slipped from their fingers and was wending its way, self-governed, to the polls." [91]

Notes

[1] A yellow dog contract committed a new employee to work non-union.

[2] McWilliams, Carey. *California: The Great Exception*, Current Books, Inc., A.A. Wyn, publisher, New York, 1949, p. 127.

[3] Gibson and Craig appear later in these pages. Severance organized the New England Women's Club before moving to California in the 1880s. Known as the "Mother of Clubs," she founded L.A.'s Friday Morning Club in 1891. "Despite dire editorial warnings expressed in the local press that 'virtue and intellect were incompatible in women,' Gloria Lothrop writes, "Severance prevailed." She helped lead the Christian-socialist Union Reform League later in that decade, remained close to the Socialist Party for a number of years, but supported right-wing progressive John Shenk for mayor in 1913. [Lothrop, Gloria Ricci, "The Boom of the '80s Revisited," *Southern California Quarterly* v. 75, nos. 3–4 (Fall/Winter, 1993), p. 294; *A Record of Twenty-Five Years of the California Federation of Women's Clubs. 1900-1925, Vol. 1, A Handbook for Clubwomen*, compiled by Mary S. Gibson, California Federation of Women's Clubs, 1929 (copy at UCLA University Research Library, Special Collections); *Citizen*, May 10, 1912, p. 6; *L.A. Sunday Tribune*, June 1, 1913, Second News Section, p. 1.]

[4] The four currents of progressive reform are discussed at length in Chapters 2 through 5 and Appendix 1.

[5] See especially Perry, Elisabeth Israels, "Men Are from the Gilded Age, Women Are from the Progressive Era," *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, v. 1, no. 1 (Jan. 2002), pp. 25-48.

[6] The leading Jewish progressive was Meyer Lissner, whom we will meet in these pages as a frequent foe of organized labor and occasional proponent of undemocratic methods. When California's unions submitted an anti-injunction measure to the reform legislature in 1911, Lissner told Gov. Hiram Johnson he would give up progressivism itself if it would defeat the bill and prevent Los Angeles from becoming a labor town like San Francisco. Other L.A. progressives also denounced the bill. Johnson had it killed. [Meyer Lissner letter to Hiram Johnson, March 23, 1911, Hiram Johnson papers, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, CA, paraphrased in Clark, Thomas R. "The Limits of Liberty: Courts, Police, & Labor Unrest in California, 1890-1926, *Ph.D. dissertation,* UCLA, 1994, p. 167.]

[7] Standard Oil set up operations in southern California in 1900, quickening the flow of capital from the East. Henry Huntington launched his far-flung interurban rail network during this period. Manufacturing in Los Angeles lagged well behind that of most cities of similar size, however. Progressives, Socialists, and labor unions consequently trained their fire on the large privately-held public utilities and, in the progressives' case, on the Southern Pacific Railroad.

[8] "Although political scientists have focused on middle-class values," says Amy Bridges, "historians since Hofstadter generally have argued that business leaders were the most prominent advocates of municipal reform. Bridges (1982) and Shefter (1985) have argued for the Progressive Era, that businessmen organized and campaigned for municipal reform to curb the extravagance of machine governments and to centralize political control." [Bridges, Amy. "Winning the West to Municipal Reform," *Urban Affairs Quarterly* v. 27, no. 4 (June, 1992), p. 497.

[9] Erie, Steven P. "How the Urban West Was Won: The Local State and Economic Growth in Los Angeles, 1880-1932," *Urban Affairs Quarterly* v. 27, no. 4 (June, 1992), pp 528-29. The Los Angeles progressives resembled the "mugwumps" of Chicago and New York more than the progressives who followed them. See Schneirov, Richard. "Rethinking the Relation of Labor to the Politics of Urban Social Reform in Late Nine-

teenth-Century America: The Case of Chicago," *International Labor & Working Class History* 46 (Fall, 1994), pp. 93-94.

[10] Grassman, Curtis. "The Los Angeles Free Harbor Controversy and the Creation of a Progressive Coalition," *Southern California Quarterly,* v. 55, no. 4 (Winter, 1973), pp. 446-49.

[11] The internal quotation about 'a great monopoly...' is from a letter Typographical Local 174 president Frank Colver published in the *L.A. Times* on May 3, 1896. Colver was one of the most respected of L.A.'s early union leaders. [Stimson, Grace Heilman. *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,* University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1955, pp. 178-79.]

[12] In May and again in July, 1909, the L.A. Central Labor Council called for the consolidation of Wilmington and San Pedro with Los Angeles and urged union members to " bend every effort to pass the measure." [Los Angeles County Central Labor Council Minute Books, 1909-1916 (hereinafter LACLC), housed at the Urban Archives Center, California State University, Northridge, July 30, 1911.]

[13] Ibid, pp. 450-62. Greb, G. Allen. "Opening a New Frontier: San Francisco, Los Angeles and the Panama Canal, 1900–1914," *Pacific Historical Review* 47:3 (Aug. 1978), p. 407.

[14] Fogelson, Robert. *The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930,* Cambridge, MA, 1967, p. 118. Ingram, James W. III. "Building the Municipal State: Coalitions and Infrastructure Development in Los Angeles, 1889–1939," paper prepared for delivery at 1994 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, New York City, p. 38.

[15] Newmark, Marco R. "A Short History of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce," *The Quarterly,* Historical Society of Southern California, v. 27, nos. 2–3 (June-Sept., 1945), p. 59.

[16] Deverell, William. *Railroad Crossing: Californians and the Railroad, 1850-1910,* University of California Press, Berkeley, 1994, pp. 105-06.

[17] Tom Sitton. *John Randolph Haynes: California Progressive,* Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 1992, p. 106; Gottlieb, Robert and Irene Wolt. *Thinking Big: The Story of the Los Angeles Times, Its Publishers and Their Influence on Southern California,* G.P. Putnam & Sons, New York, 1977, pp. 67, 71.

[18] *California Outlook,* v. 12, no. 10 (March 2, 1912).

[19] Newmark, Harris. *Sixty Years in Southern California, 1853-1913,* ed. Maurice H. and Marco R. Newmark, Dawson's Book Shop, Los Angeles, 4th edition, 1984.

[20] Grassman, "The Los Angeles Free Harbor Controversy," pp. 449-50, 455-56.

[21] Willard, Charles Dwight, letter read at a Dec. 17, 1909 meeting in Levy's Café, Los Angeles celebrating the progressive's electoral sweep of city offices, as reported in "Good Government Leaders Celebrate Victory...," *L.A. Herald,* Dec. 18, 1909.

[22] Johnson, Daniel J. "'And Never the Twain Shall Meet': Working Class Politics in Los Angeles, 1903–1909," unpublished paper presented at the 19th Annual Conference of the Southwest Labor Studies Association, April 17, 1993, pp. 2-3.

[23] In 1896 mayoral candidate Democrat Meredith P. Snyder, backed by workingclass voters as well as Willard's League for Better City Government, outpolled Republican nominee Julius Martin thanks in part to his bitter attack on the City Water Company. Fred Eaton ousted Snyder in 1898, castigating the incumbent for his inability to negotiate a buyout of that company and the failure of charter reform. Tit for tat,

Snyder rode a wave of union and progressive support to unseat Eaton in 1900. He was re-elected in 1902. Workers found little to like in his second administration, however, and in most wards switched their votes to Republican candidate Owen McAleer, who also relied on progressive backing. Willard himself noted that McAleer had made a strong record as a councilman by "opposing corporate aggression." In that year (1904) the first nonpartisan school board won election. Not until 1906 was the "machine" able to elect a mayor of Los Angeles--and he was toppled by the reform movement in 1909. [Ostrom, Vincent. *Water & Politics: A Study of Water Policies and Administration in the Development of Los Angeles,* The Haynes Foundation, Los Angeles, 1953, pp. 53; Clodius, Albert Howard. "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles, 1890-1910," Claremont Graduate School dissertation, Claremont, CA, 1953, pp. 18, 22, 48; Johnson, Daniel J. "'And Never the Twain Shall Meet'"; Willard, C.D. *The Herald's History of Los Angeles City,* Kingsley-Barnes & Neuner Co., Los Angeles, 1901 (with 1911 appendix), p. 356.

[24] Clodius, "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles," pp. 23-24.

[25] Newmark, Marco R. "Pioneer Merchants of Los Angeles," Part II, *The Quarterly,* Historical Society of Southern California, v. 25, nos. 1–2 (March–June, 1943. This event sent L.A.'s progressives into a decline from which they never recovered.

[26] Grassman, "The Los Angeles Free Harbor Controversy," p. 462; Clodius, "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles," pp. 399-401.

[27] "True Proletarians," *California Outlook,* Vol. 10, No. 11 (March 11, 1911, p. 1.

[28] Willard died on Jan. 22, 1914.

[29] Haynes, John Randolph. Papers, Special Collections, University Research Library, University of California at Los Angeles. Hereinafter Haynes Papers. This quote appears in Grassman, ff 55, which refers to folders marked 'Haynes, J.R., Personal,' 'Arts and Speeches,' and 'Lincoln-Roosevelt League'.

[30] Using Scylla and Charybdis to define the L.A.'s progressives' middling path was not as original as I thought when I wrote this passage. William Deverell tagged them with the same metaphor in his 1994 *Railroad Crossing,* pp. 150-51.

[31] In 1900 Haynes founded the Direct Legislation League. He began proselytizing for the initiative and referendum in 1898, six years later than organized labor. While Willard was named on the letterhead of Haynes' organization, his interests lay largely elsewhere and he never played an important role in the decade-long effort to plant direct democracy in L.A.'s charter. (Haynes often padded his letterheads with prestigious people who seldom bestirred themselves for his causes, however much they applauded them. See Merry Ovnick's 2001 UCLA dissertation, "The Arts and the Craft of Persuasion: Developing a Language of Reform in Los Angeles Political and National Aesthetic Reforms, 1900-16," chapter 10, p. 5 and chapter 16, p. 36.) No doubt Willard was constrained by the fact that key members of the Municipal League, at least before 1909, were wary of the initiative, referendum, and above all the recall. It is largely through his writings that Haynes was and is memorialized as "the father of direct legislation" while the labor movement's earlier and more grassroots contribution to that reform quickly became invisible.

[32] Clodius, "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles," p. 40; Willard, Charles Dwight. "Reform Measures in Los Angeles," undated typescript probably written in July, 1910, Haynes Papers, Box 43, folder "Direct Legislation–Los Angeles" (16). In this document Willard acknowledges that in 1902 the Municipal League "shied off the recall, having doubts of its expediency." Though the progressives took power by recalling Mayor Harper in 1909, they seem never to have been comfortable with this reform before or after. In 1914 the Municipal League declared itself "ready to morally and financially aid in the defense of any worthy official, either City or County, who in the opinion of the League, may be unjustly subjected to recall proceedings..." [Letter from Municipal League secretary H.S. Ryerson to city and county officials by

order of the executive committee, Feb. 11, 1914, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Records, Box 26, OD 1291B.] *Note:* The term "direct legislation" referred to the initiative and referendum. "Direct democracy" embraced these devices plus the recall, sometimes called the "imperial mandate".

[33] Willard, Charles Dwight. "Municipal Progress in Los Angeles," *Proceedings of the New York Conference for Good City Government and the Eleventh Annual Meeting of the National Municipal League,* National Municipal League, April 25-28, 1905, pp. 100-01; Woods, Gerald. *The Police in Los Angeles: Reform and Professionalization,* Garland Publishing, Inc., New York, 1993, p. 18.

[34] From the 1880s on union leaders had called for a municipal civil service; it was a key Union Labor Party platform plank during the 1902 city campaign. Most historians credit progressives for eroding patronage systems through civil service, but in Los Angeles this reform would not have passed without active support from workingclass voters. As on so many other fronts, labor leaders and progressives demanded a civil service for different reasons. Progressives saw it as a blow against partisanship and as a necessary step toward efficiency in government. Labor leaders saw it as a way to win greater job security and possibly shorter hours and higher wages for public workers. See Chapter 3, pp. 111-17. [Los Angeles City Council *Minutes,* Vol. 69, pp. 497 (Sept. 26, 1904), 520-21 (Oct. 3, 1904); Willard, "Municipal Progress," p. 101; Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,* pp. 232-33; Johnson, Daniel J. "Down in 'De Bloody Ate': Ward Politicians and Working-Class Voters in Progressive-Era Los Angeles," unpublished paper presented at a UCLA colloquium, April 3, 1997, pp. 9-10.

[35] Willard, "Reform Measures".

[36] Willard, *The Herald's History of Los Angeles City,* p. 356.

[37] *Los Angeles News,* Sept. 29, 1906; *Los Angeles Herald,* Sept. 30, 1906; *Los Angeles Examiner,* Oct. 1, 1906; "Why Amendment No. Twenty-Five Should Be Defeated," typescript (probably by Haynes), Haynes Papers, Box 133, Folder "Los Angeles Railways" 7-(29).

[38] Long-term voter turnout declined in L.A., though less than the 50% figured by Ingram. Inspired by sensational charges of graft and a strident mayoral recall campaign, more voters than usual went to the polls in 1909. This was, however, the exception that proved Ingram's rule. [Ingram, "Building the Municipal State," p. 25.]

[39] "The New Basis of Hope" (editorial), *Pacific Outlook* (July 24, 1909), pp. 1-2.

[40] Clodius, "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles," pp. 507-08.

[41] "Blind pigs" were dealers and clubs that wholesold liquor, though prior to late 1906, when the reform movement began to dominate the city council, that body let them sell booze by the bottle. Newby was chair of the Civic Righteousness League. (Letters from Robert C. Barton, executive secretary, Morals Efficiency Committee, to County Supervisor F.E. Woodley, Aug. 10 & Oct. 5, 1915, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Records [hereinafter Supervisors], Box 65, OD 3583D & 3588D.) "OD" refers to the Old Documents collection.

[42] "Hammel to Resign as Chief of Police," *L.A. Examiner,* Aug. 7, 1905; "To Restrict Liquor Sale to Small Zone," *The Los Angeles Municipal News,* July 24, 1912.

[43] Municipal League letter from Willard and R.W. Burnham to Board of Supervisors, Jan. 6, 1906, Supervisors Box 114, OD 1369P; *Pacific Outlook,* Dec. 29, 1906; "Are Voters of Second Ward Represented by Clampitt," *L.A. Express,* June 7, 1907 (excerpts from a Municipal League newsletter); Johnson, Daniel J. "Down in 'De Bloody Ate,' pp. 26-29.

[44] "Lissner Makes Strong Address at City Club," *L.A. Herald,* April 11, 1909; Charles Dwight Willard, "Our Set and Their Set," *Pacific Outlook,* VII (November 67, 1909), pp. 2-3.

[45] "Scores the Council," *L.A. Evening News* and "Judge Bordwell Sustains Municipal League Injunction," *L.A. Express*, Jan. 5 1907; "Ordinance Is Invalid," *L.A. Evening News* and "Emergency Legislation," *L.A. Express,* Feb. 5, 1907; Willard, "Reform Measures".

[46] Willard, "Reform Measures".

[47] *L.A. Herald,* Jan. 25, 1909, special issue reprinting Jan. 8-24 articles under the heading "Is Vice Protected in Los Angeles?"; *L.A. Express,* Jan. 23, 1909.

[48] Willard, "Reform Measures".

[49] The three organizations declined to participate on the grounds that they did not get involved in electoral politics, but many of their members showed up. Attendance at both the Jan. 20 and Feb. 1 meetings was by invitation only; it assembled some of the leading partisans of the open shop in Los Angeles and completely excluded representatives of the labor movement. [Willard, "Reform Measures"; Clodius, "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles," pp. 171-72, 192-94.]

[50] Clodius, "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles," pp. 195, 473.

[51] Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, p. 324.

[52] *L.A. Examiner* and *L.A. Express,* March 24, 1909; Stimson, p. 325. Clodius, "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles," pp. 196-98.

[53] *L.A. Herald,* Jan. 21 and Dec. 18, 1909.

[54] Wheeler undoubtedly benefited from the votes of some Old Guard Republicans and Democrats who did not want to elect a reform mayor. But polling data show the strong workingclass basis of his support while suggesting that many members of the two main parties voted with their feet. [Johnson, Daniel J, "Down in 'De Bloody Ate,' p. 29. See also Johnson's "A Serpent in the Garden: Institutions, Ideology, and Class in Los Angeles Politics," Ph.D. dissertation, UCLA, 1996, pp. 381-393.]

[55] Johnson, "Down in 'De Bloody Ate'," ibid. Stimson, p. 325; Clodius, "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles," p. 211.

[56] *Citizen,* Dec. 3, 1909; *Times,* Dec, 9, 1909; Clark, Thomas R. "The Limits of Liberty: Courts, Police, & Labor Unrest in California, 1890-1926, Ph.D. dissertation, UCLA, 1994, 439-40; Stimson, pp. 325, 346. Johnson, Daniel J., "'And Never the Twain Shall Meet,' pp. 20-21.

[57] Alexander, George. "What I Am Going to Do," *Pacific Outlook,* VI (April 3, 1909), pp. 3-4.

[58] Willard gloated over these 1909 triumphs while mocking the feebleness of the machine forces. "We have raided their meetings, captured their people, pulled down their leaders, taken away their newspapers, riddled them, wrecked them, as I never saw it done in any campaign," he wrote his brother after the Dec. 7 election. "We have forced them from one ludicrous plight to another, and have hammered them until they are stunned and groggy and there is no longer any fun in it." [Letter to Samuel Willard, Los Angeles, Nov. 25, 1909, Charles Dwight Willard Correspondence, 1876-1913, Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, CA. [Hereinafter Willard Correspondence]

[59] Letter to Sarah W. Hiestand, Los Angeles, November 12, 1909, Willard Correspondence.

[60] *L.A. Herald,* Nov. 12, 1909; *L.A. Times* and *L.A. Examiner,* Dec. 9, 1909; *L.A. Record,* Dec. 10, 1909; Johnson, "'And Never the Twain...,'" pp. 6, 21-22; Clark, pp. 439-40.

[61] *Union Labor News,* "Political Sure Things," Sept. 28, 1906, p. 4.

[62] Koepfli was equally active in L.A.'s open-shop movement and its first progressive organizations. He headed the Merchants' Organization in 1896 when it merged with the Manufacturers' Organization (at the behest of Otis) and continued serving as the union-busting M&M's top officer. In 1905, when the Chamber of Commerce urged the city to tap the Owens River for its water supply, Koepfli was likewise its top officer. He helped found the short-lived Committee of Safety in 1899 and the durable Municipal League two years later. He was the League's president when it launched its 1908-09 campaign to oust Mayor Harper.

[63] Pease, a furniture dealer who moved to Los Angeles in 1884, ran the Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association in 1902-06 when it adopted a militant anti-union line. "The boycott is un-American, unjust, unwarranted, and illegal," he declared in 1903. Three years later he helped found the Non-Partisan City Central Committee, which elected him to the city council along with three other progressives. Pease was the council's president until 1909, when his term ended.

[64] Johnson, a prominent L.A. capitalist, served with Willard on the Chamber of Commerce early in the 20th century. Reviled by the city's unions for erecting buildings with non-union labor, he presented a memorial to Harrison Gray Otis in 1903 that praised the *Times* publisher for ridding L.A. of "the tyranny of misguided agitators." Haynes listed him on the letterhead of his Direct Legislation League, and in 1905 he joined the Voters' League for Better City Government at Haynes' behest. Johnson also agitated for the anti-gambling, anti-saloon Church Federation. Like Pease, Russ Avery, Dana Bartlett, F.W. Blanchard, Meyer Lissner, Albert M. Stephens, and Marshall Stimson, he helped found the Non-Partisan City Central Committee that contested the 1906 election. At the emergency meeting convened by Willard on Jan. 20, 1909, Johnson was the reformer who moved the recall of Mayor Harper.

[65] Jess, Willard, Otis, Thomas E. Gibbon, and A.M. Stephens played key roles in the free harbor campaign, and after 1900 all but Otis became progressive reformers. A financier who spent most of his business life with the First National Bank, Jess sat on the Municipal Waterways Commission, Harbor Commission, and, after 1909, on the board of Lissner's Good Government Fund. He voted to recall Mayor Harper at the Jan. 20, 1909 meeting convened by Willard. His antipathy toward organized labor and the Socialist Party helped push Lissner, Avery, and other key progressives into a pact with the Republican Old Guard during the 1913 city election. This development dealt a heavy blow to progressivism in Los Angeles. Jess was a strong backer of the Owens River aqueduct but he opposed municipal control of aqueduct power in a decisive bond election on May 8, 1914.

[66] Clodius, Albert Howard. "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles, 1890-1910," Claremont Graduate School dissertation, Claremont, CA, 1953, p. 25.

[67] "L.A.'s progressive political leaders, in a fiercely open-shop town, had no need--indeed, they showed no interest--in gaining working class followers," explains Merry Ovnick. "Key progressive wordsmiths such as Edward A. Dickson and Charles Dwight Willard...maintained an uncomfortable, even chilly, distance from the blue-collar worker. [Ovnick, Merry, "Art vs. Politics: The 'Japanese Problem' and Los Angeles' Reformers in the Progressive Era," paper delivered at the Organization of American Historians convention, San Francisco, April 18, 1997.]

[68] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party,* 1848, Samuel Moore, tr. (1888), reprinted in *Karl Marx: The Revolutions of 1848. Political Writings Vol. 1,* The Marx Library, Vintage Books, New York, 1974, p. 93.

[69] My italics. Clodius, "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles," pp. 170-72, 180-81.

[70] Meyer Lissner, key organizer in Mayor Alexander's late-1909 reelection campaign, gave a more candid explanation. In a letter to San Francisco reformer Francis J. Heney, who had warned that alienating labor was a strategic mistake because no businessmen's regime made a good government, Lissner said the Municipal League feared unionists would pack the meetings and stymie the recall. [Lissner to Heney, Los Angeles, February 2, 1909, Lissner Papers, Borel Collection, Stanford University Library; Mowry, George E. *The California Progressives,* University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1951, p. 45.]

[71] Clodius, "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles," p. 181.

[72] "For Whom Will You Vote?", *Common Cause,* No. 210 (March 6, 1909), p. 1.

[73] *L.A. Record,* February 3, 1909.

[74] Stimson, Grace Heilman. *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,* University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1955, p. 289.

[75] "Printers Are Out," *Union Labor News,* Jan. 5, 1906; Stimson, pp. 289-90, 298-99.

[76] The LAPD "specials" helped the job printers outlast Union No. 174, which signed contracts with some of the job shops but was defeated at others. [Clark, Thomas R. "The Limits of Liberty: Courts, Police, & Labor Unrest in California, 1890-1926, Ph.D. dissertation, UCLA, 1994, pp. 406-07; *Union Labor News,* Feb. 16, 23, March 2, 1906.]

[77] According to the *Times,* which praised the injunction, "Judge Conrey holds that the strikers, having left the service of their employers, are outsiders, and as such have no connection with the business, and certainly have no power or right of dictation. Regarding the strikers' objection to an order forbidding them to resort to violence, the judge declares, in effect, that if they do not intend to commit violence they can have no proper objection to an order to restrain them from so doing." ["His Honor the Strike Breaker," *Union Labor News,* Aug. 31, 1906, p. 4; Stimson, pp. 302-03; "Lawler Declines to Prosecute," *Los Angeles Record,* 9/8/06; "The Open Shop: Current Comment," *Los Angeles Times,* 9/16/06.]

[78] "Carpenters May be Supported by Other Unions," *L.A. Record,* Aug. 16, 1906.

[79] The campaign ended in a partial victory that fall, with carpenters winning higher wages and shorter hours but not the closed shop. [*L.A. Record*: "Carpenters May be Supported by Other Unions," Aug. 16, 1906; "Plasterers Join In...," Aug. 18, 1906; and "Thousands of Mechanics at Noon, Saturday, Claim Half Holiday," Sept. 1, 1906]

[80] *Union Labor News,* Feb. 2, 1906, p. 1.

[81] Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,* p. 306.

[82] "Public Ownership Party Platform," *Union Labor News,* October 5, 1906.

[83] "Employers Plan to Have Non-Union Parade," *L.A. Examiner,* Aug. 26, 1906; "Why Otis Left Town," *Union Labor News,* Sept. 7, 1906.

[84] Both Willard and Newmark helped found the new organization. Newmark, scion of one of the city's oldest and most powerful merchant families, was a wholesale grocer who took a keen interest in the movement of products by rail and through the harbor. A former president of the Chamber of Commerce, he long

remained active in that organization. He was a leading partisan in the successful 1907-09 campaign to make San Pedro and Wilmington part of Los Angeles. Mayor Alexander appointed him to the Harbor Commission. [Newmark, Harris. *Sixty Years in Southern California, 1853-1913,* ed. Maurice H. and Marco R. Newmark, Dawson's Book Shop, Los Angeles, 4th edition, 1984, pp. 549, 607, 619, 637-38, 642.]

85 *L.A. Times* Aug. 31, 1906. Newmark, *Sixty Years,* pp. 619, 637.

86 In early October the nonpartisans' chose Lee C. Gates, an admirer of Henry Huntington, as their mayoral candidate. Three years later Newmark parted ways with the progressives, serving as campaign manager for one of Mayor Alexander's rivals in the November, 1909 primary election. [*L.A. Express,* July 10 (several stories), 28, 1906; *L.A. Evening News,* July 10, 1906; *L.A. Record,* July 28, 1906; Newmark, *Sixty Years,* p. 639.

87 *L.A. Record,* Sept. 2, 1906.

88 Members of the Associated Jobbers in 1906 included Bishop & Co., F.W. Braun Company, M.A. Newmark & Co.; Brownstein, Newmark & Louis; Hauser Packing Company, L.A. Saddlery and Finding Company, Llewellyn Iron Works, and Baker Iron Works--all active in the L.A. open shop movement. It also included the breweries, which were largely union-organized.

89 "Won't Shut Down Upon Labor Day," *L.A. Times,* Aug. 31, 1906.

90 *Union Labor News,* all 1906: "Grand Marshall's Report," Aug. 24; "Labor Day Parade," Aug. 31; and "Ten Thousand Men Parade" and "The Meaning of Labor Day," Sept. 7; newspaper dated Sept. 2, 1906 with logo missing, probably the Los Angeles *Record,* found in Haynes Papers, Box 91, folder "Labor--Los Angeles" 1–(20).

91 *Union Labor News,* Sept. 7, 1906.

2.
Progressives Impose, Workers Resist Moral Cleansing and Time-Discipline*

Reformers applauded the election of four westside Non-Partisans to the L.A. city council on December 4, 1906. Unhappily for them the new council could not start work until January, and the old one was not about to reform itself in ways sought by the likes of Charles Dwight Willard. "At no time in the history of Los Angeles," he lamented in the *Pacific Outlook*, "has there been evidence of such overwhelming 'incompatibility of temperament' between the respectable and self-respecting citiz ens of Los Angeles and the men chosen to represent them in the municipal legislature as at this time."[1]

Willard's editorial damned the lame-duck council not just for tolerating but for promoting vice. It noted with approval (basically Willard applauding Willard) that the Municipal League had urged local pastors to rally their congregations against the city's "wicked" and "notorious" condition. The council, it implied, had winked at street gamblers and the moral abasement of the city's youth. Despite dogged efforts by progressives, the Anti-Saloon League, the Civic Righteousness League, and the Women's Christian Temperance Union to ban or severely reduce the number of saloons, the outgoing council had encouraged even more saloons and blind pigs to open. Worse, it had compounded vice with vice by permitting the sale of alcohol at the vile Ascot racetrack. The last straw was its Dec. 17, 1906 vote to let relatively unregulated liquor wholesalers sell as little as a chilled pint at a time. This made them virtual saloons, beyond the reach of a law limiting the number of such establishments in Los Angeles to 200.[2]

The Municipal League filed suit to block three of these liquor laws, and the *Outlook* issued a series of demands that amounted to a reform blueprint for the incoming progressive council and chief of police. New saloons, said the journal, must not be allowed to

open for business unless four-fifths of the property owners in their districts agreed. The monthly saloon license fee, already burdensome, must be raised. Clocks, slots, card machine or other contrivances "into which money is hazarded upon chance" must be barred from the city. Youths under 17 must be denied entry to gambling houses, pool halls, billiard parlors, and other dens of iniquity.[3]

When the new council took office in January, 1907 it had already settled on one of the four non-partisan members as its president. Niles Pease and his reform colleagues quickly demonstrated their zeal for the moral uplift of Los Angeles. Most union workers sensed that the coming reforms posed a threat to their way of life. "The present council promises to line up more genuine kid-gloved haters of the 'common laborer' than any gathering of legislators seen in City Hall for many years," warned the *Union Labor News*.[4] With timely assists from one or more of the five "old guard" councilmen,[5] the non-partisans wrote the civic cleansing program of the Municipal League, other progressive groups, and the Protestant blue law lobby into the city's ordinances--and in some cases did far more than was asked of them.

"The period between 1907 and 1909 was marked by a huge upsurge in religious enthusiasm," says labor historian Daniel Johnson. The awakening featured "not only evangelical street campaigns but also serious efforts to limit public access to liquor, gambling, dance halls, burlesque theater, and other forms of amusement which were considered immoral. These efforts had a distinct class bias, since they often targeted specifically working-class manifestations of these activities."[6] The local temperance movement, strongest of its kind on the West Coast, dogged the public drinking habits of blue-collar families with far more zeal than it ever condemned the shuttered tipsiness of the well-to-do. Side by side with its new evangelicism, Los Angeles enjoyed or endured --and the Harper regime encouraged--a period of vice run rampant. "Victorianism, Comstockery, puritanism or whatever the reform ethos might be called, had not yet

puritanism or whatever the reform ethos might be called, had not yet triumphed over the frontier spirit," observes Gerald Woods in *The Police in Los Angeles.*[7] Both the rising calls for temperance and the deepening corruption inspired progressives to cleanse their city.

Los Angeles was not unique in the fervor of its moral crusades, but their targets differed from those in most eastern and midwestern cities. In his examination of progressive-era Boston, Chicago, and New York City, Philip J. Ethington found a prevalence of "social control policies" that included Sunday closing laws, restrictions on the sale of alcohol, and other chastisements:

> "Chicago's Anton Cermak, for instance, built his career through the formation of the city-wide United Societies for Local Self Government (opposed to liquor regulation). However, most successful progressive reformers learned by the turn of the century to avoid advocacy of social control measures. The cue in this regard was taken from Jane Addams and the settlement ideology of relativistic 'social ethics,' which recognized the intrinsic value of immigrant cultures. By the height of the Progressive era, circa 1909-1913, then, progressive reformers seeking office or to implement the new politics of needs were generally unwilling to alienate immigrant voters by advocating social control policies....Nevertheless, organizational politicians continued to wave this bloody shirt of social control for many decades, ringing the ethnic or class alarm as a method of mobilization." 8

The cities Ethington studied had large foreign-immigrant populations in a symbiotic relationship with patronage machines; Los Angeles did not. In Los Angeles the main target of moral reforms was the white native-born working class which, so the progressives felt, had to be inured to the demands of modern industry. The city's unions tenaciously fought these impositions, protesting them at city council meetings and launching often-successful referendum campaigns to rescind them. As one of the labor movement's most nettlesome grievances against progressive rule, moral reform greatly complicated its campaign for municipal ownership of the city's gas, telephone, and electric utilities. It would not be easy to vote these resources into the hands of politicians who could not be trusted.

Booze

Since liquor wholesalers had effectively become saloons, the new council targeted

them as such. The four westside nonpartisans led a successful move in May, 1907 to confine them to a small eastside saloon zone whose liquor trade was licensed and closely monitored by the Police Commission. Councilmen Lyons and Yonkin, representing workingclass voters, argued that temperance forces from the silk-stocking wards had no business meddling in an eastside liquor dispute. Their protest, says Johnson, "proved fruitless."[9] In October, 1909, Mayor Alexander signed a law making it a crime for women to serve wine or liquor, but complications involving the sale of alcohol with restaurant meals soon led to its repeal.[10]

Alexander's re-election and the progressives' capture of the city council that December stoked the moral reform fires. In the spring and summer of 1910, during the most aggressive series of strikes launched by workers in L.A.'s history, the council drafted an omnibus liquor bill that raised the retail liquor license fee 50 percent, prevented saloons from opening on a block if neighbors owning 51 percent of its frontage protested, and imposed a $100 monthly fee on the social clubs that had long served alcohol to their members. The draft ordinance was read on the evening of March 4 to a council chamber packed with over 500 saloonkeepers, club members, lawyers, and other interested Angelenos. Among them were several dozen Central Labor Council delegates who had left their weekly meeting en masse after learning that small social clubs might be taxed out of existence. This eventuality would cost dozens, perhaps hundreds of hospitality workers their jobs. Moreover a number of the clubs were owned and operated by unions; they featured amenities ranging from meals and drinks to reading rooms, billiard tables, and meeting halls. During labor crises, such as the 1910 strike wave, some of them also served as strategic headquarters and command posts. Union clubs were valued assets. For all these reasons, Central Labor Council president W.A. Engle, Associated Cooks delegate Lucien Earle, and labor lawyer Fred J. Spring spoke out against the punitive $100

license fee at the council's March 4 meeting.[11] The immediate outcome of this dispute is not clear, but by the fall of 1911 the city was using police permits and fees to slow the flow of booze in social clubs.[12]

Although the omnibus bill embraced most of the anti-saloon lobby's demands, it also exposed a rift between religious prohibitionists and progressives. One of the latter was Councilman William J. Washburn, a successful banker, early non-partisan, former president of the Chamber of Commerce, acting president of the Municipal League, and a beneficiary of the progressive sweep of all nine council seats in the 1909 city election.[13] Washburn's interests in moral reforms had only a nodding connection to morals. He was much more impressed with their impact on the efficiency of government and, as we shall see later, the disciplining of workers. Other progressives shared these views. Some of them, notes Johnson, had "hastened to distance themselves from the Church Federation's ardent moralism" during the 1909 campaign.[14]

Taken aback by the large crowd that turned out to oppose the omnibus bill on March 4, Washburn defended it as a *revenue measure.* The increase in the monthly liquor tax from $100 to $150 and the licensing of private clubs, he said, would vastly increase the city's revenues at a moment when Los Angeles finally had an honest, effective government. Many in the chamber were appalled by this argument. On the matter of licensing the saloon business, one spokesman for the Crusaders' League declared, "the city has no right to say that the liquor business is wrong and then participate in that wrong by receiving a part of the revenue it derives." Liquor license fees rose from about $240,000 in 1910 to $436,411 in fiscal 1911 after the omnibus bill became law. Only bond sales, street openings and widenings, property taxes, and Water Department income brought the city more money.[15] Nevertheless progressive-era Angelenos voted down tougher saloon laws whenever they had the chance. The culture and politics of class inspired them far more

than any urge to fill the coffers of the Alexander regime.

Two years later the city council again targeted saloons in a way that made workingclass imbibers bear the brunt of the attack. Its weapon was an amendment to the liquor ordinance forbidding saloons and hotel bars from cashing checks and serving free lunches to patrons. Unions were well aware of the hardships the revised ordinance would cause. Many workers paid by checks on Fridays and Saturdays after the banks had closed customarily cashed them at saloons on their way home. Denied that opportunity, they would be forced to buy unwanted articles at merchandise stores to convert their paychecks to cash.[16] "It simply means that...earnings are reduced," protested labor's weekly newspaper, the *Citizen.* Workers, more often than members of other classes, also habitually took light meals with their drinks at saloons.

When the Central Labor Council was apprised of the threat to these customs it sent W.A. Engle to testify against the amendment. At the city council hearing he was challenged by Catherine P. Wheat and Hester Griffith of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). "I know many men who wouldn't *go* to the saloon if it wasn't for the free lunch," announced Griffith --as if that settled the issue. The two prohibitionists recommended municipal coffee houses and milk depots, neither of which existed at the time, as suitable replacements for meals served in bars.[17] Impressed by these arguments, the progressive council brushed aside Engle's protest and declared, as a bonus, that the revised liquor law would rid saloons of "undesirable" characters. It adopted the amendment by a vote of eight to one on July 23, 1912.

The following December, in what amounted to a labor- and saloon-led rebellion against the council's action, Angelenos overwhelmingly voted for a referendum reinstating free saloon lunches. Police continued to enforce the check-cashing ban, however.[18]

It would distort the history of moral reform to mass all workers on one side of the tem-

perance line and all progressives on the other. Strictures against demon rum passed from old to young in many workingclass families, especially Protestant ones. Some union activists and socialists saw promiscuous drinking as a threat to their movements even though they often recruited new members in saloons. Shortly after Labor Day, 1905, at the urging of its chief organizer Thomas D. Fennessy, Typographical No. 174 agreed to shun any labor picnic where intoxicating beverages were sold.[19] Voluntary temperance was a sometimes virtue in the L.A. labor movement. State-enforced prohibition clearly was not.

Gambling

Nothing spurred L.A.'s moral reformers to greater bouts of indignation than the popular, creative, and highly visible forms of wagering that drew crowds to the city's sidewalks and the gambling parlors that lined them. Dice-shaking, laying bets on fan-tan tables, saddle races, and baseball games, hazarding monte, lansquenet, rondo, and hokey-pokey, defying the odds in faro, slot, and clock machines, playing the street lotteries--all were workingclass pastimes that gravely offended churchmen and progressives alike. Before 1906, however, unreformed city councils saw no evil in these pursuits and did little to satisfy the Church Federation besides outlawing roulette and fan-tan tables and betting pools.[20] These prohibitions were honored largely in the breach.

Not until the non-partisans launched their bid for power in the 1906 city and county elections did hostility to gambling win a key place in any local party platform. Alarmed by the intensity of betting at Ascot, the L.A. County non-partisan organization condemned racetrack gambling and pledged its nominees "to labor unceasingly to the end that this great evil may be abolished."[21] Three months later the Municipal League demanded the criminalization of machine wagering,[22] and in 1909, with an historic election on the horizon, the League and the Church Federation's launched a campaign to drive

dice-shaking and all other forms of gambling from the city.[23] Their initiative petition qualified for the Dec. 7, 1909 ballot. In the same election that gave progressives full control of the city council, Angelenos rebuffed their anti-gambling measure by 16,706 votes to 12,531.[24]

Were moral reformers chastened by this unexpected result? Some were, but it spurred others to more zealous efforts. Progressives who had softened their rhetoric against demon drink hurled jeremiads at games of chance. The city's new prosecuting attorney, Guy Eddie, was an intrepid practitioner of the art. On July 12, 1910 he urged the city council to override the decision voters had made seven months earlier by calling for a second election on dice-shaking. He reasoned thusly:

> "The result of this gambling show along the streets is unquestionably injurious to the fair name of Los Angeles, and entirely inconsistent with the reputation for progressiveness which she is spreading throughout the world. [I]t is...a blot upon her good name. How far down into the depths of character the gambling license that is allowed in the open along the streets sinks its demoralizing influence on the youth of our city is, of course, unascertainable, but...the effect of it must be alarming..." 25

During his remarks Eddie used a device widely heard in progressive discourse. He claimed to speak for *the people*, in this case their "universal hostility toward gambling." Moments later, however, he undermined his stance by admitting that the council was "hindered in applying a remedy to the ailment under discussion by an adverse public vote"–namely the popular affirmation of gambling on Dec. 7, 1909. Eddie gamely tried to straddle both sides of this cognitive split. The council did not. On advice from the city attorney, it declined to call a new election on the issue of dice-shaking.[26]

In October, 1912, Eddie was arrested for contributing to the delinquency of a young girl. The downfall of this public figure who "had sponsored legislation to suppress vice, gambling, and indecency on the stage and in the theater, and insisted upon a strict enforcement of these laws," stunned moral reformers but did not noticeably cool their ardor. Though a jury acquitted Eddie, he neither sought nor was offered reinstatement as prosecuting attorney.[27]

Public Dancing

Until progressivism took center stage, few Angelenos bestirred themselves against public dancing. Reform groups began to view it as a menace when its popularity soared among young people after the turn of the century, and in 1908 they launched an attack against its commercial venues. That June the Municipal League "heartily approved" a Sunday Rest League (SRL) draft law seeking to close dance halls on the sabbath, exclude youths under 18 from them unless accompanied by a parent or guardian, and subject them to continuing official scrutiny. When the city council accepted the SRL draft as its working document, the battle-lines were drawn between the blue-law lobby and Angelenos who viewed dancing as an innocent pleasure. Over the next several months leaders of the Church Federation, Civic Righteousness League, Mothers' Club, and individual churches paraded before the council in support of the SRL bill while strong arguments against it were delivered by dancehall operators, the German American Liberal Alliance, Glass Workers Union No. 17, Carpenters Union No. 158, Waiters Union No. 17, and the Central Labor Council. [28]

The city council tentatively approved the ordinance in August, 1908. After L.A.'s progressives captured the city's top office it was redrafted and strengthened, and Mayor Alexander signed it on October 16, 1909. In its final form the new law expanded the Sunday and teenage restrictions imposed by the earlier, aborted law. Police permits were now required before a dance could be scheduled; only people with written invitations could attend; no alcohol could be served; no movies "of an immoral nature" could be shown.[29]

Blue-law vigilantes hounded other evildoers after this victory and did not target dancing again for two years. In December, 1912, however, they took a step that proved to be their undoing. Over the objections of the Central Labor Council's W.A. Engle and the machinist union's Curly Grow, they persuaded the reform council to require Police

Commission permits for *private* benefit dances and to appoint three protestant ministers--the Reverends Orville J. Nave, G.A. Henry, and G.L. Howe--to surveil all dancehall activity. Nave, president of the Juvenile Protective Association, explained the new developments:

> "That the public dance hall is a problem of the most serious kind, all thoughtful people know. Statistics show that more girls are led astray by designing men and wicked mistresses of assignation houses, and more boys and young men are corrupted and led away from the paths of virtue through public dance halls, than any other agency of the social evil.30

Unions immediately circulated a petition against the new dancing restrictions. In its resolution demanding a popular vote on the issue, the Central Labor Council (CLC) scorned the attempt to place labor, political, religious, and literary societies under a police watch. During strikes, it said, the Police Commission would almost certainly deny unions the right to earn money through benefit dances--a fundraising technique often used by the labor movement. Religious conservatives among the CLC delegates opposed the resolution, but it passed handily. Engle, a respected leader of Musicians Local 47 and a veteran of labor's cultural wars, handed the petition to the city clerk with more than enough valid signatures to force an initiative election.

Even so the reform city council balked at placing the measure on the ballot. John Topham, a progressive who conceded that unions might be tolerable if they didn't strike, "violently opposed" a popular vote and consented to it only when the city attorney warned him the council would be "mandamused" if he didn't.[31] On March 24, 1913, voters ended police scrutiny of private dances by a lopsided margin of 26,734 ballots to 9,548.[32]

Billiards, Boxing, Movies, and Other Popular Amusements

Through its licensing authority, the city had skimmed income off large and small public amusements ever since the 1880s, exempting those of a religious or charitable nature.[33] At first its main purpose was revenue. The emphasis shifted somewhat after 1900

to the control of popular pastimes, and the number of licensed establishments grew exponentially. These included movies, phonograph parlors, baseball and football fields, theaters, circuses, concert halls, shooting galleries, handball courts, Wild West shows, ostrich exhibitions, mediums, muscle-testing games, trained animal shows, pool and billiard rooms, skating rinks, bowling alleys, and park concessions. License fees ranged from $60 to several hundred dollars a year and were contingent on the entrepreneur's willingness to accept limits on his or her location, hours of operation, and clientele.[34] Fortune-tellers and palmists divined the future on a short leash, their permits being issued for no more than a year at a time. Teenagers could not set foot in many of these places. Even the concessions zone of Chutes Park was off-limits to them unless they entered with an adult, for its billiard tables and shooting galleries were increasingly viewed by church and child protection leaders as corrupters of the young.

Early attempts to end prize fights were led by the Church Federation, Ministerial Alliance, and Los Angeles Christian Endeavor Union. These contests, sponsored by fraternal societies, unions, athletic clubs, and theaters, had attracted so many fans in workingclass Los Angeles that the 1906 city council balked at banning them. Local and national fighters with ring names like Mince Pie Kid inspired dedicated followers. "It is no exaggeration to say that Los Angeles is the Mecca of boxers today," boasted the *Citizen* in March, 1907. "Los Angeles is the town in this state that offers every advantage to boxers and, at the same time, has a sport-loving population that will patronize the excellent events prepared for them."[35] During a rollicking three-hour debate on Nov. 11, 1907, one newspaper reported, "roughnecks from east of Main Street and white cravats from the Fourth and Fifth wards clashed on the floor of the Council." The Civic Righteousness League threatened to launch an anti-boxing initiative if the council did not act. The result of the evening's furor was a mild ordinance limiting matches to ten rounds and banning deci-

sions.[36]

Under the reform regime of 1909-11, the campaign against prizefights intensified. It was no longer waged by churchmen alone. Progressives, emboldened by their electoral successes, attacked boxing from their westside clubs, journals, and city hall. In an editorial, "End of Prize-Fighting," Willard's *Pacific Outlook* scorned efforts to distinguish between hard gloves and soft gloves, five rounds and "last man left standing", friendly bouts at the YMCA and killer contests in a carnival setting. "[A] lot of ruffians and gamblers, ably assisted by the newspapers, have commercialized and ruined" the ancient game, it declared. "The disagreeable fact is that as a rule nothing but drastic legislation is any earthly good in such cases."[37]

Mayor Alexander had reached the same conclusion. In July, 1910 he called on the city council to prohibit all public prize fights and allow private clubs to hold amateur contests only for their own members and only if they charged an admission fee. With minor modifications, this policy became law through a unanimous vote of the progressive council on October 18, 1910.[38]

Boxing did not disappear from Los Angeles--it merely beat a strategic retreat to a growing number of private membership venues, including those owned by the city's unions. One of the latter, the Amateur Athletic Club, began sponsoring "good, clean scientific" matches at the Labor Temple in 1915.[39] A few months earlier, when the L.A. labor movement helped defeat a statewide ban on boxing, the *Citizen* summed up how many workingclass males felt about the sport. Its testosterone-laced paean to amateur fisticuffs was dead-on serious, though it sounds over the top to modern ears:

> "[T]he manly art of boxing...has been recognized and upheld for many years by all those interested in bringing to a state of physical perfection the boys and men of the country. It is conceded that there is no exercise more calculated to bring out the very best that is in a man or boy...It makes men strong, quick, cool, cautious and ambitious. It warns and guards against intemperance, overindulgence, and vice." 40

Not surprisingly, the earliest movie censorship in Los Angeles involved boxing. When

the Civic Association and Ebell Club asked the council to bar local screenings of the 1910 Jeffries-Johnson heavyweight bout, they were told the police had already targeted fight films under a law prohibiting "obscene pictures".[41] That was fast work: L.A.'s first one-reel movie, *The Count of Monte Cristo*, had been shot only three years before. Moviemakers had quickly flocked west to avail themselves of year-long sunshine, filming their three-wall interiors under open ceilings.[42] The first productions, running 10 to 15 minutes at most, enthralled nickelodeon customers, but by 1914 Los Angeles had 102 full-sized theaters charging 5¢ to 20¢ a movie and contributing $10,000 a year in license fees to the municipal coffers.[43]

Moral reformers were hard pressed to pass judgment on every film that showed up in the city--but they tried. Spearheading this effort, the Civic Association set out in 1911 to screen "all films before they are shown, eliminating all pictures of immoral nature." Delegates from the police and schools joined its censorship sorties.[44] The city took over these volunteer functions two years later and incorporated them in a Board of Censors that reported violations of the motion picture code to the prosecuting attorney and supplied lists of "good" movies to schools, parent-teacher groups, and churches. The Board reviewed 1,227 films in just seven months from late 1913 to mid-1914. How many were declared unfit for public consumption is not known. [45]

Keenly aware that a powerful new medium of class propaganda had arisen which could make depictions and distortions of reality seem equally real on the screen, the Central Labor Council and its affiliates eyed the parade of films through Los Angeles almost as attentively as the Board of Censors. Formal censorship they did not trust, but neither did they want movies to present workers as buffoons, goons, drunks, and bomb-throwers. In November, 1915, Moving Picture Operators No. 150 organized a mass meeting to discuss the censoring of a film called *Damaged Goods*. A few weeks later the Central Labor

Council condemned movies "depicting working people in a false light" or featuring "scenes of drunkenness."[46] A century ago filmmakers rarely attributed drunkenness to any class but the one that worked for wages.

The municipal government began censoring movies in the same year that an extraordinary labor film captivated audiences at the Mozart Theater. Weaving a fictional plot through documentary footage of L.A. strikes and Labor Day parades, *Dusk to Dawn* told two related stories--one of a romance between and iron molder and a laundress, the other of workers thwarting company thugs and city councilmen after a factory explosion killed their comrades. The premise of *Dusk to Dawn* was that by banding together working men and women could not only stand up to oppression on the job but overthrow an oppressive social system. Its producer and director, Frank E. Wolfe, was a Los Angeles socialist and one-time union organizer who resolved to make a popular film out of very political material. He succeeded. "Screenings of *From Dusk to Dawn*...were punctuated with frequent shouting and spontaneous singing," writes historian Steven J. Ross. "Theater lights went on and audiences, their hands red from clapping and throats sore from cheering, slowly made their way home....[T]he first film to carry the clearcut message of class consciousness had reached its happy conclusion." Ross describes its political technique:

> "Wolfe's visual images of unionists and socialists stood in sharp contrast to antilabor films. Strikers and socialists were depicted as well-dressed, law-abiding individuals who freely chose to join in nonviolent protests. Powerful scenes of hired thugs and police beating up peaceful picketers with clubs and guns reversed capitalist depictions of the forces of law and order, while documentary footage of poverty-stricken slums and miserable working conditions offered viewers visual insights into the causes of wage protests and strikes."[47]

Did *From Dawn to Dusk* have anything to do with the municipalization of censorship in Los Angeles? No evidence exists for a direct connection, but Wolfe was known to have spent the preceding two years shooting his story at very visible labor-management confrontations throughout the city, and as Ross points out other movies taking labor's side of the class struggle had begun to challenge a spate of pro-capitalist films.[48] The first

such feature, *A Martyr to His Cause* (1911), defended the McNamara brothers against charges that they had blown up the *L.A. Times* building. Urging audiences to "use your nickel as your weapon," unions and socialists joined forces in a cinematic movement whose aim was to radicalize millions of Americans.[49] Given the elitism and open-shop leanings of the city's moral reformers, the resulting movies must have raised their hackles. One can assume that if attempts to prevent the screening of these pictures failed, they were almost certainly excluded from the official "good movie" lists circulated by the Board of Censors. In 1908 L.A.'s first city council with reform credentials had voted to ban plays and dramas fomenting "class hatred," and the ideological passions behind that censorship had only grown stronger once progressives claimed all nine council seats.[50]

Time-Discipline

In the summer of 1906 the pre-reform city council defied the gathering storm of blue-law agitation, temporarily lifted an old ban on Sunday performances, and allowed the shameless folk of Los Angeles to watch a circus. The *L.A. Express* at once positioned itself as the voicebox of reform--a semi-official role it would passionately fill for the next seven years. It called the council's circus vote "undignified, cheap, and nasty" and issued a rallying cry: "This is another evidence that Los Angeles needs in her council chamber men of a bigger and broader stamp; men who, at least, are able to resist the blandishments and free tickets of a circus agent."[51] Chastened, perhaps, the same council refused to fund Sunday band concerts in the city's parks.[52]

What did the progressives hope to achieve with their fervent crusades--a West Coast "City on the Hill"? Did these reformers of a notably narrow stamp imagine they could banish sin from Los Angeles? Or were the men among them merely riding the crest of a puritanical wave to power?[53]

We should credit the moral reformers at least to some degree with doing what they

said they were about--cleansing a city. There were true believers among them, certainly in the clergy and even among professional reformers like Eddie, John R. Haynes, and Ray Nimmo. To think otherwise would be to rate their stated ideology false and manipulative when in fact it reflected a hearty midwestern evangelical tradition. But the progressives were also the sons and daughters of two politically merged classes--entrepreneurial capitalists and intellectuals. Through moral reforms, often blindly, sometimes with cold calculation, they pursued their class interests. Their defense of Sober Sunday was without doubt an attack on the alleged time-profligacy of an incorrigible, necessary, and dangerous mass of working people. By limiting what workers could do on their one full day off, more generally by policing the hours they spent drinking, wagering, dancing, watching a movie or "low" theater, shooting pool, rooting for a favored boxer, applauding a circus, or attending a concert in Chutes Park, moral reformers were seeing to it that L.A.'s workers saved their energies and wits for six long days a week on the job.

The great chronicler of English time-disciplining reforms, E.P. Thompson, documented their impact on workingclass life during the long transition from 16th-century tillage, through the enclosure movement of the late 18th century, to the triumph of industrial capitalism in the late-19th. His two seminal works on the subject, *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963) and "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism" in *Past & Present* (1967) have an almost eerie relevance to progressive-era Los Angeles. "Throughout the 18th century," he writes in the earlier work, "there is a never-ending chorus of complaint from all the Churches and most employers as to the idleness, profligacy, improvidence and thriftlessness of labour. Now it is the taverns, now it is 'that slothful spending the Morning in Bed'...and now it is the custom of 'Saint Monday' which is condemned in tract or sermon." And quoting Max Weber: "The labourer must be turned 'into his own slave driver'."[54] In "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capi-

talism," Thompson writes: "Saint Monday, indeed, appears to have been honoured almost universally wherever small-scale, domestic, and outwork industries existed; was generally found in the pits; and sometimes continued in manufacturing and heavy industry. It was perpetuated, in England, into the nineteenth--and, indeed, into the twentieth--centuries for complex economic and social reasons." The Methodist-led assault on the lax time-sense of workers at the start of the industrial revolution stemmed not so much from new synchronized manufacturing techniques as from "a greater sense of time-thrift among the improving capitalist employers" that accompanied these techniques and in some cases *preceded* them. "It is too easy," says Thompson, "to see this only as a matter of factory or workshop discipline," for it involved "the attempt to impose 'time-thrift' in the domestic manufacturing districts, and its impingement upon social and domestic life....In all these ways--by the division of labour; the supervision of labour; fines; bells and clocks; money incentives; preachings and schoolings; the suppression of fairs and sports--new labour habits were formed, and a new time-discipline was imposed."[55]

The Los Angeles of 1890-1910 was not yet an industrial city, but its future as a manufacturing hub was both imminent and predictable. Employees in small machine-shops, foundries, construction sites, hotels, restaurants, and department stores toiled 45 to 55 hours a week, had only a day and a half off, and were expected to show up fit and alert on Monday morning. Taylorism was already rationalizing speedups at a few job sites. On the other hand, most Los Angeles workers had little or no industrial experience. Many of them had come from the rural Midwest and were task- rather than time-oriented. In both their work and leisure habits they displayed a far more casual attitude toward the rigors of the clock than the city's moral reformers could abide.

Benjamin Franklin, who pursued a life-long interest in clocks, gave the "zealous husbandry of time...its most unambiguous secular expression." In *Poor Richard's Almanac*

he wrote:

> "Since our Time is reduced to a Standard, and the Bullion of the Day minted out into Hours, the Industrious know how to employ every Piece of Time to a real Advantage in their different Professions; And he that is prodigal of his Hours, is, in effect, a Squanderer of Money.' I remember a notable Woman, who was fully sensible of the intrinsic Value of *Time.* Her husband was a Shoemaker, and an excellent Craftsman, but never minded how the Minutes passed. In vain did she inculcate to him, *That Time is Money....* When at the Alehouse among his idle Companions, if one remark'd that the Clock struck Eleven, *What is that,* says he, *among us all?"*

"It is, in some sense, appropriate," Thompson concludes, "that the ideologist who provided Weber with his central text in illustration of the capitalist ethic[56] should come, not from that Old World, but from the New--the world which was to invent the time-recorder, was to pioneer time-and-motion study, and was to reach its apogee with Henry Ford."[57]

Thus we have, in the 1890s, persistent and ultimately successful demands by a morally outraged and politically clever fraction of Angelenos to close saloons on Sundays, as well as failed attempts twenty years later to clamp the same sabbatarian lock on the doors of clothiers and other merchants.[58] We have the Sunday bans on circuses, public dancing, and other entertainments, and the Sunday Rest League's many dogged campaigns to save Los Angeles for the holy day. We have the decade-long tirade against street gambling, whose wastage of workingclass time was horrifyingly evident to ministers and progressives alike. We have their patronizing solicitousness for toilers, as in Eddie's bid to "protect the laboring man from corner saloons" that ambushed him "going home with his wages."[59] In like spirit, though the tone is different, we have the vagrancy laws that set the police after men whose sole offense was loitering. Consider this report from Los Angeles to San Francisco's *Labor Clarion* during the 1910-11 outbreak of strikes in the southern city:

> "T.K. Matthews, a machinist, who was out of work, was arrested by a detective by the name of O'Brien, was hailed before a police judge by the name of Chambers on the heinous charge of vagrancy. Matthews admitted he was out of work for some time, not through any fault of his, he having been at work at Riverside until two months ago. He came back to Los Angeles to try and obtain work at his trade. The judge had the case investigated and found Matthews' statement to be correct. Nevertheless the judge sentenced him to a term of six months in a non-union shop." 60

Judge Chambers may have had more than one reason for ruling as he did. He may have

thought idle men loosened the grip of the work ethic, or became easy prey to lives of crime, or simply created a bad impression when they lounged about and slept on park benches. But the result of all such motives would have been the same: to deprive workingclass men of the free use of their time. Chambers also denied Matthews the free use of his labor-power, sentencing him to a form of employment that resembled indentured servitude.

While it is seldom useful to parse moral reformers' words and deeds for their disguised intent, we can say unequivocally that they often knew *exactly* what they were doing with time-discipline. The clergy was far from clueless about its class role in this regard, and the progressives who ran the city council and Municipal League were as clear about it as clear can be. Their attitude toward aqueduct workers tells the story.

Eight weeks after the June 12, 1907 election in which voters authorized a $23 million bond issue to build the aqueduct from the Owens Valley to Los Angeles, the city council grew alarmed over the fact that it could not stop saloons from springing up along the route of the 240-mile waterway. The council's jurisdiction ended south of the aqueduct's most likely terminus at a canal system in the San Fernando Valley. Prodded by its reform members, the council asked the supervisory boards of Inyo, Kern, and Los Angeles Counties to bar the sale of liquor at any unincorporated place within four miles of a camp of fifty or more men toiling on any public project. Its goal, it said, was to protect the aqueduct's mechanics, miners, and bindle-stiffs from "disorder and lawlessness."[61] The council also worried that tipsy workers might jeopardize the marketing of aqueduct bonds by delaying construction of the big ditch.

Many communities along the aqueduct had recently voted "wet," however, and for this reason the L.A. County Board of Supervisors denied the city's petition. Its unwillingness to act infuriated both the progressive and religious zealots of moral reform. Arguing that proximity to liquor inevitably corrupted workers on large public projects, the Church

Federation Council denounced the supervisors on both moral and economic, grounds.[62] A letter to the board from Charles Willard and W.J. Washburn of the Municipal League was even more bitingly graphic:

> "If our own Supervisors, who represent the city's interest as well as that of the county, do not comply with the City Council's request, we have no assurance that the other counties will exclude saloons. We shall therefore have, all along the line of work, a chain of liquor establishments so far removed from the headquarters of county authority that any form of effective control will be impracticable; with the result that bad liquor will be sold in unlimited quantities, fights and brawls will incessantly occur, and men will be laid off in great numbers for drunkenness.... As more than half of the $25,000,000 to be expended on the Aqueduct will go into pay of labor on the ground, the direct loss of efficiency through irregularity of service, discharge on account of drunkenness, and general disturbance brought about by the presence of these ungoverned saloons, may easily run to enormous sums of money."[63]

What makes this salvo so eyecatching is its wholly instrumental service to time-discipline. For once the progressive voice has dropped its moral outrage. Its range has shrunk to a low regard for workers and an exclusive valuation of time-as-money--the principles that guided labor relations on the aqueduct throughout the progressive era. In 1909 Gen. Adna Chaffee, who sat on the Aqueduct Advisory Board with chief engineer William Mulholland, said their first duty was to protect the city's economy, not the men working on the project. When the two interests clashed, it was the men who would have to suffer.[64] There was, however, a signal difference between Chaffee's comment and the Municipal League's letter. Chaffee, one of Harrison Gary Otis's closest allies, simply asserted the right of any employer to do as he pleased in an open-shop city; Willard and Washburn spoke of drunkenness and brawls--the vocabulary of moral reform drained of its moral content.

Otis himself could not abide the paid and volunteer reformers who policed the leisure time of the working class. The city's "rank and file" want a thoroughly decent town, his paper declared in 1909, but "they do not want one under laws similar to those of the blue code of Connecticut hundreds of years ago. We have got away from that."[65] While Otis tirelessly fought to deny workers bargaining leverage at their job sites, his successes on

that front permitted him to tolerate, and in some cases support, the off-job aspects of worker's culture. Progressives' antipathy for the working class was more consistent *precisely* because they understood that constraints on its access to taverns, dancehalls, racetracks, and parks would condition it all the better for work.

The Invention of Juvenile Deliquency

Many blue laws, as we have seen, targeted youths. They were part of a much broader turn-of-the-century movement to control the behavior of teenagers and young children in ways that would have horrified Huck Finn. At its cutting edge marched the Juvenile Protection League and a platoon of evangelicals. The fervor of their movement ignited a 1909 speech by Judge Cyrus F. McNutt, a Democrat who so detested the corruption in his own party that he joined with Republican reformers to recall Mayor Harper:

> "My friends...a city like Los Angeles has several aspects, and the largest is the moral aspect. We have an able judge sitting in the courthouse in the Juvenile Court. What good when there is upon every corner and between every corner scoundrels waiting to inveigle these children...It's all right to guard your $23,000,000 [aqueduct bond issue] and the two or three millions of taxes, but let me tell you it is just as obligatory to save the children of this town, to protect the children from the damnation that has been carried on in this city." 66

Progressive women clearly led the movement for youth reform in Los Angeles, but it enjoyed far broader support from men of other classes than reforms aimed at adult behavior. Otis, Willard, and Washburn, for example, counseled the largely distaff Civic Association, which emerged from earlier women's groups in 1890 and promptly joined the California Federation of Women's Clubs in agitating for supervised playgrounds, kindergartens, laws to roust children off the streets, and a juvenile court to enforce them. Inspired by Mrs. R.L. Craig, Mrs. D.G. Stephens, Caroline M. Severance, Mary Gibson, and a few other Los Angeles women, the Federation allied itself with Jane Addams and Florence Kelley, leaders of the Chicago social work movement, and supported Kelley's linked advocacy of child labor laws and compulsory school attendance.[67] The Civic Association's workplan envisioned close cooperation with the City Council, M&M, Cham-

ber of Commerce, Board of Trade, Health Office, Associated Charities, School Board, and principals and teachers "to make this the most beautiful, intellectual, moral and sanitary city in the land."[68] On the other hand the city's labor movement, starting with the Workingmen's Party in 1878, had long called for the free compulsory education of boys and girls aged five to sixteen. This demand, coupled with a dogged campaign against child labor, was subsequently taken up by the American Federation of Labor, the Socialist Party, and local labor bodies in Los Angeles.[69] Though the above reforms might seem heterogeneous, they all expressed a desire to limit and regulate the free time of children. Young people, most Angelenos believed, needed to be saved from their own base instincts.

Childhood changed during the progressive era--and nowhere more than in Los Angeles. Before the 1890s it was submerged in a continuum between infancy and adulthood. "Teenagers" had no special name and grew up under no special scrutiny. In the late 1890s, however, they caught the attention of reformers who began barring them from penny arcades, phonograph parlors, pool rooms, gambling houses, dance halls, movies, and cafés.[70] Since packages were often sent to these places, girls of any age and boys under 18 could not work as messengers.[71] Nor could youths under 18 legally go out after nine at night, thanks to a curfew imposed by the city council on Aug. 1, 1904.[72] Ten years later, when Methodists tried to extend this curfew throughout L.A. County, wiser heads prevailed. County counsel A.J. Hill pointed out that many young people worked, went out on errands, or searched for medical help at night and could not legitimately be barred from the streets.[73]

Preoccupation with the comings and goings of young people had less to do with any moral decay in public places than with a systemic inuring of the next generation of workers to the rigors, minute divisions of labor, and timeclocks of the new industrial work-

place. Progressives found it no easy task to sanitize the behavior of grownups who were set in their habits and often belonged to organizations that knew how to agitate against reforms. Children, even roughnecks, seemingly offered less resistance. Moreover their parents and elders could see what was happening in the workplace. They knew young Angelenos would have to earn their livelihoods by the clock, so with greater or lesser enthusiasm they accepted the proposals emanating from the Civic Association and the women's clubs. Taken together, these proposals defined a new concept of childhood. "Roughneck," "ragamuffin," and "urchin" did not vanish from the language, but the operative words had become "juvenile" and its anti-matter equivalents, "truant" and "juvenile delinquent."

The progressives and their allies in the evangelical and temperance movements made a determined effort to shape the behavior of adolescents through laws, schools, and voluntary organizations. "Mrs. Lucy Blanchard...has always been especially interested in children," a Los Angeles newspaper told its readers in 1906. Blanchard was president of the local chapter of the Women's Christian Temperance Union and vice-president of the Southern California Women's Parliament. "One of the most successful branches of her WCTU work has been among children organized as the Loyal Temperance Union," the paper said. *"She believes in formation of character rather than reformation,* and has an extensive experience with the training of young people."[74]

Saving children from themselves and molding their characters for productive lives was the mission of the clubwomen who fought to create a special teenage jurisprudence at the turn of the 20th century. Before 1903 youthful offenders served risky time with adults. In that year, through the leadership of Evelyn L. Stoddart and Mrs. J.T. Sartori, the county opened California's first Juvenile Court.[75] "A bill before the Legislature nearly resulted in defeat for the Juvenile Court in Los Angeles," reports M. Burton Williamson in her 1911 history of the Civic Association, "but it was saved from disaster by the timely aid of

Mr. W.J. Washburn, who went to Sacramento in behalf of it."[76] William Washburn, whom we have already met on these pages, was one of a subset of progressives who pursued moral reform as a means of disciplining the working class and no doubt saw the Juvenile Court in that light.

In its early years the new juvenile legal system mirrored its grassroots origins. The Civic Association supplied at least one of its probation officers, coaxed women's clubs to pay its salaries and expenses, and outfitted an old city jail as a detention home for minors.[77] Only after the Juvenile Court proved its worth did the state move in to fund and professionalize it. Though the court was a county institution, it relied heavily on city police (some of them women deputized for the purpose) to provide it with a steady stream of youthful defendants.[78] Morals squads trolled the dancehalls, movie houses, and gambling hideouts for petty lawbreakers, as this 1907 item attests:

"Police Gather in Boys Who Shoot Craps Sunday"

"Five crap shooters and five others who were watching the game, all of them boys, were arrested yesterday when patrolmen made a sudden descent upon a building formerly used as a skating rink at Burlington Avenue and Washington Street....The lads will appear before Police Judge Rose's Juvenile Court Saturday." 79

More than anything else, the Juvenile Court and its enforcers acted as if their sworn duty was to deprive adolescents of street-time, that is, time put to no uplifting use. The fact that Lorin A. Handley--a Democratic "nonpartisan" in 1906, city clerk in 1912, and a man far more sympathetic to workers and socialists than most of his colleagues--shared this aversion to children lolling about public places suggests it had broad support. In November 1909, Handley praised the Alexander regime for worrying teenagers off the streets and urged the mayor's re-election on that ground alone:

"Judge Wilbur [Curtis Wilbur of the Juvenile Court] stated the other day...that in these about eight months of the administration of Mayor Alexander there had been a noticeable decrease of the urchins of the street that came up to the Juvenile Court. If there was not anything else in his administration to commend him, those young lives of the street ought to make the men of this city put a mayor back there who is courageous enough and high-minded and high-principled enough to clean up a city like this." 80

Banishing teenagers from the streets had the same fatal flaw as the draconian sweeps of homeless men and women in American cities ninety years later--it relocated an alleged problem but did not solve it. The failure of laws and courts to retrofit children for the new industrial order became arguable by 1905 and glaring by the apogee of L.A. progressivism in 1910 and 1911. Reformers cast about for a different mode of discipline. They found it in the truancy, or parental, school.

Compulsory education and the Juvenile Court had both descended on the youth of Los Angeles in 1903. Their simultaneous arrival was no accident. The court took aim at delinquents in general and truants in particular, but while the public tolerated the shuffling of delinquents from street to detention home it soon lost sympathy for incarcerations of children whose only sin was skipping school. In 1905 the Board of Education decided the remedy was worse than the problem. "It was found that boys were worse off after being handled by the Juvenile Court, locked up in the detention home, and taken into court than they were before," the *Municipal News* reported. "An incipient truant might be lacking all the elements of a criminal, and yet after being handled as one for some time would become a young criminal. It was a school problem and had to be dealt with as such." Experimental truants' schools were then introduced. Built on the city's outskirts "to avoid the influence of older boys from the streets," they housed about 15 scofflaws each and taught them manual arts. "The teachers chosen for these schools are all men and athletes, with a keen appreciation of boys' good qualities," said the *Municipal News*. "They govern by first winning the loyalty of the boys, and from then on the boys practically govern themselves." According to the city's official newspaper 90 percent of the students in this experiment made good when they returned to their regular classrooms. Truancy schools became a fixture of workingclass education and time-discipline in progressive Los Angeles.[81]

There is no way, however, that these specialized institutions could absorb more than a

small fraction of the young Angelenos who periodically skipped school or quit altogether. Agnes H. Dowling, Socialist party school board candidate in 1906 and 1909 and a Woman's Living Wage League activist in 1913, estimated that nearly half the public school enrollees dropped out before the sixth grade. "As a rule, the children miss school because their parents cannot keep them in school," she said. "They drop out because they have no money for books or for clothing, or because they must help support the family. There are exceptional cases, and secondary causes, but the greatest cause is economic conditions. The schools where the falling off is greatest, and at the youngest age, are the schools in the working-class districts."[82]

The impact of this high attrition rate on moral reform, and particularly on the movement for time-thrift, cannot be gauged. To the extent that school dropouts worked at steady jobs it must have been negligible, but this was unlikely. Most young people worked sporadically when they worked at all. Off the job, they probably led the kind of street lives that were anathema to reformers. It is probably wise to view the early 1900s as a bridge between a era when the city's elders let teenagers enjoy a relatively anarchical use of public space and private time, and a new era in which these freedoms were constrained. Time-discipline had not yet won the day a century ago.

All public schools, not just those reserved for truants, became crucibles of reform in the progressive years. Compulsory (and punctual!) attendance was the major step, but other issues flared up: deracinating immigrants, siting schools, creating night schools for workers, teaching manual arts, opening schools year-round, using them as civic centers, and requiring free versus home-bought textbooks, to name a few. Thompson makes the essential, albeit historical point:

> "One other non-industrial institution lay to hand which might be used to inculcate 'time-thrift': the school." Clayton [Rev. J., in his 1755 *Friendly Advice to the Poor*] complained that the streets of Manchester were full of 'idle ragged children; who are not only losing their Time, but learning habits of gaming', etc. He praised charity schools as teaching Industry, Frugality, Order and Regularity....Once within the school gates, the child entered the new universe of disciplined time. At the

Methodist Sunday Schools in York the teachers were fined for inpunctuality." [83]

Unions and socialists lobbied successfully for night schools, vocational education, free textbooks, and school-based social centers. They were rebuffed, however, when they asked school boards to teach students political economy--a discipline which despite its capitalist origins they naively hoped would examine wages and profits in their true relation.[84] From organized labor's viewpoint the most pivotal struggles, other than failed attempts to unionize teachers, involved the public school curriculum. The Central Labor Council and its affiliated locals generally praised efforts to imbue teenagers with notions of time-thrift, but they drew the line at a more blatant proselytizing of capitalist values. In 1913 a businessmen's committee prodded the school board to hire a Chicago efficiency expert, Otto Buehrmann, to teach children business ethics and psychology for $150 a week. Buehrmann's course extolled "business life as a character builder." Challenging this presumption, the *Citizen* declared that "the solemn obligation of the modern business man toward society is to rob society to the limit--trim the people as long as they will stand for it." The Labor Council wrote the school board an impassioned letter criticizing Buehrmann and urging him to address the many toxic counterfactuals in workers' lives. The new Mercantile Efficiency course, it said,

> "does not teach how the worker is to defend himself against inefficient and grasping, overbearing, unjust and brutal employers, or how to meet the organized, or trustified power of organized employers....
>
> "Together with vocational training the child should learn the effect on the mental and physical structure of the human body from inhaling impure air..., continuous working by artificial light, working long hours overtime and during the night, standing long hours, particularly on unprotected stone floors, nerve-killing monotony of certain kinds of labor, beginning certain kinds of labor too early in life, speeding up especially in competition with power machines....
>
> "If it is within the power of the Los Angeles Business Men's Committee to urge upon school authorities to engage a man on the strength of a recommendation from said committee, we the workers feel ourselves justly called upon to insist, at least, that the course of mercantile efficiency fully represent the workers' interest. If your experts in vocational training are not fully qualified to teach the economic interests of the workers, we, the organized workers, shall be glad to furnish, at any time, an expert to teach in conjunction for the cause of labor." [85]

-- The school board did not respond.

The Incorrigible Working Class

During the progressive years, workingclass Angelenos creatively and tenaciously resisted the encroachments on their off-work lives. Blue laws made it harder for them to enjoy social clubs, movies, saloons, dance halls, boxing matches, and wagering sites, but they continued to frequent them. Given opportunities to weigh moral reforms through initiatives and referenda, they voted "no!" more often than not. As unionists, they both accepted the new time-discipline and fought to limit its scope by agitating against child labor and for the eight-hour day. Their protracted renegotiation of the structure of work echoed the 18th- and 19th-century English example summarized by Thompson: "The first generation of factory workers were taught by their masters the importance of time; the second generation formed their short-time committees in the ten-hour movement; the third generation struck for overtime or time-and-a-half. They had accepted the categories of their employers and learned to fight back within them. They had learned their lesson, that time is money, only too well."[86]

Most galling to progressives was the harsh treatment juries gave moral reform. Francis Larkin, secretary of the Good Government Alliance's enforcement committee in 1899, had urged the county to jail operators of nickel-in-the-slot machines and other street gambling devices. He found no comfort in the response. "The question presented is not a new one," district attorney James C. Rives told Larkin. "Several violators have been prosecuted, *but in every instance, as far as I am informed, juries have failed to agree or rendered a verdict of Not Guilty.*"[87] Five years later L.A.'s prosecuting attorney warned the city council that he could not get juries to convict saloon owners who sold liquor on Sundays because under a law then extant they knew the owners would be stripped of their license and put out of business.[88] Thomas Lee Woolwine, a city attorney idolized by reformers for prosecuting Mayor Harper's comrades in vice, found veniremen cool to his crusade against social clubs. "Gambling and drinking existed in such places practically

unmolested," he later wrote. "For years, attempts had been made...to break up this growing evil by prosecuting the bogus clubs and small offenders. Convictions were, however, practically impossible. The jurors' sense of fair play was wrought upon by the effective pleas that the poor man was being discriminated against and 'persecuted,' and the rich allowed to go unmolested."[89]

After reformers took power in 1909 juries grew even less likely to vote convictions. Distaste for punitive righteousness cannot fully explain this trend; it stemmed as much from popular aversion to the mass arrests of socialists and strikers in the 1908-11 period. Ignorant of constitutional free speech rights or unwilling to honor them, the city council and police collaborated in the jailing of dozens of Socialist Party street orators who had regaled crowds outside a tiny public speaking zone. The *Herald* blamed "the Socialistic tendencies of so many veniremen" and prayed that "enough men will be found who are not so biased by socialistic doctrines that they cannot act as jurors." Police Court prosecutions idled for weeks and detainees were sent home while city lawyers vainly beat the bushes for compliant jurors. Under pressure from 500 demonstrators who flooded its meeting room on Sept. 28, 1908, the council repealed a law that banned speaking in public without a police permit.[90]

Jurors' resentments flared anew after mid-July 15, 1910 when the council adopted and Mayor Alexander signed a M&M-drafted ordinance that outlawed peaceful picketing. It barred the city's metal trades, brewery, leather goods, electric railway, and other strikers from standing or carrying signs in front of any workplace, organizing a boycott against any goods it produced, or speaking out "for the purpose of inducing or influencing...any person" not to enter the premises.[91] "The fact is," responded the Central, Building Trades, Metal Trades, and Allied Printing Trades Councils, that the strike wave "involving thousands of men has been on for many weeks, and no disturbances have yet oc-

curred.....[T]his ordinance is a war measure, presented to the Council by representatives of employers involved in this struggle, for the purpose of preventing union men from explaining their side of this controversy to those who are in sympathy with them as well as those whose interests are identical with theirs."[92] Adopted as a referendum-proof "emergency" law of a type progressives had found so odious when it favored saloons, the picketing ban inspired a revulsion that spread beyond the unions into the unorganized working class from which most jurors were drawn.

Three hundred strikers were jailed under the M&M ordinance. On advice of Fred Spring, Job Harriman and other labor lawyers, they demanded jury trials. The first 13 prosecutions secured only five convictions, and the parade of Police Court cases ground to a halt by early 1911. Staring futility in the face, the city's attorneys dismissed all the jurors and released the remaining 287 detainees.[93]

Like the 1910 picketers, many Angelenos arrested under the blue laws demanded jury trials in Police Court, and juries continued to acquit them or deadlock over verdicts. Progressives reacted to the grassroots nullification of moral reform with a good deal more rancor than previous occupants of city hall. Where earlier prosecutors had asked the city council to soften gambling or liquor laws that offended jurors, their post-1909 counterparts set out to gentrify the jury pool. "The present system," Ray Nimmo announced in 1912, "makes it extremely difficult to secure convictions in police court jury cases, because of the antagonistic attitude of the jurors." What was this system? In language dear to most progressives, the *Municipal News* explained that it was the police court's habit "to send a bailiff forth on the highways and byways to buttonhole anybody he can get. In this way bums and bankers, proletarians and plutocrats are gathered and forced to serve on a police court jury....By reason of the indiscriminate way in which they are picked up on the streets a very poor class of jurors is frequently secured. They are poor in intellect as well as in a sense of civic duty."

Nimmo and the Police Commission had a solution ready at hand: replace the random selection of jurors with the trial jury system long used in California's Superior Courts. Like many of the progressives' structural reforms, this one revealed a marked distaste for democracy. The Alexander regime favored the change because it would reduce the jury pool to a select list of property owners and thereby guarantee veniremen of a "high class, intelligent, able, and fearless." At Nimmo's request the city council asked the Los Angeles legislative delegation in Sacramento to secure the necessary amendment to the law governing police courts.[94] Thus did progressives of the moralizing stripe lay bare the class war inherent in their reforms.

Notes

* For the reform topography and historiography on which chapters 2-5 are based, see Appendix 1.

[1] *Pacific Outlook,* Dec. 29, 1906.

[2] "The 200-saloon limitation was proposed in 1897 by one of L.A.'s first progressives, Thomas E. Gibbon, when he sat on the Police Commission. A few years later the city council made the limitation a matter of law. Because it kept the number of saloons constant during a period of rapid population growth, the saloon-per-population ratio dropped from 1:500 in 1897 to 1:1,500 in 1909. However the retail sale of alcohol by restaurants and wholesalers raised the number of liquor dispensers to about 400. *Pacific Outlook,* Dec. 29, 1906; *L.A. Times,* Nov. 5, 1907; Clodius, Albert Howard. "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles, 1890-1910," Claremont Graduate School dissertation, Claremont, CA, 1953, pp. 228-31, 238.

[3] *Pacific Outlook,* Dec. 29, 1906. The lawsuit mentioned here is one that stopped the council's use of an "emergency" clause to stifle referenda in cases where no real legislative emergency existed.

[4] "An Old Man's Friend," editorial, *Union Labor News,* Feb. 15, 1907, p. 4.

[5] The four non-partisans on the new council were Pease, R.W. Dromgold, Walter J, Wren, and A.J. Wallace. The old-guard members were E.A. Clampitt, H.H. Yonkin, Henry Lyon, Bernard Healy, and E.L. Blanchard.

[6] Johnson, Daniel J. "Down in 'De Bloody Ate': Ward Politicians and Working-Class Voters in Progressive-Era Los Angeles," unpublished paper presented at a UCLA colloquium, April 3, 1997, pp. 26-27.

[7] Woods, Gerald. *The Police in Los Angeles: Reform and Professionalization,* Garland Publishing, Inc., New York, 1993, p. 20.

[8] Ethington, Philip J. "Urban Constituencies, Regimes, and Policy Innovation in the Progressive Era: An Analysis of Boston, Chicago, New York City, and San Francisco," *Studies in American Political Development* v. 7 (Fall, 1993), p. 290. San Francisco was not typical of the other three cities in Ethington's study when it came to moral reform.

[9] *Los Angeles Record,* March 27, April 4, 11, 14, 1908; *Los Angeles Times,* Feb. 20, March 22, 28, 31, April 1, 7-8, 12, 14, 1908.

[10] "Barmaids Must Go!", *L.A. Examiner,* Oct. 17, 1909; Los Angeles City Council *Minutes,* Vol. 79, Oct. 21, 1909, p. 285.

[11] Los Angeles Central Labor Council, Minutes, March 4 & 11, 1910 (hereinafter LACLC). The council's minute-books are housed in the Urban Archives Center, Olviatt Library, California State University Northridge (CSUN), Northridge, California; "Liquor Dealers Say They Will Use Referendum," *L.A. Herald,* March 5, 1910; "Modern Club Enjoyed By City's Working Men," *L.A. Record,* July 28, 1908.

[12] "What Good Government Has Accomplished for the City," *L.A. Express,* Nov. 17, 1911.

[13] "Hard Blows for 'Dear Walter'", *L.A. Examiner,* Nov. 14, 1906; "Legal Battle to Annul Supervisors' Action Is On," *L.A. Examiner,* Sept. 10, 1908; Letter signed by Washburn and Willard from the Municipal League to the L.A. County Board of Supervisors, Aug. 28, 1907, Supervisors Box 114, OD 1388P.

[14] Johnson, "Down in 'De Bloody Ate'," p. 31.

[15] "City's Achievement Is Financial Marvel," *Municipal News, April 2, 1913*

[16] This was especially true of "time-checks", an illegal but prevalent form of wage payment. ["Money for Laborers Instead of Checks," *Municipal News,* Jan. 15, 1913.]

[17] Hester Griffith also served with John R. Haynes and other progressives on the Morals Efficiency Committee. [*Municipal News,* July 10, 24, 1912; Letter from Robert C. Barton, Executive Secretary of the Morals Efficiency Committee, to L.A. County Supervisor F.E. Woodley on Aug. 10, 1915, Supervisors Box 65, OD3583-D.]

[18] *Citizen,* July 26, 1912 p. 2, Dec. 6, 1912 p. 1, and Jan. 15, 1915, p. 2; "Say Saloons Should Cash Workers' Checks," *Municipal News,* Oct. 19, 1912.

[19] Los Angeles Typographical Union No. 174 (hereinafter LATU). Minute Books, 1886-1916, Sept. 24, 1905, p. 26.

[20] Los Angeles City Council *Minutes,* Vol. 68, Nov. 2, 1903, Jan. 18 & Jan. 25, 1904; Letter from L.A. District Attorney James C. Rives to L.A. County Supervisor Francis Larkin, May 11, 1899, Supervisors Box 56, pp 23-25, OD4051-C.

[21] "Non-Partisan Platform," *L.A. Express,* Sept. 28, 1906. See also "Say Racing Initiative Deliberate Deception," *Municipal News,* Oct. 23, 1912.

[22] *Pacific Outlook,* Dec. 29, 1906.

[23] "Checking Petition Against Gambling," *L.A. Express,* Oct. 28, 1909; "File Initiative on Gambling," *L.A. Express,* Oct. 29, 1909.

[24] "Dice Shaking Initiative Is Declared Sufficient," *L.A. Herald,* Nov. 6, 1909; "Clean Sweep," *L.A. Times,* Dec. 9, 1909.

[25] Los Angeles City Council *Minutes,* Vol. 81, July 12, 1910.

[26] Los Angeles City Council *Minutes,* Vol.. 81, July 26, 1910.

[27] "To Hear Eddie Charges," *Municipal News,* Oct. 9, 1912, Jan. 15, 1913; Clodius, "The Quest for Good Government," pp. 527-28.

[28] Unionists who petitioned or testified before the council included C.H. Porter of the Carpenters, Thomas Murray of the Glass Workers, and Claude B. Wiseman of the Waiters and Central Labor Council. [City Council Records, Vol. 76, June 15, 22, July 6, Aug. 3, 1908]

[29] "Sunday Dance Halls Closed," *L.A. Herald,* Nov. 24, 1909; "Barmaids Must Go!", *L.A. Examiner,* Oct. 17, 1909.

[30] *Citizen,* Dec. 20, 1912, p. 1 & March 3, 1913, p. 7; "Defeat the City Dance Halls," *Municipal News,* Dec. 11, 1912.

[31] Topham was one of the progressive councilmen who voted to repeal the ordinance creating the city's taxpayer-funded weekly newspaper, the *Municipal News.* ["Opinions on Labor and Capital," *Citizen,* Aug. 30,1912; "Dance Hall Ordinance Goes Before People," *Municipal News,* March 5, 1913.]

[32] "Mark Your Ballot This Way," *Citizen,* March 21, 1913, p. 7 and "Old Guard Routed," *Citizen,* March 28, 1913, p. 1; *Municipal News,* all 1913: "File Referendum on Dance Hall Measure," Jan. 15; "Simplify

Method of Dance Hall Control," Feb. 19; "Initiative Dance Hall Law-Shall Measure Be Adopted?"(pro and con views), March 19, 1913.

[33] See, for example, City Council Records, June 9, 1890.

[34] Los Angeles City Council *Minutes,* Vol. 68, Aug. 24, Dec. 28, 1903, Feb. 3, 29, 1904; Vol. 69, May 23, 31, 1904; Vol. 76, June 8, 15, July 9, 1908; "Licenses Cut Taxes," *Municipal News,* Jan. 29,1913, p. 1.

[35] *Citizen,* March 8, 15, 22, 29, April 5, 12, 1907; *L.A. Examiner,* April 7, 1907; LACLC, Sept. 20, 1912; *Municipal News,* July 24, Nov. 27, 1912.

[36] *L.A. Record,* May 11 & Aug. 7, 1907; *L.A. Express,* April 3-4, 6, 15-16, May 14, 20, 27, June 15, Sept. 22, 26, 28, June 17, July 16, Oct. 12-13, Nov. 12, 1907; *L.A. Times,* Nov. 12-14, 17, 1907. Quote taken from Johnson, p. 27.

[37] "End of Prize-Fighting," *Pacific Outlook,* Jan. 28, 1911, p. 3.

[38] Los Angeles City Council *Minutes,* Vol. 81, July 5, 12, 19, 1910; Vol. 82, Aug. 23, Oct. 11, 18, 1910.

[39] The unions hired J.H. McDaniels, a former boxer known as the Montana Kid, to manage the club. He was fired when they learned he had scabbed on a Brewery Workers' strike. [*Citizen,* Jan. 22, 1915, p. 8 and Jan. 29, 1915, p. 8.]

[40] *Citizen,* Oct. 30, 1914, pp. 1-2.

[41] Los Angeles City Council *Minutes,* Vol. 81, July 12, 19, 1910.

[42] Caughey, John & Laree. *Los Angeles: Biography of a City,* University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1976.

[43] *Fiscal Year Report and First Annual Message of H.H. Rose, Mayor of Los Angeles, to the Honorable City Council,* July 1, 1914, pp. 15-16, 36; *Municipal News,* Oct. 9, 1912.

[44] Williamson, Mrs. M. Burton. "The Civic Association as a Factor of Greater Los Angeles," *Annual Publication of the Historical Society of Southern California,* v. 8, Part 3 (1911), pp. 186-87.

[45] Hunter, Burton L. *The Evolution of Municipal Organization and Administrative Practice in the City of Los Angeles,* Parker, Stone & Baird, Co., Los Angeles, 1933, pp. 142-43; *Fiscal Year Report and First Annual Message of H.H. Rose,* p. 36.

[46] LACLC, Nov. 5, Nov. 19, and Dec. 3, 1915.

[47] Ross, Steven J. "Struggles for the Screen: Workers, Radicals, and the Political Uses of Silent Film," *American Historical Review* v. 96, no. 2 (April, 1991), pp. 333, 342, 346; LACLC, Oct. 17 & 27 (executive board), 1913.

[48] Among those denigrating workers or unions: *The Blacksmith's Strike* (1907), *The Molly Maguires, or, Labor Wars in the Coal Mines* (1908), *Awakened Memories* (1909), *The Hero Engineer* (1910), *The Iconoclast* (1910), *Tim Mahoney, the Scab* (1911), *The Strike* (1912), *The Poor Relation* (1914), and *Bill Joins the IWWs* (1915). "In these films," observed the *New York Call,* "working men and women on strike are pictured as brute monsters, constantly attacking, beating, abusing or robbing the good, angelic, heroic strikebreakers who are always wronged and abused persons." In 1915 the L.A. Central Labor Council condemned movies "depicting working people in a false light" and named a permanent committee to investi-

gate them. It also endorsed a resolution of the Anti-Prohibition League seeking to curtail scenes of drunkenness (usually working-class) in films. [LACLC, Nov. 5, 19, Dec. 3, 1915)

[49] Ross, "Struggles for the Screen," pp. 333, 337-38, 340-42.

[50] Los Angeles City Council *Minutes,* Vol. 76, Oct. 26, 1908.

[51] "A Complaisant Council," *L.A. Express,* undated 1906 clipping in Haynes Papers, Box 55, folder "Elections–1906–Gillett, James".

[52] *L.A. Express,* July 10, 1906.

[53] I do not underestimate the weighty role of women in moral reform--but it did not propel them into political office as it did several male progressives. Women won the vote in 1911. Four years later the first woman ever elected to the city council, Estelle Lawton Lindsey, was a socialist, not a moral reformer. Mrs. R.L. Craig, a remarkable progressive who co-founded the Civic Association in 1890 and helped lead the Political Equality League in 1910-11, was elected to the school board in the late 1890s and again in 1911 and 1913; she was not, however, primarily a moral reformer.

[54] "Saint Monday" was the pre-industrial English worker's predilection for adding an extra day to his Sunday off. [Thompson, E.P., *The Making of the English Working Class,* Vintage Books New York, 1966 (first published 1963), p. 357.]

[55] Thompson, E.P., "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," *Past & Present,* No. 38 (Dec., 1967), pp. 74, 78, 83, 90.

[56] See Weber, Max, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.*, Routledge, London, 1997.

[57] Thompson, E. P., "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," p. 89.

[58] Los Angeles City Council *Minutes,* Vol. 32, Sept. 15, 22, Oct. 6, 1890; Vol. 82, Oct. 18, Nov. 1, 1910.

[59] "To Restrict Liquor Sale to Small Zone," *Municipal News,* July 24, 1912.

[60] "A Letter from the South," *Labor Clarion,* March 31, 1911, in Vol. 1911-12 of the *Labor Clarion* collection in the Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley.

[61] The 1907 bond issue was for $23 million, but smaller sums had already been spent on the aqueduct. "Bindle stiffs" were itinerant laborers and hobos named for the bundles of bedding they carried on their backs. In 1908 an army of them descended on the aqueduct work camps. See pages 622-26. [Resolution adopted by the L.A. City Council, Aug. 5, 1907: copy in Supervisors Box 117, OD2433-P; Los Angeles Department of Water & Power, "The Los Angeles Aqueduct, 1913–1988: A 75th Anniversary Tribute," *Southern California Quarterly* v. 70, no. 3 (Fall, 1988), p. 339.]

[62] Resolution of the Church Federation Council," Rev. Edwin P. Ryland, President, Aug. 26, 1907, copy in Supervisors Box 114, OD1389-P.

[63] Letter from W.J. Washburn and C.D. Willard of the Municipal League to the L.A. County Board of Supervisors, Aug. 22, 1907, Supervisors Box 114, OD1388-P.

[64] *L.A. Record,* January 23, 1909, paraphrased in Clodius, p. 374.

[65] "Who Shall Decide?", *L.A. Times,* Dec. 7, 1909.

[66] "Judge M'Nutt's Recall Speech Stirs City Club," *L.A. Express,* Jan. 23, 1909.

[67] Other key Federation leaders were Mrs. Robert J. Burdette and Mrs. W.W. Stilson. During the progressive era the identification of women by their husband's first names was still prevalent, though starting to fade. [Williamson, Mrs. M. Burton, "The Civic Association as a Factor of Greater Los Angeles," *Annual Publication of the Historical Society of Southern California,* v. 8, Part 3 (1911), pp. 180, 183-85; *A Record of Twenty-Five Years of the California Federation of Women's Clubs, 1900-1925,* Vol. 1, *A Handbook for Clubwomen,* compiled by Mary S. Gibson, California Federation of Women's Clubs, 1927, pp. 7, 11-12, 34-35. Hereinafter Gibson, *A Record of Twenty-Five Years.*]

[68] Burton, p. 181. The first four cooperating groups named here were all steadfastly anti-union, but this did not prevent the city's unions from supporting many of the Civic Association's reforms.

[69] At its 1906 convention in Fresno, the state Socialist Party called for compulsory school attendance by all children until the age of 18 "so that there will be no child labor." [Haynes Papers, Box 55, p. 187; Stimson, Grace Heilman. *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,* University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1955, pp. 19, 149-50, 230, 346-47; *Union Labor News,* April 13, 1906, p. 4; "Socialists," *Fresno Evening Democrat,* Aug. 23, 1906.]

[70] Los Angeles City Council *Minutes,* Vol. 69, April 18, June 13, 27 1904; Vol. 76, Aug. 3, 17, 1908; Vol. 81, May 24, June 14, 1910; *Pacific Outlook,* Dec. 29, 1906; "Are Voters of Second Ward Represented by Clampitt?", Municipal League pamphlet reprinted in the *L.A. Express,* June 7,1907; "Barmaids Must Go!", *L.A. Examiner,* Oct. 17, 1909; "Policewomen Wanted," *Municipal News,* May 15, 1912.

[71] "Girls May Not Act as Winged Mercuries Declare Councilmen," *Municipal News,* Nov. 6, 1912.

[72] Los Angeles City Council *Minutes,* Vol. 69, Aug. 1, 1904.

[73] Letter to Supervisors from the Methodist Church of Lamanda Park, June 30, 1914, Supervisors Box 110, OD647O; Letter to Supervisors from L.A. County Counsel A.J. Hill, Aug. 10, 1914, OD649O.

[74] "Mrs. Blanchard Ready to Make the Canvass," newspaper unknown, Oct. 3, 1906. Dated clipping found in Haynes Papers, Box 55, folder "Elections–1906–Los Angeles". My italics.

[75] Gibson, *A Record of Twenty-Five Years,* interleaf, pp. 34-35.

[76] Burton, "The Civic Association as a Factor of Greater Los Angeles," p. 185.

[77] "Burton, "The Civic Association as a Factor of Greater Los Angeles," p. 185; Gibson, *A Record of Twenty-Five Years,* pp. 36-37.

[78] Los Angeles City Council *Minutes,* Vol. 81, June 14, 1910; "Policewomen Wanted," *Municipal News,* May 15, 1912.

[79] "Judge M'Nutt's Recall Speech Stirs City Club," *L.A. Express,* Jan. 23, 1909.

[80] "Judge M'Nutt's Recall Speech Stirs City Club," *L.A. Express,* Jan. 23, 1909.

[81] "Special Schools Reform Truants," *Municipal News,* May 29, 1912; *L.A. Examiner,* Aug. 23, 1905; *City Council* Records, Vol. 76, p. 133.

[82] "Public Schools and the Workers," *Citizen,* Aug. 19, 1910, p. 3; "Socialist City Convention," *Common Sense,* Nov. 10, 1906; "Good Government Candidates Will Lead on the Final Fight," *L.A. Herald,* Nov. 12, 1909; "Official Count of Vote Completed," *L.A. Record,* Dec. 10, 1909; Woman's Living Wage League

open letter to influential L.A. women in spring, 1913, found in Haynes Papers, Box 221, folder "Wages–Minimum Wage."

[83] "Judge M'Nutt's Recall Speech Stirs City Club," *L.A. Express,* Jan. 23, 1909.

[84] Stimson, pp. 19, 232-33, 306; *Municipal News,* Sept. 18, 1912, p. 207; "Central Labor Council" and "Here and There," *Union Labor News,* Nov. 17, 1905, p. 4, June 22, 1906; *Citizen,* Oct. 10, 1913, p. 7, May 22, 1913, p. 7, June 19, 1915, p. 3.

[85] "Judge M'Nutt's Recall Speech Stirs City Club," *L.A. Express,* Jan. 23, 1909.

[86] Thompson, E. P., "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," p. 86.

[87] Letter from District Attorney James C. Rives to Francis Larkin, May 11, 1899, Supervisors Box 56, pp. 23-25, OD4051-C. My italics.

[88] Los Angeles City Council *Minutes,* Vol. 68, Feb. 8, 1904.

[89] Woolwine, Thomas Lee. "A Story of Law Enforcement: How the Energetic Enforcement of the Statutes Led to a Political Upheaval in Los Angeles," *World's Work,* July, 1909, p. 11829.

[90] References to "men" and "veniremen" reflect the prohibition against women jurors during this period. ["Jail Deadly to Woman Prisoner," *L.A. Herald,* July 10, 1908; "'Free Speech' the Slogan of Brave Men and Women," *Common Sense,* July 11, 1908; "Socialist Speakers Given Their Liberty," *L.A. Express,* July 21, 1908; "Restrict Area Open to Street Speakers," *L.A. Herald,* Sept. 29, 1908[

[91] Ordinance No. 20,586 (New Series), adopted by the L.A. City Council on July 15, 1910, signed by Mayor George Alexander on July 16, and posted by city clerk H.J. Lelande. Copy found in San Francisco Labor Council Records, Box 11, Folder #6 labeled "Los Angeles Correspondence in re Merchant & Manufacturers Assoc. Strike, 1910," Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley (hereinafter SFLC).

[92] "Protest of the Central Labor Council, Building Trades Council, Metal Trades Council, and Allied Printing Trades Council Against an Ordinance Passed by the City Council of Los Angeles, July 15, 1910," SFLC Carton 11, Folder #6 labeled "Los Angeles Correspondence in re Merchant & Manufacturers Assoc. Strike, 1910."

[93] Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,* p. 354.

[94] *Municipal News,* Aug. 7, 1912, Jan. 22 & 29, 1913.

3.
Structural Reform: How Progressives Changed the Rules of the Game

"The victories of the reformers must be credited in part to the changes they made in the rules of the game," Ingram says of the electoral revamping that helped progressives capture city hall in 1909.[1] His remark touches the heart of virtually all the charter reforms that progressives won with considerable éclat between the late 1890s and 1915. While at-large elections, nonpartisan primaries, a civil service, and expert commissions were crafted to make city government more lean and efficient, they had the not-so-collateral effect of helping progressives win and hold power. L.A.'s elite reformers were virtuoso opportunists, and an instrumental view of their history does them justice.

Orthodox recitals of L.A.'s structural reforms begin with the progressives' agitation for direct democracy and their planting of the initiative, referendum, and recall in the city charter in 1902. Credit for these innovations, however, has been misplaced. Organized workers and their allies, not progressives, voiced the earliest demands for direct democracy, fought for them most consistently, and finally ensured their triumph. This durable workingclass contribution to the governance of Los Angeles made it easier for progressives to bend the city charter to their own, often anti-labor, desires.

The origins of progressive structural reform lie not in the turn-of-the-century campaign for direct democracy but in the earlier charter amendments sought by Willard's League for Better City Government. As noted in Chapter 1, these included electing city council and board of education members at-large rather than by ward; running candidates for appointive offices and hired work through a merit exam; creating professional commissions; and imposing more stringent franchise terms on railways and other public services. Willard's reliance on fellow elites to carry these reforms led to their failure at the

polls in 1897, but over time they all took their place in the charter. By 1915 structural reformers had largely succeeded in their effort to make local government more efficient, professional, and, on their own behalf, more autonomous.

Tightening the Electoral Screws

"Elections," political scientist Ronald King has observed, "are state-controlled events--who can vote, when, where, how votes are aggregated, and from that, what a winner is and who wins, and who certifies the results, and how."[2] Taking this truth to heart before the turn of the 20th century, L.A.'s progressives set out to change electoral rules they believed had propped up the Southern Pacific machine and lent undue influence to wage and salaried workers. Their prime targets were large voter turnouts in workingclass areas, the city's division into wards for city council and school board elections, and the selection of candidates by party conventions.

Odd-Year Elections

Progressive reformers never believed all politics was local. In their personal ambitions and their hopes for America they saw Los Angeles as a stepping-stone to bigger things. The clearest expression of this view was the Lincoln-Roosevelt League, which took root in Los Angeles, quickly spread statewide, and helped elect Hiram Johnson governor in 1910. What L.A.'s reformers did believe was that national politics would inevitably corrupt local politics unless a one-way firewall could be built between the two. Teddy Roosevelt was widely quoted on the subject:

> "The worst evils that affect our local government arise from and are the inevitable result of the mixing up of city affairs with party politics of the nation and state. The lines upon which national parties divide have no necessary connection with the business of the city. Such connections open the way to countless schemes of public plunder and civic corruption." 3

The firewall had two elements. One was "nonpartisanship," which drew its reform cadres from disaffected Republicans and Democrats. Weakening the bond between national and local politics, it figured prominently in the candidate elections of 1906 and

1909 and the charter elections of 1902 and 1909 (see below). "Nonpartisanship" as practiced by men like Willard, Stimson, and Lissner was, however, a bit of a dodge. Their campaign organizations functioned as parties in all but name and conducted themselves far less openly and democratically than the Demipubs. Nevertheless the nonpartisan ideal struck a resonant chord with voters who had grown weary and wary of corruption in the two familiar parties.[4]

The second firewall element was the uncoupling of local elections from the national and/or state elections that took place every even-numbered year. In the 1904 charter campaign, the Municipal League persuaded voters to transfer city elections to odd-numbered years--a move, says Ingram, that "effectively sliced turnout in local contests by 50%."[5] This was not the first time, nor would it be the last, that progressives sought to restrict the franchise for the benefit of well-to-do westside voters like themselves.

The Devil in His Dens

If the devil for progressives was "Espee," his dens were the eastside wards that gave him cover and support. Here he lived among the river flats, the small manufacturing plants, the saloons, and the dangerous classes.

The city's nine voting wards had existed with only minor reconfigurations longer than the memory of Willard and his contemporaries.[6] East of Main Street on both sides of the Los Angeles River lay wards 1, 6, 7, 8, and 9 with their large concentrations of white workers, significant pockets of Mexican Americans and immigrants from Mexico, China, Japan, Italy, the Slavic countries, and the African-American South, and a scattering of small entrepreneurs and other middleclass families. To the west lay "silk-stocking" wards 2 through 5, politically dominated by owners of middling-to-large businesses and professionals.[7] It was the reformers' recurring bad dream, especially after the election of 1906, that unruly eastside toilers would forever vote machine candidates to office in re-

turn for patronage and other favors. The truth lay 90 degrees abeam, for in historian Kevin Starr's words progressives were geniuses not only at "inventing the dream" but at

Table 1.
Occupational Structure of Registered Voters by Ward, Los Angeles, 1908

	% Workingclass		% Professional &	% Manager &	%
	Blue Collar	White Collar	Semi-Professional	Proprietor	Other
Eastside Wards					
1	55	7	20	11	7
6	63	9	15	9	4
7	63	12	8	10	7
8	68	5	5	15	7
9	58	14	10	15	5
Westside Wards					
2	49	12	22	12	5
3	27	15	30	17	11
4	20	14	37	22	7
5	24	8	39	26	3

Source: Randomized sample of 1,170 names among some 80,350 listed in the 1908 Great Register of Voters, City of Los Angeles, archived at the Seaver Center, Museum of Natural History, Los Angeles. [Registers are not available for the years on either side of 1908.] The 1908 Great Register gives the address, precinct, ward, occupation and a few other demographic variables for each person. See Appendix 2 for my categorization of the most common occupations as workingclass blue, workingclass white, professional/semiprofessional, manager/proprietor, and other. From year to year voting precincts in Los Angeles changed considerably in number and location, but wards underwent only minor changes.

acting in it. The result, decades later, is that "the California of fact and the California of imagination" still "shape and reshape each other."[8]

Progressives were wrong about wards--but only half wrong. To the very limited extent that the Southern Pacific and public utilities ran a machine in Los Angeles, they ran it by fits and starts in the semi-autonomous wards where their candidates could count on workingclass votes almost by default. There was no real choice between Espee-backed Republicans and Espee-backed Democrats, though workers scorned known associates of railway magnate Henry Huntington and embraced machine councilmen who stood up to the moral reformers. When genuine alternatives surfaced in the eastside wards--the per-

ennial socialists and the labor parties of 1902 and 1906--they alarmed progressives even more than the machine did. It made sense, then, for Willard, Meyer Lissner, and their colleagues to demonize wards and praise the virtues of voting at large, that is to say, a system in which well-financed westside reform candidates might dominate every election.

Where they erred badly was in their notions of patronage and workingclass fealty to the machine. Turn-of-the-century Los Angeles had not yet become an industrial power with a large deskilled labor force. Workers *who voted*[9] tended to be skilled craftsmen in the building, railroad, brewery, metal, and other trades who did not need--and certainly did not get--the *quid pro quo* patronage ascribed to big city immigrant populations by Robert K. Merton and the sociologists, political scientists, and historians who followed in his footsteps. Workingmen of this type, Johnson says, "were much less likely to need the types of services that the ward-heeler offered, and much more likely to define their interests in less immediate terms."[10] This farsightedness was the wellspring of organized labor's demand for direct democracy and municipal ownership, described in Part 2. The following passage from Johnson offers a striking counterpoint to progressive assumptions:

> "The most notable patronage machine in the city could be found in the Ninth ward, which was the domain of E.L. Blanchard. Blanchard's reputation as a consistent supplier of jobs to his campaign workers was legendary. As one newspaper observed during the 1900 municipal elections..., [h]e has a patronage committee, and though this committee Blanchard has placed his friends in the fire and police departments, the City Hall, the Courthouses, the Southern Pacific shops, and wherever a job looked good.'"
>
> "The political practices of men like 'Czar' Blanchard and Tom Savage had a direct, detrimental impact upon many of the city's blue-collar residents. Some did find a place on the civic payroll at the behest of the wardheelers, but...[w]hen rival politicians won, they could expect the quick termination of their jobs to make way for a new round of political appointees....[M]ost eastside councilmen failed to take the union side against corporate employers or to allow unions a voice in public policy making." [11]

Distrust of ward politicians was one of the few traits that workers and reformers shared. In 1913, looking back on the era of ward voting, a *Citizen* editorial called it a time of "raw methods, of gang politics, of voters in blocks of five; the day when bosses and

heelers, many of them, were suave, large-hearted and generous, and...the supreme test of character in a politician was that he stay bought. And many there were, in that day, who stood the test."[12] At times, however, the ward politician was the one person of influence who stood between the worker and the zealot or the union hater, so while progressives despised ward-heelers uniformly and *a priori*, workers and their leaders did so more selectively and on occasion not at all.

At-Large Voting and Direct Primaries

As notorious as the ward system was another progressive bugbear: the party nominating convention. Every election year, at the start of the primary season, the city's Republicans, Democrats, Prohibitionists, and Socialists huddled with great fanfare or solemnity to name their candidates. These highly partisan but open affairs irked reformers not because their doors were left barely ajar--the progressives' own conclaves were shuttered by comparison--or because they were run by parties--there was nothing in early twentieth-century Los Angeles more partisan than a non-partisan reformer--but because the Southern Pacific was reportedly pulling the strings at both Republican and Democratic meetings. The reform-minded *Express* viewed such proceedings with disdain. "Under the old system" it recalled in the fall of 1909, "the machine-packed convention put up a man acceptable to the Southern Pacific on the republican side and a man equally acceptable to the Southern Pacific on the democratic side and graciously permitted the free and independent voters to take their choice."[13]

Reformers and nonpartisans beat a drumroll for direct primaries and at-large elections between 1897, when Willard's proposals failed, and 1908. Their first victory came in 1902; voters that year adopted a charter amendment requiring a citywide vote for each Board of Education member. Meanwhile organized labor continued to defend city council wards.[14] The issue was not a galvanizing one for unions, however, given their long exile from city hall and the disappointments they experienced at the hands of ward politicians

who campaigned as friends of labor but voted otherwise in office. (These setbacks briefly turned unions against return of the ward system after 1912.) As political outsiders they threw their energy into a tenacious struggle for proportional representation, hoping to give losing third parties a share of council seats. Their delegates on an informal 1908 charter revision committee proposed this reform while Lissner and other progressives wrote amendments embodying their two favorite electoral measures. Only the latter made it into the final draft.

Among reformers, it was Meyer Lissner who played the pivotal role in the events that followed. He was the one most concerned with power, not just as a strategist and organizer for the progressives but for his own sake. The grandson of an Old World rabbi who came to the United States in 1846, peddled and clerked in New England, caught "gold fever" in San Francisco and died there as a pawnbroker, Lissner grew up in the Bay area. He took over the pawnshop just before his fifteenth birthday and worked at it long and hard, but it clearly was not for him. Young Meyer had someone teach him watchmaking. He went into the retail jewelry business, fought with his partner, sold out, and moved to Los Angeles at the age of 26. Here he studied law. It was a sign of his ambition that he passed his bar exam within a year and formed a partnership with Edgar W. Camp, who soon went on to join the Santa Fe Railroad's law department. Most of Lissner's bile toward the Southern Pacific may have arisen from this connection to a rival carrier. Using his law office as a base camp, he began selling real estate, organized a ward Republican Club during McKinley's first campaign, and fell in with the party's emerging reform movement. Lissner made enough money in real estate to sell his law business to friends and devote himself to full-time political organizing.[15] His crowning achievements came in 1908-09 with the charter reforms that loaded the electoral dice in favor of progressives and the Good Government Organization that won them the city.

Its work nearly finished, the charter committee appeared before the city council in June, 1908. John Murray of the Central Labor Council and Lissner had little in common, especially after Lissner made known his disdain for socialists and proportional representation, but both men urged the council to schedule a freeholders' election at the earliest possible date.[16] Lissner pointed out that a failure to act promptly would prevent the state legislature from endorsing any charter revisions for two years. The head count was not on his side, however. Only four nonpartisans had been elected to the council in 1906; the other five were ward (not necessarily "machine") politicians who knew as surely as sundown that at-large elections and direct nonpartisan primaries would end their careers. As drafted by Lissner and his allies, nonpartisan primaries would replace party conventions as the sole mechanism for nominating council candidates. Rivals endorsed by at least 100 registered voters would appear on the ballot alphabetically, without party designation, and only the top two vote-getters for any office would qualify for the general election. Lacking a suicidal itch, the retro five refused to schedule a freeholders' election.[17] The Old Guard applauded, and Labor's weekly *Citizen* took note:

> "The action of the Council was especially pleasing to the *Times,* which says: 'It is a fortunate thing for Los Angeles that the attempt of a few political busybodies to force the business of charter-making at this particular time has failed. The Council has resisted the attacks of the Lissner steam roller and the Gompers big stick." [18]

It was at this moment that L.A. labor's permanent revolution in urban politics--direct democracy--gave progressives the weapon they needed to outflank the council's roadblock. Lissner and the Municipal League launched an initiative petition campaign, secured the requisite thousands of signatures by the first week of September, and forced the council to schedule a charter election for February 2, 1908.[19]

During the five-month interval the League, Lissner, and Willard hitched their formidable agitprop skills to a campaign for the two amendments that most mattered to them--citywide voting (No. 2) and nonpartisan primaries (No. 4). "[T]he function of the coun-

cilman under our present scheme is scarcely 20 per cent local, the League's monthly, *Municipal Affairs,* reasoned. "He is a general city officer of large powers, and should be elected by the whole city....Naturally the quality of the material nominated for the office will be improved. Ward politics is often petty business."[20] Only Willard or someone very much like him could have penned the last line. Its presumption was that westside blue-bloods would *ipso facto* elevate city council debates over the tawdry standard set by eastside bluecollars. As for the direct, or nonpartisan, primary, the reform journal predicted it would "restore to the people the powers that have been wrested away from them by political leaders through the medium of the party machine."[21]

Progressives tapped every resource at their disposal for the charter revision campaign. In January, 1909 the elite City Club mobilized its members on behalf of amendments 2 and 4. Willard's Municipal League and Lissner's newly minted Good Government Organization, whose members were nicknamed Goo-Goos by unsympathetic Angelenos, canvassed for them full-time.[22] Their hard work paid off in the Feb. 2 balloting, when L.A.'s voters narrowly backed at-large elections and endorsed the direct primary by a more substantial margin. Union opposition nearly killed Amendment 2, and while the Central Labor Council did endorse Amendment 4 both reforms carried largely on the strength of the heavy vote in two westside wards.[23] The charter election thus served as a perfect example of the political leverage progressives hoped to gain with their two amendments. It cleared the way for the recall of Mayor Harper, the election of Mayor Alexander, the reformers' sweep of the city council, and four years of progressive rule.

If organized labor had spoken and organized with one voice against this radical revamping of the franchise, it might not have happened. But the unions were divided. Two of their most politically influential leaders took opposing sides during the campaign, revealing the ambiguity in labor's approach to the old ward politics.[24] One of them was

Fred C. Wheeler, a socialist and longtime activist with the Carpenters. The other was Tom Fennessy, a controversial leader of Typographical Union No. 174 who had become embroiled in his local's factional strife. A few days before the election, Wheeler condemned the nonpartisan primary:

> "Our fathers fought for several years for the right to be self-governing. An amendment to be voted on next Tuesday will, if carried, deprive us of that right so far as participating in municipal affairs is concerned....If the amendment carries, only two names receiving the highest votes at the primary can go on the official ballot. The corporation candidates always have cash enough at election time to flood the city with printed matter and have their hard workers at the polls. We as workingmen cannot measure pocketbooks with them nor can we get our people to spend all day at the polls. It follows that in nine cases out of ten...the trained political workers of the capitalist parties will see to it that their candidates are the 'two highest.' Thus every minority party is disfranchised." 25

Socialists saw the direct primary as a death-knell for their electoral chances. "If the working class fails to poll its entire vote next October our candidates will not go on the second ballot," school board candidate Scott Lewis warned, "and if you vote at all at the December election you will be forced to vote for an avowed enemy of your class."[26]

Mindful of organized labor's groundbreaking use of the recall against councilman James P. Davenport in 1904, Wheeler attacked at-large voting with equal vigor. If Amendment 2 carried, he said,

> "to recall a single councilman would mean that we would have to get one-fourth of the entire number of voters in the city to sign the petition and then have an election of the entire city to get rid of him. When the unions recalled Davenport in the Sixth Ward, it was confined to that ward alone. Workingmen of Los Angeles! Your political liberties are in danger. Get to the polls next Tuesday. There are many of the proposed amendments that need killing, but be sure to kill numbers two and four." 27

The February 2 returns suggest that a majority of eastside workers took Wheeler's advice on Amendment 4--but not enough to change the outcome. A crucial minority agreed with Fennessy. That May he addressed the Central Labor Council on the new direct primary laws of the state and the city. By way of preface, echoing Willard's Chamber of Commerce, he declared that "in all matters concerning civic progress, Los Angeles is always found in the forefront." Fennessy had pinned his political hopes on the nonpar-

tisan movement. He was one of the few labor leaders to join the progressives' statewide Lincoln-Roosevelt League. During the Harper recall he had opposed the candidacy of his fellow-unionist, Wheeler, and backed George Alexander--a stand he sorely regretted the following year after the mayor signed one of the country's most draconian anti-picketing laws. Until that calamity struck, however, Fennessy had made the nonpartisan credo his own. "The Direct Primary," he told the labor council, "is certainly a body-blow which will lead to the death of the political machine." In his view the plank in the city's reform that placed it "head and shoulders" above the state law was its removal of all party names from the ballot.

Fennessy was no champion of third parties. He rejected Wheeler's protest against Amendment 4:

> "In the endorsement of this Council for this Direct Primary law, I remember there were delegates who believed it unwise to limit the candidates on the general election ballot to the two receiving the highest number of votes...It appears to me self-evident that a candidate who does not show strength sufficient to poll the first or second highest vote at the primary election, should be deemed, logically, as one who would not be the choice of the people at the general election." 28

For reformers the success of Amendments 2 and 4 had an immediate payoff in the Harper recall, the election of Mayor Alexander to a two-year term, and the progressive sweep of city council seats--all in 1909. Workingclass influence on the council, already weak, was reduced to the vanishing point. This sequence of events carried within it a great irony, for it began with an initiative that forced a charter election. The initiative process was the labor movement's gift to Los Angeles, but that did not prevent it from being used against the interests of working people. "Without the initiative we would not have the direct primary and without the direct primary we would most surely have been defeated," John R. Haynes declared shortly after the progressive triumph of December, 1909.[29]

Nonpartisan elections became a fixture in Los Angeles while at-large voting barely outlived the Progressive Era. Organized labor's support for it was never solid; it wavered

in the second decade and vanished after that. In 1925, when the citizens of Los Angeles voted themselves a new charter, they created fifteen single-member districts that differed only in name from wards.[30] They still exist today.

Writing on "The Decentralized Politics of Los Angeles" in 1964, Francis M. Carney found that district voting had prevented a city council "machine" from taking root: "The literature on the question of at-large versus district elections of city legislatures comes down softly for the view that district or ward elections tend toward diffusion of power under nonpartisanship and that at-large election under nonpartisanship offers a tempting opportunity to informal slate-making groups....So, although ward or district elections are often associated with 'machine politics' and partisanship, and although at-large election seems to go in the package with nonpartisanship, Los Angeles' system of coupling district election with nonpartisanship has contributed to a decentralized politics."[31]

Further Inroads on the Franchise

Lissner and the Municipal League sparked an upheaval in the city's voting patterns with Amendments 2 and 4 and are celebrated for those reforms. The same charter election, however, made other inroads on the franchise. It authorized the city council to separate initiatives, referenda, recalls, and charter issues from regularly scheduled elections and decide them in their own "special" elections, thereby discouraging turnout. It let the city council lump many direct democracy issues together on a single ballot; when mammoth ballots began showing up in elections, many voters simply checked off the issues they cared most about while leaving the rest blank. Finally, progressives won an amendment that shortened the public notice for elections from 60 to 10 days.

In the aggregate these charter reforms clearly depressed voter turnout. "The crucial recall election of March 1909, which gave the mayoralty of the city to the Good Government Organization, was decided by only 26,828 voters," says Ingram. "By comparison, the 1904 mayoral election had 27,292 voters and in the 1906 mayoral election 31,388

people cast their ballots. Fewer people were deciding the course of the city after direct democracy had given voters more power."[32] The figures are correct, but the inference Ingram draws from them is not. While fewer people were deciding the course of the city in *candidate* elections, infinitely more were doing so in initiative, referendum, and recall elections. Direct democracy, after all, did not exist before 1902.

Although all the preceding electoral changes had the effect if not always the conscious intention of holding potential voters at bay, some progressives endorsed the initiative and referendum in the historic charter election of 1902. Other than Haynes they did not campaign for them enthusiastically, but they did support them. This was true as well of the prolonged agitation for women's suffrage--the largest single expansion of the franchise in California's (and the nation's) history.

Women Win the Vote

The national suffrage movement began among middle-class women shortly after the end of the Civil War. During that conflict they had seen thousands of their working-class sisters and many from their own ranks take industrial jobs. As the wall between the separate spheres of women and men slowly crumbled, the demand for gender equality grew. The California movement made little progress, however, until it picked up momentum from victories in Colorado and elsewhere. In 1895 the legislature sent a suffrage amendment to the voters. Lukewarm male support, fierce opposition by the liquor lobby, and betrayal by the state's Republican leadership doomed the reform. Out of 247,454 votes cast on November 2, 1896, women's suffrage claimed only 110,355. Its strongest support came from southern California, especially Los Angeles county.[33]

Early in the new century the vote for women began to generate more enthusiasm among progressives. It also won strong support from organized labor and the Socialist Party. Frances Knacke Noel, a socialist reformer closely allied with the city's unions, did

more than anyone else to harness them to the renewed drive for women's suffrage. In March, 1909, she appeared before the Central Labor Council to deliver a blistering attack on local and state authorities who had refused to enforce the laws against child labor. "There is but one effective measure left for Organized Labor," she said, "and that is to get equal suffrage for men and women, and with a united labor vote destroy the political entrenchments of powerful labor exploiters."[34] Three weeks later the council backed a resolution presented by Noel and endorsed by the American Federation of Labor urging all union workers to demand women's enfranchisement. Noel led the city's labor movement to the forefront of the statewide fight for equal suffrage and helped keep it there for two and a half years.[35]

One weakness of the L.A. campaign, however, was the failure of most progressive women's groups to work in tandem with socialists and pro-suffrage unions. "Unfortunately the California suffragists are largely composed of society women who would rather be always voteless than join hands with wage-workers," the *Citizen* rued in 1907.[36] Dismissing these suffragists as "society women" was unfair, for most were middle-class reformers driven by a desire to change the power equation between women and men. They buttonholed, exhorted, and prodded voters to the polls with an aggressiveness rarely displayed by ladies bountiful. But the *Citizen's* basic charge hit the mark: few progressive suffragists crossed the class divide. That is the principal reason Noel persuaded the Central Labor Council to organize a Wage Earners' Suffrage League,[37] which rallied workers of both sexes behind the reform and worked closely with the Socialist Party. "The enfranchisement of women has always been an insistent demand of the Socialist," declared the party's Aug. 6, 1911 platform. "This party was an active factor in securing the submission of the 1911 [state] suffrage amendment, and for its success the full party organization is constantly enlisted."[38]

A second weakness was the uneven support male progressives gave the campaign. The statewide Lincoln-Roosevelt League, founded in Los Angeles in May, 1907, listed women's suffrage as one of its original planks but never made it an organizing priority. "[M]any male progressives felt uncomfortable with women in politics, a discomfort illustrated by the limited support the men gave to the fight for women's suffrage," Gayle Gullet has observed. "Male progressives pushed the California legislature of 1911 to pass a constitutional amendment giving women the vote so the issue would come before the male electorate; after that, male reformers generally gave women's suffrage a minimum amount of attention."[39]

Like the first weakness described above, this one was partially overcome by the emergence of a new organization--L.A.'s Political Equality League--which joined the Votes for Women Club as a spearhead for reform. Describing itself as "a men's league for woman suffrage," it set out to convince male voters in Los Angeles that "a motherless state suffers the same loss as a motherless home." Its leaders included Judge Waldo York, T.E. Gibbon, Lee C. Gates, Katherine Edson, John R. Haynes, Mrs. R.L. Craig, Mrs. Shelly Tolhurst, and other notable progressives.[40] The league, believing it needed to counteract a likely negative vote in San Francisco and Alameda County, threw its energies into hundreds of public meetings, handed out "Votes for Women" buttons and banners throughout the city, lobbied the leaders of civic, professional, religious, and business organizations, and cultivated the California press. It also distributed nearly 100,000 leaflets and over 60,000 pamphlets ranging from 8 to 20 pages each in 1911.[41] Other suffrage groups, predominantly socialist, canvassed door-to-door, staged plays, and put up billboards and electric signs. One imaginative group rained leaflets down on Chutes amusement park from a balloon 2,000 feet aloft.[42]

Lending credence to the suffrage organizations were the demonstrated political com-

petence of reformers like Noel, Edson, Caroline Severance, and Mary Gibson, and the growing participation of women in the local labor force. "The old idea that the sphere of woman is in the home is being exploded by conditions...," the *Union Labor News* declared in 1906. "Not only is woman a factor in industry, but she is destined to become a still greater factor. She is being used not only to supplant men in many branches of industry, but new fields are being opened up where she is surely gaining control."[43] Noel constantly reminded male unionists about this long-range trend dating back to the Civil War. "Whatever prejudice men may have against women as wage earners," she told the 1910 state labor federation meeting in Los Angeles, "it must be admitted that the overwhelming number of women employed in the labor market is conclusive evidence that women wage earners are here to stay, and must therefore be reckoned with as a permanent condition which men of labor can no longer ignore."[44] In the five or six years leading up to the 1911 suffrage vote, the Central Labor Council and its unions set out to organize women in the garment, printing, hospitality, telephone, cannery, clerical, garment, and laundry trades.[45] Its efforts met with spotty success, but a Rubicon had been crossed. With many L.A. homes now requiring two incomes, and with unions traditionally demanding equal pay for equal work, organized male workers could no longer defend the old political division of labor. The election results suggest that many of their non-union counterparts felt the same way.

On October 10, 1911, women's suffrage met its expected rebuff in San Francisco and barely squeaked by with a 3,587-vote lead statewide. Well over half that winning margin came from Los Angeles, where the balloting was 15,000 for, 13,000 against despite the opposition of the *Times*, the M&M, and other business groups.[46] The amendment fared best on the workingclass east side. "[P]recincts that gave women the largest majorities, as a rule, were those where the working men make their homes," reported the *L.A. Tribune*.

Heavily populated by union families, the Labor Temple's precinct voted for it almost two to one. The wealthy west side, where most progressives lived, opposed suffrage.[47]

Progressive men did *not* carry the day for women's suffrage--progressive and workingclass women, by organizing, and union workers, by voting, did. "Privately [Gov.] Johnson agonized over the suffrage victory," says Gullet. "'The more I think of the situation with regard to woman's suffrage,' he wrote political activist Meyer Lissner, 'the more I think [this is]...something that will ultimately destroy us.' No doubt Johnson meant that women's enfranchisement would destroy the popularity of progressivism among male voters, although he might also have feared that it would destroy male hegemony in politics."[48]

Johnson was likely alarmed by the exuberance with which newly franchised women rushed into the electoral arena. Between October 10 and November 9, 1911, 81,843 of them registered to vote in Los Angeles. They were signed up exclusively by volunteer registrars--the city lacking the funds to do so.[49] This process took place at a fateful moment, shortly before that year's mayoral elections. Women who registered could not participate in the October 31 primary but were eligible to vote in the December 5 general election.

Socialist candidate Job Harriman, backed by his party and organized labor, shocked the city when he handily won the primary election over four other candidates, outpolling his nearest rival, Mayor George Alexander, by 19,816 to 16,712 votes.[50] During the next five weeks women entered the voting lists. That epochal fact, superimposed on furious organizing by progressives and the Old Guard for Alexander and by labor and the socialists for Harriman, tripled the turnout for the general election. On December 5 Alexander defeated Harriman by 85,741 to 51,776 votes.[51]

Many contemporary observers and most historians of the next 75 years pinned this

remarkable turnabout on confessions that two iron worker leaders, John and James McNamara, gave just before the election to the sensational 1910 bombing of the *L.A. Times*. This explanation eventually ran aground on statistical evidence that few Harriman supporters had abandoned him after the confessions. In 1988, Joseph Kraft offered a new theory: *women* had voted against Harriman in great enough numbers to cost him the election.[52] But this view, too, was problematic. Old Guard and Progressive candidates received 56% of the votes in the primary and 62% of the votes in the general election. Kraft estimated that 55% of the voters in December 5 were women. In "Gender and Ideology: The Socialist Party and the Women's Vote in the 1911 Los Angeles Mayoral Election," James Ingram and Katherine Underwood ask the pertinent question: "If the women's share of the vote increased by 55%, and they voted for Alexander as Kraft implies, then why does the anti-Harriman vote only increase by 6%?"[53]

The answer, say Ingram and Underwood, is that women did *not* cast their ballots disproportionately for Alexander. We have already seen one piece of evidence: during the suffrage fight, progressive and labor-socialist women had campaigned largely from separate camps. That division did not fade away after October 10. While most members of the Votes for Women Club favored Alexander, women in the Wage Earners' Suffrage League almost certainly voted for Harriman.[54] "The reality of the post-suffrage movement did not support...a positive assessment of female unity," observed Sherry Katz in "Dual Commitments," her 1992 UCLA dissertation. "Because of the intense conflict among women during the Los Angeles municipal campaign, Helen Bary, a socialist/labor sympathizer, concluded that the 'dream of solidarity among women...[was] destined to be relegated to the land of dreams.'"[55]

Rather than rely on political conjecture, however, Ingram and Underwood ran a series of multivariate ecological regressions on precinct data from the 1911 election and the

U.S. population censuses of 1900, 1910, and 1920. They found that while the Harriman vote dwindled as the number of women in a precinct rose, regressions for gender, nativity, party, and class make it clear "that gender exercises no independent influence on the 1911 vote....The voting patterns look the same with women voting as without."[56]

Ingram and Underwood do not state in any detail how they determined "class," which ranks second only to party membership as a predictor of a precinct's vote. Their tables offer clues, however. Listed as key variables are homeownership, tenancy, illiteracy, and schooling.[57] If these in combination are meant to convey class, they are poor indicators indeed. L.A.'s 1908 Great Register of Voters gives the occupation of every registrant and would be a far better guide to the class of male voters. Since most women lived in households with men, a reasonable set of calculations could have been worked out for the class of women in a given precinct. Manuscript censuses might also have provided occupational data.

As it stands, the Ingram/Underwood analysis does not prove gender was a nullity in 1911. "Approximately 70,000 women voted in the Los Angeles mayoral election, casting a slightly greater number of ballots than men," said Katz. "The *California Social-Democrat* believed that approximately 36,500 of Harriman's 51,500 votes [also an approximation] were cast by women, while the *New York Call* set that figure at 31,500. If these figures are accurate between 45 and 52 percent of all women who cast their ballots voted for Harriman, while he secured only 39 percent of the vote overall." Katz concluded that the question of women's vote for or against Harriman in 1911 "remains unsolved."[58]

What did organized workers think had happened? Few publicly blamed the McNamara confessions. Three days after the election the city's labor newspaper expressed what was probably a workingclass consensus: "The *Citizen* does not deny that the women

played the deciding part in the election," it said, "but it does not regret its advocacy of women's suffrage. That woman used her vote against those who gave it to her is not nearly as important as the fact that she has that which is rightfully hers."[59] There was petulance and patronization in this remark (the suffrage was something women fought for and earned, not a gift men gave them), but it affirmed the democratic sea-change that had swept across Los Angeles and California.

* * * * * * *

Women's suffrage aside, the net effect of the progressive electoral intervention was to nudge political power toward the best organized, most moneyed classes who could lobby city hall, set up precinct operations, wage citywide campaigns, and push voters through the ever more balky election turnstiles. Organized labor met some of these requirements; middle- and upper-class progressives met them all. Faced with the loss of ward-based leverage and the chance to participate in most runoff elections, the workingclass and its parties bore the brunt of these "class-free," "non-partisan" reforms. Only their considerable resilience, rooted in the vision they had of a more democratic Los Angeles, kept them enthusiastically hammering away at the forge of citybuilding.

The Civil Service

A weekly *Citizen* correspondent for Shinglers Union No. 2 surveyed "progressive" Los Angeles in May, 1912 drew a hard lesson:

> "The American working class...has been taught that there [are] no class distinctions in this country. This thing has been drilled into the workers from infancy till it has become an indisputable fact to most of them. The majority of the working class still holds this opinion in spite of the everyday glaring demonstrations of class rule in our courts and legislative bodies."

Pointedly, he gave this example:

> "Civil service reform got the united support of the class. What did the class get? Can you answer?" 60

Whatever their class-consciousness, the city's public workers could have answered without hesitation, for L.A's decade-old civil service had intruded on their lives more sharply than any other progressive reform. Their opinion of it was mixed. By making it

harder for city departments to hire and fire employees at will, based largely on favoritism, the civil service had brought them an unprecedented degree of job security. But it was also the golden cage in which clockwork discipline increasingly ruled their labor and weakened the small leverage they once possessed to negotiate wages, hours, and working conditions. Moreover, in progressive hands, civil service rules had taken on a magical now-you-see-it, now-you-don't character: they were forcefully applied when it was opportune to do so, set aside or ignored when it was not. The distinction had everything to do with the reformers' quest both to rationalize the city workforce in the name of efficiency and to lower its cost in the name of municipal growth.

Like the 1902 direct democracy amendments, the civil service system adopted by voters that same year had a braided origin which most historians have reduced to a single progressive strand. Willard's League for Better City Government campaigned for a civil service as an anti-machine measure in 1896, but so did the Christian Socialist Union Reform League in 1898 and the Union Labor Party (ULP) in 1902. Public employment had been thoroughly corrupted by the spoils system, ULP leaders declared. Organized workers, who benefited far less from patronage than is generally assumed, were just as determined as progressives to rid municipal offices of favoritism and they voted accordingly in the 1902 charter election.[61]

It was the Municipal League, however, that drove the campaign for civil service into its final stages. "Whatever you do," Willard's new organization urged Angelenos, "vote for...Amendment 15--Civil Service Reform." They did so lopsidedly, passing the amendment by a 4 to 1 majority. Under its terms, centralized personnel administration run by an unpaid five-member appointed board made its first appearance in Los Angeles. City jobs were meticulously subdivided and classified. Successful applicants had to score well in competitive exams and survive a six-month probationary trial. "Except for certain specified exempt positions including elected officers, commissioners, employees of the

Board of Education and attorneys, unskilled laborers employed by the day and physicians, all employees of the city were placed under civil service," reported Burton L. Hunter, a municipal historian of the 1930s. Policemen, policewomen, and firemen were also excluded, but in a 1904 follow-up election voters brought all public safety and unskilled labor jobs into the system.[62]

John R. Haynes sat on the Board of Civil Service Commissioners from its creation in 1902 to 1915 and served as its president for several of those years. He outdid even Willard and Lissner in his zeal for impartial, efficient labor relations in city departments. During his tenure the board's successful 1906-07 effort to exempt aqueduct workers from civil service protection had dire consequences that Haynes may not have foreseen, among them the chronic underpayment, arbitrary firings, and blacklisting of laborers, miners, and mechanics along the big ditch, their diet of stale and often rotten food at commissaries run for profit by the city's contractor, and the resulting unwillingness of some building trades unions and workers to support *any* public ownership proposal while progressives held power. Haynes was, after organized labor, the most resolute defender of public ownership in Los Angeles; the aqueduct exemption may have haunted him once he realized its political cost. (This chain of events is closely examined in Chapter 11.)

Installing civil service in the charter was only a first step toward a new system of municipal labor relations. More notable than the reform itself was the way progressives at city hall and the various city departments chose to enforce, amend, or ignore it. They made it abundantly clear, for example, that guaranteeing public workers a decent standard of living was *not* one of the goals they wished to pursue through the civil service.

The Attack on Wages

An early sign of their intentions surfaced in 1907, when the city council's four nonpartisans backed an attempt by the Public Works Board to cut street sweepers' wages from $2.25 to $2.00 a day; they also denounced state legislation that would set a $3.00

wage floor under publicly employed day laborers. Hobnobbing in a kind of rich man's club with the Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association, the Public Works commissioners and nonpartisans recoiled almost viscerally against the idea of a public minimum wage in the classified civil service. A wealthy nonpartisan on the council, Niles Pease, called the sweepers' wage "exorbitant."[63]

Stiff resistance from "Bloody 'Ate'" (eighth-ward) councilman Barney Healy and his four old-guard colleagues thwarted the 1907 wage cuts, but the Public Works Board pursued them again a year later. Its president, D.K. Edwards, told the council that since he was paying aqueduct workers only $2.00 a day "under conditions much more severe than in Los Angeles, and where the expense of living is higher," it made no sense for downtown laborers to earn 25 cents more. This line of reasoning, with its foretaste of 1990s-style "globalization", failed to impress the city's organized workers. From the eastside, in union meetings, editorials, and petitions, arose a chorus of protest that had its intended effect. Seventh-ward councilman Henry Lyons joined Healy in damning the cuts. "It gets on my nerves when some members of the council bring up this matter and always speak of reducing the poor man's salary--the $2 or $3 a day man," said Lyons. "Why don't they lower the salaries of the $150 and $200 a month men if they are going to lower any at all?" [64]

This time not even the nonpartisans found it prudent to vote with the Public Works Board. Under the reform regimes of 1909-13, however, the council exerted a steady downward pressure on the income of city employees. This pressure continued through 1913-15 after progressives and Old Guard Republicans banded together in a Municipal Conference to oppose a labor-socialist electoral threat; the Conference lost the mayoralty in June, 1913 but elected four of its council candidates. They often commanded a council majority.

It was during this period of self-inflicted progressive decline that the episode most

telltale of both reformers' and Old Guard attitudes toward workers occurred. In January, 1914, a Central Labor Council delegation visited the city council's finance committee to seek a union or 'living" wage scale for all city employees. Its petition outraged city council president Frederick J. Whiffen, one of the successful Municipal Conference candidates. When Whiffen declared that he would not let "outsiders" dictate to the council, the lone socialist lawmaker, Fred Wheeler, upbraided him. "I must take exception to the president's remarks," he said. "We are dictated to a thousand times a day. If these men, who represent more people than all the civic bodies put together, have not the right to come to this council and ask for what they want and what they deem right without being charged with "dictating," I am at a loss to understand why."[65]

Reneging on Job Security

Holding down wages in city departments and bureaus created a political dynamic that reinforced the open shop movement's longstanding effort to suppress wages in private industry. So did the progressive retreat from the job security promised by civil service reform. Employment safeguards came under concerted fire by departmental managers in 1911. In language dear to the heart of L.A.'s progressives, George H. Dunlop noted that proposed charter amendment No. 3 would give city department heads a "more efficient" way to fire public workers. Progressives rallied the public behind the measure in early 1911, and on March 6 voters approved it.[66]

Under charter amendment No. 3 department heads could and did dismiss any city employee who failed the test of efficiency or whom they merely disliked. Previously, to rid themselves of unwanted workers, managers had to win the consent of the Civil Service Commission. Amendment No. 3 shifted the onus to the fired employees: they now had to beg the commission to revoke their dismissals. A number of city workers were let go soon after March 6. When deputy city attorney Myron Westover had them reinstated with back pay on the grounds that they were hired under an implied contract of employ-

ment whose terms predated Amendment No. 3, he was overruled by his boss, city attorney John Shenk.[67] Two years later progressives named Shenk their mayoral candidate.

The right to fire "unworthy" public workers made strange bedfellows. Almost alone among progressives Haynes upheld the rights of labor, but his hostility to patronage led him to defend Amendment No. 3 at least as firmly as labor foes like Shenk. In February, 1913, as the Civil Service Commission's top officer, he reminded a skeptical city council that the power to fire employees was a feature of every civil service in the country.[68]

The Workingclass Approach to Civil Service

The contrast between the Los Angeles city and county civil service regimens could not have been more sharply drawn. While unions endorsed the former in 1902--a step they later rued--they actively helped draft and campaign for the county system ten years later. W.A. Engle of Musicians Local 47 and A.M. Salyer, a Socialist Party veteran, worked in tandem on that year's county charter-writing board. Their intent was twofold: to create an anti-patronage civil service that both unions and progressives could support, and to embed it in a charter whose labor safeguards could not possibly have flowed from a progressive pen.

"The civil service provisions," reported the *Citizen*, "were advocated so that the county government might be freed from the pernicious spoils system which had previously prevailed and by which the worker always got the worst of it." The labor provisions brought to fruition wage, hour, and workrule reforms which L.A. unions had sought for 20 years only to see them nipped in the bud by Old Guard and progressive regimes alike. Section 45 barred county managers from discriminating on the basis of sex in hiring or pay; Section 46 mandated the eight-hour day for "mechanics and others engaged in manual labor"; Section 47 ordered the Board of Supervisors to afford all employees in the classified civil service an income "at least equal to the prevailing salary or wage for the same quality of service rendered to private persons"; Section 48 guaranteed workers em-

ployed by the county for at least one year an annual two-week vacation; Section 49 prohibited unpaid forced labor--in other words chain gangs--as a penalty for the commission of public offenses. On Nov. 5, 1912, Angelenos adopted the new county charter, including its civil service and labor reforms, by a vote of 37,350 to 29,102. [69]

Paradox of "The Best Men"

From the earliest days of the twentieth century Willard and his reform colleagues denounced the succession of dull or corrupt politicians who had stunted L.A.'s development, and they held out a vision of a city run by its "best men"--namely themselves. The "best men" presumption wove through contemporary accounts as notably as its twin, "progressive," and it is a marvel that Willard et. al. did not notice or care how self-congratulatory it was.[70] Nonpartisanship, to them, meant the elevation of the city's noblest manhood to public office no matter if the aspirant was "a republican or a democrat, a Methodist or a Presbyterian, an Elk or an Odd Fellow, a banker or a baker." [71]

Why had the best men not stepped forward as civic leaders by the turn of the century, except in the Free Harbor fight? Reformers proposed a threefold answer: the spoils system, ward voting, and party nominating conventions. The spoils system awarded public offices to friends and political allies regardless of their abilities. Ward voting gave undue weight to eastside workingclass voters who allegedly did the bidding of the Southern Pacific. Party conventions narrowed voters' choices to Republican and Democratic candidates chosen by that selfsame railroad machine. Small wonder, explained the *L.A. Examiner*, "that the best men, who under other conditions would be willing to serve the public, remain aloof and refuse to lower their manhood by seeking office at such great cost to their self-respect."[72]

Between 1902 and 1909 progressives swept aside these obstacles to their rightful place in the firmament by winning support for three structural reforms. The first of these, the civil service, replaced sinecures for friends and allies with supposedly objective ex-

ams testing the qualifications of public job-seekers. The second and third reforms tipped the electoral scales westward and upward in class, assuring a greater flow of progressive candidates into city offices.

The civil service was only seven years old when, on Jan. 2, 1910, one of the best of the best men stepped forward to condemn it root and branch. John D. Works, a product of the L.A. Chamber of Commerce, top officer of the prestigious City Club, head of the blue-ribbon committee that named George Alexander to run his recall race against Mayor Harper, and victorious candidate in the progressives' December, 1909 sweep of city council seats, had been elected president of the new council only moments before he rose to speak. Revered by reformers, he lashed out against their most prized institution. "This city has been under misrule for many years," he said. "The offices are filled with employes selected by favor, and often at the behest of a corrupt and unprincipled political machine, and not upon their merits or qualifications for the positions..."

Were these not the very evils the civil service was supposed to prevent? Its governing board featured a Who's Who list of progressive notables that included John R. Haynes, Free Harbor veteran W.A. Spalding, and at least three charter members of the 1906 nonpartisan movement. But apparently they had allowed the Old Guard to infiltrate the Civil Service Commission's lower echelons, where its agents were now entrenched. President Works had them in mind:

> "It might be reasonably have been expected that the Civil Service Commission would supply better men, and insure better service, in the conduct of the city's affairs. But, like every other department of the city, it has, in great part, been the product of the political machine, and under its influence.
>
> "It has not been a success, and never will be until it is entirely free from such influences and is composed of men who will conduct the examinations it is called upon to make without fear or favor, and with the sole object of securing as competent and reliable employes for the city as they would if selecting men to conduct their own business." 73

Works had stumbled on *the* classic progressive conundrum. It went something like this: To thrive, Los Angeles had to be managed by its best men. That this did not happen

was the fault of a political system based on spoils. *Only a civil service, properly administered, could guarantee a government of the best men.* But in Los Angeles the institution had failed its mission because it was poorly staffed and riddled with mediocrity. *Only a government of the best men could save the civil service.*

Does this reasoning resemble a maze with no exit, a cat chasing its tail? It defines a riddle the progressives created but could not solve. Neither free market ideologues like Otis nor workingclass activists like Curly Grow, Fred Wheeler, and W.A. Engle trapped themselves in such circular logic. They were straightforward class warriors who had no illusion that the "best men" could create the best possible government and freeze it in time. L.A.'s progressives, on the other hand, believed they and the institutions they created could still the class conflict that raged around them. "From above come the problems of predatory wealth," they declared. "From below come the problems of poverty and of pigheaded and brutish criminality."[74] The progressives imagined they were the quiet eye of the storm. It was a clever trick they played on themselves.

Other Structural Reforms

Two further reforms, one successful, the other failed, are worth noting for what they tell us about the progressive view of local government.

Public Utilities Commission

In 1909 the Municipal League drafted an ordinance creating a Public Utilities Commission, or Board, to regulate the rates and practices of electric railways, gas, electric, and telephone companies, and other publicly franchised utilities. This draft was presented to the city council. Although nonpartisans held four of the council's nine seats, it rejected the measure. The League promptly drummed up thousands of signatures on an initiative petition. Voters, fed up with high gas rates and poor railway service, approved the Public Utilities Commission on December 7.[75]

During the citywide election campaign that fall the Good Government Organization

joined the League in building support for the initiative. Its president, Meyer Lissner, was also chief architect of Mayor Alexander's re-election. Alexander rewarded him by naming him chair of the new three-member utilities commission. Obeying a progressive impulse that was still novel in 1909 but is pro forma now, Lissner hired a panel of utility experts to study the city's utilities and make recommendations. The experts persuaded Lissner that electric and telephone rates were too low, and the commission urged the city council to raise them. This seemingly modest step opened a breach in progressive ranks that never quite healed. Facing a public outcry against the proposed increases, the council refused to adopt them. When Mayor Alexander not only backed the council's position but called for city distribution of the aqueduct's hydropower as well, Lissner and his two Public Utilities Commission colleagues resigned. Other progressives, most notably Willard, refused to desert the mayor and continued to view the commission as a reform "of great value to the city."[76]

A year after the resignations Willard and the Municipal League led a movement to force electric railways to show their books to the commission's investigators. They prevailed on the city council to pass the following ordinance:

> "Section 1.–The Board of Public Utilities shall fix all fares to be charged by street and interurban railway cars within the city limits, during July, 1912, and in April every third year thereafter.
>
> "Section 2.–Street and interurban railway corporations must furnish to Board of Public Utilities in April, 1912, and in January every succeeding year, a statement under oath of amount received for conveyance of passengers within the city limits during the year preceding, and verified statement of expenses, together with inventory of franchises, rolling stock, tracks, wires, poles, and all other equipment used for passenger traffic, showing actual cost and present cash value of such property, and a statement of stock and bond issues." [77]

Having lost the fight at city hall, the railways waged a successful referendum drive that froze the ordinance and left its ultimate fate in the hands of the voters. "The street car companies do not object to the city officials looking into their books now or at any time," reported the *Municipal News*, "but what the companies do object to is the *furnishing to the city of information from the books that can be used for no other purpose than to re-*

duce rates."[78] It is highly unlikely that the railways would ever willingly have bared their financial innards to public scrutiny, but they had a point about rates. According to their franchises, the maximum fare they could charge most passengers within city limits was five cents. Therefore the only adjustments the Public Utilities Commission might make would be *downward* ones.

Willard brushed this argument aside. "This form of business enterprise," he said, "enjoys privileges granted by the public that are of great value--the right to use public streets and the power to condemn property when needed. It is a quasi-public concern; its behavior is subject to regulation by public authority and its affairs should be open to inspection."[79] Most Angelenos agreed. On May 28, 1912--a day when more direct democracy issues ran the gauntlet of public opinion than ever before in Los Angeles--they upheld the ordinance by a vote of 21,085 to 11,662.[80]

No radical transformation of Henry Huntington's electric railways or their rates followed this election. The misnamed "Street Car Fare Ordinance" went as far as most progressives were willing to go toward reforming the capitalist market. It epitomized their faith in regulation while distancing them both from labor activists and socialists and from men like Haines W. Reed and John R. Haynes on their own left wing, all of whom favored municipal ownership over regulatory schemes that worked to protect the regulated when they worked at all.

Commission Government

If, along with a lizard's leg the three witches of *Macbeth* had thrown at-large voting, nonpartisanship, and the "best men" into their pot, they might have conjured up not Shakespeare's bloody child but commission government. Progressives pursued this reform in one shape or another from the 1890s to 1913, when they gave up the chase. Some of its appeal stemmed from the fact that it encapsulated previous reforms while giving them a gloss of businesslike efficiency. It institutionalized the best-men motif in five to

nine nonpartisan commissioners, each elected at-large to the city council, each controlling a city department or function, each backed up by a staff of experts. In one version the mayor was simply the commissioner charged with assigning his colleagues their tasks; in another version the mayor's office disappeared. The undemocratic features of the plan attracted some Angelenos but repelled others. By eliminating several elective offices while merging executive and legislative functions in a few commissioners, it centralized power and insulated it to some extent from the citizenry.

"Proposals for municipal reform provoked heated debate," says Amy Bridges, writing specifically of western cities at the start of the 20th century. "The dominant themes of reformers' arguments were the substitution of business for politics, government by virtuous citizens, and the promise that reformed local government would be more conducive to municipal growth. Opponents of reform saw in commissions and city managers autocratic arrogations of power and argued for representation and democracy in local government."[81]

Through his League for Better City Government, Willard drafted a charter amendment embodying a strong-executive plan that pared the number of elective city offices and authorized the mayor to set up administrative boards and commissions. It was submitted to the voters in 1897 and failed to pass.[82] Ten years later an advisory committee charged by Mayor Harper with framing a more modern charter studied the pioneering commission governments of Des Moines and Galveston.[83] Nothing came of it, but the experience of the two cities continued to fascinate L.A.'s reformers. Galveston had adopted its new municipal structure in 1901, hoping it would speed its recovery from a disastrous tidal wave the year before. Des Moines was the first Iowa city to adopt a model city charter drafted by the state legislature; it vested executive and legislative capacities in five commissioners but hedged their power by granting the electorate direct democracy.

Meyer Lissner praised both plans after the progressive electoral sweep of 1909, noting that a similar reform in Los Angeles would do away with the city clerk, tax collector, and other elected offices.[84]

Desultory talk finally turned to action in the winter of 1912, when the city council named a "committee of representative citizens" to revise the charter along the lines of commission government. Among the groups it first asked to send delegates were Lissner's Good Government Organization (Goo-Goos), the Realty Board, Chamber of Commerce, Municipal League, Women's Progressive League, City Club, Women's City Club, Socialist Party, and Central Labor Council. When the invitations went out at the end of February, however, the last two organizations had been dropped from the list. *Mirabile dictu*--progressive councilman Jerry Andrews objected to their inclusion on the grounds that "politics" should not enter into the drafting of a charter!

As the *Citizen* noted with no little sarcasm, "representatives of the so-called Good Government League and Municipal League, two of the most bitter partisan political organizations that ever held forth in any city in America," were warmly welcomed onto the citizens' committee.[85] The council instructed it to rough out a plan for commission government, expecting that an elected board of freeholders would put the final touches on this work and the voters would endorse it by the end of the year.

Andrews and his colleagues failed to reckon with the consequences of excluding union representatives, however. Denounced by organized labor for their manifest bias, they reluctantly appointed Carpenters Local No. 158 president Fred C. Wheeler to the committee in March. Wheeler not only agitated for labor planks at its meetings but led all other candidates in balloting for the board of freeholders that summer, edging out Haynes, Lissner, and other progressives.[86] The Labor Council, still unwilling to trust the freeholders, named its own committee to work with the socialists in a campaign either to send

an acceptable draft charter to the voters or to defeat it at the polls.[87]

What would it have taken to satisfy the city's unions? Not commission government. They were neither avidly for it nor against it. If its concentration of authority alarmed them, the existing progressive mayor and council form of government alarmed them at least as much. Wheeler, with outside support from socialists and the Labor Council, did manage to kill the nonpartisan requirement for commissioners and raise their number from five to seven.[88] But in a key freeholders' debate Wheeler lost the amendment closest to the heart of union activists and socialists--the *sine qua non* of their support for the new charter. They called it proportional representation. (Chapters 8 and 11 deal at length with labor's tenacious struggle for proportional representation in the allotting of city council seats.) Under this electoral system each party running candidates in a city election would claim the number of council seats that most nearly matched their share of the total vote. "Committees representing the Socialists and Union Labor Political Club...repeatedly appeared before the charter framers, asking that a clause declaring for proportional representation be incorporated," reported the *Citizen.* "This the framers did not do." Lissner led a successful attack against the reform, fearing it would place socialists on the council.[89]

An unusual aspect of the ensuing election was Fred Wheeler's support for the draft charter. Though the other freeholders had snubbed his bid for proportional voting, he was impressed by their willingness to strengthen the city's intervention in the market, especially through the right to run a variety of municipal enterprises if so instructed by the voters. The charter was "admittedly far from perfect when considered from the workingman's point of view," he said, but it conferred a broad range of power on the city. "We got absolutely everything we asked for in that direction, even to the right of the city to invade that holy of holies of the plutocrats, the banking business....When representatives

of the powers that be in Los Angeles calmly sit in their seats and vote to permit the city to engage in any business that a private individual, firm or corporation may transact, it is no exaggeration to sat that 'the world do move'." Wheeler and his alternate on the board of freeholders, Typographical No. 174 president Ralph Criswell, urged their friends in the Union Labor Political Club to back the charter for what it contained, not oppose it for what it lacked. But the defeat of proportional representation was a pill too bitter to swallow. Neither the club nor the Central Labor Council endorsed the charter.[90]

On election day, December 3, 1912, Angelenos rejected the new charter by a vote of more than two to one. Hostility to the concentration of power in a small body of commissioners clearly weighed on voters' minds, but it was not the sole reason for the landslide defeat. Labor leaders and socialists claimed that the freeholders' refusal to support proportional representation had doomed the charter. Workers had voted with their feet, declared Rev. Thomas W. Williams. "Had the Meyer Lissner crowd listened to the demand of the socialists and made provisions for proportional representation, there is not a doubt but that the charter would have carried."[91]

Notes

[1] Ingram, James W. III. "Building the Municipal State: Coalitions and Infrastructure Development in Los Angeles, 1889–1939," paper prepared for delivery at 1994 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, New York City, p. 25.

[2] King, Ronald, remarks based on his paper, "The Most Corrupt Election: Louisiana in 1876," presented at The Social Science History Association, 24th annual Meeting, Fort Worth, TX, Nov. 12, 1999.

[3] Quoted in "Non-Partisan Campaign Opens: Full Ticket to Be Named," *Los Angeles Express,* July 10, 1906.

[4] Nonpartisanship was not exclusively a progressive project. During the mid-1890s, when L.A. unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, at least eight of them repudiated a close association with the Democrats and rated candidates on their individual, not party, credentials. It is interesting to note that one of the city's most radical unions, the Carpenters, helped lead this movement. Partisanship could be rejected both from the right (by progressives) and the left (by labor). See Stimson, Grace Heilman. *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,* University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1955, p. 151.

[5] City Council Records, Vol. 69, Sept. 26, Oct. 3, 1904, pp. 497 and 520; Ingram, "Building the Municipal State," p. 25.

[6] The 1889 charter increased the number of wards from 5 to 9, each electing a city council member. (Newmark, *Sixty Years,* p. 587; Hunter, *Municipal Organization,* p. 75)

[7] In a November, 1906 speech, says Daniel Johnson, labor's mayoral candidate Stanley B. Wilson told an 8th ward crowd, "Oh the East is East; and the West is West, and never the twain shall meet." He was referring to the division between the affluent westside wards and the predominately working class wards east of Main street. "There were significant differences both in the pragmatic interests of these classes and, at a more subtle level, how they understood and rationalized these interests in political rhetoric," Johnson adds. "These differences would, again and again, become an important issue in determining the outcome of municipal elections in Los Angeles from 1903 to 1909." [Johnson, Daniel J., "'And Never the Twain Shall Meet': Working Class Politics in Los Angeles, 1903–1909," unpublished paper presented at the 19th Annual Conference of the Southwest Labor Studies Association, April 17, 1993, pp. 1-5.]

[8] Starr, Kevin, *Inventing the Dream: California Through the Progressive Era,* Oxford University Press, New York, 1986 (paperback), p. vii.

[9] Most immigrants could not vote and women did not get the vote in California until 1911.

[10] Johnson, "'And Never the Twain Shall Meet'," pp. 2-3.

[11] Johnson, Daniel J. "Down in 'De Bloody Ate': Ward Politicians and Working-Class Voters in Progressive-Era Los Angeles," unpublished paper presented at a UCLA colloquium, April 3, 1997, pp. 6, 9-10, 12; *Los Angeles Times,* Nov. 26, 1900.

[12] *Citizen,* Feb. 21, 1913, p. 4.

[13] *L.A. Express,* "S.P. Plans to Ignore Amendments," Sept. 3, 1909.

[14] See, for example, *L.A. Express,* "Non-Partisan Platform," Sept. 28, 1906 and *Citizen* news item on charter revision, Feb. 14, 1908, p. 5.

[15] Lissner, Meyer, "How I Got Along," *California Outlook*, Vol. 14, No. 10, March 1, 1913, pp. 7-8.

[16] Only an elected body of freeholders (property owners) could legally bring charter amendments to a popular vote. Other members of the charter committee were Thomas Fennessy of Typographical Union No. 174, John R. Haynes, and delegates from the Chamber of Commerce, L.A. Bar Association, and Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association. [Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, p. 323]

[17] City Council Records, Vol. 76, pp. 149, 191, 198-99, 240; *Citizen,* July 17, 1908, p. 1; *Municipal Affairs* (monthly journal of the Municipal League), Vol. 4, No. 1 (Jan. 1909), pp. 1-2; Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, p. 323;

[18] *Citizen,* July 17, 1908, p. 1.

[19] City Council Records, Vol. 76, pp. 414, 499-500; *Municipal Affairs*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Jan. 1909), p. 1.

[20] *Municipal Affairs,* Vol. 4, No. 1 (Jan. 1909), pp. 1, 5.

[21] *Municipal Affairs,* Vol. 4, No. 1 (Jan. 1909), p. 6.

[22] *L.A. Express,* Jan. 16, 1909; Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,,* p. 323.

[23] *L.A. Times,* "Ten Are Carried and Twenty-One Lost," Feb. 4, 1909. The vote for at-large elections was 8,598 to 7,232 and for the direct primary, 9,208 to 6,547. See also Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,,* p. 323.

[24] Johnson says voters in bluecollar precincts east of Main Street showed "considerable resistance" to at-large elections. That their hostility was not even greater he attributes to the influence of organized labor and the city's principal working-class newspaper, the *Record*, "both of whom viewed the amendments as a justifiable attempt to erode the rule of the ward heeler." [Johnson, "Down in 'De Bloody Ate'," pp. 30-31; Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,,* p. 323.]

[25] The direct primary law weakened third parties in more than one way. According to Clodius, "[T]he Socialists and to some extent the Prohibitionists...feared that minority parties would not be able to qualify for a place on the ballot under the new procedure; that under it large expenditures and elaborate machinery might be essential to obtain nominations; that poor men would therefore have no chance for office, and that machine and corporate influence might predominate more than before." [*Citizen* Jan. 29, 1909, p. 6; Clodius, Albert Howard. "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles, 1890-1910," Claremont Graduate School dissertation, Claremont, CA, 1953, pp. 396-97]

[26] The following observation by the July 24, 1914 *Citizen* makes it clear that direct primaries *doubly* stacked the deck in favor of "non-partisan" candidates: "If you have registered since January, 1914, and have not stated your affiliation, then *you will only be able to vote for the non-partisan officers* at the primaries. If you have stated your affiliation you can only vote for those nominees for the various partisan offices whose party affiliations are the same as the one stated by you when registering, but *you can, of course, vote for any of the non-partisan candidates you wish*." If the reformers' electoral coin-flip had a name, it would be "Heads I Win, Tails You Lose". (My italics) [*Citizen,* May 12, 1911, p. 5. [*Citizen*, July 24, 1914, p. 8]

[27] *Citizen,* Jan. 29, 1909, p. 6.

[28] *Citizen,* May 14, 1909, pp. 7-8.

[29] "Good Government Leaders Celebrate Victory," *Los Angeles Herald,* Dec. 18, 1909.

[30] Erie, Steven P. "How the Urban West Was Won: The Local State and Economic Growth in Los Angeles, 1880-1932," *Urban Affairs Quarterly* v. 27, no. 4 (June, 1992), p. 538.

[31] Carney, Francis M. "The Decentralized Politics of Los Angeles" in theme issue: "City Bosses and Political Machines," American Academy of Political and Social Science, *The Annals* (May, 1964), pp. 111-12.

[32] Ingram, "Building the Municipal State," pp. 25-56.

[33] Cooper, Donald G. "The California Suffrage Campaign of 1896: Its Origin, Strategies, Defeat. *Southern California Quarterly,* v. 71, No. 4 (Winter, 1989), pp. 312-13, 318, 321-22.

[34] Frances Noel. "Address Delivered Before the Los Angeles Central Labor Council on Child Labor, March, 1909," Mission Press, Los Angeles, 1909; Los Angeles County Central Labor Council, *Minute Books for Executive Board and Council meetings, 1909-1916,* March 12, 1909 (hereinafter LACLC).

[35] LACLC, April 2, 1909, Jan. 20, April 28, May 19, August 7, 11, Sept. 8, 15, 1911.

[36] *Citizen,* March 29, 1907.

[37] This organization was originally named the Wage Earners' Vote for Women League. Its secretary, Bessie Todd, and several of its members belonged to Garment Workers No. 125, a union that Noel closely supported. [Los Angeles Typographical Union No. 174, Minute Books, 1886-1916, Aug. 27, 1911, p. 270 (hereinafter LATU); LACLC, April 28, Aug. 11, Sept. 8, 1911.]

[38] *Citizen,* Aug. 11, 1911, pp. 15.

[39] Gullet, Gayle. "Women Progressives and the Politics of Americanization in California, 1915-1920," *Pacific Historical Review* v. 44, no. 1 (Feb., 1995), p. 80.

[40] See several typescript leaflets and declarations by the Political Equality League in John Randolph Haynes Papers, Special Collections, University Research Library, University of California at Los Angeles, Box 227, folders "Women-Suffrage-Political Equality League 1-(20)", "Woman-Suffrage 4-(20)", and "Women-Suffrage 3-(29)". Herinafter Haynes Papers.

[41] "Report on Publicity of the Political Equality League of Southern California" and an untitled report from the League's department of literature in Haynes Papers, Box 227, folders "Women-Suffrage, 3-(29) and 4-(20).

[42] Katz, Sherry. "Dual Commitments: Feminism, Socialism, and Women's Political Activism in California, 1890-1920," Ph.D. dissertation, UCLA, 1992, p. 288; Apostol, Jane. "Why Women Should Not Have the Vote: Anti-Suffrage Views in the Southland in 1911," *Southern California Quarterly* v. 70, no. 1 (Spring, 1988), pp. 31-32.

[43] "Woman in Industry," *Union Labor News,* Jan. 5, 1906.

[44] *Proceedings,* 11th Annual Convention of the California State Federation of Labor, Los Angeles, Oct. 6, 1910, p. 17.

[45] Z.W. Craig. "The Rights of Women,"*Union Labor News,* March 9, 1906, p. 4;"A Bon- net for Nothing," *Citizen,* April 12, 1907, p. 9.

[46] Katz says the amendment carried L.A. by over 5,000 votes. Katz, "Dual Commitments," p. 297; Apostol, "Why Women Should Not Have the Vote," p. 40.

[47] "Socialist Strength Shown in Vote on State Amendments," *Citizen*, Oct. 13,1911, p. 16; *L.A. Tribune,* Oct. 11, 1911 quoted in Katz, "Dual Commitments," pp. 297, 358 ff. 141.

[48] Gullet, "Women Progressives and the Politics of Americanization in California," p. 80.

[49] Political scientists James Ingram and Katherine Underwood calculate that 82,614 women registered for the December general election, based on election returns compiled by the City Clerk's office. ["Week's Activities Among Clubwomen..,", *L.A. Sunday Tribune*, Dec. 28, 1913, Part V, p. 2; Ingram, James W. III and Katherine Underwood. "Gender and Ideology: The Socialist Party and the Women's Vote in the 1911 Los Angeles Mayoral Election," paper presented at 1995 meeting of Western Political Science Association, Portland, Oregon. (Typescript).]

[50] Los Angeles City Clerk, Election Returns, Volume 1.

[51] The authors state that the voter turnout in this election "was probably the highest of any election in the city's history that did not involve presidential races." [Ingram and Underwood, "Gender and Ideology," Table One, based on data from the City Clerk's Election Returns, Vol. 1.]

[52] Leonard Pitt has also claimed that women voters defeated Harriman. [Kraft, James. "The Fall of Job Harriman's Socialist Party: Violence, Gender, and Politics in Los Angeles, 1911," *Southern California Quarterly,* v. LXX, no. 1 (Spring, 1988); Pitt, Leonard. "Red Flag Over City Hall?" The Socialist-Labor Ticket in the Los Angeles Mayoral Election of 1911," paper presented at the American Historical Society's annual meeting in 1989.]

[53] Ingram and Underwood, "Gender and Ideology," p. 2.

[54] "The reality of the post-suffrage woman movement...was discouraging to those who supported a broad-based alliance of women, one which transcended class, social, and racial divisions," observes historian Sherry Katz. She also notes that a few socialist women worked with the Political Equality League and Votes for Women Club during the suffrage campaign, even though these organizations reached out mainly to middle-class voters. [Katz, "Dual Commitments," pp. 99, 287]

[55] Katz, "Dual Commitments," pp. 399, 301.

[56] Ingram and Underwood, "Gender and Ideology," pp. 13-14.

[57] Ingram and Underwood, "Gender and Ideology," Tables Three and Four.

[58] Katz, "Dual Commitments," ff. 152, pp. 361-62.

[59] *Citizen*, Dec. 8, 1911.

[60] "Shinglers" column, *Citizen,* May 3, 1912, p. 13.

[61] Clodius, "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles," p. 25; "A Memorial to the Board of Freeholders for the Drafting of a New Charter," Union Reform League, 1898, in Haynes Papers, Box 102, folder "Los Angeles Charter–Miscellaneous" (10); Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,*, pp. 232-33.

[62] Los Angeles was the first large U.S. city to hire policewomen. [Willard, Charles Dwight. "Reform Measures in Los Angeles," undated typescript probably written in July, 1910, Haynes Papers, Box 43, folder "Direct Legislation–Los Angeles" (16); Hunter, Burton L. *The Evolution of Municipal Organization and Administrative Practice in the City of Los Angeles,* Parker, Stone & Baird, Co., Los Angeles, 1933, pp. 101-02, 114-15; City Council Records, Vol. 30, Sept. 2, 1889 and Vol. 69, pp. 520-21; Dresen, J.G. (com-

piler), *Souvenir Album,* Los Angeles Police Department, 1914, Special Collections, University Research Library, UCLA, p. 24.]

63 *Union Labor News,* Feb. 15, 1907, pp. 1, 4; Johnson, "Down in 'De Bloody Ate'," p. 24.

64 City Council Records, Vol. 76, pp. 386, 410, 416, 434, 436; *Citizen,* Sept. 4, 1908, p. 11; *Los Angeles Record,* Jan. 27, 1908; *Los Angeles Times,* Jan. 28, 1908; Lyons quote from Johnson, op. cit., pp. 24-25.

65 *Citizen,* Jan. 23, 1914, p. 1; Jan. 30, 1914, p. 10; Feb. 6, 1914, pp. 1, 6.

66 I have not been able to determine why the Central Labor Council agreed that Amendment No. 3 would "place responsibility and facilitate administration"; it neither opposed the charter measure nor campaigned for it. Perhaps it did not elicit much labor comment because the city's unions had focused their attention on other unwanted charter changes and the 1911 straw poll which called for public distribution of aqueduct power. [*California Outlook,* Feb. 25, 1911, p. 12; "Los Angeles for the Workers," *Citizen,* Feb. 17, 1911, p. 7; LACLC Jan. 20, 1911.]

67 *Municipal News,* "Discharged Civil Service Employes May Get Salaries," Aug. 7, 1912; "Decision Spoils Hope of Ousted Employes," Sept. 4, 1912.

68 "Civil Service Board Feels Disappointment," *Municipal News,* Feb. 19, 1913, p. 2.

69 *Citizen,* Oct. 25, 1912, p. 11; Nov. 8, 1912, p. 1; and Oct. 23, 1914, p. 8.

70 Examples from the *L.A. Express,* summer and fall, 1906: "One hundred of the city's very best business men and taxpayers have signed their allegiance to the new cause" [a nonpartisan party], statement by Charles A. Parmelee, merchant. "Something that will take the management of city affairs out of the hands of men of small caliber and the bosses is demanded," statement by A.J. Wallace, capitalist.

71 "Vast Difference," *L.A. Express,* July 7, 1906.

72 "Vast Difference," *L.A. Express,* July 7, 1906.

73 "G.G. Now Has Reins of Power," *L.A. Express,* Jan. 2, 1910.

74 *California Weekly,* Dec. 18, 1908, p. 51.

75 Like most progressive reforms, the Public Utilities Commission had a forerunner. Mayor Harper--the nonpartisans' *bête noire*--created and filled the post of Gas Inspector in 1907. This official tested and sealed meters and investigated consumers' complaints about their gas service. [Willard, 'Reform Measures"; "Clean Sweep," *L.A. Times,* Dec. 9, 1909; Hunter, *The Evolution of Municipal Organization,* p. 108.]

76 Clodius, "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles," pp. 520-22; Willard, "Reform Measures".

77 "Street Car Fare Ordinance," *Municipal News,* April 24, 1912.

78 "Street Car Fare Ordinance....Edited for Opponents of Ordinance," *Municipal News,* April 24, 1912.

79 The *Citizen* reprinted Willard's unsigned article from the July 24, 1912 *Municipal News.* A safe assumption is that Willard wrote the several *Municipal News* articles favoring the ordinance in the spring of 1912. ["Vote for the Rate-Fixing Ordinance," *Citizen,* May 24, 1912, p. 1.]

80 "Few Elections Due to Direct Legislation," *Municipal News,* Feb. 19, 1913.

[81] Bridges, Amy. "Winning the West to Municipal Reform," *Urban Affairs Quarterly* v. 27, no. 4 (June, 1992), p. 507.

[82] Clodius, "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles," pp. 23-26.

[83] *Citizen,* Sept. 6, 1907, pp. 8-9; Nov. 1, 1907, p. 8; and July 17, 1908, p. 1.

[84] "Plans Machine for Bosses," *L.A. Times*, April 11, 1909.

[85] *Citizen*: "Council Plans to Foist New Charter Upon the People," Feb. 23, 1912, p. 5; "Council Names Committee to Draft New City Charter," March 1, 1912, p. 3.

[86] "Final Vote on the Late Freeholders' Election," *Citizen*, June 7, 1912.

[87] *Citizen*: "Laboring Men Are Planning to Draft Sensible City Charter," April 19, 1912, p. 1; "Charter Revision Committee Holds First Meeting," April 26, 1912, p. 1.

[88] *Citizen*, Nov. 15, 1912, p. 1.

[89] *Citizen*: "New Charter Badly Defeated," Dec. 6, 1912, pp. 1, 3.

[90] "Wheeler Discusses New City Charter," *Citizen*, Nov. 15, 1912, p. 1 and "Minutes of the Union Labor Political Club," Nov. 22, 1912, p. 16.

[91] "Why the Charter Was Defeated," *Citizen*, Dec, 6, 1912, p. 3.

4.
Social Reform: The Workers' Welfare That Wasn't

"The growth pursued by developmental reformers was thought by some of them to depend on the cheap labor of the surplus army of the unemployed, and social reform could not be allowed to take away the advantage that unorganized and needy labor gave Los Angeles over San Francisco." -- James W. Ingram III [1]

Two groups grappled with the social deficiencies of Los Angeles a century ago: progressives and labor activists. Among progressives a handful of reformers proposed to sanitize and eventually replace the city's notorious house-courts, grow its meager stock of parks, draft a businesslike school curriculum, launch a school lunch program, fund public job agencies, and create a welfare system based on the principal of "least relief." Organized labor had no more interest than progressives in broadly applied social provision. Instead, with middling success, it concentrated its fire on several well-defined wage, hour, gender, worker's compensation,[2] and child labor issues. Hindsight informs us that by the 1930s these issues, along with least relief, would play a major role in American social policy, but during the progressive era they had a tentative, exploratory character. "If structural and moral reform played second fiddle to developmental efforts, social reform didn't even make it into the orchestra," political historian James W. Ingram says of Los Angeles. "Local anti-picketing ordinances actively suppressed organized labor, and the Municipal Housing Commission and Social Service Commission were aimed at regulating tenements and coordinating private charitable efforts rather than creating a local welfare state. Social reform....was not a local priority for Los Angeles reformers."[3]

Indeed, most L.A. progressives believed a high social wage distributed through welfare provision and protective labor laws would erode the city's growth just as ruinously as high wages paid by private enterprise. Did social reforms constitute a social wage? It is useful to think of them that way. Some of the surplus created by L.A.'s workers--that

fraction of their product for which they received no compensation--flowed to local and state government through taxes, bond investments, tolls, fees, and other types of revenue. A much greater portion flowed into the property and consumption of capitalists, but that is not our concern here. From the increment captured by government a hotly contested pittance (relative to city infrastructure, industrial and development subsidies, law enforcement, the bureaucracy, etc.) funded welfare provisions and statutory protections for the working and middle classes. This was the social wage. In Los Angeles during the progressive years it was doled out stingily by Old Guard and reform city councilmen alike.

The social wage had two parts--one returning value specifically to workers, the other benefiting a broader swath of society; one centered on the workplace, the other on consumption; one regulatory, the other provisionary; one demanded by unions above all, the other by transitory cross-class coalitions that sometimes included labor. Union activists, in other words, were the most consistent social reformers in Los Angeles a century ago, but they did not see themselves that way. Nor did they seem to mind that progressives wore the mantle of reform as their exclusive garb.

We first consider the social wage returned to workers in the form of wage, hour, and child labor laws.

Higher Wages, Shorter Workdays

Second only to a low rate of unionization, low pay was the crowning glory of L.A.'s open shop. A draconian wage system forced everyone from skilled tradesmen to clerks, teamsters and laborers into a losing race against the local cost of living and the earnings of workers in San Francisco. The Bay City paid carpenters $5 a day in 1907 while Los Angeles begrudged them $4. Teamsters driving four-horse drays earned $4 in the north, only $3 in Los Angeles.[4] The skilled wage gap between the two cities widened over the next seven years, reaching $1.25 a day for painters and $3.00 for iron workers. "In no

other large city of the nation are such low wages paid, all things considered, as are paid here," declared the *Citizen*.[5]

The situation was even bleaker outside the skilled trades, especially for women workers. A June, 1913 report issued by the city's industrial commission offered a wealth of evidence for a poverty of means. The commission looked at costs of food, clothing, housing, medical care, transportation, and incidentals, added meager set-asides for old age and periods of unemployment, and found that $2 a day would barely support an average Los Angeles family while $4 would provide a minimal "living wage". Not counting teenagers, who were widely hired in violation of the state's labor code, it found that 15 percent of the city's male workers and 60 percent of its women workers earned under $2 a day. Over 300 sales clerks, cashiers, wrappers, and couriers working at five department stores received less than $1. "The suffering, deprivation and disappointment which these inadequate wages indicate must be very great," observed the commission.[6]

The strongest downward pressure on wages came from the large reserve army of jobless and semi-employed labor that Otis and his colleagues worked energetically to recruit. This army, drawn from all points of the compass but especially from the East and Midwest, rendered silent service to other weapons in the open shop arsenal: blacklisting union sympathizers, hiring shopfloor spies, imposing yellow-dog contracts, hiring police as strikebreakers, and funding struck companies, to name a few. Female operators hired by the Home and Sunset Telephone companies started work at $5 a week on the chance of advancing to $6 if they made that company's "role of honor". Likewise the labor newspaper *Citizen* discovered in 1907 that

> "a large proportion of the millinery business is done by 'apprentices' who do not receive one cent for their services. With the bait that 'after you learn the trade you can make from $6 to $9 a week--and even more, if your work is catchy and stylish' --poor and needy girls are enticed to 'apprentice' themselves without wages for from two to six months, in one of the several large establishments on Broadway or Spring street. In a majority of the cases, the proprietor finds that the girl who has

> trimmed tens of dozens of hats sold over the store's counters in the course of her months of weary apprenticeship, 'is not fitted for the business' and consequently she is 'let out' just before the arrival of the first pay day." [7]

Even if we give progressives the benefit of the doubt and assume they found some of these open-shop tactics to be abusive in the extreme, they clearly did not consider them targets for reform. It was the organization of workers, not of employers, that men like Willard and Lissner worried about. Blacklists, lockouts, zero-wage "apprenticeships," and other anti-union measures were proposed to or imposed on employers and meticulously enforced by an interlocking directorate of trade associations, the Citizens' Alliance, and the M&M. Progressives, for all their protestations of class neutrality, were much more likely to rebuke unions than challenge this phalanx of open-shop forces.

Campaign for a Minimum Public Wage

It was thus left to workers themselves to seek legislative relief from the low-wage system. They did so more cautiously and sporadically than modern readers might suppose. Starting in the 1890s, Populists, Knights, Socialists, and the Council of Labor called for a minimum of two dollars per eight-hour day on public works. Typographers spurred the 1896 city council to adopt a policy whereby department heads signed contracts only with businesses that paid "full" wages, but this simultaneously bold and nebulous stand did not survive a blistering counterattack by private contractors.[8] The Council of Labor finally prodded the city council to specify the eight-hour day (and two-dollar wage) on public projects at the turn of the century. Backed by the city's unions, public employees and the employees of city contractors made painfully small wage gains over the next decade; street sweepers, as we have seen, were earning just $2.25 a day when they came under fire from progressive cost-cutters in 1907.

While the L.A. Central Labor Council, its predecessors,[9] and its affiliates often agitated for higher public wages, it never occurred to them to demand a charter-driven or

legislated floor under wages in private industry. They made a clear distinction between local government as an employer and local government as a regulatory instrument backed by the police power. In the first instance, they prodded the mayor, city council, and county supervisors to guarantee public employees the equivalent of a union wage, so as not to drive down pay in the private sector. This demand met with frequent disappointment, even after California imposed a $2 and later a $3 floor under some daily municipal wages. In the second instance, unions opposed nearly all attempts by government to set groundrules for labor-management negotiations, believing, with most other affiliates of the American Federation of Labor, that seating bureaucrats at the bargaining table would strengthen the hand of employers. The lone exception, arrived at sporadically and only after heated debate, was labor support for workplace legislation protecting women and children.

As the foregoing makes clear, L.A.'s labor activists devised a complicated and somewhat contradictory approach to government regulation of a fair day's wage in the progressive era. This attitude played out in a number of interesting ways.

First, consider the perennial skirmish over the wages of public employees. Having failed to nudge successive regimes toward a union scale, the Council of Labor danced no victory jig at the turn of the century when the state ordered local governments to pay their laborers at least $2 a day. Not only was this a stingy wage, but city and county officials enforced it grudgingly when they enforced it at all. Their opinion of it was only slightly higher than that of L.A. Superior Court Judge Waldo M. York, who declared the state law unconstitutional in January, 1906. Said he:

> "If a contractor or official is obliged to pay every employe $2 a day, he is, naturally, going to employ only men who can earn $2 a day. The law making the $2 wage obligatory, therefore, discriminates against those men who are so unfortunate as not to be able to do a full day's work, and so I believe it to be unconstitutional." 10

Waldo notwithstanding, early in 1907 state senator William H. Savage of San Pedro drafted a bill to create a $3 minimum daily wage for California's public day laborers. His move reflected continuing labor agitation for the increase, and it appalled progressives on the L.A. city council. At this moment of crisis, they locked arms with open-shop forces. The anti-union Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association took the first step. At the end of January it petitioned the city council to oppose the bill on the grounds that

> "such pay is excessive in view of the character of the work required and the hours engaged; that it would be an exorbitant burden upon the taxpayers of the entire state;...that owing to the large increase of expenditure it will greatly retard public improvements;...that it will be necessary, if the act becomes a law, to reduce the number of laborers employed and deprive them of a means of livelihood..."

A few days later Albert J. "Jerry" Wallace, a stockbroker and one of four non-partisans elected to the council in 1906, asked his colleagues to condemn the Savage bill on the grounds that

> "such pay would be excessive in view of the character of the work required and the hours engaged; that it would be an unjust and oppressive burden upon the taxpayers of the entire state; that owing to the large increase of expenditure, it would greatly retard public improvements and result in reducing the number of laborers now employed and depriving them of the means of livelihood." 11

This stalwart of the local progressive movement felt so secure in the M&M's embrace that he borrowed its language almost verbatim, changing little but the tense. Though Wallace had recently voted deputies in the Harper administration an aggregate $92,760 pay increase, he and six other councilmen urged the state senate to block the Savage bill. Organized labor found no merit in the M&M's argument. "Is the mining industry of California, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, or Colorado curtailed because of the $3, $4, and $5 a day wages paid pick-and-shovel men?" asked the *Union Labor News*. "No. On the contrary, the volume of local business done by all kinds of merchants in mining districts is much greater than in states where wages are but half of these sums." Noting the substantial raises due city and county deputies and judges, Senator Savage asked the council "in common sense and common decency, why you should oppose the payment of $3 per

day to the laboring man....I cannot agree with your views in the matter, and I must do all that I can to pass the measure..."[12] In this effort he succeeded, and the $3 wage for public day laborers became law.

The contradictions in labor's view of government as a regulator of wages sharply collided during the 1913-14 statewide campaign for a women's minimum wage. A year earlier, in 1912, the California State Building Trades Council under P.H. McCarthy had agreed to sponsor an initiative fixing a statewide minimum wage and eight-hour day for *all* workers, but it had quickly abandoned the project. "We must first gain control of the federal government," said McCarthy. "Then it will be time to advocate such a law. Our efforts now would be worse than useless."[13] The women's minimum had then come quickly to the fore. It immediately drew the wrath of the San Francisco Labor Council, most of its member unions, and some of the unions in Los Angeles.

Progressives, too, divided over this issue. A small left wing led by Haynes and a platoon of California clubwomen led by Katherine Philips Edson advocated the new wage law, but business-minded reformers close to the Chamber of Commerce demurred. Edson was the indispensable mover and shaker. Long active in L.A. reform campaigns for pure milk, the Australian ballot, and women's suffrage, "she was ejected once from the legislature as a lobbyist, denounced simultaneously by capital and labor, branded as a 'female politician,' and badgered by the *Los Angeles Times*."[14] In 1912 she was appointed a special Southern California agent for the Bureau of Labor Statistics and immediately set out to end sweatshop conditions for the state's working women. Taking her minimum wage campaign to the California Federation of Women's Clubs, she secured the endorsement of its Paso Robles convention. Edson had campaigned hard for Hiram Johnson in 1910 and now won his backing for a women's minimum wage. During the 1913 legislative session she and Helen Todd, a suffrage leader, drafted bills to that end. Edson shrewdly

deferred to Todd, solidifying the measure's popular base of support. Passed by both houses of the progressive legislature that spring and signed by Johnson, the new law established an Industrial Welfare Commission with the power to set minimum wages, maximum hours, and standard working conditions for women and children. The law also had teeth. Employers who spurned the commission's orders could be convicted of a misdemeanor and sentenced to fines and imprisonment.[15]

Edson was not swept up by the euphoria surrounding her legislative coup. Thinking ahead, she wisely foresaw legal challenges to California's new use of its police power and drafted a constitutional amendment to head them off. It not only authorized the legislature to pass minimum wage laws but declared that no other provision of the state constitution could limit the Industrial Welfare Commission's power to enforce them. Once again mobilizing her vast network of women's clubs, Edson stumped for the amendment throughout California. Voters overwhelmingly adopted it on Nov. 3, 1914.[16]

Eight years later, as Executive Commissioner of the Industrial Welfare Commission, Edson recalled her historic wage campaign in a "Statement to the Women's Organizations of California." Irked by the San Francisco Labor Council's repeated attacks on her stewardship of the commission, she wrote the following:

> "The minimum wage law was forced through the legislature by Governor Johnson in 1913, against the solid opposition of organized labor. Organized labor took the position that there would be no incentive for women to join labor organizations if the State fixed a minimum wage and the maximum hours of work for women. It was also concerned that the minimum wage would become the maximum. Organized labor fought against the Constitutional Amendment delegating to the Commission the power to fix minimum wages, but in spite of this opposition, the women's clubs, the churches and the organizations of the then Progressive Party succeeded in convincing the people, who voted for the amendment by an 84,000 majority in 1914." [17]

This summation was unfair. Though the San Francisco Labor Council and other central labor bodies fought the minimum wage on the grounds noted by Edson, they did not speak for all organized workers. Neither did AFL president Samuel Gompers, who

warned that government regulation of wages would "only be another step to force workingmen to work at the behest of their employers, or at the behest of the State, which will be equivalent to and will be, slavery."[18] Rejecting this voluntarist point of view, the Sacramento Federated Trades Council and many smaller unions endorsed the minimum wage. Union workers in Los Angeles agonized over the Todd bill, then declared for it. "While the San Francisco labor leaders were bitterly assailing the minimum wage," says historian Norris C. Hundley, Jr., "Los Angeles labor took an opposite stand. Its leaders circulated petitions calling for the establishment of a minimum wage board." Among these leaders was the socialist Frances Nacke Noel, who at that moment was drafting the strongest sections of the city's June, 1913 report on industrial conditions and whose work for the Women's Trade Union League and Women's Union Labor League had long commanded the respect of other labor activists. Edson was well aware that Los Angeles never joined "the solid opposition of organized labor." She had visited its Central Labor Council late in 1912 to win its support for an Industrial Welfare Commission, had been invited back twice more in 1913, and, apparently as a quid pro quo, had agreed to make one of the commissioners a representative of organized labor.[19]

During the 1914 constitutional amendment campaign, disputes over the women's minimum wage (as distinct from the industrial commission) split L.A.'s delegation at the annual California State Federation of Labor convention in Stockton. San Francisco's representatives urged the meeting to condemn the Edson amendment while those from San José and Vallejo praised it, arguing that "the wage of the most skilled organized worker is based to a degree upon the lowest, underpaid toiler." M.C. Glenn and C.W. Truelock of Los Angeles sided with San Francisco, but Cyrus F. "Curly" Grow, a leader of the 1910 metal trades strike, defended the minimum wage as a step forward for the whole labor movement. Though the Federation officially called for the amendment's defeat, Grow,

Noel, and Fred Wheeler continued to promote it in Los Angeles. The Central Labor Council was too riven to settle this dispute. It neither supported Edson's ballot measure nor joined most other California labor organizations in opposing it.[20]

Using data from field investigations, the new Industrial Welfare Commission nudged the legal minimum wage up to a modest $16 per week over the next six years. Some 80% to 90% of the state's fully-employed women reportedly earned that much or more in 1920.[21] Enforcement of the minimum depended on the density and vigilance of local union movements and was weak in open-shop Los Angeles.

Edson's premonition about the constitutionality of a legislated minimum wage was borne out in 1923, when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that a similar District of Columbia law violated Fifth Amendment's due process clause. Thereafter Edson and her colleagues waged a stubborn rear-guard battle to save California's statute, and wages made little headway during this period. The Supreme Court reversed itself in 1937, however, enabling the highly politicized Industrial Welfare Commission to continue its work amid much controversy down to the present day.[22]

Shorter Workday Campaign Mobilizes the Anti-Union Alliance

If L.A.'s union activists were of two minds about a legal minimum wage, they pursued a legal limit on working hours wholeheartedly. Agitation for the eight-hour day began after the Civil War in the East and Midwest and quickly became the holy grail of American labor. According to labor historian David Montgomery,

> "the prominence of the struggle for the eight-hour day in the 1860s and early 1870s indicates that many workers considered it the central issue defining their place in reconstructed America....[T]hey envisaged the contest above all as one which pit[ted] 'the wages system' against 'republican institutions.' Its outcome would decide whether they and their children would live as drudges, creating wealth for others, or as free and active citizens of a democratic state." [23]

During the 1880s L.A.'s fledgling unions inherited this struggle to remold American social and political life at a time "when no ideological consensus legitimized the state."[24]

Their protracted campaign for government intervention in the hours of work accompanied, and to some extent grew out of, their quarrel with employers over time on the job. Arthur Vinette, the man who in Stimson's words "molded the early labor movement in Los Angeles" more than any other, led a building trades drive in 1884 to cut their daily job hours from ten to nine. By 1886 carpenters and painters had compelled many employers to accept the shorter workday. Typographers achieved a similar success the following year. Although many businesses defied this trend, the city's unions set their sights on an even shorter eight-hour day. They redoubled their agitation for this goal after the AFL named May Day, 1890, as the launch date for a nationwide eight-hour campaign. Vinette and his fellow carpenters organized an Eight-Hour League which brought public pressure on employers, some of whom adopted the new work schedule with no cut in wages. Aided by the Nationalist clubs, the League won the eight-hour workday for all the building trades in 1890.[25]

Most of these victories did not last. The length of the workday and its companion, the workweek, waxed and waned with the local economy, the growth of the open-shop movement, and the energy with which the Council of Labor and its affiliates organized new workers. Frustrated by their slow progress during the 1890s, and even more so after the turn of the century, L.A.'s unions began to demand state and local eight-hour laws for government workers on the untested theory that hours in private industry would follow suit. They helped win such a law for California's public employees and employees of public contractors in 1903.[26] Joining the labor movement in the fight for these reforms were Populists, Knights of Labor, and a few women's groups. Nonpartisans and other "best men" who would soon identify themselves as progressives rarely, if ever, lent a hand.

Non-enforcement of the state and federal eight-hour day laws and indeed of the entire

labor code was endemic in open-shop Los Angeles. In September, 1906, the Central Labor Council sent Lemuel D. Biddle and W.A. Engle to see U.S. Attorney Oscar Lawler about a contractor who was working his teamsters eleven hours a day at a new post office site. Lawler refused to move against the lawbreaker, accepting his argument that teamsters "merely sat in their seats" whenever their wagons were being loaded and so spent only eight hours actually working. [27] That the contractor utterly controlled his employees' whereabouts for eleven hours a day carried no weight with Lawler, an intrepid foe of unions who would later use the 1910 dynamiting of the L.A. Times building by two iron workers as a pretext to haul a wide circle of labor leaders and activists into federal court. Very few were convicted.

The labor code fared no better at the county level. One of the area's most avowedly anti-union employers was Carl Leonardt, a contractor who built the Hall of Records and a new county hospital. In 1909 the Building Trades Council protested that Leonardt was routinely working his employees over eight hours a day. To this charge, which carried a $3,700 fine, the contractor proudly acquiesced while noting that an "emergency" clause in his agreement with the county shielded him from prosecution. The Board of Supervisors asked Chief Deputy District Attorney Hartley Shaw for an opinion. Early in 1910 Shaw declared that except for one small construction project no emergency existed and the fine should be paid. This was not what a majority of the supervisors wanted to hear. Leonardt's work, they insisted, had taken place under emergency conditions. He paid no fine.[28]

The crux of this enforcement fiasco lay in the social class of its adversaries. Like Leonardt, most of the county supervisors were small to middling capitalists or professional men who identified their own interests with those of the county's business enterprises. Socially, politically, and economically they had nothing in common with Leon-

ardt's employees, the Building Trades Council, or, for that matter, any wage workers.

This problem was compounded by the fact that key members of the supervisorial majority were progressives in a progressive age. Richard W. Pridham, who voted in favor of Leonardt, was the archetypal figure. The owner of a small factory, he led the Manufacturers' Association in the 1890s and helped convert its successor, the M&M, into L.A.'s most aggressive open-shop combatant during the early 1900s. In 1906, Pridham and other members of the anti-union Citizens' Alliance blocked a move by the Employing Printers Association to accede to Typographical Union No. 174's demand for an eight-hour day.[29] "Pridham," opined the *Citizen*, "is a greater union-hater than Otis; is a bitter opponent of the shorter workday; and never, under any circumstances, will he employ a union man."[30] It was Pridham, as president of the Chamber of Commerce in 1926, who boasted that Los Angeles was "The Citadel of the Open Shop" and, erroneously, an economic powerhouse because of it.[31]

If Pridham's open-shop credentials were highly burnished, so were his progressive bona fides. He first mingled with key reformers in the mid-1890s, joining T.E. Gibbon, W.D. Woolwine, Niles Pease, and Charles Dwight Willard to sponsor L.A.'s annual *Fiesta* celebrations. Otis, too, helped promote those booster events, and throughout his long public career Pridham epitomized the scramble of leading progressives to march alongside the feisty *Times* publisher whenever workingclass discontent threatened their common interests. In August, 1908, the Lincoln-Roosevelt League sponsored Pridham's campaign for re-election to the Board of Supervisors. He wrote the City Club's checks when that elite headquarters launched its successful charter campaign for the direct primary and at-large city council elections. Sitting with him on the club's board of directors were Gibbon and Meyer Lissner. On Dec. 17, 1909 Pridham applauded the Good Government sweep of city council seats as one of that organization's guests at Levy's Café. He still

identified himself as a progressive in the fall of 1912, serving with Lissner, George Alexander, Lee C. Gates, Russ Avery, E.T. Earl, S.C. Graham, Marshall Stimson, and A.J. Wallace on the executive board of the Roosevelt Progressive Republican League of L.A. County.[32] These notables embraced Pridham as a tried-and-true reformer. Workingclass Angelenos knew otherwise. To them he was the quintessential *anti-reformer,* a class enemy who despised the social wage in all its forms.

It is easy to see why, with men like Pridham in city and county offices, it often fell to L.A.'s unions to police the eight-hour law. "Beginning in July, 1905," says Stimson, "the Central Labor Council and the Building Trades Council so publicized violations of the law that within a month the City Council ordered that all future contracts must include the eight-hour law and the penalties for violation, and instructed the city attorney to proceed against contractors currently disobeying the law."[33] Stimson implies that the 1906-09 city council, with its four reform members, continued to hold contractors' feet to the fire. Everything we know about this first progressive council, however, militates against the idea that it was alarmed by wage and hour violations. The 1905 order was likely honored in the breach. Even if Stimson got it right, the four years in question merely offered L.A.'s workers a respite from the customary progressive neglect of wage and hour enforcement.

Like their public counterparts, workers in private industry faced an uphill battle to shorten on-the-job hours after the turn of the century. They doggedly pursued this goal for fifteen years, mainly by confronting employers but also at times by demanding a universal legislated ceiling to the workday and workweek. On both fronts they found little success.

The 1901-02 woodworkers' strike and boycott foreshadowed the tenacity of this effort --and its many frustrations. Unlike most L.A. building tradesmen who worked a forty-

four hour week, door and sash carpenters in the planing mills worked nine hours a day, six days a week. Those ten extra hours were the reason they defied the Millmens' Association, a bloc of twelve mill owners, by organizing their own union in 1900. Taking heart from a successful eight-hour campaign in San Francisco, Amalgamated Woodworkers Local 144 voted to strike if it was not granted a shorter workday. The owners balked, whereupon non-union carpenters announced they would join the walkout. This gambit was applauded if not inspired by the union, and it worked. Ten mills granted their door and sash carpenters an eight-hour day in the fall of 1901.

Despite this promising start by Local 144, two large companies--Carpenter & Biles and Hughes Brothers--rebuffed its demands. A few other building trades unions agreed to boycott products from the mills but failed to do so vigorously. Local 144 knew that if it did not bring the two companies to heel it would lose its agreements with the other ten. Picket lines went up at the Hughes and Carpenter & Biles mills. The owners called in the police to escort scabs across union lines, and a series of increasingly hostile confrontations between police and strikers followed. Council of Labor President James Gray was one of those arrested. In his 1994 dissertation on labor unrest in California, historian Thomas R. Clark describes the ensuing sequence of actions by a "machine" government supposedly partial to labor:

> "[W]hile he sat in a jail cell, Jim Gray and Police Captain Bradish engaged in a 'lively conversation' that was widely quoted in the press. Gray protested that there was no law against the carrying of signs or banners, and noted that pickets always carried signs or banners in San Francisco. Police Captain Bradish, after making a dubious claim that 'the Supreme Court had ruled against such practices,' reminded Gray that Los Angeles was 'not San Francisco....You shan't run a boycott in this town.' Bradish, however, did not have the final word. Judge Morgan of the Los Angeles Police Court ruled that, in the absence of a specific ordinance against carrying signs or banners, [picketers] should be released." [34]

Police Chief Charles Elton and the *Los Angeles Times* damned Morgan's decision. Equating picketers with the anarchist who shot President McKinley, Elton vowed to ar-

rest more of them. The threat was an empty one, however, and the city council soon took matters into its own hands. On December 28, 1901, it outlawed the carrying of signs and banners on city streets. Picketing stopped, but the strike labored on. Early in 1902 Local 144 and the Council of Labor decided to buy and run an old planing mill as a union cooperative. Boom times in construction buoyed the project. Facing a determined new rival in the door and sash trade, the two nine-hour mills finally agreed to negotiate with the union that September. The *Times* responded to this unwelcome development with accusations that the union was "strangling" the boom. A day later the L.A. Fire Commission denied the mill a permit on the grounds that its activities would devalue nearby homes. Not only was this a specious argument--the mill had previously operated on the same site--but a concern for property values lay outside the Fire Commission's purview. Nevertheless its decision effectively killed the co-op. Clark concludes:

> "By the end of the year the Hughes Brothers and Carpenter & Biles mills were running at full strength. The final blow to the mill workers came in late December, when a strike to protest the hiring of non-union bench hands at the Los Angeles Planing Mill ended quickly in defeat. Inspired by the success of their fellow mill owners, all of the city's eight-hour planing mills eventually reverted to the nine-hour day. Within less than a year, the Woodworkers' Local No. 144 would cease to exist." [35]

Employers loathe to grant labor's eight-hour demands found a staunch new defender in the Los Angeles Citizens' Alliance, created in January 1904 to reinforce the open-shop thrusts and parries of the M&M. Both organizations shared the same patron, Harrison Gray Otis, and the same secretary, Felix J. Zeehandelaar. Otis chaired the Alliance's executive board, while in a city packed with well-heeled prolephobes Zeehandelaar was the only paid, full-time anti-union agitator and propagandist. A former *Herald* reporter recruited into the M&M by Otis, he harried unions and the few union-tolerant employers with bulldog tenacity for two decades. His mission, as he later put it, was to defend Los Angeles "from any and all encroachments by labor unionism."[36] It took Zeehandelaar

four months to organize 6,000 firms, individual employers, and sympathizers into the L.A. Citizens' Alliance--the largest local chapter in a nationwide network of like-minded organizations. Spurring its continued growth was the International Typographical Union's nationwide demand for an eight-hour day with no cut in pay.

The ITU assiduously prepared its campaign during 1905 by educating its members, lining up support from other printing trades unions, notifying employers, and amassing a strike fund.[37] Print shop owners insisted that, unlike the building trades where eight-hour days generally prevailed, their heavy investment in machinery required longer hours of operation. They undercut their own argument, however, by refusing to run a second shift.[38] On Jan. 2, 1906, in lockstep with fellow unionists throughout the country, 145 L.A. printers, press feeders, and pressmen quit work at book and job shops that had spurned the eight-hour day. The press feeders and pressmen walked out in solidarity with Typographical No. 174 because firms which had accepted the shorter workday had suddenly reneged under heavy pressure from the Citizens' Alliance. Local unionists saw this turnabout as a threat to their entire movement.[39]

Through his allies in the Citizens' Alliance and M&M, Zeehandelaar deployed a number of weapons against the strike. Replacement printers were recruited throughout the country and brought to Los Angeles.[40] Off-duty policemen were hired as guards. Funds were wheedled out of hundreds of L.A.'s businesses, and struck firms were paid a dollar a day for each worker who downed his tools. Employers lacking the necessary anti-union vigor were cajoled, shamed, and intimidated. Zeehandelaar personally harangued printers who accepted the ITU's work schedule. When one job shop ignored his bullying in March, 1906, he retaliated by leaning on its largest customer, Levy's Café, to cancel its print orders. Al Levy apparently told the Citizens' Council chief to stop meddling in his business. Zeehandelaar threatened to have the *L.A. Times* investigate certain goings-on in

the café's private dining rooms. The immediate consequence of this "strong-arm work," reported the *Union Labor News*, was to cow both the printer and restaurateur while reimposing the nine-hour day in the job shop.[41]

By October, 1906, the ITU had won its demands in most cities across the country. The big exception was Los Angeles. Here, when ITU's southern California organizer and former Local 174 president Thomas D. Fennessy declared that "85 percent of the members of the typographical union of Los Angeles are now working eight hours a day," he was either being artful or whistling in the dark.[42] That 85 percent was skewed heavily in favor of newspaper printers who had won an eight-hour schedule several years before. Their union mates in the job shops could wrest nothing shorter than an eight-and-a-half-hour day from the Employing Printers Alliance and its senior partners, the Citizens' Alliance and M&M. Given the coercive power of the city's open-shop movement, even this truncated victory was impressive. It materialized when Local 174's foes met in Citizens' Alliance headquarters and decided they could not defeat the strike. At that meeting, as we have seen, progressive businessman R.W. Pridham quashed a move to accept the printers' demands in full but agreed to compromise at an eight-and-a-half-hour day. The printers vowed to keep fighting. When the ITU cancelled their strike benefits, however, the campaign ended.[43]

This two-year struggle unfolded in a highly politicized environment. During the first two decades of the century Zeehandelaar was intimately connected to the city's elected regimes--and to the police department they oversaw. His cultivation of mayors, county supervisors, and city councils paid off in moments of crisis, when the M&M was allowed to draft anti-union laws or call on the police to break up picket lines, supply armed guards, or deputize the private guards hired by employers. During its September, 1914 hearings in Los Angeles, the United States Commission on Industrial Relations asked

Zeehandelaar if the M&M had ever found the local police to be uncooperative. No, he said, employers occasionally supplemented police officers with their own private guards or county deputies, but requests for police protection were "always granted."[44]

These practices reflected the class outlook of the post-1909 reform administrations and the "machine" mayors and councils that preceded them. In both contexts, George Mowry wrote in *The California Progressives*, the M&M was "a quasi-political organization charged with the purpose of seeing that the Los Angeles city government was at all times 'friendly' to its ideals....[T]he Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association, under either the regular party machines or the Good Government people, was a functioning part of the Los Angeles city government."[45]

Among the hundreds of Angelenos who identified themselves as progressives, only one, John Randolph Haynes, openly supported the ITU's or any other union's struggle for a shorter workday. Edwin T. Earl revealed the typical reformer's view in a 1916 letter to Haynes. "I think the 8 hour agitation is a mistake for certain classes of workmen," he said. "Sometimes men who are not occupied reasonable hours are subject to temptation and dissipation, and waste their earnings."[46] Haynes' response, if any, is not known, but he would certainly have disagreed with the *Express* publisher. Four years earlier he had written the following for L.A.'s labor weekly:

> "Long working hours at the present time are illogical, even absurd. The weaver of today managing twelve steam power looms produces in a day approximately as much as five hundred weavers in the old handloom days. Why should he work as many hours as they? Moreover, work under modern steam power high pressure systems is more exhausting and should be limited to shorter hours. Also the minute specialization and the terrible monotony by which the worker in the shoe factory, for instance, makes on motion and that only thousands of times a day, sometimes producing insanity, requires that hours should be correspondingly shorter." [47]

For Haynes what counted, as always, was the health of the polity. When wage workers were too drained by too many hours on a machine-run job to take the same hand in public affairs as, say, a self-employed attorney like Lissner or a well-heeled scribe like Willard,

the polity suffered. This was no doubt true--and still is in a nation that has never achieved a universal 40-hour week. But a patronizing note crept into Haynes' conclusion: "If the toilers are given leisure hours for sunshine and self-development they will be fitted to exercise the powers and responsibilities of democracy."[48] Were they not, by dint of their own applied off-work efforts, already so fitted? In the very year when Zeehandelaar and his cohorts stalled the printers' drive for an eight-hour day, L.A.'s unions retaliated by creating an Anti-Citizens' Alliance which in one deep breath became the Public Ownership Party and left an enduring stamp on the city.[49] These developments, spurred by Typographical No. 174, the Carpenters, and other unions, profoundly alarmed Willard, Otis, and others in the Progressive-Old Guard nexus who tried and failed to disrupt the 1906 Labor Day parade.

Overlapping the printers' strike in the fall of 1906 was a campaign by carpenters, bricklayers, plasterers, and laborers to win a union shop and work just half a day on Saturdays, thereby cutting the workweek from 48 to 44 hours. As reported above (pp. 42-43), nearly 3,000 building trades workers downed their tools at midday on Saturday, Sept. 8. Some firms quickly granted the "half-holiday". Others, led by the Mill Owners' Association, Master Builders' Association, and Builders' Exchange, resisted the change. Rather than return to work six full days a week, many L.A. craftsmen left for San Francisco where they helped that city recover from a devastating earthquake.

Demands for reduced working hours in private industry continued throughout the progressive era. In his narrowly lost mayoral race against George Alexander in 1909, Fred Wheeler promised to seek an eight-hour day for all workers if elected.[50] The Metal Trades Council, representing a few employees in the Baker and Llewellyn Iron Works and other foundries, proposed an eight-hour day in 1912 only to have the idea summarily dismissed.[51] Two years later the L.A. Central Labor Council and other California labor

bodies agitated for a constitutional amendment that would set eight hours as the legal maximum working day. Workingclass precincts in Los Angeles voted for it by a three-to-one margin, but it met a decisive defeat statewide.[52] Organized labor's unrelenting pressure for a shorter workday nevertheless brought results. Most of the larger L.A. employers were running eight-hour shifts by World War I, and in 1917 even that most recalcitrant sector, the metalworking industry, was moving by stages toward the eight-hour day.[53]

A Shorter Workday for Women

While the struggle to cut working hours for *all* workers proved enormously difficult, it took just one year to win the statutory eight-hour day for women. Northern California reformers and labor unions statewide drove an enabling bill through the legislature; progressive governor Hiram Johnson signed it on March 28, 1911. Those progressives who lobbied for the women's eight-hour day tended to stress its gender aspect, while workers saw it as a step forward for their class as a whole. True to form, southern California progressives led the fight against the new law.[54]

William A. Vanna, a leader of Laundry Workers No. 52 and vice-president of the L.A. Central Labor Council, was the first to propose an 8-hour day and 48-hour week for working women in California. More than most union activists he had seen first-hand the unhealthy and oppressive conditions under which women and girls toiled, especially in Los Angeles. Most of the city's 3,000 laundry hands were females earning two-thirds of what men received for the same jobs. Just over 300 belonged to Local 52, but even union workers faced dismissal if they complained about low wages and 10-to-12-hour days or revealed their union status.[55] Vanna often reminded his Labor Council comrades about this gendered form of tyranny, urging them to organize more women to strengthen their movement. In October, 1910, as Local 52's delegate to the State Federation of Labor

convention, he drafted a resolution that demanded an eight-hour limit for working women. It was adopted without dissent, and the federation immediately began agitating for the historic reform in Sacramento.[56]

Assemblyman Thomas F. Griffin, a country lawyer, was set to introduce a 10-hour bill early in the 1911 legislative session when he was approached by progressives from the Bay area, a prominent L.A. socialist, and a delegation of workers. Among them was San Francisco reformer Maud Younger and Frank Wolfe, the socialist. The result of that encounter was draft legislation for an eight-hour day. What happened next was reported by the *L.A. Record*:

> "'Big Business' laughed at Griffin's bill, at first. The agents of the interests fought it perfunctorily in the assembly committee. Amendments were suggested to make it unconstitutional. But labor saw the jokers. And labor saw to it that the bill went out of committee minus the jokers. 'Big Business' laughed again. Then the assembly passed the bill--as it was written. Many assemblymen voted for it in the belief that it would be killed in the Senate." [57]

Once again, this time in the state senate, a labor upsurge closed off what little daylight had existed between southern California's machine politicians and its reformers. Sen. Wright of San Diego led the old guard fight against the eight-hour bill; Sen. Lee C. Gates joined him on behalf of L.A.'s progressives. Gates, who ran for mayor on the 1906 nonpartisan ticket, had won Lincoln-Roosevelt League support for his successful Senate race. Personally close to railway magnate Henry Huntington, he said he opposed any limitation on women's work which did not apply to men. Since Gates had never favored shorter hours for anyone, this was merely an argument for the status quo. Sen. Leslie Hewitt, a former City Attorney who often collaborated with L.A.'s progressives, openly favored a long working day. This trio and other senators of like mind stalled the eight-hour bill in committee while jabbing it picador-style with hostile amendments. Only a concerted lobbying effort by the L.A. Central Labor Council, L.A. Building Trades Council, and their counterparts throughout California forced the weakened bill out of committee. The turn-

ing point was highly emotional testimony by "cracker-grabber" Daisy Mank, who risked her job in a cracker factory by telling the committee of long, hard workdays and pressure from the owners to sign a petition against the Griffin bill. Once on the senate floor, it passed by a 34 to 5 vote. Gates, Hewitt, and Wright made a late-hour bid to cover their tracks by voting for the measure.[58] An exuberant scene greeted the debate before the final roll call. As each restrictive amendment but one was pulled from the legislation, the crowded galleries broke out in applause. [59]

In its final form, the Griffin act decreed the 8-hour day and 48-hour week for all women except those employed by fruit and vegetable ranchers and processing plants. Ranchers and packers in southern California had mobilized enough political support to kill the new law if it did not offer them this loophole. For leading L.A. progressives not even a concession of this magnitude made the eight-hour day palatable. Meyer Lissner begged Gov. Hiram Johnson to veto it and *Express* publisher E.T. Earl had his house guest, Theodore Roosevelt, urge the governor to do likewise.

> "As the bill lay on Johnson's desk, the governor received a call from [Chester] Rowell who, with Earl listening to the conversation, undertook to state Roosevelt's views on the matter. When Rowell finished, Johnson asked him to tell the former President that he was sorry but he had just signed the measure. Sometime afterward Rowell learned that Johnson had signed the bill at the telephone during the conversation." 60

Two weeks later, on April 15, the unions of Los Angeles paraded through the city and massed in a huge demonstration to celebrate a reform they had not only originated but worked tirelessly to achieve.[61] Historians of progressive-era L.A. have repeatedly "confirmed" the weakness of its unions and the triumph of the open shop. For evidence they have pointed to the city's stingy social reform tradition. "[T]he social reform that Los Angeles residents enjoyed was not provided at the local level," declares Ingram.[62] Excluding Stimson and a few others, that remark gives us L.A. labor historiography in a nutshell. Social reform was, in fact, *de minimus* in the city, but it is not true that the few

increments of social wage Angelenos enjoyed fell on them like manna from Sacramento or Washington D.C. The women's eight-hour day movement offers a contrary interpretation; it shows why the same labor activists who despaired of wringing reforms from a progressive city council were capable of winning them from a somewhat less troglodyte state legislature. Ingram's remark celebrates this fact.

Unions, Women's Clubs Oppose Child Labor

A similar process tightened California's child labor law and marginally improved its enforcement. To the degree that children were excluded from the workplace, their jobs went to adults at somewhat higher pay while the wage-depressing reserve army of labor was proportionately reduced. Child labor reform thus raised the social wage.

"Los Angeles employers were notably lax in observing child labor regulations," says Stimson.[63] The State Labor Commissioner had too small a staff to enforce a 1901 law that raised the working age limit from 10 to 12. Backed by the *L.A. Times* and the emerging open-shop lobby, local food processing companies defied every effort to bar children from their plants. Their statewide counterparts did likewise. Arrayed against them were local members of the California Federation of Women's Clubs, a few other progressives, the Building Trades Council, the Council of Labor and its 1904 successor, the L.A. Central Labor Council.[64] The San Francisco Settlement Association and San Francisco Labor Council led a similar combination in northern California. These organizations sought not only a tougher law but a more aggressive enforcement program. In 1905, they persuaded a grudging state legislature and governor to meet both demands. The new child labor law still embodied concessions to the canning industry, but in Stimson's words it provided "that no child under eighteen could work more than nine hours a day; that no child under sixteen could work between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. or could work at all unless he could read and write English and was attending night school; and that a child under fourteen could

work only during school vacations by permission of the juvenile courts." Amendments adopted over the next four years strengthened the police power of school attendance officers and the State Labor Commissioner, who was now authorized to arrest violators.[65]

From 1905 on the Commission worked hand in glove with L.A.'s unions in a dogged but only partially successful campaign to halt the routine exploitation of children. Two of its deputy commissioners for southern California, J.M. Eshleman and Bruce Hatch, pursued violators with unusual vigor. Eshelman's investigations benefited from field and/or legal work by the Central Labor Council, Socialist Party leader Job Harriman, the Humane Society, and the local chapter of a nationwide progressive organization, the Consumers' League.[66] Their opponents were formidable, as the following cases demonstrate.

In the days before the new law took effect, L.A. unionists moved quickly to target violators. One of the most egregious of these was Weightman Smith, manager of the local branch of the California Fruit Canners' Association. His Macy Street cannery was notorious for the scores of children 13 and 14 years of age who toiled there up to 16 hours a day. On April 8, 1905, prodded by the Central Labor Council, the city attorney ordered Smith's arrest. The arrest warrant charged him with working a boy named Harry Gahn more than nine hours a day. Bragging to his employees that he would never face a jury, Smith used his political connections to delay his prosecution for six months. First, the city attorney's office conveniently lost the complaint. A new complaint was made out and a demurrer filed. The city attorney lost the demurrer. In May, 1906, when the case finally came to trial, Smith's lawyers talked the judge into excluding all potential jurors who had not paid a real estate or personal property tax--i.e. the sort of people who lived near the cannery. The court also barred any juror who had ever belonged to a union.

At trial, defense lawyers blamed the child labor violation on Smith's foremen. They recruited Deputy District Attorney E.J. Fleming to testify on his behalf. Outraged, the

Central Labor, Building Trades, & Miscellaneous Trades Councils demanded that District Attorney John D. Fredericks remove Fleming from his post. This he refused to do.

Despite the bias in jury selection, young Gahn's testimony struck most jurors as irrefutable. He told them he had been worked 13 hours a day. Nine of the eleven jurors vote to convict Smith. Since labor law convictions required a unanimous verdict, a new trial was scheduled for July. Shortly before the hearing the judge decided that certain alterations to the courtroom posed a safety threat and ordered a postponement.

On Sept. 12, 1906, the case again came to trial. The same jury exclusions remained in effect. Judge Austin told jurors that a guilty verdict could be reached only if the prosecution, led by Job Harriman, proved that *Smith himself* knew how many hours young Gahn worked. No such proof could be offered. Wright was therefore found not guilty.

As a result of this all-too-typical experience with the legal system, delegates from most L.A. unions meeting on Dec. 29, 1906 voted to seek changes in the child labor law. Delegates Tom Fennessy of Typographical No. 174 and Chris Ploeger of Press Feeders No. 37 made the case for reform at the California Federation of Labor's January, 1907 convention, which endorsed the proposal. It removed a plaintiff's obligation to prove a defendant had personal knowledge of the hours his child employees worked; a violator could be found guilty merely for *permitting* a child under 14 to work on his premises or a child under 18 to work over 8 hours on any day. A carefully hedged exception allowed children under 14 and over 12 to work if their parents or guardian were incapacitated, as determined by truant or probation officers and a judge of the local Juvenile or Superior Court. Union leaders recognized the fact that many workingclass parents relied on the supplemental income earned by teenage children. While concerns for the welfare of children and the size of the reserve army overrode this family custom as a general rule, the labor federation agreed to exempt households deprived of adult earnings through illness

or injury.[67]

Early in 1907 the state labor federation pushed its reform through the state legislature, but James Gillette, last of a long line of governors installed by the Southern Pacific and its corporate allies, pocket-vetoed it. The *L.A. Times* denounced the proposed amendments as an attempt to "restrict the labor market"--which they clearly were--and heaped "columns of abuse" on witnesses who supported them.[68] Harrison Gray Otis' disdain for any limits on the use of child labor was surpassed by his loathing for organized labor. In an address to the Commonwealth Club, California Labor Commissioner W.V. Stafford recalled his department's jarring encounter with the *Times* publisher:

> "Throughout the entire state this aid [publicity for the 1905 law] has been cheerfully given, but here in Los Angeles we found one exception. The proprietor of a great daily newspaper, when solicited to bring the matter before the public in the interest of both the employer and the child, demanded in return for his aid in this humane work that our department of the state government should aid him in smashing the labor unions." 69

The barriers to enforcement laid bare by the Weightman Smith case did not demoralize the attack on child labor violators in Los Angeles. In March, 1906, one B. Roselli was convicted of employing his 12-year-old son in his Central Avenue market.[70] Several months later W. B. Vanna, business agent of the Laundry Workers Union, handed the city attorney evidence that J.E. Reid was working teenagers 10 to 12 hours a day in his laundry. Reid was arrested, indicted, and convicted.[71] These cases opened an era in which the number of successful child labor prosecutions almost matched the failed ones. The political climate became less indulgent of violators--but only slightly so. Interviewed by the *L.A. Examiner* on March 16, 1906, Deputy Commissioner Eshelman said, "This is the fourth time representatives of the state bureau have visited Los Angeles since the child-labor law went into effect, April 20 last...and on each visit we have received assurances from merchants and employers generally of this city that they would at once comply with the law, but each time we return we find that these promises have not been complied with."[72] Over the next five or six years the city's unions continued to report child labor violations to city and county officials, who refused most prosecutions while carrying a

few through to conviction. Hostility to the new, amended law by Otis, the Citizens' Council, the M&M, and other open-shop forces and its lukewarm acceptance by progressives left investigations largely up to the unions and enforcement in the hands of a small number of state officials. This combination made a difference, but not nearly enough to emulate San Francisco in the almost total abolition of child labor.[73] In March, 1909, when Frances Nacke Noel urged delegates at a Central Labor Council meeting to work for women's suffrage, it was partly in the expectation that a broader franchise would rid Los Angeles of officials who winked at the persistence of illegal child labor.[74]

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The onus for workplace legislation fell on unions, but social reform was more broadly shouldered in the arena of consumption. Here progressives organized sporadic cross-class coalitions for affordable housing, poor relief, and public education[75] but did little to expand the city's stock of public parks. [76] The results they obtained in 1900-15 were meager compared to social reforms in other large American cities of that era.

Housing

Most wage-earning Angelenos lived in a broad swath of precincts that curved east of Main Street from northern to southern Los Angeles on both sides of the river. Embedded in this arc were the Southern Pacific tracks, the historic Plaza, most of the city's industrial plants, and part of the central business district. Neighborhoods surrounding Aliso Street, which crossed the river toward Boyle Heights from a point near present-day Union Station, formed the problematic core of the workingclass city. On its periphery lived older immigrant groups (German, Canadian, Irish) and the mostly white, mostly native-born skilled and semi-skilled workers whom we have briefly met earlier in this dissertation and who are the protagonists of Part 2. A majority owned their own homes. In the core itself were gathered some thousands of less skilled, considerably poorer recent immigrants and racial minorities: Mexicans, Italians, Jews, Slavs, Chinese, Japanese, and

African-Americans.[77] Poverty and exclusionary real estate practices had forced most of them into tenancy.[78] A large number lived in lodging houses and small homes, but most Mexicans crowded into house courts whose squalor, high rents, disease, and lack of facilities offended progressive opinion from the 1890s to the eve of World War I--i.e., during this period they were never effectively renovated or replaced.

Not that a small band of reformers didn't try. During the century's first decade they led a number of investigative sorties into the Aliso Street slums and other run-down blocks between Main Street and Boyle Heights. What they reported was news to nobody, but it helped transmute the old notion of "the poor ye shall always have with ye" into a problem seeking a solution. The key year was 1906, when Mayor Owen McAleer appointed a temporary Housing Commission led by Dr. Titian Coffey to carry out the investigations and propose cures for "the foul cellars, the over-crowded sleeping rooms, the improper construction, the unsanitary plumbing and, above all, the deficient toilet facilities and surface drainage of these 'cholo courts'."[79] In a typical court, eight or more two-room shanties surrounded a central yard that contained the sole water supply for 65 to 75 people. Lighting facilities were minimal or non-existent. So was sanitation. Typhoid fever and tuberculosis chased other diseases from dwelling to dwelling.[80]

Against these failures the new Housing Commission, Health Commission, city council, and reformers wielded a mediocre set of weapons. The same regulatory apparatus that progressives were imposing on the excesses of privately-owned public utilities proved ineffectual against wholly private corporations. The city clamped a lid on prices charged by the electric, gas, rail, and water companies; not so on rents. It denied franchises to railways, but the owners of slum property could not so easily be ordered out of business. In the tenements, which the Health Commission oversaw, sanitary regulations were sometimes vigorously enforced. This was not the case in the courts monitored by the

Housing Commission, at least not during the century's first decade. Hotels, boarding-houses and lodging houses routinely had to obtain licenses, but housing courts often escaped this form of regulation.

To a degree the weakness in enforcement stemmed from laws which barred the taking of property rights except by condemnation for public projects--and even that required compensation. But it arose far more from the free-market ideology then rampant in Los Angeles among Old Guard and progressive politicians alike. In their eyes the right of entrepreneurial merchants, manufacturers, and landlords to run their businesses as they saw fit trumped the rights of consumers, workers, and tenants. Consequently during the Progressive era few politicians addressed the Aliso Street slum's root cause--low wages and the unearned increment in the price of land. Public investments in streets, railways, water, and electricity in or near the urban core had greatly increased the value of underdeveloped land--no thanks to its owners. Speculators, including slum landlords, had little incentive to develop their property to a higher use when it rewarded them so handsomely at a lower one. Of course the unearned increment was taxed, but the full cost of the tax was passed on to tenants who lived elbow-to-elbow in the ramshackle courts. Rents were exorbitantly high ($5 to $10 a month) for hovels in which so little had been invested, but low enough to attract desperate immigrants.

"Thus a slum is made," editorialized the *Municipal News*, the city weekly that organized labor had campaigned for as an antidote to the fictions crafted by the *L.A. Times*.

> "It grows as more land is held in speculation and more people, who must have low rent, arrive. Landlords ready to exploit slum property are not wanting, for slum property nets a double yield. The land stores up the unearned increment, while the hovels upon it drain rich returns from their poverty-racked families. It is a notorious fact that the tenant of the slum pays relatively the highest rent in the city. Not only does he wipe out the high taxes, high because the appraisals of the land are on a level with the property surrounding it that is in use, but often he pays a high interest on the investment as industrial land. The stress of the high tax and the profit falls upon the slum renter with bitter force. To ease it he takes into his crowded quarters sub-tenants and lodgers, until his home is turned into a warren of disease and death." 81

The city could have regulated rents. It could at least have prohibited slum landlords from deflecting the unearned increment tax to their tenants. As union leaders urged, it could have built enough sanitary, affordable public housing to underbid the Aliso courts. Would these methods have opened up a market for low-cost dwellings worth their rent? Probably, but they were not pursued. Instead successive city councils and mayors relied on the Housing Commission and voluntary associations to undertake a few palliative reforms.

Missionaries opened a few day nurseries for young children in the courts so their parents could hold down jobs. As in most such religious work a century ago, its beneficiaries found that help came wrapped in a patronizing concern for their morals. "Conditions surrounding these people render it very difficult for them to live upright, moral lives, even if they wish to do so," said Dr. Harriet W. Carman of the Women's Christian Temperance Union. "[T]hey are much less to be blamed than pitied."[82] Both missionaries and the Housing Commission tended to place the onus for good sanitation and hygiene on tenants, not landlords. In a visit to a Pacific Electric camp where 50 to 60 of Henry Huntington's Mexican track workers lived with their families, *L.A. Record* reporter Edwin T. Jorgensen found the air "foul with reeking smells. There is no sewage in the camp, the toilets are simply shallow vaults." This fact notwithstanding, Jorgensen described Dr. Dana Bartlett, then president of the Housing Commission, as a hero to the Mexicans for "working valiantly to clothe these people, supply them with medicine, and teach them better standards of living."[83] Apparently even Bartlett, L.A.'s most dedicated social reformer but also a man who saw poverty as an infirmity of the poor, found the camp's abysmal standard of living to be the track workers' responsibility, not Huntington's.

Organized labor's push for city-run housing peaked at a time when its own resources were strained to the limit and both the progressive and Old Guard forces of Los Angeles

were united against it. Early in 1910 a housing expert from Denver addressed the Central Labor Council, urging it to demand the construction of a large municipal lodging house like those in New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia. This the council did. It petitioned both Mayor Alexander and the city council to support such a reform, but the petition was rebuffed. On July 31, when the Union Labor Political Club endorsed the Socialist Party's state and county tickets while condemning the Good Government Organization, its platform called for municipal housing.[84] Had the labor-socialist alliance won the mayoralty vote in December, 1911--or even elected a few city council members--low-cost public housing might have seen the light of day. Neither L.A.'s unions nor the local Socialist Party forcefully pressed the issue after 1911, however. Their energies were consumed by the campaign for public power, other public ownership goals, and a fight for their very existence. Could municipal housing have made a large dent in the city's seemingly intractable housing court problem? The answer lies buried in might-have-beens, the question never put to the test.

Welfare and the Reserve Army

There are few better barometers of a governing elite's relationship to the working class than the way it structures and deploys its system of welfare. During the progressive era, welfare provision was lopsidedly local; cities like Los Angeles faced the pressing needs of orphans and delinquents, widows, abandoned wives, the elderly poor and able-bodied jobless largely on their own, with little help from state legislatures and almost none from Washington, D.C. In the 1930s this predicament would churn up stubborn demands for federal intervention, but no such outcry arose in 1890-1915. L.A.'s mayors, city councilmen, and county supervisors of that quarter-century presided over a stingy public welfare cupboard and saw no need to make it generous. Old Guard and Progressive alike, they all had a stake in the open shop. The *sine qua non* of the open shop was a large floating army

of unemployed, underemployed, and desperate men and women, willing to cross almost any picketline and take almost any job at almost any wage. What possibly could have weakened the growth and persistence of this army more than a truly unstinting system of relief?

Before 1890 the city's helping network extended no farther than a handful of settlement houses, a few free or low-cost clinics, several homes for orphans, unwed mothers, and low-income working women, and a small number of charitable and self-help organizations like the Mexican *sociedades mutualistas* that served particular ethnic groups.[85] All the above were private entities. Neither the city nor the county government moved to ease the joblessness and poverty that gripped southern California during the recession of the mid-1880s.

That cause was taken up by L.A.'s first central labor body, the Trades Council, which began agitating for a free employment service in 1885. It finally won its point in January, 1893, on the eve of a nationwide financial panic and depression. Prodded by both the Trades Council and Mayor Thomas Hazard, the city council created a Free Labor Bureau and named W.A. White of the Stonecutters' Union as its manager. Half its funds came from the city, half from the county. Within two years the new agency found jobs for 5,068 of the nearly 10,000 men and women who applied.[86] Despite this record--or more likely because of it--open-shop forces tried to wrest control of the employment service from organized labor. The city's few relief groups had set up an Associated Charities office in 1893 to lobby for municipal funds; two years later the Merchants' Association urged the city and county to support job placements by this politically safe organization instead of the labor bureau. The effort failed, but in 1897 the County Board of Supervisors replaced White with a former employer named S.M. Perry. In Grace Heilman Stimson's words, "organized labor saw its control slipping away."[87] The history of the

first Free Labor Bureau and its occasional successors remained a contentious one throughout the progressive era .

The Americanization of Amelia

One of the more jarring contradictions in L.A.'s embryonic welfare system was the rivalry between two schools of social work--the settlement house approach pioneered in Chicago by Julia Lathrop, Jane Addams, Frances Kellor, and Graham Taylor before being planted in Los Angeles late in the 19th century, and the first clumsy trials of modern "scientific" casework early in the 20th. These trials, carried out by a growing number of private relief agencies, the city's Associated Charities, and most notably the L.A. County Department of Charities, would lead by the mid-1930s to the hegemony of casework. During the progressive era, however, the struggle between the two methods of welfare provision was far from resolved. It was fought to a considerable extent over the issue of caring for immigrants.

Protestant women organized L.A.'s first settlement houses in the 1890s. Most prominent of these was the College Settlement, founded in 1894 on Alpine Street a few blocks from the Aliso Street courts. Inspired by Chicago's Hull House, it served a local population of recently arrived Mexican, Italian, Basque, Syrian, and Slav immigrants who worked in low-wage jobs when they could find work at all. At the College Settlement they obtained spare clothing, rudimentary health care, referrals to Children's Hospital, helpful instruction and games, and, not least, friendship. Resident social workers, all women, sent the neediest families to Associated Charities, but that is where any similarity with casework began and ended.

While most public and private charities viewed the poor as "clients," settlements called them "neighbors". The charities atomized society and disarmed clients by dealing with just one family at a time; settlements invited their neighbors to share group experiences in

classes, clubs, and entertainments. Public charities, by deliberate policy, helped families only after they had exhausted their meager resources. The College Settlement intervened earlier in an effort to *prevent* dependency, just as it worked with the Juvenile Court and probation officers to forestall truancy and delinquency. It saw its mission as guiding "the privileged and the unprivileged to a better understanding of their mutual obligations." The onus on poor families who enrolled in the settlement's clubs and classes was to adopt American ways of homemaking, hygiene, work, and citizenship. For native-born Angelenos who donated money to the settlement or attended its concerts and lectures, the burden was to show respect for at least the artistic aspects of immigrant culture--what Jane Addams called "immigrant gifts". The College Settlement went out of its way to revive and present the dances, music, and folk literature of the ethnicities that trouped through its door. [88]

Such gestures now seem superficial and patronizing in light of the pressures immigrants felt to accept Anglo-American time-discipline at home and at work. Douglas Monroy has written of L.A.'s early twentieth-century settlements that they "sought to break down Mexican culture nonviolently and to simultaneously integrate them into the dominant Anglo ways and the Mexicans' inferior position in society."[89] There is much truth in that statement, but it is too harsh. During the settlements' brief ascendancy in L.A. they faced a competing Americanization project, led by the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) and allied capitalists, that sought to impose on immigrants an "imperious conformity." Some employers refused to hire immigrants who had not submitted to such indoctrination. "In contrast to these programs," says historian Gayle Gullett, "were the Americanization efforts of settlement workers, many of them women, who, like their DAR adversaries, advocated the creation of a homogeneous national culture based on Anglo-American values. On the other hand, they felt national unity should develop within

a democratic process and that immigrants must participate in the shaping of national culture.[90]

This was the approach taken by the College Settlement. Though it contained a deep-down element of condescension, it was far more considerate of poor families than the means tests, enforced pauperization, and morals policing of L.A.'s charitable casework establishment. Both the settlements and the public and private charities reflected the prejudices of their time. They shared with most native-born white Angelenos, including organized workers, a grave underestimation of the character of Asians, Mexicans, and African-Americans. Had the settlements survived, they would probably have shed these *apriori* judgments at least to the degree that the larger society has shed them; their "neighbors" would have seen to that. The casework system did survive, but precisely because it refuses to deal with its "clients" as ethnic collectivities, as whole cultures, as members of an exploited class, it remains prejudicial to their interests to this day.

The Americanization project was unevenly pursued while in private hands from the 1890s to 1914. During World War I, however, it gained momentum, state sanction, and wide public support. Loyalty to an American democracy under attack became an acid test for immigrants hoping to start new lives in this country. Americanization programs also offered women reformers an ideal chance to paper over class antagonisms without addressing the class inequalities that provoked them. "According to the activists," says Gullet, "American values could not take root unless immigrant wives and mothers taught them in the immigrant home; moreover, that instruction could not effectively occur unless women reformers had first instructed immigrant women."[91]

Here we have the rationale for the home teaching movement which spread throughout California in 1915 under the aegis of the Commission on Immigration and Housing. Three years earlier, Simon J. Lubin, a former settlement worker, had heard Addams and

Kellor read the Progressive Party's national plank on immigration. He was greatly impressed by their call for state immigration agencies, and in 1913 he talked Gov. Hiram Johnson into creating a California Commission on Immigration and Housing. "The Commission's education programs, especially its home teacher program that sent female public school teachers into immigrant homes, won the praise of Americanization advocates across the nation," says Gullet. "These programs were the creation of Mary Gibson, a Los Angeles school teacher, the widow of a banker, and nearly sixty when she joined the Commission in 1913."[92]

Gibson had devoted three decades to welfare work and progressive politics, founding an orphanage in the 1880s, joining the Friday Morning Club and its "municipal housekeeping" campaigns in the 1890s, and fighting for women's suffrage in the 1900s. Though Johnson had named her to the commission, the tenuous nature of male progressive support for women like herself led her to rely on the state's formidable network of women's clubs for her home teacher program.[93] She wrote the state's Home Teacher Act, deployed the Women's Legislative Council to drive it through the legislature, and secured D.A.R. funding for the first home teachers. In 1915 Gibson was elected an officer of the statewide Federation of Women's Clubs and used that position to agitate for Americanization statewide. Los Angeles, with its fast-growing Mexican community, became the front line of her campaign.[94]

The Los Angeles of 1915 was ground zero for an explosion in the number of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans. Fifteen years earlier, swamped by a deluge of midwesterners, they had accounted for a mere five percent of the city's population. Living in what whites called "Sonoratowns" in the Old Plaza-Aliso house court area, San Pedro and Wilmington, Watts, and San Fernando, they had led a politically submerged existence as field and track hands, liverymen, day laborers, seamstresses, and street vendors of sweets, tamales,

and manzanita roots. Their ranks grew at an accelerating pace after the turn of the century, however. The 1910 Mexican revolution, with its severe disruption of ordinary life, drove many rural refugees northward. Drawn to the L.A. basin by quickening industrialization and to the San Joaquin and Imperial Valleys by the demand for stoop labor on recently irrigated farms, new immigrants poured across the Baja California border--many of them on the trains of the Santa Fe and Southern Pacific. American immigration policy had opened the floodgates. By excluding new Chinese workers in 1882 and Japanese in 1907, it had created a vacuum in the seasonal migratory workforce that California's ranchers hired at bare subsistence wages. Until the red scare following on the heels of World War I, U.S. border agents routinely ignored literacy tests, head taxes, and bans on contract labor to ensure the Southwest an abundant supply of "illegal" (and therefore highly exploitable) Mexican labor.[95] "The volume of this migration was nothing less than staggering," historian George Sánchez has observed. "More than one million Mexicans--about 10 percent of Mexico's population--had entered the United States from 1910 to 1930." Thousands of the new Mexican families wintered in Los Angeles during the Progressive era and thousands more settled there permanently. By 1930, a tenth of the city's million-plus residents would be Mexican.[96]

It was not just the sense of being invaded that made Gibson and other Americanizers fixate on recent Mexican immigrants; the character flaws they imputed to the new arrivals had at least as much to do with it. Social workers, sociologists, and social reformers like Gibson expressed a kindly, or "helping," strain of the racism that poisoned most white Angelenos' opinion of Mexicans during the first decades of the 20th century. Emory Bogardus, chair of the University of Southern California's sociology department, sent a whole generation of welfare workers and sociologists into L.A.'s "Sonoratowns" with master's degrees in these prejudices. One of them, William McEuen, called the typi-

cal Mexican "a spend-thrift and a born gambler, a happy-go-lucky, careless merry person." Bogardus himself declared that "[t]he Mexican laborer is often shiftless and thriftless; his past environment has not stimulated him to be otherwise."[97]

Unlike hard-edged racists and nativists who urged immigration authorities to bar Mexicans from the United States, Americanizers cautiously welcomed them on the surmise that they could be taught time-discipline. This was the subtext of pejoratives like "shiftless and thriftless" and "happy-go-lucky." It was also the declared goal of Gibson, Bogardus, Amanda Mathews Chase, and most other Americanizers. Bogardus defined the "problem" to be solved: Mexicans, he wrote, "live so largely in the present that time has no particular meaning to them. With them time is not commercialized as with us...and as is natural they consequently do not drive themselves as we drive ourselves."[98] Chase, the state's first home teacher and one of the founders of the program in Los Angeles, saw her work as a "disciplinary tonic" for Mexicans being drained of their Mexicanness.[99]

What was this "Mexicanness," and why did it need to be rooted out? Besides the personal traits that struck nativists and Americanizers as unruly were habits embedded in rural Mexican culture. These included the observance of saints' days, hometown holidays, and religious festivals; bouts of weekend drinking; confinement of women's work to the home; and--closely linked to the latter--a high fertility rate. Exaggerated in the minds of most Americanizers, these customs and norms had a basis in reality. They not only kept most Mexican-American women out of the paid labor market but made their husbands' and brothers' appearance there highly erratic. "When a Mexican laborer wants to take a day off,' complained superintendent W.H. Watts of the El Paso Water Company, "he can be relied on to dig up a saint or some kind of an anniversary to celebrate."[100] Weekend drinking, often in a festive context, gave rise to the Mexican version of "Saint Mondays" and a four-day workweek. How un-American was that?

"Just as in all modernizing countries, the United States faced the difficult task of industrializing whole cultures," Herbert G. Gutman pointed out in a groundbreaking essay 30 years ago, "but in this country the process was regularly repeated, each stage of American economic growth and development involving different first-generation factory workers....[T]he American working class was continually altered in its composition by infusions, from within and without the nation, of peasants, farmers, skilled artisans, and casual day laborers who brought into industrial society ways of work and other habits and values not associated with industrial necessities and the industrial ethos."[101]

In Los Angeles during World War I, meeting those necessities and stamping that ethos on immigrant Mexicans was the task Americanizers in the home-teaching program and settlement houses set for themselves. Their aim was to achieve what E.P. Thompson called "a severe restructuring of working habits--new disciplines, new incentives, and a new human nature upon which these incentives could bite effectively."[102] Not by accident did the home teacher movement coincide with the rise of Frederick Taylor's "scientific management" system for rating, controlling, and accelerating the work of factory and office employees. Gibson was fully aware of the new regimen, as Gullet makes clear:

> "Scientific management, Gibson explained, encouraged employers and workers to 'give each other a hand,' thereby increasing production, easing the tense relations between capital and labor, and eventually dissipating class consciousness altogether as workers increased their financial gains. In Taylor's system, however, management controlled technical knowledge and made the decisions. Gibson borrowed this concept from Taylor as well as his emphasis on cooperation. She envisioned an interdependent society as hierarchical and relying on humane yet powerful experts to achieve and maintain social harmony." [103]

Impelled by this vision, Gibson sent her teacher corps into Mexican and other immigrant homes to rid them of pre-industrial habits. There was no space in this endeavor for an appreciation of "immigrant gifts." Home teachers focused on women first and foremost, given their role as the primary socializers of children and as a stronger influence on male heads of households than any Anglo teacher or social worker could ever be. "Accor-

ding to the strategy advocated by the Americanists," says Sánchez, "if the Mexican female adopted American values, the rest of her family would certainly follow suit....By focusing on the strategic position of the mother in the Mexican family, Americanization programs hoped to have an impact on the second generation of Mexicans in the United States."[104]

Frequent contact with each family was crucial for building trust between the home teacher and the mothers in her district. To the degree that trust took hold, the teacher could then advance each family through the Gibson program: instruction in a healthy diet, modern hygiene, household budgeting, fertility control, and distaff trades such as sewing and cooking, and the enrollment of women in English classes. The latter activities were possible only with the consent of Mexican husbands who traditionally did not expect their wives to achieve competence in the wide world. But the home teacher's role was less revolutionary than might be supposed. Sánchez explains:

> "Americanization programs, however, did not intend to undermine the traditional Mexican family structure; rather, these programs depended on the cohesiveness of the Mexican family to achieve their goal of assimilation. Home teachers, even when they did get Mexican women out of the house to attend class, encouraged the acquisition of traditionally feminine skills which could then be utilized within the confines of the household. The conscious strategy of these reformers was to use the Mexican woman as a conduit for creating a home environment well suited to the demands of an industrial economy." 105

To modernize the Mexican-American home, reformers soon realized, they would have to nudge its women across the threshold into sex-segregated jobs in the food, hospitality, laundry and domestic service industries. English classes were scheduled for wives and mothers in the afternoon. Newly acquired language skills encouraged many immigrant women to apply for jobs when unemployment eased slightly after World War I. In the dialectic between home and work--or so the theory went--newly acquired time-discipline in one venue would reinforce time-discipline in the other, and the Mexican family would take on a distinctly American coloration.[106] Whether life for immigrants would actually

improve was at best a secondary consideration for home teachers and other Americanizers. By sending mothers and daughters into a gendered job market, they were consigning them to the lowest wages Los Angeles offered--wages so low they might loosen but could not break the grip of patriarchy on Mexican households. Only women who entered effectively unionized workplaces had the wherewithal to win economic independence. On this very point one can see a critical difference between Gibsonian and what might be called trade union Americanization. "Organized Labor is the greatest Americanizer I know," Frances Nacke Noel told the California Federation of Women's Clubs in April, 1916, "because [it fights] for an American standard of living, and without an American standard of living you cannot have an American standard of freedom and culture."[107]

Did the Americanizers succeed? By one key test, no. At the end of World War I Mexican immigrants already had the lowest naturalization rate of any group in California. The ratio of naturalized to all foreign-born Mexicans in the state actually *fell* during the first half of the 1920s, when home teaching was still being vigorously pursued. Nativist demands for firm limits on Mexican immigration grew louder, and before the end of that decade the Commission of Immigration and Housing joined them.[108] Gibson's Home Teacher program was abandoned. More demoralized than they themselves knew, some Americanizers adopted the harder racism of the nativist lobby and shifted their attention to the public schools, where the effort to deracinate Mexican immigrants continued, self-defeatingly, in segregated classrooms.[109]

Americanization was misguided in its core assumption. As both Garcia and Sánchez have shown, the Spanish-Indian culture that Mexicans carried with them across the U.S. border was less an obstacle to their full participation in American life than a key means by which they would achieve that goal--like so many other immigrant generations in an inventively creolized way. The possibility of such an outcome never occurred to social

reformers in the Progressive era.

Dispensing "Least Relief"

> *"The trades unions differ from charitable societies or persons in that they help workers to help themselves, while the charities give the needy a small portion of what never ought to have been taken from them."* 110

The vital bonds linking L.A.'s welfare system to its open-shop offensive are explored in some detail below. What matters here is the payoff: an enduring philosophy of "least relief" and a welfare record of notable stinginess.

From 1890 to the end of World War I a patchwork of private charities labored against much public indifference to orient newcomers to the city, feed and shelter a fraction of the non-working poor, offer a pittance of relief to the able-bodied jobless, counsel members of specific ethnic groups, and provide room, board, and medical care for unwed mothers, their babies, and wards of the Juvenile Court.[111] A highly-praised example of the latter charity was the Florence Crittenton Home in northeast Los Angeles, which sheltered 103 unwed mothers and 70 infants in 1915. Three quarters of the women had worked as domestics, factory hands, waiters, laundry and garment workers, stenographers, and clerks. The home cared for them an average of three months, offered them occupational and childcare training, and placed them in new jobs or returned them to their families. Most of the babies stayed with their mothers.[112]

Effective as it was, however, the Crittenton Home saw no need to engage the thorny social and economic conditions that gave rise to unwed motherhood, dependency, and privation. Nor did the city's other private charities. Their concern for the chronic unemployment that afflicted the city led to temporary soup kitchens rather than efforts to organize poor neighborhoods or create a program of effective relief. Even the settlement houses turned out to be pale imitations of their Chicago counterparts in this regard. Ill-equipped to fight poverty or joblessness, private charities worked largely in isolation

from one another. Coordination among them lagged even after they cobbled together an Associated Charities bureau in 1893.

This drawback eased somewhat during progressive rule in Los Angeles. By 1912 a Conference of Social Workers had entered the field, serving as a forum for the city's public and private welfare workers. That year it urged the city council to create an agency charged with overseeing all charities financed in part or in full by contributions. The council did not act on this proposal but voters did, adopting a 1913 charter amendment that gave rise to a Municipal Charities Commission. In its first year the new agency investigated 46 private agencies and endorsed all but 4 for the receipt of monetary donations. It was succeeded by a Social Service Commission in 1916. Both agencies tried "to bring order out of chaos" in the words of Mayor Henry H. Rose, but by regulating just one charity at a time they forfeited a more strategic citywide coordinating role.[113]

The same reticence limited the work of their county cousin, the Public Welfare Commission. Appointed by the Board of Supervisors on April 14, 1915, it was led by the ubiquitous John R. Haynes. Two other L.A. progressives--Sidney A. Butler and Cora D. Lewis--helped shape its policies.[114] Despite the reform credentials of Haynes, Lewis, and Butler, they do not appear to have exploited the most ambitious mandate of the commission's enabling act, namely "to secure intelligent cooperation among all charitable and social agencies in the county and the municipalities therein *to the end that a comprehensive and economical plan of public welfare may be attained.*"[115] No such plan emerged during the period 1915-18. Instead the commission limited itself to investigating private charities, endorsing those that met "actual needs of the community," recommending a few for county subsidies,[116] serving as a conduit for those funds, issuing permits for day nurseries and women's boarding homes, and collecting data on charitable aid, unemployment, and juvenile delinquency. These activities did not rise above the level of piece-

meal regulation. As a result private charities had far less impact on everyday life of Los Angeles than they did in New York, Boston, and other cities with a greater coordination of social work and a stronger commitment to welfare philanthropy.

The City Defers to the County

Public social work fared little better. As open-shop forces recruited more and more job-seekers to the area after 1905, a high rate of unemployment became chronic. The city and the county worked out a loose division of labor which shunted permanent relief cases--mainly widows with children and the aged poor--to the county charities department while the city handled emergency cases--mainly able-bodied but destitute men and women who couldn't find work. These distinctions quickly became meaningless, however. The Associated Charities, renamed United Charities when it became the city's funnel for public relief, proved incompetent to help more than a tiny fraction of the willing-to-work poor. Underfunded and understaffed, it collapsed beneath the weight of jobless Angelenos during the recession of 1914-17. It shut down all relief activities on July 1, 1915, ceding what little remained of them to the county.[117]

Six months before this transfer the Board of Supervisors created the L.A. County Department of Charities to manage and professionalize three public agencies for the indigent: the County Farm, County Hospital, and Outdoor Relief Division. The farm had spent about $125,000 a year on the care of nearly 200 aged and disabled county residents. The hospital had tended a daily average of 1,150 patients, many of them unwed mothers and their babies. Though immigration foes led by county supervisor Richard H. Norton protested that a quarter of the beds were filled by Mexican nationals, fewer than six percent of the patients actually fit that description. Most Mexicans avoided the hospital because they had seen too many of their countrymen enter it upright and leave horizontal.[118]

Until 1915 the farm, hospital, and relief department were indifferently supervised by Dr. C.H. Whitman, a physician who received no stipend for the job and accordingly spent most of his time in private practice. His appointment as overseer, declared the foreman of the 1914 grand jury that investigated the three agencies, "was and is an acknowledged subterfuge and evasion of the Charter. He is only nominally such; he is such in shadow, but not in substance."[119] Oversight of each agency had actually devolved to a supervisor with no claim on expertise in welfare administration--Norton over outdoor relief, Charles D. Manning over the county farm. Manning ran the farm through his son, a political conflict of interest which the grand jury found "hardly ethical."[120] In all key respects--professional standards, staff competence, recordkeeping and statistics, provision of care--the three agencies suffered from slipshod work. The grand jury's report, and a follow-up joint investigation by the Bureau of Efficiency[121] and the State Board of Charities and Correction, called for a top-to-bottom revamping of welfare provision in Los Angeles County.

Pressure for change weighed on the county supervisors. They were led by chairman Richard W. Pridham, whom we have already met as a foe of the eight-hour day and the social wage. Sitting with him were Norton, Manning, Sidney A. Butler, and W.E. Hinshaw. Despite their occasional differences, all were progressives while Norton also had a union background (see Chapter 10). Pridham, Manning, Butler, and Hinshaw served together on the executive committee of the Roosevelt Progressive Republican League. Manning's long supervisorial tenure dated back to 1906, when he was nominated for the post by the county's nonpartisans. Norton, by now a cantankerous politician who irritated his colleagues, nevertheless followed the reform canon except for moments of dissent rooted in his past involvement with organized labor. What these five worthies did in response to the grand jury ultimatum tells us a great deal about progressivism in Los Ange-

les: they tapped Norman Martin, a retired high-level executive of the *Southern Pacific Railroad*, to head the new Department of Charities.[122]

Martin appears to have been an earnest, well-intentioned man and a good manager, but he found at best only grudging support for his reforms among the progressive supervisors. Fighting to modernize county welfare programs in the face of an economic slump that robbed him of the resources he needed for the task, Martin concentrated his attention on the Outdoor Relief Division. This was the branch of Charities most intimately mired in the reserve army, the economic casualties of the open shop. It is the Outdoor Relief Division which provides us with the clearest insights into the nature and limits of welfare provision in Progressive-era Los Angeles.

Until the last third of the 19th century, such relief as existed in the U.S. was extended in-kind to paupers in almshouses, workhouses, asylums, and other institutions. After 1900 a Charity Organization Society (COS) movement led by Mary Richmond gained ground both on this old form of relief inherited from the English Poor Laws and on the settlement house movement of the 1880s and 1890s. Richmond championed "scientific" casework, "friendly visiting" of clients by caseworkers, the efficient dispensing of alms, the investigation of fraud, and the unsentimental verification of need. Distinguishing between the "unworthy" and the "deserving" poor, she prescribed institutional care for the former and outdoor (at-home) relief for the latter.[123] The principle of "least relief" took hold as her influence spread: clients were to be granted no more aid than necessary to restore them to self-reliance. In Los Angeles 90 years ago, the County Farm was a vestigial Poor Law institution and the Outdoor Relief Division, with its narrow focus on "deserving" widows and the disabled, was a Richmondian agency, albeit a drastically incompetent one.

Heading the division from February 1909 until Martin fired him in April, 1915 was a

gentleman named H.M. Crane. The 1914 grand jury found that he "either does not know how, or does not attempt to properly perform the duties of such an office. Apparently he has never provided needed statistics or properly followed up the relief work."[124] The fault lay less in Crane than in the supervisors who hired someone clearly unaware of or indifferent to the casework standards set by his counterparts in other large cities, especially those of the East and Midwest. Here we arrive at the Outdoor Relief Division's core failure before and to a lesser degree after the reorganization of January, 1915.

In their Jan. 8, 1915 report to the supervisors, the Efficiency Bureau and State Charities Board saw the problem clearly. They were scathing in their criticism:

> "Originally, the idea of a Public Charities Office was to suppress professional fraud and bring imposters to justice. Relief was doled out to the 'worthy' in sufficient quantities only to keep them from starvation. Modern methods of philanthropy have crowded these bugaboos of organized charity well down the list of its activities, and have replaced them with the ideas of service and adequate relief. The Los Angeles County Charities has failed to free itself from the old point of view. As nearly as we could learn, it is the policy of the office to assist only when no other resource is left, that is, in cases of absolute destitution, and to give only sufficient aid to barely provide food and shelter....Philanthropy of this type is neither progressive, scientific nor effective." [125]

To receive consideration from Crane's office, relief applicants had to prove they had lived in L.A. County for at least a year, lacked both property and liquid assets, and had no able-bodied man in their family. Not only did these tests exclude the working poor, who were legion in Los Angeles, but they denied help to most other low-income Angelenos. "There is no attempt at constructive work in cases that simply represent a low standard of living," observed the Jan. 8, 1915 report. The supervisors took note of the resulting paucity of clients and gave Crane only four investigators, one assistant inspector, and one clerk/stenographer to handle them. This number grew unimpressively to nine by 1915.[126]

Aid dispensed to the few families who qualified for it was, of course, *de minimus*. Mostly it trickled out as food and household articles from grocers who had signed cost-plus contracts with the Charities Office. "It is the policy of the office to give relief only in

kind," the report explained. "Cash is occasionally paid when the indigent needs other things than may be procured by or from the grocer. In such cases, the grocer's order is increased to cover the amount of cash granted, and he is instructed to advance this amount to the indigent." The Charities Office never let its clients handle cash relief. It paid rents, for example, directly to their landlords.[127] In this respect it was no different from any other agency influenced by the Richmond school of social work. Clients were held to be too irresponsible to use aid money wisely, at least in the early stages of their cases. Friendly visiting was supposed to bring them slowly around to a more disciplined encounter with life. The problem with the Charities Office was that it had inherited Richmond's low opinion of the poor but not the rigorous casework system she had devised to uplift them. Even with a caseload that drew in just a tiny fraction of destitute Angelenos, Crane's staff saw each client no more than two or three times a year. Each visit involved a different investigator, with virtually no record-keeping, so there was little effort to rehabilitate clients, train them for the job market, find daycare facilities for their children, or do anything else to improve their material circumstances.[128]

Tables 1 through 4 show the frail condition and limited reach of the welfare safety net in Los Angeles near the end of the Progressive era:

1. Cases originated and funded by County Outdoor Relief Division in fiscal year July 1, 1913–June 30, 1914.

Major categories	Total	City	County
General relief	518	336	182
Transportation*	137	114	23
Miscellaneous	15	1	14
Totals	670	451	219
Applicants rejected	738		

* Recently arrived persons found to be public charges were returned to their previous places of residence outside L.A. County.

2. Dollar value of kinds of relief provided in fiscal year July 1, 1913–June 30, 1914

Orders	Amount
Merchandise	$34,975
Rent	13,287
Cash	4,444
Transportation	4,894
Total	$57,600
Receipts	
Merchandise	$10
Transportation	57
Total	$67
Net outlay	$57,533
Outlay per case	*$86*

3. Reasons relief sought* in 496 selected cases, fiscal year July 1, 1913–June 30, 1914

Illness	133
Old age	115
Death of breadwinner	86
Failure of breadwinner	71
Failure of mother	26
Unemployment	19
Insanity	17
Vicious habits	6
Unknown	23
Total	496

*As defined by untrained relief investigators.

Source for Tables 1-3: L.A. County Board of Supervisors Records Box 46, folder "Charities," "Report on Investigation of Outdoor Relief of the Los Angeles County Charities Office" (OD327-C), presented to supervisors by David Evans, president of the L.A. Bureau of Efficiency, Jan. 8, 1915, pp. 16-18, 20.

Words such as "failure" and "vicious habits" reveal a mindset among investigators that placed the onus for misfortune on the poor themselves, not on the chronic dislocation of the labor market caused by open-shop policies. Taken together, Tables 1 and 2 support the Efficiency Bureau's conclusion that the Charity Office's interventions were "palliative rather than constructive....While the relief given beyond doubt serves to meet an immediate need in almost every instance, it is too small to lift the family to a normal standard of living or put it on the road to self-support."[129] The yearly average relief stipend of

$86 per family was less than one-sixth the earnings of an ordinary laborer. The 518 families receiving this "least-relief" shrank to a numerical nullity, moreover, when measured against the tidal wave of layoffs and joblessness that swamped Los Angeles in 1913-14.

Pedestrians crossing the North Main Street bridge that winter and spring would have spotted below them along the banks of the Los Angeles River a ragtag encampment of 400 men. Unemployed but not idle, they had organized themselves into a self-proclaimed "army" that scrounged the city for food and blankets, set up a free employment stand, put out a newspaper, and joined other jobless workers in protest rallies at the Labor Temple. So orderly were these men that the police waited several months before arresting over 100 of them and rousting the rest out of the riverbank.[130]

The unemployed army, led by a printer named Morris Rose, was just the vanguard of a huge swarm of workers without work under whose clamorous weight the city nearly buckled. "The parks in Los Angeles are literally crowded with strangers who are at the point of despair," reported the *Citizen*. "They have come to the conclusion that it is a waste of time to even *look* for work." Estimates of the number of jobless in the city ranged from 30,000 to 35,000; thousands more had settled in the outlying county.[131] Among unions, Carpenters No. 1763 and the Iron Workers reported 50% of their members out of work; Millmen & Cabinet Makers, 45%; Waiters and Typographers, 40%; Painters No. 267, 30%; Cooks and Bakers, 25%; and Webb Pressmen, 20%. The Southern Pacific Railroad alone discharged 1,200 workers during December, 1913.[132]

Despite this carnage throughout the fiscal year, the county's Outdoor Relief Division accepted only 19 applications from men and women deprived of work by the national recession that struck Los Angeles a particularly nasty blow (see Table 3 above). Its counterpart, the city relief office, slowly crumbled under the onslaught. By comparison, the Central Labor Council fed 200 jobless workers two meals a day in its rathskeller during

the first four months of 1914--this despite the idling of at least a quarter of its members.[133] It also warned unionists around the country not to move to Los Angeles in the hope of finding work, and it mobilized hundreds of the unemployed as well as those still working to demand a city public works hiring program. The latter initiative fell on deaf ears among progressives on the city council, though it was vigorously supported by the lone socialist-labor councilman, Fred C. Wheeler.[134] Statewide, the progressive governor, Hiram Johnson, took no steps to alleviate mass layoffs and the suffering they caused. "With hunger stalking the streets of San Francisco and Los Angeles, and with unemployed armies ranging through the state, progressivism might well have broadened its appeal and cemented labor to its cause by caring for the unfortunates," wrote Mowry. "Instead the governor, by his silence, acquiesced to... the use of the firehose and the club."[135]

Work Camps

It did take a significant step in a new direction, however. For more than a year the Central Labor Council had demanded a public works program for the jobless. The city council rejected the idea. The county supervisors did not. Bearing the brunt of the crisis and unwilling to solve it through relief, they backed Martin's proposal to "establish a county rock pile for the purpose of furnishing legitimate employment to the unemployed." By arrangement between Charities and the Road Department, the camp was set up near Claremont, California in the late fall of 1915. Hundreds of Angelenos fractured rock by hand there until May 20, 1916, when the facility closed.

It cost the camp roughly 90 cents a ton to produce road-sized gravel for which the Road Department paid 60 cents and Charities subsidized the rest. Since wages were based on the tonnages each worker produced, we don't know how much they earned a day. It had to be considerably less than the prevailing $2 for manual labor, however, given Mar-

tin's rationale. "The idea," he said, was "to have the rate of compensation such that the employment would not attract [men] from other lines of industry or from localities outside Los Angeles County."[136] Assuming the men earned $1.50 a day and worked six days a week, the $6,637.68 wage bill for rock-breaking in December, 1915 would have required the equivalent of about 170 workers. Turnover was undoubtedly high, however, based on the Road Department's experience at its own camps where the pay was better. An educated guess is that over 1,500 men passed through the quarry during the six months it provided jobs for the unemployed.[137]

Martin occasionally had to remind the supervisors that the Claremont program was not meant to generate income for the county. In December, 1915, only a few weeks after it began, they quizzed him about its cost. He conceded that breaking rock by hand was 50 percent more expensive than the Road Department's use of machinery--but that, he said, was not the point:

> "It was never expected that road rock could be broken by hand as cheaply as by machinery. No argument is necessary on that score. The problem was to find some way of furnishing work for the unemployed and, if possible, work of a productive nature, and do away with the doling out of charity to needy persons who wanted work and not charity. This rock-breaking is not ideal by any means, but I contend that it is the best logical scheme that has been instituted in this section whereby the Outdoor Relief Division has been able to say to able-bodied applicants for work that they have work for them..." [138]

This argument carried the day, at least for another year. With the supervisors' support Martin opened a second rock-breaking camp for 25 men near the construction site of the Devil's Gate Dam on July 10, 1916. The Charities Department hired the laborers, fed and boarded them, and ran the commissary while the Devil's Fate Flood Control Engineer laid out, checked, and timed the work. Wages here were more generous, averaging $2 a day. The regulations Martin posted at the new camp tell us a good deal about this form of work-relief in Los Angeles County during the first world war:

- "No worker may remain in the camp over 90 days.
- "Any man shall be required to leave if employment is found for him at the same rate the camp is

paying--i.e. $2/day.
• "All workers shall be required to undergo at least one half-hour's military training five days a week.
• "No man shall work more than eight hours a day or more than six days a week.
• "No man shall be allowed to break and receive pay for more than eighteen cubic yards of rock per week [i.e. earn over $2.40 a day].
• "Any man found reveling, gambling, or in possession of intoxicating liquor will be immediately discharged and barred from returning to the camp."

Cash or Carry?

When Martin arrived on the scene he quickly had to grapple with the Outdoor Relief Office's longstanding policy of giving aid only in kind. It distributed most of this aid to some 160 families through chits redeemable for food and household articles at 84 local groceries. In January, 1915 the Efficiency Bureau and State Charities investigators had condemned this practice: "[T]he grocery order method of relief is not only extravagant, as an economical woman often can make the money go much further than an order for the same amount, but it is also deadening to the self-respect, and certain types of cases will refuse aid rather than submit to what is to them a humiliating situation. This is a condition the County, in fairness, cannot dismiss by saying 'beggars should not be choosers.'" Whenever possible, declared the investigators, aid should be given as checks made out to the clients themselves rather than their grocers or landlords.[139] This advice was reinforced a few months later by the State Board of Charities and Correction, which parceled out state aid to widows, orphans, and abandoned children in L.A. County through Martin's department. The Board notified him that Los Angeles was one of only four California counties that still converted such grants into food and clothing. It not only urged him to distribute state aid directly to clients as cash, but to do so in the form of regular bank checks instead of special charity drafts that identified their recipients as paupers.[140]

Martin recommended this policy change to the supervisors. Without notifying him they rejected it. He heard about their decision through county counsel Hill and let the is-

sue drop until the State Board again called for cash payments in January, 1916. Once more, Martin nudged his employers to honor the request:

> "I believe that if this department were allowed the discretionary power of determining who should and who should not receive cash in lieu of groceries...we could take care of the situation to the better advantage of all concerned for the following reasons: (First)–In state-aid cases the families requiring attention from the county are often frugal and independent...but are compelled to call upon the state or county solely because of misfortune. (Second)–It helps to maintain the wife's independence by allowing her to trade where she wishes. (Third–In many instances the money will go further. (Fourth–It will [reduce] the number of people who know that assistance is being given...." [141]

--And again the supervisors stood fast. It seems clear they either didn't trust recipients to spend cash aid wisely, or they wanted to stigmatize and complicate relief to make it less sought after, or both. In their view it was too easy to for the poor to pocket cash and spend it willy-nilly; better they should carry home bread, milk, cooking oil, soap, and pots with little or no discretionary income for the movie house or fan-tan table.

Martin's one consolation in his campaign to make relief less punitive was Charities' replacement of scores of individual grocery contracts with a centralized county food store. The January 1, 1915 ordinance creating his department stipulated that "[a]s far as practicable all supplies of any kind or nature in the Department of Charities, including Outdoor Relief for the indigent poor, must be drawn through the county commissary." Much to the dismay of the Southern California Retail Grocers' Association, which repeatedly sniped at it, this facility opened its doors to indigents the following April Fool's Day. From all over the county the department's clients began flocking there by foot, rail, or jitney cab for their monthly orders of food and supplies.[142]

The theory behind setting up a public commissary was twofold: clients would no longer have to pick up their orders in ways and at places that advertised their relief status to their neighbors, while Charities would save the profits previously claimed by local grocers. In practice, however, the new system did not work. The distances some recipi-

ents had to travel proved onerous, and local grocers were soon given back their contracts to distribute milk, bread, and other perishable items.[143] This compromise merely delayed the inevitable. Before the end of the decade the commissary experiment was quietly cancelled.

A Ride Out of Town

Table 1 above notes that the Outdoor Relief Division handled 137 "transportation" cases in fiscal year 1913-14. That prosaic line item recorded one of its most controversial practices. When the division learned that relief-seekers had arrived in the county within the year, it often sent them back to their former places of residence. This in itself violated no norm. The problem arose from the department's failure to investigate the resources available to the indigents it was entraining out of Los Angeles County.

By 1915 most large relief agencies in the United States had signed a formal Transportation Agreement which required them to take several precautions before they moved relief applicants from place to place. They had to ascertain, first, that applicants could not afford their own fares; second, that transporting them would *improve* their prospects; and third, that they would have sufficient resources at their destinations to prevent them from becoming dependent or, alternatively, that they had already been clients of the public charities there.[144] Failure to satisfy any of these points would bar the transportation of an indigent, leading to his or her care *in situ* by the agency doing the investigation.

Neither the Los Angeles County Department of Charities nor its older relief office had ever signed this agreement, and they routinely ignored its provisions. Discovering that relief applicants could or could not pay for their rail tickets, they probed such cases no further. An indigent might arrive at his destination penniless, with no prospects other than charity. The destination might not even be his former home or legal residence. No matter. So far as the Outdoor Relief Office was concerned, out of sight was out of mind. "Only

eighteen of one hundred and nineteen transportation [cases] recommended during the last fiscal year were investigated in any degree," the Efficiency Bureau found in January, 1915. "It is impossible to believe that this discredited method of granting and securing transportation does not work hardships on other communities." The bureau urged Martin's department to sign and conform to the Transportation Agreement.[145]

It did not take this advice. As the stinginess of the relief funds available to Martin grew during World War I, so did his interest in sending potential clients out of town.[146] Transportation became a welcome safety valve--the more so if investigations did not get in the way. His employers found no fault with this attitude and even encouraged it. Supervisor Norton, in particular, saw transportation as a quick way to dispose of the "hordes" of Mexicans allegedly swamping the county's relief office.

"A very serious and perplexing situation confronts us with regard to the extraordinary influx of Mexicans," Norton warned his colleagues in April, 1916:

> "Practically twenty-five per cent of the patients in our County hospital are from this class. One hundred and forty-seven Mexican families, comprising at least 850 people, are receiving assistance through our Outdoor Relief Department....In addition to the 147 families receiving Outdoor Relief, we have about 120 of these men working at the rock camp near Claremont. It is estimated that these men are taking care of at least 700 additional people, making a total here of between 800 and 900, or a grand total of between 1,800 and 2,000 of these people that are dependent wholly upon the County for their support....I would recommend that a strong resolution be prepared and sent to the Federal Government, detailing these facts and asking that these people be returned to the country from whence they came." [147]

In a resolution adopted ten days later the supervisors took the above data at face value and called on the federal government to deport all aliens who had become public charges of the county.[148] This demand, from the point of view of social work theory, amounted to outright defiance of the national Transportation Agreement. The Mexican scare quickly subsided, however, when the Immigration Service's top agent in Los Angeles, Charles T. Connell, demolished Norton's figures and consequently his argument. Only 99 of the County Hospital's 1,080 patients had Mexican backgrounds, Connell pointed out--and 41

of these were U.S. citizens while another 56 were Mexican nationals who had legitimate and approved reasons for visiting the hospital. That left only two patients subject to possible deportation. In a similar vein, Connell said he had seen no evidence that any of the Mexican families on relief had become public charges for reasons antedating their arrival in the United States--the key test for any attempt to exclude them. Finally, Connell reminded the supervisors that because the 120 laborers at Claremont had broken rock *for pay*, they were clearly not public charges and therefore not deportable.[149]

L.A. Social Work: The Progressive Legacy

Norton's notion of a Mexican triage in matters of relief nonetheless did not die. This progressive-era idea--the racist's answer to Americanization--embedded itself in the culture of the Department of Charities with fateful consequences for thousands of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans. In 1927 charities superintendent R. R. Miller told a House of Representatives immigration committee that it was his policy when aiding Mexican families "to reduce the ordinary food budgets 20%. Rents [i.e. relief payments for rent] also are cheaper than for American families."[150] Like his successor, Rex Thomson, Miller drew no distinction between Mexican immigrants and their U.S.-born children: all were "aliens," all fell short of anglo-saxon standards, all were the objects of a discriminatory welfare policy. And, like Thomson, though much less extensively, Miller apparently used forcible repatriation as a way to get them off relief.[151]

The triage soon grew more severe. Frances Feldman, a social work administrator and educator whose career spanned seven decades, recalled her encounter with this policy during a 1930s-40s stint at the department's office in L.A.'s mostly Mexican Belvedere district. "We had three budget levels for families on assistance until I became Belvedere director in 1943," she said. "We had an 'A' budget for Caucasians, a 'B' budget for

Blacks, which was lower, and a 'C' budget for Mexicans which was 15% lower than the one for Blacks. Rex Thomson said it was because the Mexicans ate beans. This same mentality led to the notion that 'they ought to go back where they came from.'"[152]

In the early 1930s Thomson presided over the largest single instance of transportation--more aptly coerced repatriation--in U.S. social work history. Sixteen trainloads of Mexicans pulled out of the Southern Pacific depot at county expense between March 23, 1931 and April 19, 1934. Bound for Nogales or El Paso and points in Mexico's economically wracked interior, they carried 2,438 families and 13,332 individuals to an uncertain fate.[153] Many of the children were U. S. citizens leaving home in a legal as well as a physical and emotional sense. All 2,438 families had been drawing relief from the Bureau of County Welfare in the department Thomson headed: that, and their Mexicanness, real or perceived, were the sins for which the bureau had induced them to leave the country with little or no investigation of the wretched conditions awaiting them.

The Mexican "repatriations" shook the barrios and colonias of scores of American cities during the Depression years. Several investigators have gauged the exodus at nearly a half-million people.[154] For Los Angeles County alone, newspaper and other estimates of Mexicans leaving because of organized prodding by social workers, immigration raids in the Plaza area, joblessness, widespread nativist hostility, and false promises of free land in Mexico were much higher than the number of repatriates on Thomson's trains, but impossible to confirm.[155] It is universally agreed, however, that Los Angeles far outpaced any other U.S. county in repatriations.

Anyone who seeks to understand this mass uprooting as a *social work* phenomenon must give special attention to welfare traditions born in progressive-era Los Angeles, especially within Martin's Department of Charities and among the supervisors who oversaw it. Before 1900 there had been much prejudice against Mexicans in the city but no

public relief. After 1915 such prejudice often found its targets *through* relief, Americanization, and other forms of social work. This was, moreover, only part of the progressive era's impact on later generations. Its other great legacy was the principle of least relief.

Had he lived into the 1930s and 1940s Martin would have instantly recognized the L.A. Charities Department as the agency he once ran--above all in the obstacle-ridden way it dispensed aid to the poor. Many districts still gave rent checks only to landlords, and in-kind aid still dominated. "Clients received food vouchers redeemable at a local store rather than direct cash grants," Feldman recalled. "Moreover we applied a very rigid means test. Families on relief couldn't own a car. They were permitted only a $50 cash reserve, and maybe a burial plot. They had to sign a lien on their house and promise to pay the relief back. If the client died before that happened, the county had first crack at the money owed. Liens were a problem for people with a car and a little home."[156]

The hurdles that welfare applicants were forced to jump had been imposed in patchwork fashion by federal, state, and local laws over the preceding 45 years. Congress had barred welfare payments to anyone living in the United States less than five years, while California had required three years' local residence. Through its 1901 Pauper Act, the state had encumbered public acts of charity with the investigation of clients and other disciplinary reforms.[157] But it was L.A. county that decided how much relief to give, to whom, in what form, and under what local conditions. The choices it made in the years 1910-17 anticipated the extraordinary system of least relief that is very much with us today.

Least Relief and the Open Shop

Nothing more clearly shows the connection between least relief and a large reserve army of the unemployed than the activities of the *L.A. Times*, Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association (M&M), Realty Board, and railroads during the dark days of 1913-14.

While United Charities collapsed and tens of thousands of idle men and women crowded the streets, parks, and riverbed of Los Angeles, these open-shop forces worked overtime to bring thousands more job-seekers to the city. The *Times*, in its nationally circulated 1913 midwinter edition, listed 20 reasons for people to move to southern California. The railroads seeded brochures throughout the East with descriptions of jobs begging to be filled in Los Angeles. At the very peak of the unemployment crisis, Louis and Richard Perry note in their *History of the Los Angeles Labor Movement, 1911-1941,* "[t]hat curious California institution, the home-seekers' excursion train, sponsored by the railroads and aided by the advertising of Los Angeles booster organizations...continued to bring in more residents along with the tourists. Estimates of the total number of persons entering the city by this means between October, 1913 and March, 1914 ranged from 30,000 to 40,000." Police Chief Charles E. Sebastian condemned the nonstop advertising that had glutted the local job market and raised the crime rate.[158] In testimony before the U.S. Commission on Industrial Relations, metal trades leader Curly Grow blamed the strategic recruitment of surplus labor for 20% to 25% of the city's unemployment that winter.[159] Real estate boosters, said the *Citizen*, "well know that a large army of the unemployed will mean that wages will be kept down."[160]

This was not the first or last time Otis, Zeehandelaar, and their allies beckoned thousands of job-seekers to L.A. under false pretences. During the bump in unemployment at the start of 1908, with 10,000 to 20,000 workless workers roaming the city, both the M&M and the Citizens' Alliance ran ads in eastern newspapers promising good jobs at high wages to readers willing to make the trip. The ad campaign worked. With so many immigrants desperate for any work they could find, jobs imposing low wages, long hours, and signed promises to oppose unionization were quickly filled. Stimson notes that 1908 "saw a decline in number of new unions organized. Only 2 were formed, compared with

16 in 1906 and 6 in 1907." By 1910 Los Angeles County had at best 15,000 union members in a population of 504,000; San Francisco had over three times that many union members in a population of only 416,000. [161]

Numbers like these delighted the M&M, Citizens' Alliance, Chamber of Commerce, Realty Board, Founders' & Employers' Association, dozens of kindred organizations, and most of the city's the daily newspapers. Together they championed a free-market ideology that exerted a hegemonic force in Los Angeles during the Progressive Era. Its slogans were "industrial freedom" and "the open shop". As a rallying cry for middle-class Angelenos, industrial freedom meant the right to work in or without a union, but in practice what emerged was an impressively coordinated and partly successful movement to shut unions out of the workplace. Reporting to the L.A. Central Labor Council after they testified before the Industrial Relations Commission, several union activists believed they had made "a compelling case that the open shop does not exist in L.A. It is instead a closed-shop city --closed to labor."[162]

Employers and their support groups deployed an impressive arsenal of weapons against workers trying to organize. In addition to those noted earlier, they included firing workers without cause, company unions, laws banning picket lines and free speech, mass arrests of strikers, employment bureaus that weeded out pro-union job seekers while supplying replacement workers to struck firms, importing strikebreakers, boycotting unionized firms, and denying them credit. Like right-wing ideologues today, the partisans of industrial freedom in Progressive-era Los Angeles celebrated the "free" market but demanded that the state intervene to make it unfree whenever workers tried to organize on a par with employers.

Most of the above weapons came into play during specific labor disputes, and they were often effective. The success of the open shop required a much longer-range erosion

of union power, however, and a more chronic distortion of the labor market. This was achieved by recruiting a reserve army of the unemployed and reinforcing it with prison labor, blacklists and yellow-dog contracts.

A classic instance of the use of corvée labor occurred in September, 1913, just as the city's worst unemployment crisis approached its peak. Rather than hire unemployed day laborers to repair the North Broadway bridge across the L.A. River, the city engineer followed Street Department practice by borrowing 56 jail inmates to do the job. This decision greatly vexed Grow, who rose up before other delegates at the Sept. 19 labor council meeting and drew the appropriate connection between corvées and the reserve army of jobless workers. "These unfortunates ," he said,

> "are lured here by the railroads, who spread lies about conditions, giving the impression that work is plentiful. These men come here, spend their little money, and are soon penniless. Then, they are vagged in the streets for having been poor and now they're forced to work in open competition with honest labor, doing a poor paving job on the bridge while expert pavers with families to support hunt work." 163

Compulsory anti-unionism, or "yellow-dog" contracts between employers and individual workers, became a common requirement for new hires around 1904, when the open-shop alliance led by Otis decided not merely to oppose labor's demands but to destroy unionism root and branch. International Molders' president Joseph Valentine had visited L.A. in January of that year and had asked the city's foundries to recognize the local branch of his union. Rather than negotiate, companies represented by the Founders' and Employers' Association forced their employees and job applicants to sign affidavits of union nonmembership; those who didn't were fired or denied work.[164] This requirement immediately affected all the city's metal trades: machinists, iron and brass molders, boilermakers, lathers, blacksmiths and helpers, iron workers, patternmakers, and sheet metal workers. A typical affidavit, actually sent to machinist John O'Brien when he asked for a foundry job in 1910, follows:

Contract

This Agreement, made this 17th day of August, A.D., 1910, by and between the Founders' and Employers' Association of Los Angeles, California, party of the first part, and John O'Brien, representing himself to be a first class machinist of large experience in general machine shop work, including lathes, shapers, planers, and milling machine work and job work, party of the second part...

Los Angeles, Cal.
(to be dated when signed, 1904)

"To the Founders' and Employers' association of Los Angeles:

"I hereby apply for employment in one of the foundries connected with the Founders' and Employers' Association of Los Angeles....I am not a member of any labor organization and I promise that while in the employ of any member of the Founders' and Employers' association I will render faithful service in the interests of my employer. I will not become a member or be identified with or influenced by any of the labor unions, their agents, or walking delegates or any one representing them while in the employ of any member of this association, but I will preserve my independence permitting no outside influences to interfere with or dictate in my affairs with my employer."

".....(to be signed by O'Brien before a notary public)..... " [165]

From the metal trades, compulsory non-unionism as a condition of hire spread to less skilled occupations, including laundry work. This happened not by osmosis, but by design. In June, 1907, Otis challenged every Los Angeles employer to follow his newspaper in adopting the practice. "We will hire hereafter no man who is a member of any union," he declared in a *Times* editorial. "We will exact a pledge and enforce it by a penalty that our employes shall never join any union..."[166] Affidavits and verbal promises to shun walking delegates became so common that L.A. unionists at the 1907 and 1910 state labor federation conventions won resolutions urging the legislature to outlaw yellow-dog contracts. Despite strenuous lobbying by the federation, neither effort succeeded. All five progressive senators from Los Angeles voted against the 1910-11 bill, and when it reached the House both the L.A. Chamber of Commerce and Meyer Lissner convinced Gov. Johnson to bury it there--Lissner arguing that its passage would doom the city's progressive movement.[167] Once again, reformers dropped their quarrel with the Old Guard to march in lock-step against labor. The 1911 legislature was and is the most celebrated in California history, having enacted utility regulation, direct democracy (including the recall of judges), and other hard-fought reform measures. On purely economic

measures touching the daily wants and needs of working people," observed the *Citizen*, it "was more than willing to defeat even the moderate demands of labor."[168]

Coupled with signed and verbal yellow-dog contracts, the mustering of a permanent army of job-seekers became a potent anti-union weapon in progressive-era Los Angeles. Along the southern coast as well as nationally unemployment rose early in 1912, and boosters chose the opportunity thus presented to advertise the city as "another Eden" in eastern papers like the Utica, New York *Saturday Globe*. "The great southwest of California extends a hearty invitation to the workers of the land to 'come on in'," one such ad announced. "The development of this region is going on so rapidly that muscle to do the common work is always scarce....It is claimed that there is room throughout this Pacific empire, at this present moment, for 100,000 unskilled laborers, if they are only willing, law-abiding and industrious."[169] The influx of job-seekers quickened notably during the deep recession of 1914-15 and continued after the end of the war in Europe. In the fall of 1921, L.A. labor leader John S. Horn wrote central labor bodies, building trades councils, and local unions across the U.S., warning their laid-off members not to come to Los Angeles. "There is an effort being made by the M&M and Chamber of Commerce to flood the labor market here with workers in order to beat down conditions," he said. "We already have 30,000 men out of work and the outlook is bad for the winter."[170]

What did this fluctuating but always large and zealously recruited unemployed army have to do with L.A.'s public charities and their tradition of least relief? Everything. The charities were overseen by progressives on L.A.'s city and county governing councils who had not only steeped themselves in free-market ideology but who in many cases had earned their livelihoods in the business world. With the rare exception of politicians like Norton, Richmond Plant, and of course the indefatigable socialist Fred Wheeler, they were as devoted to the open-shop cause as Otis and Zeehandelaar.

Norman Martin shared their outlook. As Superintendent of Charities he seems to have been genuinely moved by the threadbare lives of his clients, and upset by the paltry resources he had been given to help them. These concerns were trumped, however, by his many years as an executive of the Southern Pacific Railroad and his aloofness from organized labor. During his tenure at Charities, Martin never challenged least relief as a matter of principle. Even his fondness for transportation, while generating a fifth of his department's caseload, failed to make a noticeable dent in the legions of the unemployed. A few of the increasingly professionalized social workers he hired must have chafed at the constraints they labored under, but they, too, were caught in the web of least relief.

Beginning on October 1, 1929, the *L.A. Times* published a series of articles entitled "The Forty-Year War for a Free City." It celebrated what Otis and his successor, Harry Chandler, misread as the defeat of unionism in Los Angeles, the triumph of the open shop, and the reasons for these outcomes. Though he had been dead a dozen years, the final article summarized Otis' conclusions. A key reason for the assumed victory over organized labor, it said,

> "lies in the great number of nonunion and frequently anti-union artisans of every trade who are permanent residents of Los Angeles and who constitute one of the main defenses of the open shop. As has been seen in the great majority of the strikes described in these articles, the same thing occurs with monotonous regularity--a strike is called, the places of the strikers are promptly filled by nonunion men, and the industry goes on with, at most, only a temporary inconvenience....With such a reservoir of free labor to draw upon, it is not extraordinary that Los Angeles industries should have been able successfully to cope with union walkouts." 171

Otis and Chandler knew full well that this "reservoir of free labor" did not materialize out of thin air, or flow from the city's factories, shops, and offices. It came from the ranks of desperate men and women lured to the city by a promise of jobs that did not exist until lockouts or walkouts (a great many "strikes" in L.A. were actually the former) created openings. The operative word here is *desperate*. Only an open-shop zealot who was also a great simpleton would have recommended lowering the level of grief through welfare

for the able-bodied unemployed, or through anything but least relief for widows, single mothers, the lame, and the halt. Charity and the open shop were mutually exclusive terms.

Notes

[1] Ingram, James W. III. "Building the Municipal State: Coalitions and Infrastructure Development in Los Angeles, 1889–1939," paper prepared for delivery at 1994 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, New York City, p. 8.

[2] California's 1911 worker's compensation law, not covered in this chapter, arose in large measure from protests over the long history of uncompensated injuries and deaths among workers who built and toiled on the Los Angeles' aqueduct and the city's railways, tunnels, and wharves. Previously, court rulings based on "contributory negligence" and "fellow-servant" doctrine had thwarted efforts by workers and their families to sue employers for work-related accidents. The new law only partially addressed this problem. ["Longshoremen's Union," *Union Labor News*, March 2, 1906; *Proceedings of the Twelfth Annual Convention of the California State Federation of Labor,* Bakersfield, CA, Oct. 2-6, 1911, p. 94; "Special Counsel to Face Investigators," *Municipal News*, Aug. 14, 1912; "Aqueduct Horrors Told...," *Citizen*, Jan. 24, 1913, p. 6; "Hills Yielded Early to Make Way for City's Traffic," *L.A. Times,* April 4, 2004; Stimson, p. 356.]

[3] Ingram, "Building the Municipal State," pp. 7-8.

[4] "Call for a Conference," *Union Labor News,* March 9, 1907, p. 1.

[5] "Hypocrisy of Local Big Business Shown," *Citizen*, Sept. 18, 1914, p. 3.

[6] "Many Fall Below Living Wage Line, Committee Finds," *Citizen*, June 20, 1913, p. 1.

[7] "A Bonnet for Nothing," *Citizen*, April 12, 1907, p. 1.

[8] Los Angeles Typographical Union No. 174. Minute Books, 1886-1916 (hereinafter LATU), Vol. 1893-96, second cycle of pages, pp. 64-65; Stimson, Grace Heilman. *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,* University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1955, pp. 128, 146, 221, 225. Some of labor's wage demands were couched as charter reforms.

[9] L.A.'s unions organized the Central Labor Council on a departmental basis in the spring of 1904 to meet the threat posed by a new open-shop foe--the Citizen's Council. Among its departmental councils were those representing the building, printing, electric and power, and miscellaneous trades. Previously a weaker Council of Labor had undergone several transformations while partially coordinating strikes, boycotts, union political activity, and organizing. This earlier central body emerged in 1890 from an epochal strike and boycott which began that year between the *L.A. Times* and Typographical Union No. 174. The Council of Labor affiliated with the American Federation of Labor in 1894. [LATU, Dec. 7, 1890, March 25, 1894, Feb. 28, March 27, 1904; Stimson, pp. 123, 150-51, 275-77.]

[10] "An Absurd Decision," *Union Labor News*, Jan. 11, 1906.

[11] "By Their Works Ye Shall Know Them," *Union Labor News*, Feb. 15, 1907.

[12] "By Their Works Ye Shall Know Them," *Union Labor News*, Feb. 15, 1907.

[13] "Labor Council to Drop Wage Fight," *L.A. Evening Herald*, Jan. 21, 1912.

[14] Haynes, John R., "Principle of Minimum Wage," *L.A. Standard,* April 26, 1912, clipping found in Haynes Papers, Box 221, Folder "Wages-Minimum Wage"; Hundley, Norris C., Jr., "Katherine Philips Edson

and the Fight for the California Minimum Wage, 1912-1923," *Pacific Historical Review* 29 (1960), pp. 271-72.

[15] Gov. Johnson's allies--Sen. William Brown and Assemblyman William A. Roberts--pushed the minimum wage bill through the legislature. It passed the Assembly by a vote of 46 to 12 and the Senate by 27 to 7. [Edson, Katherine Philips, "Statement to the Women's Organizations of California on the Present Status of Minimum Wage Legislation in This and Other States," April 22, 1922, p. 3, copy in Haynes Papers, Box 221, folder "Wages-Minimum Wage'; Hundley, "Katherine Philips Edson and the Fight for the California Minimum Wage," pp. 271-77.]

[16] Hundley, "Katherine Philips Edson and the Fight for the California Minimum Wage," p. 177. Edson's amendment carried by 379,311 votes to 295,109.

[17] Edson, "Statement to the Women's Organizations of California," p. 3.

[18] San Francisco *Labor Clarion*, Feb. 21, 1913

[19] Hundley, "Katherine Philips Edson and the Fight for the California Minimum Wage," p. 275; LACLC Executive Board, Dec. 16, 1912; LACLC, Jan. 3, 10, Feb. 21, May 16, 1913.

[20] California State Federation of Labor, *Proceedings*, 15th Annual Convention, Stockton, Oct. 5-9, 1914, pp. 22-23, 75, 77; "Councilman Calls Attention to Some Proposed Amendments," *Citizen*, Oct. 30, 1914, p. 1; "Mass Meeting of Women Workers," leaflet in Haynes Papers Box 227, folder "Women-Suffrage" 6-(20).

[21] Edson, "Statement to the Women's Organizations of California," pp. 3-8.

[22] Hundley, "Katherine Philips Edson and the Fight for the California Minimum Wage," pp. 283-84,

[23] Montgomery, David, "Strikes in Nineteenth-Century America," *Social Science History* v. 4, no. 1 (Winter, 1980), p. 96.

[24] Montgomery, "Strikes in Nineteenth-Century America," p. 97.

[25] Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,* pp. 44-46, 74, 96, 100-01.

[26] Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,* p. 294.

[27] "Lawler Declines to Prosecute," *L.A. Record,* Sept. 8, 1906.

[28] Citation from Board of Supervisors clerk C.G. Keyes to C. Leonardt ordering him to appear before the Board to answer eight-hour charges, Jan. 6, 1910, L.A. County Board of Supervisors Box 65, OD3490D (hereinafter Supervisors); "Labor Law Joke to 'Solid Three," *L. A. Herald,* Feb. 9, 1910; Stimson, pp. 128, 146-48, 294.

[29] Newmark, Marco R. "Pioneer Merchants of Los Angeles," Part II, *The Quarterly, Historical Society of Southern California,* v. 25, nos. 1–2 (March–June, 1943), p. 29; M&M resolution, Jan. 4, 1906, Supervisors Box 114, OD 1369P; "Printers' Alliance Seeks Compromise," *L.A. Examiner,* Sept. 27, 1906.

[30] "Norton's Enemies Are Labor's Enemies," *Citizen,* April 10, 1914, p. 4.

[31] Fogelson, Robert. *The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930,* Cambridge, MA, 1967, p. 130.

[32] *Sixty Years in Southern California, 1853-1913, Containing the Reminiscences of Harris Newmark,* Maurice H. and Marco R. Newmark, eds., Dawson's Book Shop, Los Angeles, 4th edition, 1984, p. 606; "Mr. Voter!", pamphlet issued by the City Club's Charter Amendment Campaign Committee in Jan.-Feb. 1909, Haynes Box 102, Folder "Los Angeles Charter-1909"; Sidebar, "Guests at Good Government Dinner," *Los Angeles Examiner*, 12/18/09;

[33] Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,* p. 294.

[34] Clark, Thomas R. "The Limits of Liberty: Courts, Police, & Labor Unrest in California, 1890-1926, Ph.D. dissertation, UCLA, 1994, pp. 255-56. My account of the 1901-02 woodworkers' strike relies largely on Clark, pp. 242-63.

[35] Clark, Thomas R. "The Limits of Liberty: Courts, Police, & Labor Unrest in California," pp. 255-56. My account of the 1901-02 woodworkers' strike relies largely on Clark, pp. 242-63.

[36] This remark, made in 1910 after the Times building was reduced to rubble by then-unknown dynamiters, typified the Otis-Zeehandelaar campaign to tar the entire labor movement with the crime. Though it stemmed from a horrific event, it also reflected Zeehandelaar's longstanding view of unionism as a social and economic cancer. [*L.A. Times*, Oct. 6, 1910.[

[37] Strike fund payments in 1906 ranged from $7 a week for single individuals to $15 for married workers. ["Los Angeles Local News," *Union Labor News*, Sept. 28, 1906.

[38] "The Printers' Fight for an Eight-Hour Day," *Pacific Outlook*, Sept. 16, 1905, pp. 99-100.

[39] At the time most L.A. newspaper printers worked an eight-hour day while those in job and book shops toiled an hour longer. "Printers Are Out," *Union Labor News*, Jan. 5, 1906; LATU, Vol. 1902-1905, Jan. 31, Feb. 28, 1904; Jan. 29, March 26, 1905; Vol. 1905-08, July 23, July 30, Dec. 24, 1905; March 25, 1906; Stimson, pp. 258, 298;

[40] Local 174 activist Stanley B. Wilson, soon to be named labor's mayoral candidate on the 1906 Public Ownership party ticket, told a union meeting that many strikebreakers had been "captured and shipped out of town." Others had joined the union. [LATU, Vol. 1905-08, June 24, 1906; Stimson, p. 299.]

[41] "$900,000 a Month Spent by Los Angeles Wage-Earners," *Union Labor News*, March 23, 1906.

[42] LATU, Vol. 1905-08, Oct. 29, 1905; "85 Per Cent Employed," *Union Labor News*, Oct. 12, 1906; "Typographical Topics," *Union Labor News*, Nov. 16, 1906;

[43] "The Printers' Alliance," *Union Labor News*, Sept. 28, 1906; Stimson, pp. 298-99.

[44] Clark, "The Limits of Liberty: Courts, Police, & Labor Unrest in California," pp. 409-10, paraphrasing and quoting Zeehandelaar in *United States Commission on Industrial Relations, Final Report and Testimony,* Vol. 6, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 1916, pp. 5496-98.

[45] Mowry, George E. *The California Progressives,* University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1951, p. 49.

[46] Edwin T. Earl letter to Haynes, Dec. 8, 1916, in Haynes Papers, Box 76, Folder "Hours of Labor–Eight-Hour Day" (21).

[47] Haynes, Dr. John R., "The Shorter Working Day: What Does It Mean?", *Citizen*, Aug. 20, 1912.

[48] Haynes, John R., "The Shorter Working Day: What Does It Mean?", *Citizen*, Aug. 20, 1912.

[49] Shortly before the city election of 1906, in which the Public Ownership Party figured prominently, the *Union Labor News* admonished its readers: "Otis and the [Citizens'] Alliance are safely entrenched in the city hall at present; whether they remain there depends upon the votes of the workingmen of Los Angeles." [*Union Labor News*, Nov. 2, 1906.

[50] Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, p. 324.

[51] *Citizen*, Feb. 9, 1912.

[52] *Citizen*, April 5, 1912, Sept. 23, Oct. 30, and Nov. 6, 1914.

[53] Reflecting these gains on a national scale was the Adamson Act, signed by President Wilson during his first term. It established the eight-hour day for railroad workers. ["Reduction of Nine-Hour Day to Eight Is Begun by Firms," *L.A. Express* or *Tribune* (same publisher), Dec. 31, 1917.; Shapiro, Herbert, "The McNamara Case: A Crisis of the Progressive Era," *Southern California Quarterly*, v. 59, no. 3 (Fall, 1977), p. 282.]

[54] Gendered legislation was one of the common meeting-grounds of nationwide progressives and labor in the first decades of the twentieth century. The AFL, wary of government interference in the labor market, relented when it came to mothers' pensions and shorter hours for women. Progressives, wary of alliances with labor, relented on the same issues. ["Eight-Hour Law Will Not Stand," *L.A. Times*, March 29, 1911.[

[55] "Local Laundry Workers at the Mercy of Greedy Bosses," *Citizen*, Dec. 30, 1911, p. 7.

[56] Los Angeles Central Labor Council, Minutes, March 5, 1909 (hereinafter LACLC). The council's minute-books are housed in the Urban Archives Center, Olviatt Library, California State University Northridge (CSUN), Northridge, California; *Proceedings*, Eleventh Annual Convention of the California State Federation of Labor, Los Angeles, Oct. 3-7, 1910, p. 9.

[57] *L.A. Record*, March 23, 1911

[58] "Senate Adopts 8 Hour Bill; Women Wild at Victory," *L.A. Herald*, March 9, 1911; "When Three Young Women Defied Powers of Greed in Fight for Their Sex--and Won," *L.A. Record*, March 23, 1911

[59] "Senate Adopts 8 Hour Bill," op. cit.;

[60] Mowry, *The California Progressives*, pp. 144-45.

[61] Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, p. 358.

[62] Ingram, "Building the Municipal State," p. 7.

[63] Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, p. 294.

[64] Unknown L.A. newspaper, probably *Examiner* or *Express*, Feb. 14, 1905, clipping found in Haynes Papers, Box 48, folder "Davenport Recall"; Gibson, *A Record of Twenty-Five Years*, pp. 26-33; Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, pp. 294-95.

[65] Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, pp. 294-95; "'Women and Children First': Child Labor Laws Revised," *Union Labor News*, Jan. 4, 1907, p. 1.

[66] Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,* pp. 294-95.

[67] *Union Labor News*, March 16, 23, June 29, July 6, Aug. 3, Sept. 14 (twice), Dec. 28, 1906; Jan. 4, A writer in the *Union Labor News* gave this conservative view of child and maternal labor: "It strikes us that the men are the ones who should do the work if there can be found any who are not otherwise employed. Let the men work and earn a living for the boys, and let the boys go to school. Let things be as they should be. If there was less child labor and less mother labor, for wages, there would be more work and better wages for the men, the legitimate bread winners of the family, and the nation would be better off." [Feb. 1, March 22, 1907; *Union Labor News*, Nov. 24, 1906.]

[68] *Union Labor News*, March 22, 29, 1907.

[69] Quoted in Noel, Frances Nacke. "Address Delivered Before the Los Angeles Central Labor Council on Child Labor," March 1909, pamphlet, Special Collections, University Research Library, UCLA, Call No. HD 6250U5N68; also reported in "Child Labor," *Citizen*, March 19, 1909, p. 5.

[70] *Union Labor News*, March 23, 1906.

[71] *Union Labor News*, July 27, Aug. 24, 1906.

[72] *L.A. Examiner*, March 16, 1906.

[73] "In San Francisco," Eshelman pointed out in his March 16, 1906 *Examiner* interview, "there is absolutely no violation of the child-labor law." [See also "Children Forced to Perjury. Labor Commissioner Hon. W.V. Stafford Scores Broadway Merchant and *Los Angeles Times* for Ill-Treating Children," *Union Labor News*, May 18, 1906.]

[74] LACLC, March 12, 1909. See the discussion of women's suffrage in Chapter 3.

[75] Schooling was a clamorous battleground of social reform in 1900-15, but this subject has been amply covered by other writers. To generalize, organized labor led the successful campaign for free textbooks while joining with progressives to make primary (and later secondary) education compulsory and to approve school construction bonds. A *sine qua non* of compulsory schooling was the abolition of child labor, however, and here L.A.'s progressives, unlike their counterparts elsewhere, were mostly silent. In the often heated debates over curriculum, progressives sought to instill time-discipline and promote the "Americanization" of immigrants (see chapter 2 and this chapter below), while unions fought an uphill battle for workingclass subjects and values as against capitalist indoctrination. [Raftery, Judith Rosenberg. "The Invention of Modern Urban Schooling: Los Angeles, 1885-1941," *Ph.D. dissertation,* UCLA, 1984.]

[76] Los Angeles owned one of the least developed park systems of any large U.S. city during the Progressive era. Had it not belatedly accepted Col. Griffith J. Griffith's 1896 gift of a 3,015-acre tract just west and south of the river--known today as Griffith Park--its park acreage would have reached at best a few thousand acres. Among progressives, moral reformers tended to view urban parks and their amusements as sites of iniquity, especially for young people, while structural and developmental reformers viewed them as opportunities for "greater efficiency and economy." L.A.'s first park, the historic downtown Plaza, was established by law on Dec. 20, 1856. Later acquisitions, all in place before the first progressives were elected to public office, included Central, Exposition, Chutes, Elysian, Hollenbeck, and Eastlake parks. Under the reform regimes of 1909-13, significant park acreage was added not by statute but as a byproduct of the annexation of contiguous towns. Arroyo Seco Park, a gem of L.A.'s present-day greenery set aside during World War I, was championed by the city's unions. [Guinn, J.M. "Two Decades of Local History," *Annual Publication of the Historical Society of Southern California,* v. 6, (1903), p. 43; Guinn, "How the Area of Los Angeles City Was Enlarged," *Annual Publication of the Historical Society of Southern California,* v. 9,

Part 3 (1914), pp. 175-76, 178; *Citizen*, "Labor Council Gives Endorsement to...Have City Buy Arroyo Seco," Aug. 8, 1913, p. 4, "Griffith park Project Great Benefit to City," Sept. 4, 1914, p. 10, and "Fred C. Wheeler and Mrs. Lindsey Are Successful" (jump head), June 4, 1915, p. 3; LACLC, July 21, 28, 1913; Hunter, *The Evolution of Municipal Organization*, p. 21; Newmark, *Sixty Years*, pp. 401,463, 539, 598, 614; *Calendar Year Message of George Alexander, Mayor of Los Angeles, California, to the Honorable City Council*, Jan. 6, 1913, pp. 45-51; *Fiscal Year Report and First Annual Message of H.H. Rose, Mayor of Los Angeles, to the Honorable City Council*, July 1, 1914, pp. 4-5, 23, 27.

[77] The Aliso workingclass core lay near the intersection of wards 7, 8, and 9. In 1900, Daniel Johnson found, the percentage of potential male voters who were unskilled blue-collar workers was nearly three times higher in these wards than in the four westside wards. Since many core residents were recent immigrants or Chinese who could not vote, the eastside-westside gap in skills was actually much greater. ["Frightful Overcrowding Found on Aliso Street," *L.A. Record*, July 2, 1906; "Move to Form Corporation and House City Poor," *L.A. Express*, April 2, 1912; Johnson, "Down in 'De Bloody Ate'," p. 4.]

[78] Some racial covenants, especially in outlying districts, were actually written into house sale contracts, but others were informal. The Los Angeles Housing Commission found that the latter had prevented Mexicans from buying homes in the better areas of the city. [Antonio Bustamante and Pedro Castillo, *An Illustrated History of Mexican Los Angeles, 1781-1985*, Chicano Studies Research Center Publication No. 12, UCLA, 1986, p. 113]

[79] "Housing Problem Too Much for Volunteers." *L.A. Express*, Oct. 16, 1906.

[80] "Frightful Overcrowding Found on Aliso Street," *L.A. Record*, July 2, 1906; "Housing Problem Too Much for Volunteers." *L.A. Express*, Oct. 16, 1906.

[81] "The Real Slum Makers," *Municipal News*, May 22, 1912.

[82] "Doctor Makes Appeal," *L.A. Express*, Feb. 9, 1907.

[83] "P.E. Track Workers Sleep in Tents," *L.A. Record*, Dec. 7, 1910.

[84] LACLC, Feb. 28, March 7, 11, and 18, 1910; City Council Records, April 12, 1910, Vol. 81, p. 37; Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, pp. 346-47.

[85] In 1889 the L.A. Chamber of Commerce published *Facts and Figures Concerning Southern California and Los Angeles City and County*, a booklet that extolled not just the city's economic prowess but its courts, schools, churches, hospitals, theaters, fraternal societies, and pleasure resorts. The only social service institution it found worthy of mention was a Woman's Home, "a large, handsome building with accommodations for seventy, where working girls and women can have a respectable home at a moderate price." [Evening Express Publishing Co., Los Angeles, 1889. Copy available in Supervisors, Box 45, folder "Chamber of Commerce" (OD 271-C).

[86] Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, pp. 48-49, 128-29.

[87] Hunter, *The Evolution of Municipal Organization*, pp. 95-96; Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, p. 191.

[88] Los Angeles Settlement Association, *The College Settlement*, Los Angeles, 1905, pp. 7-26 (copy of this booklet found under call number HV4196L8L89 in the University Research Library, UCLA--see p. 7 for examples of "immigrant gifts"); Gullet, Gayle, "Women Progressives and the Politics of Americanization in California, 1915-1920," *Pacific Historical Review* v. 44, no. 1 (Feb., 1995), pp. 78-79.

[89] Monroy, Douglas. "Like Swallows at the Old Mission: Mexicans and the Racial Politics of Growth in Los Angeles in the Interwar Period," *Western Historical Quarterly* v. 14, no. 4 (October, 1983), p. 448.

[90] Gullet, "Women Progressives and the Politics of Americanization in California," pp. 77-78.

[91] Gullet, "Women Progressives and the Politics of Americanization in California," p. 74.

[92] Gullet, "Women Progressives and the Politics of Americanization in California," p. 79.

[93] "The more I think of...woman's suffrage, the more I think [this is]...something that will ultimately destroy us," Johnson wrote Meyer Lissner after California voters adopted the reform in 1911. [Gullet, p. 80]

[94] The Home Teacher Act proposed 'to work in the homes of the pupils, instructing children and adults in matters relating to school attendance,...in sanitation, in the English language, in household duties,...and in the fundamental principles of the American system of governance and the rights and duties of citizenship..." [Gullet, "Women Progressives and the Politics of Americanization in California," pp. 79, 81. [California Commission of Immigration and Housing, "The Home Teacher, Immigrant Education Leaflet No. 5," (San Francisco, 1916), p. 8, quoted in Sánchez, George F., "'Go After the Women': Americanization and the Mexican Immigrant Woman, 1915-1929," Stanford University Center for Chicano Research *Working Paper Series*, Vol. 6 (1984), p. 254.]

[95] For several years after 1906 the Santa Fe and Southern Pacific began importing two to three carloads of Mexicans a week from Chihuahua, Durango, Jalisco, Sonora, and Zacatecas; several thousand were employed as track workers. [Romo, Ricardo. *East Los Angeles: History of a Barrio,* University of Texas Press, Austin, 1983, pp. 4-5, 7, 42, 47-59; Kiser, George C. and Martha Woody Kiser, eds. *Mexican Workers in the United States: Historical and Political Perspectives,* University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 1978, p. 3; McWilliams, Carey. *North From Mexico: The Spanish-Speaking People of the United States,* Greenwood Press, New York, 1968, p. 169; Meier, Matt S. and Feliciano Rivera. *The Chicanos: A History of Mexican Americans,* Hill and Wang, New York, 1872, pp. 85-88; Navarro, Carlos and Rodolfo Acuña, "In Search of Community: A Comparative Essay on Mexicans in Los Angeles and San Antonio in *Twentieth-Century Los Angeles: Power, Promotion, and Social Conflict*, Norman M. Klein and Martin J. Schiesl, eds., Regina Books, Claremont, CA, 1990, p. 198.]

[96] Sánchez, George F. "'Go After the Women': Americanization and the Mexican Immigrant Woman, 1915-1929," Stanford University Center for Chicano Research *Working Paper Series*, Vol. 6 (1984), p. 251; International Institute of Los Angeles. "Survey of the Foreign Communities Resources in Los Angeles City," June, 1936, revised October 1940; Romo, *East Los Angeles*, pp. 5, 61, 80. Elsewhere (p. 11) Romo states that Mexicans constituted nearly 20% of the city's population in 1930, but this is clearly incorrect.

[97] McEuen, William W. "A Survey of Mexicans in Los Angeles (1910-1914), Master's Thesis, University of Southern California, 1914, p. 9; Bogardus, Emory S. *Essentials of Americanization*, Los Angeles, 1919, p. 181.

[98] Bogardus, Emory S., "The Mexican Immigrant," *Sociology and Social Research*, Vol. 11 (1926-27), pp. 470-88.

[99] Gullet, "Women Progressives and the Politics of Americanization in California," p. 83.

[100] Quoted in Garcia, Mario T., "Americanization and the Mexican Immigrant, 1880-1930," *Journal of Ethnic Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Summer 1978), p. 22.

[101] Gutman, Herbert G., "Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America, 1815-1919," *American Historical Review* v. 78, no. 3 (June, 1973), pp. 540-41.

[102] George Sánchez contends (p. 251) that the "industrial necessities" of the U.S. Southwest were aggravated by World War I, which siphoned workers into the military and war production and opened up job opportunities for Mexicans. In Los Angeles, however, 1914-17 were years of high unemployment. Americanists there sought to reshape immigrant work routines for the long-range needs of U.S. industry, not the war economy. [Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," p. 57.]

[103] Gullet, "Women Progressives and the Politics of Americanization in California," pp. 82-84.

[104] Sánchez expands this insight in his 1993 study, *Becoming Mexican American*, where he observes that the immigrant generation might have been less "malleable" to Americanization than reformers had hoped. [Sánchez, "'Go After the Women'," p. 255 and *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1993. See esp. pp. 94-107.]

[105] Sánchez, 'Go After the Women,' pp. 255-57.

[106] Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, pp. 101, 103-04.

[107] *Citizen*, May 5, 1916, p. 1.

[108] Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, pp. 104-05.

[109] Garcia, "Americanization and the Mexican Immigrant," pp. 29, 31; Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, p. 105.

[110] Correspondent for Carpenters Local 426 in *Union Labor News*, March 16, 1906.

[111] In 1912, for example, Los Angeles had 83 institutions boarding and feeding some 1,600 children, half of them without family resources. Many children had been declared wards of the state by L.A.'s Juvenile Court; others were awaiting court action. [Dr. L.M. Powers, "The City's Health," *Municipal News*, June 26, 1912, p. 108.] Jewish charities were among the best organized of the ethnic and religious caregivers. Largely through the efforts of Rabbi Sigmund Hecht, they created the Federation of Jewish Charities in 1911 to provide homes for orphans and the aged as well as free loans, recreation, and counseling for the Jewish population then centered in Boyle Heights. [Clar, Reva. "The Jews of Los Angeles: Urban Pioneers," Southern California Jewish Historical Society/ Jewish Federation Council of Greater Los Angeles, 1981.]

[112] Supervisors Box 47, Folder "Charities-Misc," January 26, 1916 letter from Charles E. Stickle, Ass't. Secretary of the Public Welfare Commission of the County of Los Angeles, to Board of Supervisors (OD1274-C).

[113] "Social Workers Want Charity Commission, "*Municipal News*, July 31, 1912; Hunter, *The Evolution of Municipal Organization*, pp. 143-44, 173; "Municipal Charities," *Fiscal Year Report and First Annual Message of H.H. Rose,* Ingram, "Building the Municipal State," pp. 7-8.

[114] Butler and Lewis served on the executive committee of the Roosevelt Progressive Republican League. Earlier Butler had been a Chamber of Commerce director and a county supervisor. Lewis exemplified "municipal housekeeping" at its most energetic. From 1911 to 1915 she led the Civic Association's Committee on Noises, Whistles, and Smoke, agitated for women's suffrage, sat on the L.A. Housing Commission, served as first vice-president of the Evening City Club, and superintended Juvenile Hall.

[115] *My italics.* Supervisors Box 121, folder "Public Welfare Commission": Commission roster (OD3726-P) and "Ordinance No. ?,...New Series, An Ordinance creating a Public Welfare Commission and prescribing its duties" (OD3725-P).

[116] In early 1916 only seven private charities were receiving county subsidies totaling $1,000 a month. The county did not ask for or receive reports on how these funds were spent. [Supervisors Box 47, folder "Charities-Misc.," Jan. 14, 1916 letter from John R. Haynes, president of the Public Welfare Commission, to supervisors (OD1270-C).

[117] Supervisors, Box 46, folder "Charities," March 4, 6, May 17, Oct. 6, 1915 letters from Superintendent of Charities Norman Martin to Board of Supervisors (ODs 343-C, 361-C, 364-C, 392-C). Hereinafter letters of this type are referenced as "Martin to Supervisors".

[118] Supervisors, Box 46, folder "Charities": "History of Our Investigation of Public County Charities" by J.J. Hassell, Auditor, 1914 L.A. County Grand Jury, p. 22 (OD325-C), hereinafter "History of Our Investigation"; Jan. 8, 1915 "Report on Investigation of Outdoor Relief of the Los Angeles County Charities Office" presented by David Evans, president of the L.A. Bureau of Efficiency, to the Board of Supervisors, pp. 6-7, 16 (OD327-C), hereinafter "Report on Investigation of Outdoor Relief"; Oct. 28, 1914 letter from W.J. Washburn, Foreman, 1914 L.A. County Grand Jury, to Hon. Paul J. McCormick, Judge of the Superior Court, L.A. County, CA, p. 2 (OD325-C); March 18, 1915 letter from Martin to Supervisors (OD347-C); Box 47, folder "Charities-Misc.": Jan. 26, 1916 letter from Charles E. Stickle, ass't. secretary of the Public Welfare Commission of the County of Los Angeles, to Board of Supervisors (OD1274-C); Feb. 9, 1916 letter from Mrs. H.K.W. Bent, Deaconess, to Board of Supervisors (OD1283-C).

[119] Voters created the Superintendent of Charities position in the county charter they adopted in 1912. [Supervisors, Box 46, folder "Charities," Oct. 28, 1914 letter from W.J. Washburn, Foreman, 1914 L.A. County Grand Jury, to Hon. Paul J. McCormick, Judge of the Superior Court, L.A. County, CA, pp. 4-5 (OD325-C)]

[120] "History of Our Investigation," p. 22.

[121] The Bureau of Efficiency was the L.A. County Civil Service Commission plus the County Auditor.

[122] See support letters recommending Martin for Superintendent of Charities, especially T.A. Graham to Martin on Dec. 18, 1914, in Supervisors Box 46, folder "Charities" (OD326-C); also March 4, 1915 letter from Martin to Supervisors, Box 46 (OD343-C).

[123] Germain, Carel B. & Alex Gitterman. *The Life Model of Social Work Practice,* Columbia University Press, New York, 1980, Chapter 8, "Social Work and Its Historical Traditions," especially p. 349; also Franklin, Donna L. "Mary Richmond and Jane Addams: From Moral Certainty to Rational Inquiry in Social Work Practice," *Social Service Review,* Vol. 60, No. 4, Dec., 1986, pp. 504-525.

[124] "History of Our Investigation," p. 27 and list of Charities Department payroll in Exhibit A; Supervisors Box 46, folder "Charities," April 20, 1915 letter from Martin to Supervisors (OD355-C).

[125] "Report on Investigation of Outdoor Relief", p. 1.

[126] Supervisors Box 58, folder "County Employees," July 9, 1913 letter from H.M. Crane, Inspector, Los Angeles County Charities, to Supervisors (OD5496-C); Supervisors Box 46, folder "Charities," March 18, 1915 letter from Martin to Supervisors (OD347-C).

[127] "Report on Investigation of Outdoor Relief," pp. 14-16.

[128] "Report on Investigation of Outdoor Relief," pp. 6-7, 10-12.

[129] "Report on Investigation of Outdoor Relief," p. 18.

[130] *Citizen*, Jan. 2, 1914, pp. 1, 3; April 3, 1914, p. 1; April 10, 1914, p. 7; Perry, Louis B. & Richard S. Perry. *A History of the Los Angeles Labor Movement, 1911-1941*, University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1963, pp. 14-15 [hereinafter Perry & Perry].

[131] LACLC, December 19, 1913; *Citizen*, Dec. 26, 1913, p. 1; Perry & Perry, p. 8.

[132] LATU, Vol. 1911-16, Dec. 28, 1913, pp. 143-44; LACLC, Jan. 5, 1914.

[133] Perry & Perry, p. 14.

[134] Wheeler also damned the Municipal Employment Bureau for dispatching strikebreakers to struck plants instead of concentrating all its energies on finding jobs for the unemployed. LACLC, Dec. 19, 1913; *Citizen*, Dec. 26, 1913, p. 1; Jan. 2, 1914, pp. 1, 3; July 3, 1914, p. 1.

[135] The *Citizen*, L.A.'s labor weekly, pilloried the state's top progressive thusly: "When Hiram Johnson, as Governor of California, was called upon to help relieve the unemployed situation in the state he threw up his hands and pleaded helplessness." [Mowry, *The California Progressives*, p. 296; *Citizen*, April 24, 1914, p. 4]

[136] The Road Department ran the rock-breaking operation while the Charities Department registered the unemployed and assigned those who met the county residence test to jobs at the quarry. [Supervisors Box 47, folder "Charities-Misc.," October 7, 1915 letter from Superintendent of Martin to Supervisors (OD1245-C); letters from Road Commissioner F.H. Joyner to Board of Supervisors, October 20, 1915 (OD1248-C) and January 4, 1916 (OD1266-C).]

[137] Based on calculations from data in Supervisors Box 47, folder "Charities-Misc.," January 4, 1916 letter from Road Commissioner F.H. Joyner to Board of Supervisors (OD1266-C); Condensed Report--Division of General Administration & Accounting, for the Period of July 1, 1914, to June 30, 1915, Appendix A: "Unemployed Relief--1914-1915" (OD1248-C)

[138] Supervisors Box 47, folder "Charities-Misc.," December 23, 1915 letter from Marin to Supervisors (OD1263-C).

[139] "Report on Investigation of Outdoor Relief," pp. 14-16, 29.

[140] Supervisors Box 46, folder "Charities," July 12, 1915 letter from Martin to Supervisors (OD375-C).

[141] Supervisors Box 46, folder "Charities": letters from Martin to Supervisors, Oct. 6, 1915 (OD394-C) and Jan. 17, 1916 (OD402-C).

[142] Supervisors Box 46, folder "Charities," letters from Martin to Supervisors on March 13, 1915 (OD344-C), Dec, 23, 1915 (OD394-C), and Jan. 14, 1916 (OD400-C).

[143] Supervisors Box 46, folder "Charities," July 15, 1916 letter from Martin to Supervisors (OD 378-C).

[144] "Report on Investigation of Outdoor Relief," pp. 7-8.

[145] "Report on Investigation of Outdoor Relief," pp. 8-9, 26.

[146] Dwindling funds forced the Outdoor Relief Division to work 20 employees only half-time and lay off several others in April, 1917. "The work of the Outdoor Relief Division is becoming more demoralized every day," said Martin. A few months earlier the county cut its subsidies to private charities 50%. Supervisor Norton said he saw no reason why the county should support outside charities when wealthy citizens could do it. Charitable philanthropy in Los Angeles lagged far behind that of eastern cities, however. [Supervisors Box 46, folder "Charities," "Contributions to Charity Cut Down," unidentified newspaper clipping, probably February, 1917 (OD5848-C); Supervisors Box 58, folder "County Employees," May 18, 1917 letter from Martin to Supervisors (OD565-C).]

[147] Supervisors Box 27, folder unknown, April 1, 1916 letter from Supervisor Richard H. Norton to Board of Supervisors (OD1358-B).

[148] Supervisors Box 27, folder unknown, Board of Supervisors resolution, April 11, 1916 (OD1362-B).

[149] Supervisors Box 27, folder unknown, April 17, 1916 letter from Charles T. Connell, inspector in charge of the Department of Labor's Immigration Service, Los Angeles, to Board of Supervisors (OD1362-B).

[150] U.S. House of Representatives, *Immigration from Countries of the Western Hemisphere,* Hearings before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, 70th Congress, 1st Session, Feb. 21-April 5, 1929, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 1928, p. 90. At least a decade later, the Department of Charities continued to discriminate against Mexicans when parceling out relief.

[151] In 1925 Karl de Schweinitz, on a fact-finding mission for the American Association for Organizing Charity (later called the Family Service Association of America), interviewed case supervisor Emily Wooley in the Division of Outdoor Relief. He reported the following about Mexican relief: "The County Charities face the dilemma of whether to refuse to aid adequately, hoping to deport, or to help adequately, in which case the families will valiantly oppose deportation because their conditions of living will have been so much better than what they were used to." Like many social workers of his day, de Schweinitz confused repatriation with deportation. His observations suggest that one reason the Division of Outdoor Relief cut food allotments for Mexican families was to prod them to leave the country "voluntarily." [Karl de Schweinitz, "Notes from interviews with Miss Emily Wooley," Box 39, "Los Angeles, California, May 1916-December 1937," Family Service Association of America [FSAA] Collection, Social Welfare History Archives, University of Minnesota Libraries.]

[152] By combining data contained in several letters from the Department of Charities to the Board of Supervisors in 1934-35, one can calculate that each Mexican received 50% to 60% of the relief given each white client. On Jan. 29, 1934, for example, Thomson wrote that the average family on relief had 4 members and received $30.80 per month. On April 11, 1934, Bureau of County Welfare director A. C. Price wrote that repatriating Mexican families averaged over 5 members. And in a letter written Jan. 25, 1935 but referring to a field survey conducted during March and April, 1934, Thomson stated that the average Mexican family on relief received $25.23 per month. Knowing that the $30.80 countywide average budget was skewed downward by Mexicans and Blacks and upward by whites, one can estimate that the average white relief recipient received nearly twice as much in 1934 as the average Mexican. [Frances Feldman, interviewed by telephone at her office in the Arlien Johnson Social Work Library, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, Feb. 12, 1992.]

[153] U.S. National Archives, Washington, D.C., Record Group 59, 311.1215/65. This is a copy of a Los Angeles County Department of Charities report, now missing.

[154] In 1934 Dr. Emory S. Bogardus, Dean of the School of Social Welfare at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, used data from Mexico's Office of Social Statistics to calculate the 1930-1933 exodus at over 280,000 ("Repatriation and Readjustment," *The Mexican-Americans: An Awakening Minor-*

ity, Manuel P. Servin, ed., pp. 88-90). Nearly 40 years later Abraham Hoffman studied Mexican Migration Service figures compiled by the U.S. Consulate General in Mexico City to reach a 1929-35 total return of between 438,000 and 500,000 ("Mexican Repatriation Statistics: Some Suggested Alternatives to Carey McWilliams," *The Western Historical Quarterly,* Vol. III, N. 4, October, 1972, pp. 397-99; see also Hoffman's *Unwanted Mexican Americans in the Great Depression: Repatriation Pressures, 1929-39,* pp. 125-27 and 174-75). All these totals are made up of a combination of (1) voluntary returns before 1931, spurred largely by unemployment, (2) deportations or departures in lieu of deportation, and (3) a large middle range of returns that looked voluntary under the law but were strongly pressured, as in Los Angeles, by welfare departments, the media, immigration raids, and the clear manifestation of anti-Mexican feelings by white people.

[155] California historian Carey McWilliams cites a *Los Angeles Times* estimate that 35,000 Mexicans left Los Angeles County in 12 months of 1931-32. Given the immigration raids and the many reports of Mexicans abandoning their homes, stowing their other belongings into cars and trucks, and driving from the city during this peak repatriation period, his is not an unreasonable guess. But it is just that--a guess--and McWilliams changed his mind often and unrepentantly.

[156] Interviews with Frances Feldman by telephone, Feb. 12, 1992 and at her office in the Arlien Johnson Social Work Library, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, March 13, 1992; "Report on the Expenditures of the County Welfare Department for Public Relief" submitted by a special committee to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Aug. 17, 1931, pp. 18-19; "A History of Public Welfare in Los Angeles County," Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services, Research Report No. 75-9 (typed), Aug. 27, 1975, Part I, Chapter V, p. 16.

[157] Telephone interview with Frances Feldman, Feb. 12, 1992. The three-year requirement was sponsored by County Supervisor Frank L. Shaw and adopted by the state legislature. Shaw, who later became Los Angeles mayor, was the most zealous advocate of Mexican repatriations on the 1930s Board of Supervisors. ("Charity Bureau Books Revised," *Los Angeles Times,* June 8, 1931, Part II, p. 1)

[158] Perry & Perry, *A History of the Los Angeles Labor Movement,* pp. 9-11.

[159] *Final Report and Testimony Submitted to Congress by the Commission on Industrial Relations,* Senate Document 415, 64th Congress, 1st session, Washington, 1916, VI, pp. 5563-64.

[160] *Citizen,* Nov. 28, 1913, p. 1.

[161] Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,* p. 319; Clark, pp. 229-30.

[162] LACLC, Sept. 18, 1914.

[163] *Citizen,* Sept. 26, 1913, p. 1.

[164] Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,* p. 264.

[165] "Union Men Desire True Industrial Peace," *Citizen,* Feb. 9, 1912, p. 9.

[166] "Local Laundry Workers at the Mercy of Greedy Bosses," *Citizen,* Dec. 30, 1911, p. 7; *L.A. Times,* June 24, 1907.

[167] The 1910-11 yellow-dog contract measure was incorporated into a triple-threat bill that also barred blacklisting of workers and injunctions against peaceful picketing. Later in the decade the state labor movement did win enactment of a law against compulsory nonunionism, but when the railroad brotherhoods challenged the Pacific Electric's yellow-dog contracts, the federal circuit court in Los Angeles ruled

that the law violated property rights and declared it "void". Its decision was upheld by the U.S. Court of Appeals in San Francisco in November, 1923. *Proceedings*, Seventh Annual Convention of the California State Federation of Labor, Stockton, CA, Jan. 7-11, 1907, pp. 20-21; *Proceedings*, Tenth Annual Convention of the California State Federation of Labor, Stockton, CA, Jan. 7-11, 1907, pp. 32-33; Stimson, p. 357; Mowry, *The California Progressives,* pp. 144-45; *L.A. Examiner*, Nov. 14, 1923.

[168] "So-Called Progressives of Little Benefit to Toilers," *Citizen*, Feb. 16, 1912, p. 12.

[169] Quoted in "Unemployed Fast Becoming a Very Serious Problem," *Citizen*, March 15, 1912, p. 1.

[170] Oct. 17, 1921 letter to "All Central Labor and Building Trades Councils and Local Unions" from John S. Horn, secretary-treasurer of the Los Angeles Central Labor Council, San Francisco Labor Council Records, Box 6, (call no. 69/139c), Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

[171] *Los Angeles Times*. "The Forty-Year War for a Free City: A History of the Open Shop in Los Angeles," p. 27, booklet compiled from a series of articles beginning October 1, 1929, located under call number HD6488L89f in Special Collections, University Research Library, UCLA.

5.
Developmental Reform: When Every Class Thought Bigger Was Better

The pursuit of growth consumed L.A.'s progressives from 1890 to World War I. In all its urban forms--population, commerce, manufacturing, public infrastructure, and city government--growth was their holy grail. Only a handful of progressives were not intoxicated by it. The same can be said of the city's unions and the open-shop lobby led by Otis. All three forces equated a bigger Los Angeles with a better Los Angeles. Why, then, were they so often at odds? The answer lies in the fact that labor's zeal for growth was inseparably linked to a demand for full popular democracy--something neither Otis nor most progressives ranked near the top of their to-do lists.

By any measure the advocates of developmental reform, including the unions, enjoyed phenomenal success. Their impact on the economy dates approximately to 1890. In that year, says Fogelson, "Los Angeles' principal industries--its flour mills, carpentry shops, and slaughterhouses--were small in scale, geared to the home market, and confined to consumer goods."[1] The city did not become a manufacturing powerhouse until the 1930s. Even so its industrial growth during the reform era was sturdy and impressive, especially when compared with that of much more industrially advanced San Francisco.

Besides the three turn-of-the century industries noted by Fogelson, Los Angeles had, or added, several others employing significant numbers of workers during the progressive years. These included home and office construction, job printing, the wholesale trades, tourism, fruit and vegetable production, garment manufacture, motion pictures, shipping and warehousing, metal trades, and oil extraction. Disproportionately, the working class was engaged in producing nondurable goods and services for local consumption, but an

Table 2A. Number of Manufacturing Establishments Los Angeles and San Francisco, 1899-1919

(in thousands)

	1899	1904	1909	1914	1919	% change 1899-1919
Los Angeles	.5	.8	1.3	1.9	2.5	400
San Francisco	1.7	2.3	1.8*	2.3	2.4	41

Table 2B. Percent Increase in Value of Manufactured Goods, Los Angeles and San Francisco, 1890-1914

	1890-1904	1904-1909	1909-1914	% change 1899-1914
Los Angeles	157.0	97.1	50.8	585.4
San Francisco	28.8	–3.5*	22.0	51.7

Table 2C. Percent Increase in Wage Earners Engaged in Manufacturing in Los Angeles and San Francisco, 1890-1923

	1890-1904	1904-1909	1909-1914	1910-1919	1919-1923	34-Year Period
Los Angeles	102.0	66.0	37.0	98.0	17.7	972.2
San Francisco	18.0	–36.0*	12.4	52.9	–17.3	34.0

* The 1904-09 declines for San Francisco in Tables 1A-C reflect the economic devastation of the 1906 earthquake. The Census Bureau repeatedly changed its criteria for manufacturing establishments in Table 1. In 1899 it excluded those earning less than $500 per year. Thereafter it raised the bar from census to census, discounting more small shops. The five-year totals for either city are incommensurate, but rough comparisons of the two cities remain valid. Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Growth of Manufactures, 1899-1923,* Washington, D.C., 11928, pp. 83, 180; idem, *Thirteenth Census of the United States,* vol. 9 *Manufactures,* pp. 92, 94, 97; idem, *Fourteenth Census of the United States,* vol. 9, *Manufactures,* pp. 83, 106-110. [Tables modified from Clark, "The Limits of Liberty," pp. 212-13].

oil boom in the L.A. basin created a supply of cheap energy that soon filled 10 percent of the nation's needs, rising to 20 percent by the 1920s and drawing the first manufacturers with a national market to the city.[2]

Los Angeles business establishments were smaller and more spread out than those in San Francisco, giving the town a vestigial rusticity. "But fewer and fewer arrivals...could expect to become independent artisans, farmers, or small businessmen," says Clark, "and more and more could expect to be wage-earners."[3] Many of the latter toiled in a burgeoning industrial district that ran eastward from main Street and straddled the Los Angeles

River. Here arose the clamor of small factories, metal shops and foundries, wholesale markets, and food-processing plants. Mexican, Italian, Japanese, Chinese, Dalmatian, and native-born white workers lived nearby in the small homes, house courts, boarding houses, and hotels of Sonoratown and Chinatown.[4]

As the following tables show, the rise in manufacturing and long-distance trade left a clear imprint on other data sets from that era:

Table 3.
Port of Los Angeles Commerce, 1888-1932
(in thousands)

Year	Net tons	Year	Net tons
1890	186	1910	1,713
1900	215	1920	4,340

Sources: Board of Economic Survey, *Economic Survey of the Port of Los Angeles, July 15, 1933,* table 54. Adapted from Fogelson, p. 119;

By 1915 the port had partially freed itself from Espee's tentacles and developed modern wharfing and transshipment facilities; some 20 steamship lines plied its waters. Overland transportation had grown apace. Los Angeles was an electric railway hub employing

Table 4. Bank Clearances

Year	Amount
1890	$36,019,721
1900	123,000,000
1910	811,377,487
1920	3,994,280,520

Sources: for 1890 & 1910: *Municipal News,* May 29, 1912; for 1900 (rounded total): Perry, Louis B. & Richard S., *A History of the Los Angeles Labor Movement,* p. 5; for 1920: L.A. Clearing House Association, cited in E.L. Hampton, "How the Open Shop Promotes General Prosperity in Los Angeles," *Industrial Digest,* New York ca. 1927.

more than 6,000 workers and serving 25,000 square miles with over 1,100 miles of track. It was also the terminus for four transcontinental railroads. The number of trains running in and out of the city was greater than that of Chicago, Indianapolis, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Detroit, and Grand Rapids combined.[5]

When the Standard Oil Company sank its taproots into southern California soil at the turn of the century, eastern capital began flowing into Los Angeles and bank clearances soared. Clearances multiplied over 32 times in the two decades after 1900 as the pace of industrialization and commerce quickened. San Francisco still led all other West Coast cities in finance, but Los Angeles was closing fast. By the late 1920s it served as headquarters for California's second and third largest banks.[6]

Table 5A. Building Operations

Year	Permits	Value
1900	1,922	$2,519,361
1910	10,738	21,684,100
1920	?	60,023,600

Sources: *Municipal News*, May 29, 1912; L.A. Building Department, 1910-20.

Table 5B. Property Values

Fiscal Year	Total Assessed Valuation
1880-81	$7,259,588
1890-91	49,320,670
1900-01	65,599,920
1910-11	332,506,774
1912-13	443,648,969

Source: *Calendar Year Message* of Mayor George Alexander to the L.A. city council, Jan. 6. 1913.

Home, office, and industrial construction long ranked as the city's key industry, responsible for much of the traffic through the harbor and most of the footholds won by organized labor. The data shown above inspired repeated bouts of civic bragging: "Facts and figures about the material growth of Los Angeles that will make the chest of any true Angelene just about 'bust' with pride," was the way the *Municipal News*' characterized the 1910-11 construction boom. In tandem with building permits, assessed valuations and tax collections also exploded. Rising taxes helped the city retire some of the enormous debt it had shouldered to improve the harbor and build the aqueduct--but rising assess-

ments allowed it to take on even more debt for even more infrastructural feats!

People Everywhichway

Progressives took great satisfaction from the wave of new residents that flooded Los Angeles after 1890. "No American city, not even Chicago in its phenomenal development from 1860 to 1870, could show such rapid growth," boasted Willard.[7] For good reason, labor activists declined to celebrate. They did not oppose population growth, especially by annexation, but in much of the drummed-up traffic from the East and Midwest they saw a deliberate attempt by Otis, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Board of Trade to marginalize unions.

Table 6. Los Angeles City Population as of Jan. 1[8]
(rounded to nearest 100)

Year	*Population*
1890	50,400
1900	102,500
1910	319,200
1915	475,400
1920	576,700

This spectacular increase in residents impressed L.A. reformers all the more when they compared it with San Francisco's modest growth. In 1890 the northern city outranked Los Angeles by nearly 300,000 people and led the state in manufacturing and commerce, but while L.A.'s population doubled in the 1890s, more than tripled in the 1900s, and nearly doubled again in the 1910s, San Francisco's failed to double over the entire three decades. "Once ridiculed by San Franciscans as a 'cowtown,'" says Clark, "by 1920 Los Angeles claimed more residents than its neighbor to the North."[9] Progressives no less than Old Guard growth addicts rankled under San Francisco's demographic superiority, and they gauged some of their own legitimacy and success by that standard.

L.A.'s early twentieth-century population boom had many sources. Besides natural increase it drew on an explosive migration of white native-born Protestants from the Mid-

west and East seeking retirement in a benign climate or jobs in a labor market they had been led to believe was boundless. Some of the influx was spontaneous, especially during hard times back East. Much more of it was recruited up by the Chamber of Commerce, Realty Board, M&M, newspapers, and railroads through nationwide advertising of L.A.'s virtues, traveling boosters and exhibits, cheap rail fares, and pamphlets and books by the thousands. It was a veritable myth-making machine.[10] The city it conjured--romantic, bucolic, free of strife, economically forgiving, unlimited in opportunities--never existed, but that image proved highly attractive to the small-town and farmstead Americans who poured into Los Angeles from the mid-1880s on. Some of them formed the political base for the city's anti-vice crusades and its miserly social provision. Others, joined by immigrants from western and southeastern Europe, China, Japan, Mexico, and the U.S. South, bolstered a working class that turned out to be more radical than the toilers of San Francisco or any other western city.[11]

Another boost to population came from the phenomenal outward leap of L.A.'s boundaries. In just two decades after 1895 the city's area grew over 10 times, from 27.7 to 288.2 square miles. Voter-approved annexations of and consolidations with outlying areas accounted for nearly all the increase. One notable spate of acquisitions from mid-1909 to mid-1910 brought Hollywood, East Hollywood, Ivanhoe, Colegrove, and 13,000 new residents within the city limits. Even more extraordinary was the election of April 6, 1915, which annexed 170 square miles of San Fernando Valley farmland, more than doubling the size of Los Angeles, increasing its population by 15,000, and making it geographically the second largest North American city after New York and larger than every European city but London.[12]

Few annexations could have taken place, and none of the boosters' tall tales would have lured so many thousands to the L.A. basin, if developmental reformers, unions, and

other city-builders had not won the free harbor fight and galvanized public support for the Owens River Valley project. Together the $23 million aqueduct and San Pedro's world-class harbor created an infrastructural *sine qua non* for the city's economic growth and population explosion. Without them Los Angeles would have remained a backwater well into the 20th century. William Mulholland, the civil engineer lionized by a long line of hagiographers for singlehandedly (so they say) masterminding and building the aqueduct, was a man of few words, uncommonly well-chosen. In 1907 he put the issue thusly: "If we don't get the water, we won't need it." [13]

Nowhere was this paradoxical truth clearer than in the terms the city imposed on the areas it annexed and outlying seekers of water. A political slugfest erupted over these terms, splitting reformers and contributing to their movement's downfall after 1915.

The wellspring of this impassioned debate was water--specifically water brought to Los Angeles from the Owens River Valley 240 miles to the north. Mulholland and his team of engineers in the Department of Public Service had made it clear to everyone that when the aqueduct gates swung open in 1913 they would release four or five times more water than the city could use. "This fact created one of the most momentous problems ever presented to city officials," declared Vincent Ostrom in his 1953 study, *Water & Politics*. "How was this surplus to be disposed?"[14]

In *Southern California Metropolis*, Winston and Beatrice Dinerman explained the legal basis for the events that followed:

> "Litigation in 1895 had determined that the city could not sell pueblo water to supply lands outside the city, and that the long-standing practice of selling such water to individuals and commercial companies beyond the city borders did not create a legal right to do so. Three communities that had no resources of their own and had depended upon buying water from Los Angeles voted to annex to the city following that court decision. Annexation of water-deficit communities was further encouraged by another State Supreme Court decision, *City of Los Angeles v. Pomeroy,* given in 1899. In this instance the court said that pueblo water rights were not limited to use by lands or householders in the original city but could be applied also to annexed areas, regardless of when annexation took place." [15]

Two competing and mutually exclusive solutions emerged. First in the public prints, though second in point of time, was Samuel C. Graham's remarkable proposal in the spring of 1912 to sell districts outside Los Angeles the excess water at the steepest rates the market would bear. The Graham Plan, as it was called, would create an artificial shortage by spreading the water over a larger area than it could properly irrigate, forcing landowners to bid up the price. By this means, Graham reckoned, the water would be put to the highest possible use (in most places, agriculture) and the city would earn the highest possible return on its investment in the aqueduct and the water distribution mains.

His plan quickly won the support of Mayor Alexander, the Good Government Organization and most other progressives.[16] What made it remarkable was that it came from a man of strong progressive credentials,[17] a developmental reformer and champion of municipal ownership who was at that moment prodding the city council to buy out Henry Huntington's electric railway.[18] Nevertheless Graham's proposal would *stifle* the city's expansion, *restrain* its population and industrial growth, and leave Los Angeles an urban island in a sea of crops, cacti, and cattle. The Graham Plan ruled out annexations as a growth strategy. It downplayed urbanization. It played fast and loose with the welfare of people living in potentially annexable districts. In the view of the *L.A. Record,* it would set in motion a process

> "by which any consumer who for a period applies the water to a lower or less profitable grade of use may, to put it roughly, be 'squeezed' into a position where he will voluntarily refuse to continue taking the water service, thus enabling the City to recover the water thus served without controversy and without the payment of damages for improvements.... [W]henever the Public Service desires to recover the water, the Commission will raise the water rates to a point where the consumer of lower uses cannot afford to pay them." **19**

After his Dec. 5, 1911 reelection, Mayor Alexander installed Graham on the Public Service Commission voters had created earlier that year to oversee the aqueduct and its hydropower operations. Seated with Graham were three other appointees who favored the

sale of surplus water. They reissued the Graham plan in its final particulars: a huge conduit with branches to carry the aqueduct's excess flow to Glendale and through the Santa Monica Mountains to the far western portion of the city as well as the outlying districts of Providencia, Cahuenga, and Inglewood; a second large conduit known as the "high line" to skirt the Verdugo Mountains and water Chatsworth, Pasadena, and San Dimas. Financing this farflung construction project would require a package of municipal bond issues totaling $8,400,000. The city council endorsed this plan and scheduled a November 2, 1912 advisory referendum, or straw poll, to test public support for it. That support turned out to be considerable. Angelenos voted overwhelmingly for the Graham plan, giving it a majority of nearly 2 to 1. The city council called for a February 12, 1913 bond election, later moved to April 15 over Graham's objections.[20]

At this moment the competing "Mulholland plan" came into full public view. The Chief Engineer had bitten his tongue during the protracted ballyhoo over Graham's scheme, relying on his deputy, J.B. Lippincott, to carry the argument against it. Now, however, he and Lippincott mounted an impassioned public campaign to defeat the $8,400,000 bond issue. Selling water to outlying districts without annexing them, he said, "would be practicing a base deception on the people who will later come there as innocent purchasers and from whom it is the declared intention of the highliners to take the water away after they have probably made millions of dollars worth of improvements dependent upon the water."[21] Graham and Public Service Commission president F.G. Henderson led the fight for the bonds.[22]

The "Mulholland Plan"--so dubbed after the straw poll--was a misnomer, for it had been drafted in mid-1911 by a board of consulting engineers, not Mulholland. Asked by the Commission to solve the dilemma of the Owens Valley surplus, the three engineers--J.H. Quinton, W.H. Code, and Homer Hamlin--insisted that any district seeking the water

must annex to the city of Los Angeles, pay for the necessary conduits, and shoulder a pro rata share of aqueduct costs. Such a retroactive levy was made possible by a 1911 amendment to the California Municipal Corporations Act which allowed the taxing of annexed property to retire a previously incurred indebtedness of the city. Finally, noting that the San Fernando Valley had an enormous capacity to capture and store water, the three-man board urged the Commission to give that region its highest priority.[23]

Flagrant real estate speculation in the valley by Otis, *Express* publisher Edwin Earl, and other L.A. notables veered toward scandal soon after the Quinton, Code, and Hamlin report came out, and it was quietly shelved. After the straw poll backed sales of the surplus, however, Mulholland quickly revived and championed it. Annexation became the cutting edge of his campaign against the Graham Plan.

His motives had everything to do with the future growth of Los Angeles. Two years earlier, when advising the city council to absorb, not merely sell water to, districts on city's periphery, he had written: "[I]n disposing of the surplus water, it should be kept in mind that the territory served should be adjacent to the city, and capable of final absorption by annexation. Should this be done, no reason would ever arise for severing the water from the land to which it would be applied, as the process of assimilation would completely settle the question."[24] Viewing this strategy across eight decades of southern Californian water intrigues and controversies, political scientist Steven P. Erie said the aqueduct project "taught Mulholland the importance of expanding the city's bonding capacity. Annexation would rapidly increase the city's assessed valuation and thus its debt ceiling, making other public water and power projects possible."[25] The irony of this stand was that Mulholland had to defend it against the quick-money itch of the Good Government Organization, the mayor's office, and his own superiors in the Public Service Commission--all bastions of developmental reform!

Despite the fact that Mulholland had rebuffed every union demand for wage increases on the aqueduct,[26] two influential labor activists supported his call for annexations and financing of the surplus water distribution by the receiving districts. Fred Wheeler, long-time leader of the Carpenters, had opposed the Graham Plan from the moment it surfaced. So had Ralph Criswell, president of the printers union and member of several charter reform boards.[27] They were joined by dissenters among the progressives. As the campaign against water sales hit its stride, public pressure forced the city council to delay the bond election until April 15. On election day voters dealt the Graham Plan a catastrophic defeat, rejecting water sales to all the proposed exurban districts and ratifying only the Francisquito Canyon line to the west side of the city.[28]

The ensuing policy vacuum did not last long. Weakened by internal disputes over the water surplus and even more by their dalliance with remnants of the Southern Pacific machine in the 1913 general election, progressives lost the mayoralty after only four years in power. They also watched in dismay on June 3 as Wheeler claimed a city council seat--the first labor candidate to win that or any other elective post in the twentieth century.[29] The new mayor, Henry Rose, took office as a Graham supporter but a detailed review of water policy led him to favor annexations. So did his appointees to the Public Service Commission. On August 29 this agency reversed its previous stand and adopted the main tenets of the Quinton, Code, and Hamlin report. These were also endorsed by the city council, which named Criswell, the mayor, councilman Martin F. Betkouski, and six other public representatives to an Annexation Commission charged with overseeing the city's physical expansion. In classical boomers' language, it boasted of a rosy future:

> "Annexation and consolidation will give Los Angeles official standing as the metropolis of the Pacific Coast. Greater Los Angeles, coextensive with the territory receiving aqueduct water, will have a population, assessed valuation, bank clearings, building permits, and so forth in excess of any other city on the Pacific Coast." 30

The stands taken by the city council and Annexation Commission doomed the Graham Plan, but many Angelenos still lacked a firm grasp of the Quinton, Code, and Hamlin principles. During the year-long debate over the proposed annexation of the San Fernando Valley, misgivings about the assignment of costs threatened to derail the measure. One of its staunchest defenders was the new labor councilman, Fred Wheeler. "I desire to correct some recent statements appearing in print regarding the action of the City Council in the matter of aqueduct water and the San Fernando lands," the former union president declared publicly on June 15, 1914. "Every foot of the distributing system in the valley will be paid by an irrigation district....The water users will pay the regular price to the city for all they use. But they cannot get a drop of it until they become annexed to Los Angeles. They will then assume their full share of the bonded indebtedness of the entire aqueduct, as well as the harbor and power bonds." On the eve of the annexation vote he reminded L.A.'s taxpayers that the interest on bonded debt for the aqueduct, harbor, and power plants was costing them $4,000 a day. Annexation, he said, "will be the first step to reduce this staggering load without costing us a dollar."[31] This argument, made by Mulholland, Lippincott, and progressives as well as unionists like Wheeler, probably carried the day for the city's 1915 acquisition of the huge San Fernando Valley.

Since so much of Los Angeles' economic, spatial, and population growth followed epic feats of infrastructure-building at the harbor and aqueduct, it might be argued that these megaprojects caused the growth. That would be a mistake. A political vision inspired both the modern harbor and the aqueduct; political maneuvering brought each of them into being; an intense political struggle then arose over who should control these assets and to what ends, all of which shaped the nature, extent, and timing of the city's growth. In *America Becomes Urban,* Eric Monkkonen disputes those geographers who attribute the varied spatial designs of U.S. cities to changing transportation technologies.

"[T]he arguments made by the technological determinists are not entirely wrong," he says, "for each transport technology has indeed had profound consequences for the shaping of our cities. Rather, the determinists forget that political action was the necessary prior step for technological change....Of far greater historical and contemporary importance than the shaping power of transportation technology have been the enormous political, social, and economic efforts by governments--local, state, and federal..."[32] This insight applies with great force to the infrastructural prowess of Los Angeles a century ago.

Speaking of local government as dialectically as Monkkonen speaks of technology, we note that its spectacular growth during the progressive era was both a result of and a precondition for developmental reform.

Did the Open Shop Spur Developmental Reform?

"The mechanics and all the industrial people of the city...have seen Los Angeles grow in population, in wealth, in industries, in educational facilities and in everything constituting the moral forces of a community as no other city in America, probably no other city in the world, at this or any other time, has ever grown," Otis boasted through a special *Times* publication, "Story of a Sixteen Years' Battle," in 1907. Buoyed by the expanding tide, Otis was moved to explain it: "This growth, with its great accompanying prosperity and progress of every kind, is recognized here to have as its foundation more than all else the industrial freedom that has been maintained during all these...years of struggle."[33]

Seven years later his anti-union comrade-in-arms, Felix Zeehandelaar, sharpened that sentiment in testimony before the U.S. Commission on Industrial Relations. "The open shop," declared the M&M secretary, "is Los Angeles' greatest asset as a creator of a high and consistent level of prosperity."[34] His view was buttressed not only by the soaring

indices noted above but by the confessions of two labor activists to the 1910 dynamiting of the L.A. Times building and the defeat of two strong Socialist Party bids for the mayoralty in 1911 and 1913—developments that Zeehandelaar and Otis had crippled the local labor movement. By 1914, crediting every economic advance to the open shop had become a mantra for the city's boosters, industrialists, and scribes, and the M&M was still chanting it three decades later.[35]

The mantra was, however, a fiction. The growth of any city, corporation, or industry owes more to the paid and unpaid fractions of working class labor than to anything else--and the social surplus thus generated tends to rise, not fall, with the advance of unionization. But even if we set this fact aside, we can identify many other wellsprings of growth in Los Angeles that had nothing to do with "industrial freedom". These included the massive public works at the harbor and aqueduct that Otis would not have promoted so vigorously had he truly believed in the omnipotence of the open shop. A highly developed rail network enabled manufacturers, farmers, and orchardists to market their goods nationwide while making Los Angeles highly dependent on the ebb and flow of the U.S. economy. Annexations boosted the city's wealth, population, and tax base in a series of extravagant leaps. A year-round benign climate, plentiful resources including land, and above all a super-abundant supply of skilled and unskilled labor attracted investors and employers. "The weakness of organized labor, according to a survey of firms operating branch facilities in Los Angeles, offered them little or no incentive to move there," states Fogelson. "Their interest in workers extended only to their availability."[36]

If the open shop had any impact at all on the economic life of Los Angeles, it must have been negative. "Industrial freedom," a term of the propagandist's art, evoked hoary republican virtues and a serenity that belied the open shop forces' disruption of the city that was their "citadel".[37] Otis, Zeehandelaar, and their allies did not move defensively.

They were provocateurs. Throughout the reform era their campaign to crush unions kept the city in an uproar. Otis routinely referred to Los Angeles as a battleground. He mounted a brass cannon on his car and vilified labor activists as "brutes," "wolves," "corpse-defacers, and "assassins".[38] "Los Angeles spits hate, *San Francisco Bulletin* reporter Pauline Jackson observed in 1912. "The air seems poisoned with it....Neither worker nor employer in the whole of Los Angeles is free. Each man is at the other's throat."[39]

In September, 1914, Zeehandelaar informed the Industrial Relations Commission that the M&M and Associated Jobbers had not only called on the police but had hired off-duty sheriff's deputies to win the pivotal Teamsters lockout of 1907. The fact that the teamsters' picketlines were peaceful was of no consequence--the employers demanded and got "protection".

> **COMMISSIONER HARRIS WEINSTOCK:** "If you called on the police, what was the necessity for hiring special deputies?"
>
> **ZEEHANDELAAR:** "We needed them to follow each individual truck and protect it. The police did not follow each truck." [40]

Recruitment of armed police and deputies was a prominent tactic of employers during many other labor conflicts before and after the teamsters' lockout.[41] While it seems to have intimidated some unions, especially in 1903-04, it angered and emboldened many more. Open-shop forces could not control every industry or suppress workers' willingness to put their jobs on the line. "Several important strikes were won outright by labor, or at least compromised," says Stimson, "because local unions received help from their internationals or worked in concert for a common objective; or because the disputes, like those with railroads, involved larger organizations where union pressure could be applied over a wide area." Between 1901 and 1905 the California Bureau of Labor Statistics recorded 51 labor walkouts in Los Angeles; the city had only 6% to 8% of the state's union

members during this period but generated over 18% of its strikes.[42] Most of these failed or met with partial success. Despite the defeats, "unions fought hard against the mounting opposition, with strike after strike evidencing a strong determination to break the fastening hold of the open shop."[43] Their defiance culminated, but did not end, in the citywide wave of rail, metal trades, and brewery strikes of 1910 that drove the city's leading progressives recklessly into the M&M's arms.

"Industrial freedom reigns supreme," Otis declared on the first day of 1912.[44] That was the problem. When a small manufacturer from Skokie or Dubuque decided to relocate to Los Angeles, he may have been indifferent to the stormy labor relations climate of his new city, but if it mattered to him at all he probably came west in spite of it, not because of it.

The Harbor and the Limits of Progressive Reform

During the lifetimes of most progressives, the Los Angeles harbor became the largest, busiest port on the West Coast. The long battle to secure it for ocean shipping was not just their crucible--it was their crowning triumph. Because progressives exercised a virtually unchallenged stewardship over the harbor from 1890 to 1915, it bore their stamp more than any of L.A.'s other public enterprises in that era.

What does it reveal about progressive reform?

Ingram identifies a 1907 pamphlet issued by the Municipal Waterways Association as the developmental reformers' "game plan," showing how they "explicitly intended to use charter amendments to increase the local state's capacity to increase the economic strength and potential of their region."[45] One such amendment would permit the city to annex coastal towns in order to bring the harbor within its limits--a goal it achieved two years later through consolidation with Wilmington and San Pedro. Organized by T.E.

Gibbon, James A. Anderson, Marshall Stimson, A.P. Fleming, Stoddard Jess, Joseph H. Call, George H. Stewart, and other notable progressives, the Municipal Waterways Association proposed a series of steps to promote the commercial growth of Los Angeles. These included:

> "Acquiring, constructing and operating municipal docks, wharves and warehouses upon such waters for the accommodation of vessels of the largest class.
>
> "Opening, laying out and maintaining paved and macadamized highways from the business districts of the city of Los Angeles to such municipal docks and wharves.
>
> "Acquiring, building, operating and maintaining a municipal railway via the river bed from the business center of Los Angeles to such municipal docks and wharves..." [46]

This progressive blueprint bore only a nodding acquaintance with the progressive reality that emerged over the next ten years. Despite reformers' early and late calls for a municipalized harbor, corporate interests kept an iron grip on its waterfront, wharfage, warehousing, and rail transshipments.[47] City-owned frontage was miniscule: only 200 feet of municipal dock by late 1911. "All the rest has been gobbled up but this little slice at Wilmington," protested the labor movement's *Citizen* that September. "The corporations have magnificent wharves down there. Huntington, the S.P., the Union Oil Company have divided it up.... After awhile, perhaps, they will take this slice, too."[48] Municipal wharves and freight sheds did not come into use until 1914. Led by the Southern Pacific, five private rail lines carried harbor cargo to points in L.A. County and beyond during the years of progressive government (1909-13). Only in the 1920s did they merge into a single Harbor Belt Line Railroad that was partially owned by the city.[49] A competing truck route from the harbor to Los Angeles might have forced Espee to lower rates, but this alternative was half-heartedly pursued by the developmental reformers. As late as 1913 they were still dickering with the railroad over rights of way, and it took another year for the harbor boulevard to open for traffic.[50]

Facts on the ground told just part of the story. Politics, no less than technology and lo-

gistics, shaped the harbor's character during the progressive era. Over one prized ribbon of waterfront--the periodically submerged tidelands--progressives fought private interests with all the fervor of their old free harbor campaign. They believed that late in the 19th century California had violated the state constitution by granting tideland patents to the Banning Corporation, Southern Pacific, and other companies. Harbor Commission secretary A.P. Fleming presented the details of this argument to the city council in August, 1908, and the council immediately urged the state attorney general to void the patents through litigation.[51]

After some delay the suit was filed. In response the Bannings and railroads insisted that since they had made use of the tidelands for many years California no longer had a right to them. The Pacific Electric Railway tried to preempt the state's claim by quietly laying a four-track line across a portion of its land near the mudflats; it hoped to exploit an old law which prohibited state condemnation of any land bearing a four-track right of way. Alerted to the ruse, L.A. police chief Alexander Galloway led forty of his men to the waterfront where they tore up 2,000 feet of the Pacific Electric's surreptitious handiwork.[52] On January 3, 1911, L.A. Superior Court Judge Walter Bordwell ordered California to retake its tidelands and hold them in trust for all its people. The state legislature, recently captured by progressives, granted Los Angeles, Long Beach, San Diego, and Oakland perpetual use of the tidelands within their jurisdiction.[53] Over the next several years Los Angeles finally gained clear title to these indispensable harbor assets.

On virtually every other issue affecting the waterfront, however, L.A.'s developmental reformers temporized, compromised, and ceded away their original vision of a fully municipal harbor. "The Harbor Department pursued a collaborationist strategy with the business community--a prototype for later public/private partnerships," states Erie. "In its pursuit of both harbor improvements and agency empowerment, the department enjoyed

the near-continuous blessing of the business community and the city's leading newspapers....One well could argue that the department exercised 'satellite power'--that, at best, it served as an important instrument for business interests and hegemony."[54] It is revealing to contrast this instrumental view of the capitalist state with the more autonomous state-for-us that downtown progressives sought through their regulatory commissions and civil service, or with the porous state-for-the-people that L.A.'s unions hoped to create through direct democracy and large municipal enterprises. All three forms of the local state coexisted in progressive-era Los Angeles--demonstrating the futility of single-category definitions such as "strong," "weak," "instrumental," or "autonomous."

Anticipating the pro-merger votes of San Pedro and Wilmington, the city council appointed a Board of Harbor Commissioners late in 1907, two years before Los Angeles gained access to the sea.[55] A March 9, 1911 charter amendment created an Harbor Department to run the harbor.[56] Theoretically, the commission set policy and the department carried it out, but in practice the political lines between the two entities were blurred and they both had to contend with the authority that the Board of Public Works wielded over harbor improvements. One intramural clash in 1912 led Mayor Alexander to replace A.P. Fleming with Clarence H. Matson as secretary of the Harbor Commission.[57] Despite this friction, the progressives' stewardship of the harbor was remarkably consistent in its use of a public resource to stimulate private profit. "The harbor must be handled strictly as a business proposition," Alexander declared in 1913.[58] Developments undertaken there during his tenure made it clear that it was the shippers', railroads', and jobbers' business he had in mind, not the city's.

Los Angeles moved quickly to raise a modern commercial infrastructure at water's edge. Between 1909 and 1914 it built piers, docks, bridges, roads, wharves, and freight sheds along both the inner harbor in Wilmington and the outer harbor at San Pedro. It

deepened ship channels and filled in hundreds of acres of tideland with the dredged material.[59] Rather than operate the wharves and warehouses itself, however, it leased them to private corporations at low rates. The city charter authorized the Harbor Department to run its own fleet of ships, but secretary Matson rejected this option in favor of generous waterfront leases to and contracts with private shippers.[60]

"The issue of leasing and franchises spawned a good deal of conflict because the Harbor Department charged low rates and charged harbor expansion to taxpayers," says Ingram. At the commission's bidding, the department sought to promote industry, not generate income for the city. It accordingly set rates that paid for the harbor's operating, maintenance, depreciation, and interest costs but not for capital improvements.[61] The contrast with water policy was stark. In fiscal year 1911-12 the Water Department pumped earnings worth $1,312,333 into Los Angeles' general fund. The harbor turned over a meager $8,213.[62] Either it did not occur to Matson and the progressives who signed off on the 1907 Municipal Waterways Association pamphlet that the harbor could *both* stimulate commerce and finance its own expansion, or, more likely, their commitment to free (read highly subsidized) enterprise made them take a compromised view of public ownership at the harbor.

Custom and progressive ideology led the Harbor Department to rely on general obligation bonds to finance new docks, roads, and landfills.[63] The city paid off bond debt with tax revenues, so while L.A.'s fully municipal water system subsidized other city operations, taxpayers subsidized the waterfront. For a quarter-century after 1890, municipal reformers had sung the praises of a "free" harbor. Yet, as historian Albert Howard Clodius pointed out in 1953, "The incomplete victories for public control and the many compromises with private interests leave the harbor, even today, not entirely and indisputably 'free'." This state of affairs drew an occasional rebuke from the Municipal League,

but the great majority of progressives felt at ease with it.[64] The strongest, most consistent calls for a publicly owned and managed harbor came not from the professional or business classes but from organized labor.

It is true that the waterfront never riveted the attention of downtown workers as vividly as the Owens River aqueduct and its power plants. It did preoccupy the San Pedro Labor Council and several harbor unions, however, especially the Longshoremen. Closely allied at times with L.A.'s central labor councils, the harbor unions enlisted the labor movement in the 1890s fight for a deepwater harbor at San Pedro and the 1909 campaign to consolidate San Pedro and Wilmington with Los Angeles.[65] Z.W. Craig, an activist with the San Pedro Labor Council and Longshoremen's Union No. 3, organized a pivotal June 21, 1909 meeting to protest the local town's offer of 50-year franchises to Espee and the Bannings on the eve of the consolidation votes. As a result, says Clodius, "[t]he bold attempt of the corporations and private interests to gain control of the few remaining harbor areas available for municipal development seemed to have increased the sentiment in favor of consolidation."[66]

Through labor's weekly newspaper, the *Citizen,* various public forums and political campaigns, and an Alembic Club made up of socialists, labor activists, and a handful of left-wing progressives, L.A.'s unions condemned what they saw as a betrayal of the public's stake in the harbor. "Much of the waterfront...has been taken from the people and given to private interests," the *Citizen* observed in 1912. "The city is only improving that portion of the bay that will add materially to privately-owned holdings. In the outer harbor, which holds the key to the entire situation, no work has been done by the city. It is here the real improvement should be made at this time."[67] Union members and socialists called for a municipal passenger ferry. They lobbied for an express boulevard and a city-run railway between the waterfront and downtown Los Angeles--both of them to serve as

checks on the private rail lines' high rates. They elicited no help from the Harbor Commission. Neither the passenger ferry nor the municipal railway ever materialized, and Espee and its allies delayed the harbor boulevard until 1914.

As early as 1906 Craig had articulated labor's vision of a truly free harbor in several issues of the *Citizen*:

> "Railways and wharves are natural monopolies, inasmuch as they are limited in their respective spheres. Therefore they should be publicly owned. The breakwater when finished will be public property....Let the city, county, or state condemn a right of way to the water front at the western end of the present trestle, build a steel viaduct from there to the great sea wall, with a drawbridge, if advisable; build such wharves and warehouses as the demands of commerce may from time to time require. Let all the transcontinental or other railroads have their cars set in on equal terms and delivered to them at the government-owned terminal....
>
> "How would it be to apply the same principle [public ownership] to at least one wharf [at the inner harbor] in San Pedro, together with a system of warehouses and terminal tracks and a municipally owned railroad from here to Los Angeles? Under the present system every wharf is a tollgate, and is therefore a tax on commerce. The more we tax commerce, the less of commerce we shall have. Do we really want this to become a great commercial port? If so, let us get rid of those who are continually levying tribute." 68

This vision inspired the Public Ownership Party's platform in 1906 and the labor-socialist platform in the pivotal election of 1911. It failed to inspire the progressive regimes of 1909-13, however, and so never materialized at the harbor.

The causes for this failure lay within both camps--progressives and labor unions. Because the free harbor fight had launched, defined, and tempered L.A.'s brand of progressivism, developmental reformers took a proprietary interest in the waterfront. Their focus on it never wavered, and they made sure they dominated the department, the commission, and all the advisory groups that oversaw what happened at the port. Labor was firmly excluded from these councils. Not one union representative sat on any of them during the entire progressive era. Matson, in particular, cold-shouldered every labor appeal for a more municipalized harbor and spurned every opportunity to cooperate with the harbor unions. The metropolitan unions, for their part, displayed a somewhat fitful concern for the waterfront. They were much more focused on public ownership of L.A.'s water and

public power systems. "[L]abor papers like the *Record, Examiner,* and *Citizen* made a great fuss over power bonds and usually ignored harbor bonds," says Ingram.[69]

Given the powerful influence unions wielded over the city's water and electrical infrastructure, we can assume modern Los Angeles would have inherited a much different harbor if they had fought for their vision of it more insistently and with more organizing skill. The reality is that in the citadel of the open shop, beleaguered by progressives and employers alike, organized labor had limited energy to spend in the public arena. What it managed to achieve there, as Part 2 shows, was altogether remarkable.

Developmental Reform and the Expanding Municipal State

Taken as a whole, progressive lobbying tended to increase the size and capacities of city government without radically altering its nature. The changes were imposing in degree, less so in essence. Reformers supported the dredging and outfitting of a semi-municipal harbor, the purloining of Owens Valley water, and, at times but not consistently, the development of aqueduct power. Even before the Alexander regime took office, they demanded and won a much closer regulation of L.A.'s railway, gas, electric, and telephone companies. They defined a wide spectrum of pastimes--dancing, wagering, playgoing, prizefighting, drinking in private clubs, etc.--as vices, and brought them under official scrutiny. They expanded the mayor's role. They created a Harbor Commission, a Public Works Department, a Water Bureau, a Public Service Commission, a Civil Service Commission, and a host of other boards and commissions that encroached on formerly laissez-faire sectors of the local economy. Only in the arena of social reform did they pull up short, unwilling to make Los Angeles a local welfare state.

One should not overstate the novelty of these reforms, however, or interpret the progressive moment as a break with the past. Previous regimes had built roads, *zanjas,* bridges, and other public works, and they had launched sporadic forays against vice. Af-

ter 1904 they had regulated railway and telephone rates. Much of this earlier municipal activity had been undertaken reluctantly, however, by petition from propertyholders, through voluntary organizations or private enterprise, or during crises of one kind or another.[70] By contrast the city's progressive regimes engaged in a marathon of state-building with the zeal of true believers. They greatly enlarged the local state's penetration into both the market and the lives of its citizens.

Missing from the accounts of Erie, Ingram, and other historians is the degree to which organized labor prompted ordinary Angelenos to bear the costs of breakaway development and an activist local state. In the view of these scholars, growth was inspired entirely by the progressives and other business elites. Part 2 of this dissertation offers a corrective to that assumption.

Notes

[1] Fogelson, Robert. *The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930,* Cambridge, MA, 1967, *The Fragmented Metropolis,* p. 121.

[2] Viehe, Fred W. "The Social-Spatial Distribution in the Black Gold Suburbs of Los Angeles, 1900–1930," *Southern California Quarterly* v. 73, no. 1 (Spring, 1991), pp. 33-34; Perry, Louis B. & Perry, Richard S., *A* History *of the Los Angeles Labor Movement, 1911-1941,* University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1963, pp. 34-35; Clar, Reva. "The Jews of Los Angeles: Urban Pioneers," Southern California Jewish Historical Society/Jewish Federation Council of Greater Los Angeles, 1981; Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis, p.* 127; Stimson, p. 201.

[3] Clark, Thomas R. "The Limits of Liberty: Courts, Police, & Labor Unrest in California, 1890-1926, Ph.D. dissertation, UCLA, 1994, p. 215.

[4] Mason, William M. & Dr. John A. McKinstry. *The Japanese of Los Angeles,* Los Angeles County Department of Museum of Natural History, Los Angeles, 1969, p. 5.

[5] Dresen, J.G. (compiler). *Souvenir Album,* Los Angeles Police Department, 1914, Special Collections, University Research Library, UCLA, pp. 7, 14.

[6] Stimson, Grace Heilman. *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,* University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1955, pp. 200-01; Clark, p. 215; Perrys, *A* History *of the Los Angeles Labor Movement,* p. 5.

[7] Willard, C.D. 1911 Appendix to *The Herald's History of Los Angeles City,* Kingsley-Barnes & Neuner Co., Los Angeles, 1901, p. 355.

[8] Decennial sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 12th & 14th Censuses of the United States, 1900, vol. 1 and 1920, vol. 1. The 1915 total is the L.A. Chamber of Commerce's "proportionate differential estimate" based on the city directory, water & gas meters and telephones in service, school enrollment, and building statistics. See Edgar L. Hampton, "How the Open Shop Promotes General Prosperity in Los Angeles," *Industrial Digest,* New York, ca. 1927-28.

[9] Clark, "The Limits of Liberty," pp. 208-09.

[10] "Boosterism had by now become a fine art in Los Angeles, and for some even a way of life," states Leonard Pitt. "One cannot overestimate the importance of the public relations industry. In 1890, after the population growth had slumped somewhat, the charismatic *Times* publisher, Colonel Otis, suggested that the business community reestablish the Chamber of Commerce and work with the [Southern Pacific] to spread the gospel of Southern California to the rest of the nation. After careful consideration they targeted the snowbound heartland as the best market in which to peddle the glories of climate. They saturated the region with millions of brochures, pamphlets, and special newspaper editions. The Chamber of Commerce even created a popular traveling display known as 'California on Wheels' and installed a colorful exhibit at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893 that featured 'Oranges for Health and Wealth.' By 1900 they could boast that one out of every five adults in the U.S. had seen some form of Los Angeles propaganda." [Pitt, Leonard, "The Midwesternization of a Cowtown," *California History* 60:1 (Spring, 1981). pp. 48-49]. This promotional apparatus has drawn the attention of dozens of other historians. See Clark, "The Limits of Liberty," pp. 208-09; Fogelson *The Fragmented Metropolis*, pp. 68-72; 189-90; Bigger, Richard & James D. Kitchen, *How the Cities Grew: A Century of Municipal Independence and Expansionism in Metro-*

politan Los Angeles, The Haynes Foundation, Los Angeles, 1952, pp. 12-17; and Klein, Norman M. & Martin J. Schiesl, eds., *20th Century Los Angeles: Power, Promotion, and Social Conflict,* Regina Books, Claremont, CA, 1990, p. 1.

[11] By 1910, 53 percent of Angelenos were native-born whites with native-born parents, another 23 percent had at least one foreign-born parent, and only 19 percent had come from outside the country. African-Americans made up 2.4 percent of the city's residents and Asian-Americans slightly less. "Los Angeles also had a significant Hispanic population, consisting of both immigrants from Latin America (mostly Mexico) as well as the Spanish-speaking *Californios* who lived in California at the time it was annexed by the United States," says Clark. "Because the United States Census counted this population as 'white' until 1930, it is virtually impossible to know the exact percentage for the preceding years....Nevertheless, Mexican and Hispanic culture made an unmistakable imprint on Los Angeles and California as a whole from the very beginning." [Clark, "The Limits of Liberty," pp. 210-11.]

[12] By 1920 Los Angeles ranked first in area among U.S. cities. On July 28 of that year the *L.A. Times* declared that of the 257,475 increase in city population between 1910 and 1920, only 12,390 came from annexations. This claim appears dubious alongside Bigger's & Kitchen's observation that the San Fernando Valley annexation alone brought in an additional 15,000 residents. Since much of the annexed land was agricultural, its full impact on population growth was not felt until urban growth replaced farms several years, or in some cases several decades, later. [Winston W. & Beatrice Dinerman, *Southern California Metropolis: A Study in Development of Government for a Metropolitan Area,* University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1964, pp 57-59; Guinn, J.M., "How the Area of Los Angeles City Was Enlarged," *Annual Publication of the Historical Society of Southern California,* Vol. IX, Part II (1914), pp. 173, 178-80. The final paragraphs of this essay were added in 1915. See also Bigger & Kitchen, *How the Cities Grew.* p. 171. [*L.A. Times,* July 28, 1920, Part II, p. 1].

[13] Ostrom, Vincent, *Water & Politics: A Study of Water Policies and Administration in the Development of Los Angeles,* The Haynes Foundation, Los Angeles, 1953, p. 144.

[14] Ostrom, *Water & Politics*, p. 148.

[15] Dinermans, *Southern California Metropolis*, pp. 57-58.

[16] *Los Angeles Municipal News,* April 17, Nov. 13, & May 8, 1912; *California Outlook,* Nov. 2, 1912, pp. 16-17, 22-23; Ostrom, *Water & Politics*, pp. 151-53; Bigger & Kitchen, *How the Cities Grew*, pp. 166-67.

[17] Graham was a respected reformer who made his money in the oil business and took an early interest in politics. In 1898 he joined the central committee of L.A. County's fledgling Progressive Party. He helped launch the citywide nonpartisan rising in 1906, the statewide Lincoln-Roosevelt League in 1907, and the Harper recall, Good Government Organization, and Alexander candidacies in 1909. In rapid succession, Mayor Alexander named him to the Police Commission, the City-County Consolidation Commission, and the Public Service Commission which managed the distribution of surplus aqueduct water.

[18] *Municipal News,* July 10 & 17, 1912.

[19] *L.A. Record,* 9/12/12.

[20] *L.A. Citizen,* Jan. 10, 1913; *Municipal News*, Nov. 13, 1912, Jan. 8, 1913; Ostrom, *Water & Politics*, pp. 152-53; Bigger & Kitchen, *How the Cities Grew*, pp. 166-67.

[21] *L.A. Times,* April 15, 1913, Part I, p. 1.

[22] Ostrom, *Water & Politics*, pp. 153-54; Bigger & Kitchen, *How the Cities Grew*, *How the Cities Grew*, p. 167.

[23] Bigger & Kitchen, *How the Cities Grew*, p. 129; Ostrom, *Water & Politics*, pp. 149-51.

[24] "Distributing the Water from Owens River," *California Outlook* v. 13, no. 19 (November 2, 1912).

[25] Erie, Steven P. "How the Urban West Was Won: The Local State and Economic Growth in Los Angeles, 1880-1932," *Urban Affairs Quarterly* v. 27, no. 4 (June, 1992), pp. 539-40.

[26] Aqueduct miners, mechanics, and laborers earned considerably lower wages than workers in nearby private industry--the result of the progressives' decision to hold construction costs to the bare minimum. See pp. 622-26 of this dissertation.

[27] *Citizen*, June 26, 1914, p. 4.

[28] Ostrom, *Water & Politics*, p. 154; Bigger & Kitchen, *How the Cities Grew*, p. 167-68.

[29] *Citizen,* June 6, 1913, pp. 1, 2, 4.

[30] City Council Records, Vol. 94, p. 141; Ostrom, *Water & Politics*, pp. 154-56; Bigger & Kitchen, *How the Cities Grew*, pp. 167-68.

[31] *Citizen*, June 26, 1914, p. 4 and April 30, 1915 p. 4

[32] Monkkonen, Eric H., *America Becomes Urban: The Development of U.S. Cities & Towns 1780-1980,* University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1988 (1990 paperback edition), pp. 162-64.

[33] The Times-Mirror Company, "Story of a Sixteen Years' Battle," Los Angeles, 1907, p. 5.

[34] Commission on Industrial Relations, "Open and Closed Shop Controversy in Los Angeles," United States Congress, Senate Documents No. 415, 64th Congress, 1st Session (Washington, 1916), pp. 5496-98; Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce. *Minutes*, July 30, 1910.

[35] Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association, "M&M 1896-1946," Fiftieth Annual Report, Los Angeles, 1946, copy available at the Labor Archive, San Francisco State University. The Socialist Party mayoralty candidate in 1911 and 1913 was Job Harriman. He won the 1911 primary election just before John J. and James B. McNamara confessed to the *Times* bombing and California gave women the vote; many historians believe those events contributed to his defeat in the general election, but the issue is not settled.

[36] Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis*, p. 131; Subcommittee on Senate Resolution 266 of the U.S. Senate Committee on Education and Labor. Testimony of Dr. Paul A. Dodd at hearings on violations of free speech and labor held in Los Angeles, 76th Cong., 3rd Sess., Part 52: Los Angeles Industrial Background (Washington, Jan. 10 and 11, 1940). Dodd, an associate professor of economics at UCLA, dismissed the argument that the open shop had made Los Angeles prosperous. "[N]ational forces of business depression and recovery have dictated the cycle through which each community has passed, regardless of the extent of local labor organization," he said. Dodd found this unremarkable for a city like Los Angeles that relied on distant markets for its goods.

[37] "Citadel of the open shop," a phrase describing Los Angeles, was coined in 1926 by Chamber of Commerce president Richard W. Pridham, a former L.A. County Supervisor and officer of the Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association (M&M). Throughout his career as employer, public official, and political activ-

ist, Pridham forcefully advocated "industrial freedom" and the open shop. [Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, *Members Annual,* 1926, pp. 139-40.]

[38] "Mr. Otis and the *Los Angeles 'Times',* Authorized Publicity Committee of L.A. Typographical Union No. 174, Los Angeles, 1915, p. 23. Copy in UCLA University Research Library under call number Z 120 I61L89; Stimson, pp. 316-17.

[39] Jacobson, Pauline. "The Struggles of Organized Labor in Los Angeles," compiled from *San Francisco Bulletin* articles by the L.A. Central Labor Council and L.A. Building Trades Council, pp. 3, 29. [Copy in the Labor Archive, San Francisco State University.] Neither the compilation nor the individual articles are dated, but several references in the latter indicate they were written in 1912.

[40] *Citizen,* Sept. 11, 1914, p. 2. The *Citizen* reported on the Commission's Los Angeles hearings in great detail, often verbatim.

[41] *Citizen,* Sept. 11, 1914, p. 2; Stimson, pp. 267, 275, 311, 316.

[42] California Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Report,* Sacramento, 1907, pp. 210-11.

[43] Stimson, pp. 289-90, 296.

[44] *L.A. Times,* Jan. 1, 1912.

[45] Ingram, James W. III, "Building the Municipal State: Coalitions and Infrastructure Development in Los Angeles, 1889–1939," paper prepared for delivery at 1994 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, New York City. (Typescript), p. 10.

[46] Ingram, "Building the Municipal State," pp. 8-9.

[47] After his 1909 recall election, for example, Mayor Alexander promised to do all he could "to give the people of Los Angeles their own harbor....It would be a travesty on human intelligence to allow the corporations to levy tribute on the commerce of this city with the outer world." Two years later the *Pacific Outlook* extolled the "most engaging picture that T.E. Gibbon, Esq., and his associates of the Harbor Board, Messrs. [Maurice H.] Newmark and [Stoddard] Jess have unrolled before the people of Los Angeles: a well-built and well-equipped, double-track, electric railway for swift freight and passenger service between the business center and the water front, owned, controlled and operated by the city....If the project is consummated, as we are certain it will be, the real deep-down gratification will come in the fact that it is an operation by the city as a whole, and for the benefit and gain of the city as a whole, not for the enrichment of a few individuals." Neither of these scenarios came to pass in the progressive era. [*Pacific Outlook,* "What I Am Going To Do," April 3, 1909, p. 3 and "A Municipal Railway," February 4, 1911, p. 3.]

[48] *Citizen,* "Save the Fair Name of Los Angeles," Sept. 20, 1911, p. 8.

[49] *Fiscal Year Report and First Annual Message of H.H. Rose,* p. 9; Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis,* p. 118; Ingram, "Building the Municipal State," p. 38.

[50] *Calendar Year Message of George Alexander, Mayor of Los Angeles, California, to the Honorable City Council,* Jan. 6, p. 4; *Souvenir Album,* p. 17.

[51] L.A. City Council Minutes, Vol. 76, pp. 356-62 (Aug. 17, 1908);

[52] Dumke, Glenn S. "Early Interurban Transportation in the Los Angeles Area," *The Quarterly,* Historical Society of Southern California, v. 22, no. 4 (Dec., 1940), pp. 142-43.

[53] Crouch & Dinerman, pp. 31-32.

[54] Erie, "How the Urban West Was Won," pp. 538-39.

[55] Shotliff, Don A. "San Pedro Harbor, or Los Angeles Harbor? Senator W.H. Savage and the Home Rule Advocates Fail to Stem the Tide of Consolidationism, 1906–1909," *Southern California Quarterly,* v. 54, no. 2 (Summer, 1972), p. 129; Clodius, Albert Howard. "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles, 1890-1910," Claremont Graduate School dissertation, Claremont, CA, 1953, p. 352.

[56] Crouch & Dinerman, p. 31.

[57] *Calendar Year Message of George Alexander*, p. 30; *Municipal News,* June 12, 1912 and Jan. 22, 1913.

[58] *Calendar Year Message of George Alexander,* p. 33.

[59] *Fiscal Year Report and First Annual Message of H.H. Rose,* pp. 9-10.

[60] Crouch & Dinerman, p. 33; Ingram, "Building the Municipal State," p. 39.

[61] Ingram, "Building the Municipal State," p. 38.

[62] *Municipal News,* p. 410.

[63] Erie, "How the Urban West Was Won," p. 535.

[64] Clodius, "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles," p. 364; Ingram, p. 38.

[65] Stimson, Grace Heilman. *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,* University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1955, pp. 178-79; Clodius, "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles," pp. 359-60.

[66]Clodius, "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles," pp. 358-60.

[67] *Citizen,* Feb. 2, 1912, p. 11.

[68] Craig, Z.W. "San Pedro's Problem: How to Utilize the Breakwater," *Citizen,* Sept. 21, 1906, p. 4; and "Public Ownership the Only Remedy," *Citizen,* Sept. 28, 1906, p. 7.

[69] Ingram, "Building the Municipal State," pp. 19-20, 39.

[70] Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis*, pp. 32-38, 41-42.

Part 2

Organized labor on the offense; progressives try to stem the tide.

6.
Who Were L.A.'s Workers?

Since the progressive era, sociologists, geographers, political scientists, and urban historians have built entire careers on the extraordinary demographic saga of Los Angeles. The city's labor force both changed in striking ways and stabilized between the 1890s and World War I. A most impressive rising trendline for workers was their number. In 1899 the U.S. manufacturing census found 5,193 wage-earners in Los Angeles. It counted 10,424 in 1904, 17,327 in 1909, and 23,744 in 1914--the wage workforce having more than quadrupled in 15 years! These mileposts understate the breakneck growth that actually occurred because later censuses excluded more worksites than their predecessors.[1]

One relatively fixed demographic was the large workingclass share of L.A.'s electorate. The 12th decennial census clearly showed this proletarian majority in 1900. My own sample of potential male voters named in the city's 1908 Great Register identified 54 percent as wage workers. Since most Asian and Mexican immigrants and their grown children worked for wages and did not vote, and since workers likely predominated among the many native-born Angelenos who rarely registered, the total workingclass share of the population during the progressive era was probably closer to 65 percent.[2]

The Incredible Whiteness of Being Los Angeles

Another fixed demographic was the large majority of native-born and foreign-born whites. In 1900, these two groups constituted 78.6 and 17.3 percent, respectively, of the 102,500 residents of Los Angeles. An unknown but small number of the 98,300 "whites" were actually Mexicans and Mexican-Americans--the U.S. Census did not list them separately until 1930. Asians and African-Americans each accounted for 2 percent of the population. [3] Over the next decade these ratios barely changed: native-born and foreign-born whites still constituted 76.6 and 19.0 percent of the 319,200 residents of Los Ange-

les in 1910. An unknown but larger number and percentage of the 305,155 "whites" were Mexicans or Mexican-Americans, while Asians again contributed 2 percent and African Americans 2.4 percent of the city's population.[4]

It was the preponderance of native-born whites and the growing contingent of Mexican and Mexican-Americans that gave Los Angeles its distinctive look in 1910. No other city had tried so hard or so successfully to recruit internal migrants from the white American heartland, and no other had served as entrepot and destination for so many Mexican wage workers. By contrast only 1.6 percent of the 1910 population came from eastern and southern Europe--a remarkable fact given what was happening in cities of the U.S. Midwest and East. "Unlike the typical American metropolis," Robert M. Fogelson observes in *The Fragmented Metropolis*, "Los Angeles did not have at any time in its modern history a vast group of European immigrants." The following table illustrates this fact:

Table 1 – Foreign-Born White and Nonwhite Populations as Percentage of Total Population in Selected Cities, 1890-1910

	Foreign Born White			Nonwhite		
City	1890	1900	1910	1890	1900	1910
Chicago	41	35	36	1.3	1.9	2.1
Detroit	39	34	34	1.7	1.4	1.2
Los Angeles	**22**	**18**	**19**	**6.3**	**4.3**	**4.4**
New York	39	37	40	1.6	1.6	2.0
Philadelphia	26	23	25	3.9	4.9	5.6
San Francisco	34	30	31	9.5	5.1	4.1

Source: Robert Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis*, Tables 6 & 9, pp. 80 & 82.

As the progressive era opened, three of every four white Angelenos had started life in California, the Midwest, and the mid-Atlantic states. Smaller contingents had arrived from England, Ireland, Germany, Canada, and France. White demographics remained more or less constant from 1890 to 1920, though a very slight shift occurred in favor of Italians, Russians, and other eastern and southern Europeans. The latter were less likely than native-born whites and western Europeans to possess craft skills; most worked as

laborers for the first generation or two before assimilating into the wider white society. In 1910, the U.S. population census found that just over a third of L.A.'s foreign-born whites came from English-speaking countries while a sixth came from Germany.[5]

From this unusual population mix, the nature of progressive-era craft unionism, and the unabashed chauvinism that dogged ethnic minorities and women in turn-of-the century Los Angeles, we can draw this reliable conclusion about the city's union members: all but a handful were white and male.

Not only did unions recruit from a labor pool that was 95 percent white, but as craft-based entities they organized workers whose skill level practically guaranteed their whiteness and maleness. This was an historically contingent fact, given the limited educational and training opportunities open at the time to Americans with unpink skins and/or two X chromosomes. Those few Mexicans, African-Americans, and women who broke through the wall of prejudice, served apprenticeships, and became skilled in a craft seldom found their way into L.A.'s unions. Asian-Americans were excluded from unions carte-blanche.

To test these conclusions I listed the names, local affiliations, and labor movement activities of 1,939 union members who worked in Los Angeles or San Pedro from the mid 1890s to World War I. Most were English-speakers. Sizeable minorities had Germanic and Scandinavian names. Only 14 had Latino given names or surnames. Of the total only 58 were women; another 61 women worked closely with organized labor as members of the Women's Union Label League[6] and a scattering belonged to the Ladies' Auxiliary of Typographical No. 174. Female wage workers paid dues to just 9 of the 188 local unions I identified during this period: printers, press feeders, garment workers, laundry workers, waitresses, waiters & waitresses (combined), retail clerks, cracker bakers, and office employees. I found Latinos in only 7 unions: hod carriers & building laborers, united labo-

rers (a federal union), lumbermen, bakers, printers, blacksmiths, and electric railway track workers (another federal union). African-Americans could not be identified by name, but the near-total absence of commentary about them in the labor press and in printers' and central labor council minutes suggests that they were even rarer than Latinos. No recognizably Asian names appeared on my list.[7]

Women Workers' Uphill Battle

It was not only the available labor pool that influenced the gender and ethnic composition of the city's unions; craft workers' attitudes toward women, Asians, African-Americans, and Mexicans were just as determinative.

We have it from an excellent chronicler, Grace Stimson, that in the early 1890s the Los Angeles Council of Labor "gave little heed to the problems of female labor, though several unions, notably the Typographical, accorded women full membership. It was left to an outside organization to help working women." This was the Women's Industrial Exchange "which had been serving women in several capacities ever since 1885, and carried on its female labor bureau."[8]

Organized labor's halfhearted embrace of female workers was socially conditioned. In myriad ways men in and out of unions took their cues from a fading but idealized division of labor, an archaic legal system, a popular culture whose novelties demonstrated the "more things stay the same" phenomenon, lagging schools, and ordinary discourse--all of which held that a women was ill-suited for the labor market. Her proper place was still the home. There, hostage to a male income, she had been assigned a nurturing, not a competitive, role. Growing cohorts of women compelled or venturesome enough to work for pay after the turn of the century found their ambition rewarded by the alienation of their wages. In California during the progressive era the earnings of both wife and husband were defined as community property which the man alone controlled. He could do

anything he wanted with it while he lived except give it away, and on his death could will half of it to heirs other than his wife. What made this circumstance so woefully unfair, argued Murrea Marvin, who chaired the Women's Federation of the local Socialist Party, was the fact that

> "a woman cannot control a dollar of community property, while her husband lives, even though it may be a dollar she earned, nor can she will a dollar of her share away when she dies, even to her own children. Her death removes all restrictions, and gives all to the husband absolutely." 9

Gendered Speech and the Erosion of Separate Spheres

It is intriguing to note how everyday language legitimized separate spheres for men and women in 1900s Los Angeles--and sobering to realize how much of it still trips off men's tongues. More than any other social group, progressive reformers spoke and wrote in a masculinized vocabulary. Their tropes, when celebrating themselves as they so compulsively did, were "the best men," "men of affairs," and --Willard's favorite--"citizens of the best type," by which he clearly did not mean the nonvoting sex. Most of this verbiage was habitual, but it was also true, as Merry Ovnick has observed, that "the political reformers frequently employed manliness as a persuasive tactic."[10]

Male labor activists were less apt to toast themselves in public, but they routinely used the epithet "union men" to describe a rank and file which included growing numbers of women. They also assumed the proletarian virtue of staunchness was intrinsically masculine. "We are up against a hard proposition," shingler J.R. Walker wrote of all organized labor in 1903, "but the manhood of the workers will be found equal to the task..."[11] When trade union pioneer Arthur Vinette died in July, 1906, the printer Joseph Phillis eulogized his fallen friend thusly: "[W]ithal he was a manly man, his own man... [who] always manfully stood by his guns when attacked from any quarter."[12] The women of Garment Workers No. 125 likewise stood by their guns while abandoning their needles during major strikes in 1903 and 1913, but for this they earned no gendered praise.

Nevertheless, by the latter year the separate spheres mentality had lost much of its grip on L.A.'s male workers. Stagnant incomes had made it hard for families to subsist on the take-home pay of a single earner. Low wages imposed by the open-shop coalition after 1900 forced daughters, sisters, and wives into jobs demanding modest skills. About this trend men were of two minds. While it raised their families' disposable incomes, it threatened male privileges and occasionally male livelihoods. In the city's offices, women had begun to take over clerical positions formerly held by men. A similar shift had occurred in the city's garment shops. These changes spurred an ongoing debate within the union movement.

From one camp in the debate came this patriarchal dirge:

> "It strikes us that the men are the ones who should do the work if there can be found any who are not otherwise employed....If there was less child labor and less mother labor, for wages, there would be more work and better wages for the men, the legitimate bread winners of the family, and the nation would be better off.
>
> "Let our men be engaged in earning a living for the family, our mothers be engaged in the management of the home and the children occupied with being trained for future health and usefulness and there will be fewer clouds in the sky of social, business and political life." 13

The other camp recognized that times had changed:

> "[N]early five million women go to work every day in the United States....The real question, then, would seem to be, 'They are here already; what are we going to do about it?' The only sensible answer would seem to be, 'Assist them, so far as we can, to get equal pay for equal work.' Otherwise the iron law of wages will force the employer to hire the help which he can hire the cheapest."

San Pedro longshoreman Z.W. Craig, author of the latter statement, pointed out that the Laundry Workers Union had placed clauses in its contracts requiring equal pay for male and female women markers, washers, and distributors, and that other unionized trades had adopted similar measures. "The American Federation of Labor advocates, in season and out of season, and at all times, equal opportunities for women in its membership, and equal pay for equal work," Craig said. "To organized labor can be given the credit for the greater part of the improvement that has been made toward the amelioration of the conditions of the working women."[14] Craig's view echoed that of most labor lead-

ers by 1910, though not all. Rank and file sentiment is harder to gauge, but a similar change, against similar rear-guard resistance, seems to have taken place there. Still, labor movement women knew they could take nothing for granted.

A Contradictory Trade Union Response

One who ceaselessly prodded her male comrades was Frances Nacke Noel, firebrand for the Women's Living Wage League and Wage Earners' Suffrage League, mover and shaker on the Central Labor Council's executive board, defender of Mexican anarcho-syndicalists during their American political trials, socialist candidate for the city council, leader of the Women's Trade Union League, Women's Union Label League, and Friday Morning Club, and labor's staunchest ally in the L.A. women's movement. On October 6, 1910 Noel shook her stick at the 172 male delegates attending the eleventh annual state labor convention in Los Angeles. Declaring that "women wage earners are here to stay" and chastising those "men in various crafts who for reason of mere prejudice are unwilling to admit women into the ranks of their union," Noel demanded an end to that exclusionary practice. Her reputation as a champion of organized labor preceded her to the podium. The delegates promptly adopted a resolution that called on the state's unions to recruit women members.[15]

Slow as they were to organize women, L.A.'s unionists realized early on that wage equality served the interests of their class. This was a narrower principle than job equality, which implied women's access to industries and trades that men still hoped to monopolize. Far fewer women than men became garment cutters, for example, but if they belonged to a union they earned the same rates as men. Not to have insisted on this would have exposed unions, in Craig's words, to the downward pressure of "the iron law of wages" and would have created a dangerous two-tier union structure at many worksites.[16] Organized labor was also the first institution in Los Angeles to raise pay equality as a po-

litical standard. When Arthur Vinette and Jonathan Bailey of Carpenters No. 56, E.S. Livermore of Typographical No. 174, P.S. Dorney of the Knights of Labor, and Jesse Butler of the old Workingmen organized a Union Labor Party in 1888, their platform opposed the entry of women into certain trades but demanded equal wages for those already in the labor market. Four years later a revamped Union Labor Party again demanded that men and women receive the same pay on public works.[17]

Equal pay for equal work remained an unwavering union goal throughout the quarter-century covered by this dissertation. Motivated by a class interest, it also had profound cross-class implications for women's struggles against patriarchy. It is impossible to imagine a situation in which women would be politically, legally, and socially the equal of men while remaining their economic inferiors. Most women who worked for wages during this period lacked union protection and therefore earned considerably less than men in similar jobs. Among them were the store clerks, telephone operators, and millinery employees mentioned in chapter 4. Their workplace subordination acted as an enduring drag on the progressive-era women's rights movement.

In 1913, with help from the Central Labor Council, a Women's Living Wage League was founded in Los Angeles by Frances Noel, Daisy Houck, Murrea Marvin, Mary Engle, Theodosia Harriman (wife of Job Harriman), and other feminists in or close to the workers' movement.[18] The League focused public pressure on companies that underpaid, sweated, or otherwise devalued female labor, and it prodded the city council to create an Industrial Commission. Noel served on that commission in the spring of 1913. Dissatisfied with its inquiry into women's work, she and Berenice A. Johnson issued their own report. They found that roughly a quarter of the women employed in the city were earning "starvation wages," well below the "subsistence wage" of $2 a day. One particular circumstance exposed the link between lower wages for women and male hegemony in

the home. According to Noel and Johnson,

> "It is an almost universal demand by department stores, five and ten-cent stores, and many other employers that those they hire should live at home. Result is, when seeking work, many are forced to say they live under those conditions, and, in consequence, eke out a semi-starved existence on a wage that is not intended to be a sufficient support for the independent living of a single individual." 19

We can see that the early twentieth century was a contradictory time for gender relations in the Los Angeles labor movement. This, of course, signified progress over the Victorian era's separate spheres. Male activists reached out to women's groups for boycott and strike support, epitomized by the Women's Union Label League. They championed the eight-hour day, equal wages, and the suffrage for women. Increasingly, too, they helped them organize and join unions. But most craftsmen still drew the line at welcoming their sisters, wives, and daughters into time-honored male trades, and only rarely did they vote women into the leadership of their unions and their central labor bodies.

When Frances Noel scanned the great hall of the L.A. Labor Temple before addressing the state labor convention that October morning in 1910, she saw only four women seated among the delegates. Just one--Gertie Mudgett of Press Feeders No. 37--represented the host city. Delegates named William and Harry spoke for Laundry Workers No. 52, a local union made up overwhelmingly of women.[20]

Thousands of women had joined unions by 1910, but few won seats at state conventions or on the city's Central Labor Council. At most council meetings during the century's first decade the only women present were Noel and another member of the Women's Union Label League. The 1910 strike wave and triumph of California's suffrage amendment in the same year spurred women to fight for greater influence at the higher echelons of the labor movement. Eight to twelve representatives of the Ladies' Tailors, Waitresses, Garment Workers, and Retail Clerks began voting at labor council meetings, and in February, 1912, the decade-old Laundry Workers union seated its first

female delegate on the council. These were only piecemeal gains, however. The L.A. Central Labor Council remained a male bastion well beyond World War I. Women unionists nominated a dozen of their sisters for leadership positions on that body but managed to elect only two. Noel and Daisy Houck, the financial secretary and former president of Garment Workers No. 125, won seats on its executive board.[21]

Local 125: A Belwether Union

The saga of Houck's local tells us a great deal about the tough-minded struggle women workers waged in Los Angeles a century ago. It is a tale of initiative and self-education--and of industrial unionism 30 years before its time. Historically less well-known than its younger sibling, Ladies' Tailors No. 52, the garment workers union earned its charter in 1900 after cutters, pressers, and stitchers at a downtown workclothes firm banded together to fight against 12-hour workdays and arbitrary firings. They asked AFL field representative John C. Ince to help them organize and, when that was done, to install their leaders. Ella Strout took office as the local's first president. Also voted in were Lemuel Veliz, vice-president; Fannie Lowe, recording secretary; Frank Horgan, financial secretary; Rose Barnes, treasurer; and Frances Flores, sergeant-at-arms.[22] From the outset Garment Workers No. 125 was led by women. Its members elected just one male president during the entire progressive era.

The young union faced familiar challenges: defending workers at Brownstein, Newmark, & Louis, broadening its foothold in the workclothes industry, and growing its membership. In 1903 it struck Brownstein et. al. and a second workclothing manufacturer, Cohn & Goldwater, for two days, demanding and winning higher wages and shorter hours. The new contracts substituted arbitration for strikes and lockouts.[23]

No. 125's next few years saw rapid growth marred by detours into racism. Forbidding members to work alongside Chinese, it denied shops employing Chinese the right to sew

on the union label, and in 1905 it proudly informed the Central Labor Council that it had "gotten rid of Russian peasants in the overall factories."[24] These actings-out of working-class chauvinism and grievously misguided AFL policies were shortlived, however, fading away by the end of the decade. Meanwhile the union made steady gains. It ended the 1903 strike with 200 members, nearly the entire workforce at its two garment firms. In 1905 its strong base enabled it to force a cut in daily working hours from ten to eight.[25] It continued to improve working conditions and hours for its members over the next five years, a period when its rank and file earned respect from the printers, metal trades, brewers, and other L.A. unions for coming to their financial aid at moments of crisis.[26]

Garment workers were openly proud of these achievements. When reformers redoubled their campaign for women's suffrage late in the decade, the union's secretary wrote,

> "the principal objection they met was that women were all right in the home but were not capable of handling business or legislative matters. The spielers...were not well enough posted to point to the magnificent organization of garment workers who had many years ago proved that they could handle affairs as well as, if not a great deal better, than the men. The same is true about the eight-hour law for women and the law governing child labor, safety appliances, toilets in shops and general sanitary conditions. Years before the legislation was passed...the Garment Workers' Union, through their organization, had secured these reforms." [27]

In 1910 P.A. Newmark broke with his partners and set up his own workshirt manufacturing company. Garment Workers No. 125, under the leadership of Daisy Houck, promptly signed up many of the new plant's employees. As the industry expanded so did the union, more than doubling its size to nearly 800 members over the next seven years. It led all other L.A. unions in the per capita allotment of votes at two State Labor Federation conventions during this period and ranked near the top at others.[28] The women of No. 125 knew how to use the power that flowed from their numbers. Remarkably for workers during the peak years of L.A.'s open shop movement, they reached for and achieved that elusive goal--an all-union shop.

This act of rebellion against Otis, the *L.A. Times*, the Merchants' and Manufacturers'

Association (M&M), and the local business establishment produced one of the longest successful strikes in the city's history. It began on March 1, 1913, when Newmark refused a request for higher piece rates and the union called out its most strategically placed members. Through its international and the L.A. Central Labor Council, No. 125 mounted an extraordinarily effective boycott of the company's work shirts. Organized workers, who wore a substantial share of these items, stopped buying them. "Sales were gradually whittled down until only 89 of the original 300 employees remained at work," state Louis B. and Richard S. Perry in *A History of the Los Angeles Labor Movement.*[29] At that point Newmark gave up the fight and asked the Labor Council to intervene. Happy to oblige, council president J.C. Timmons, vice-president Al. B. Hassel, and secretary Lonnie Butler brought the warring parties together and extracted a settlement from Newmark that was entirely favorable to the union. Under the contract ratified by nearly 400 members of Garment Workers No. 125 at a raucous June 26, 1914 meeting in the Labor Temple, P.A. Newmark agreed to hire only union workers. Union dues and strike assessments were levied against employees who had remained on the job after March 1, 1913, though Newmark himself paid half the latter. After the ratification, to rousing applause, 81 new members of No. 125 marched into the hall and formally joined the union. Frances Noel sent them on their way with "one of her characteristic, short, pertinent, and energetic talks."[30]

The garment workers' decisive use of the boycott was not lost on the city's other workclothes manufacturers, Brownstein-Louis and Cohn-Goldwater. In short order they, too, signed union shop agreements with No. 125. The Perrys recognized the importance of this achievement:

> "At the hearings of the Commission on Industrial Relations in 1914, the United Garment Workers and the Journeymen Tailors were singled out as exceptions to the effectiveness of the open-shop campaign....Even [the M&M's Felix] Zeehandelaar testified that he believed all overall as well as

other garment factories were closed shops. Although in fact the firms were union rather than closed shops, and not all manufacturers were in this category, Zeehandelaar's statement was in effect an admission of failure to achieve a complete open shop in the manufacture of clothing, especially of work clothing." 31

What the Perrys failed to point out was the rare advantage Garment Workers No. 125 enjoyed over the city's craft unions--namely, its industrial form of organization. It would have been almost impossible for this women's local to defeat the open shop if had been simply a cutters', a pressers', or a stitchers' union. With the leverage it now held over its three employers, it negotiated contract gains that surpassed those of most all-male trades locals in Los Angeles. Among them were cutters' wages of $22.50 per week, lower but still impressive wages for needle workers, pay increases approaching 8 percent a year, time-and-a-half pay for hours over 48 per week, double pay for Sunday work, and a grievance procedure. No. 125 won these provisions at a time when union waitresses were earning $8 for a nominal 48-hour workweek; split shifts, however, often forced them to spend 60 or more hours a week on their employers' premises. Male waiters in the best cafés were working *seven* days a week for a mere $8 to $10. "When one considers the handicaps and environment to be met and overcome in Los Angeles," State Labor Federation organizer J.B. Dale declared, the garment worker contracts amounted to "an oasis in a desert."[32]

Local 125 at Large in the City

Workplace successes encouraged the garment workers to expand their horizons. In the early years of World War I they cemented an alliance with the Women's Trade Union League (WTUL) through Frances Noel and Daisy Houck, who was local secretary of the League and financial secretary of the union. The WTUL, founded in 1904 by Lillian D. Wald, Jane Addams, and other settlement house leaders in New York, Chicago, and Boston, set out to investigate the national condition of working women but soon turned to a very vigorous form of strike support, most notably for female garment workers in New

York's famous 1909 "uprising of the 20,000." There the young WTUL, made up of both middle-class and wage-earning women, "organized shops and strike halls, marched with the pickets, testified for them in court, secured volunteer legal services, furnished $29,000 bail, managed newspaper publicity, participated in arbitration, arranged parades and demonstrations, raised funds, and paid strike benefits."[33]

Impressed by this cross-class alliance of New York women, Noel talked up a similar coalition in Los Angeles. She sparked enthusiasm for the idea among the garment worker unions, Central Labor Council, and one of the city's oldest and largest women's organizations, the Friday Morning Club. In 1915 the WTUL's Los Angeles branch came into existence. It was less militant than its New York counterpart, but similarly motivated. Recruiting middle-class volunteers to aid strikes by and the unionization of female workers, it "served as the women's arm of the labor movement and the industrial arm of the women's movement." The local WTUL backed strikes by cannery, bindery, and boot and shoe employees, created a vacation camp for women workers, and, at the prompting of the Central Labor Council, investigated reasons and remedies for the city's 1914-16 unemployment crisis.[34]

Much of this work benefitted from participation by members of Garment Workers No. 125. Daisy Houck helped Noel organize one of the widely attended unemployment forums. Later that year, as a demonstration of solidarity with the rest of the labor movement, the union staged a play and used the proceeds to buy stock in the financially strapped Labor Temple. Another of No. 125's activities that went beyond normal business unionism was the evening school it sponsored for its members in the summer and fall of 1917. Teachers supplied by the Board of Education taught civics, English, and other subjects to upwards of 200 garment workers, most of them recent immigrants.

A Workingclass View of Americanization

State AFL organizer Dale believed these classes followed "the recommendations of the Councils of Defense in the Americanization of the foreign-speaking residents." But did they? Given the garment workers' defiance of the open shop and their association with Noel, it is likely that union rights and procedures figured prominently in the curriculum. This strain of "Americanization," stressing class solidarity rather than individual boot-strapping, was *not* what Mary Gibson and her colleagues (see Chapter 4) had in mind.[35]

Noel made this fact clear on April 26, 1916 when she addressed the fifth annual convention of the State Federation of Women's Clubs in Del Monte, California. "For the first time in the Federation's history," reported the *Citizen*, "trade unionism was discussed in frank and bold statements from the platform." Assigned the topic of "the Women's Trade Union League as an Americanizer," Noel spoke broadly of the city's labor movement and the women in it. A downtown L.A. shirtwaist manufacturer had locked 15 young girls out of his factory when they asked for higher wages, she told her middle-class audience. As a WTUL leader, Noel and the Central Labor Council had tried to open negotiations with this gentleman. He refused to see them, whereupon the fifteen girls, joined by other workers from the factory, set up a picketline. The manufacturer's demanded, and was given, two city patrolmen and two city detectives to quash his employees' rebellion.

"Right here let me ask who is the Americanizer--the employer, the police or the girls?" Noel asked. Perhaps sensing some hesitation in her listeners, Noel answered her own question:

> "I defy anyone who proposes that any movement, intended for the fundamental welfare of the workers, is really and truly an Americanizer unless it carries with the scheme a basic independence for both the worker as a worker and the worker as a citizen....[W]oman is the mother of the race, and womanhood must learn that it does not pay in the long run to make human life so abominably cheap that a vulture class can afford to sap the lifeblood of the offspring we raise with suffering and care." [36]

Noel's statement skirted the outer limits of the solidarity that had been forged between

organized labor and the women's movement as the progressive era in Los Angeles ended.

Workers of Color: Struggles on the Margins of Organized Labor

Unlike San Francisco, where anti-Chinese agitation powered the rise of the city's organized labor movement, Los Angeles provided no such "indispensable enemy" for its white working class.[37] Here, transient and settled populations of Chinese, Japanese, African-Americans, and Mexicans were either too small or too occupationally segregated to rivet the attention of the fledgling craft unions. Some job competition did exist, especially in the hospitality and other service trades. So did the same racial antipathies that seared the northern city, but in Los Angeles they burned at a lower intensity.

Asians: "Strangers from a Different Shore"[38]

Between enactment of the 1790 Naturalization Law and its 1952 repeal, official U.S. policy backed by popular opinion held that the only immigrants worthy of citizenship were white ones. This policy was reconfirmed in 1870 when the government declared Asian/Pacific peoples "aliens ineligible for citizenship" through a skewed interpretation of the Fourteenth Amendment's naturalization clause. Mexicans skirted the prohibition in the years of this dissertation because federal censuses counted them as white, proving that American racial categories have had only a nodding acquaintance with biology. "Though immigrants from countries like Ireland and Italy experienced discrimination and nativist reactions, they nonetheless could become citizens of the United States," Ronald Takaki notes in *Strangers from a Different Shore.* "Citizenship is a prerequisite for suffrage--political power essential for groups to defend and advance their rights and interests. Unlike their European counterparts, Asian immigrants were not permitted to exercise power through the ballot..."[39]

Anti-Asian racism took legal and extra-legal forms. In 1854 the California Supreme

Court ruled that Chinese could not testify against whites in court. Mob violence against the Chinese flared up in coastal cities from San Francisco north during the 1870s. While such attacks were far less common in southern California, one vicious incident occurred in October, 1871, when a white rabble invaded Los Angeles' Chinatown, burned homes, looted shops, and killed 16 or more Chinese.[40]

Would-be Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Korean, and Indian immigrants also suffered degrees of exclusion throughout this long period. On the cutting edge of campaigns to bar Asians--above all Asian workers--from our shores, the American Federation of Labor justified its stand in unabashedly racist terms. Its 1893 national convention called the Chinese "a degraded people" who "bring with them nothing but filth, vice and disease."[41] A year earlier the AFL had steamrolled the Chinese Exclusion Act through Congress, halting the inflow of Chinese laborers for ten years. Its lobbyists broadened the ban to cover most other Chinese in 1888, renewed it in 1893, extended it indefinitely in 1902, and began demanding its application to Koreans and Japanese in 1904.[42] San Francisco's Central Labor Council emerged from a long crusade against Chinese workers to lead that city's attack on Japanese and Korean immigrants. It was the perfect California expression of AFL racism, and vice-versa. "Sixty years' contact with the Chinese, and twenty-five years' experience with the Japanese and two or three years' acquaintance with Hindus should be sufficient to convince any ordinarily intelligent person that they have no standards...by which a Caucasian may judge them," AFL president Samuel Gompers declared in 1908.

It was the Workingmen's Party that elevated San Francisco's Chinese population to the status of an indispensable enemy in the 1870s. The party's Los Angeles branch had a similar notion but pursued it only fitfully and halfheartedly. "Throughout its career, the Los Angeles party avoided the violence characteristic of the northern city, both in intra-

party schism and in anti-Chinese attacks," says Stimson. "There were no ranters, no rioters, no mobs to disturb the calm in Los Angeles, where the real workingmen who formed the core of the party gained the adherence of business and professional groups."[43] What it passed on to the craft unions that succeeded it was less a fixation on race than a commitment to defend wage workers, a hatred of monopoly, and a legacy of political unionism.

The Chinese

Asians in late 19th-century Los Angeles were not numerous, but they did important work. First to arrive were the Chinese. Most came as sojourners. Nearly all were males sentenced to bachelorhood by anti-miscegenation laws. In the 1870s they leased land southwest of the city, farming table crops and hawking them door to door or selling them to commissaries along the Southern Pacific Railroad, where their countrymen laid track. The city's first produce market took shape in a small Chinatown that had appeared east of the old Plaza. Two-thirds of the laborers who dug the country's longest rail tunnel through the mountains north of Los Angeles in 1876 were Chinese. They worked as farmhands and in Chinese restaurants and laundries, helped build the *zanjas* that watered the city, cooked for white families and boarding houses, ran small Chinese businesses, harvested abalone, and fanned out into the basin's citrus groves. There they taught American growers how to graft and bud the fruit, pocketing a mere $5 a month for their invaluable labors. Except for an occasional restaurant cook or hotel employee, they filled occupational niches that most white workers shunned.[44] They were also demographically insignificant. Only 605 Asians, mostly Chinese, lived in Los Angeles in 1880, making up just 5.4 percent of the city's population.[45] For these reasons job competition between white and Chinese workers was rare.

The city's organized labor movement would have made no attempt to recruit Chinese workers even if it had found them in its favored trades. Among Asian immigrant groups

the Chinese were the most despised, and while L.A.'s unions seldom displayed the rabid racism of their San Francisco counterparts they dutifully toed the AFL line.

The printers' union took up the anti-Asian cudgels in 1886 two years after receiving its AFL charter. It did so despite facing *no* Asian job competition whatsoever. Pure and simple racism motivated this exemplar of pure and simple trade unionism. At the printers' urging the Trades Council, one of L.A.'s first central labor bodies, agreed to agitate against Chinese working in laundries, vegetable gardens, hotels, restaurants, and private homes. The Trades Council pulled the Knights of Labor, former Workingmen, and every L.A. newspapers except for the *Times* into the drive. It sponsored anti-Chinese ward clubs and organized door-to-door boycott canvassing. Rallies attended by thousands of Angelenos pilloried the Chinese. Almost overnight, like most such flareups in the city, this one fizzled out. Stimson explains that

> "In the first place, advocating the discharge of Chinese employees for whom no replacements were available posed an insoluble problem; and secondly, the refusal of Chinese vegetable peddlers (almost the sole source of supply) to serve families which had dismissed their countrymen caused many people to forget their boycott pledges....There was no real urgency in Los Angeles for preceding against the Chinese, and the boom just starting in 1886 quickly diverted labor's attention to craft unionism and its demands." 46

Fitful and ineffective, the scapegoating continued. Typographical No. 174 threatened its members with a $2.50 fine if they patronized a Chinese or Japanese restaurant. Unions persuaded the city council to bar Chinese laborers from public works in 1889, but the state supreme court ruled that doing so violated the freedom of contract. These local efforts were overshadowed by a much more robust national campaign. With few exceptions American unions fought to extend the Chinese ban through the 1892 Geary Act, and they demanded that it be strictly enforced. The L.A. Council of Labor instigated and won the first case testing the new act in 1893, when the U.S. District Court in Los Angeles deported a cook named Wong Dip Ken.[47] Labor's exclusion campaign largely succeeded. Smugglers hustling Chinese across the Mexican border could not match the pre-1892 tide

of legal immigration from China. That nation's contribution to the city's population dropped from 5.4 percent to 3.7 percent during the decade after 1880.[48]

"Although they were largely cut off from the majority society and their ancestral homeland," say historians Donald and Nadine Hata,

> the Chinese stubbornly stood their ground. Low wages notwithstanding, they managed to save money and established their own lending institutions. A variety of community associations were also organized for mutual support and survival, to arbitrate disputes between members, and to provide social services. The associations were organized around villages and districts, clans and families, benevolent services, businesses and professions, and secret societies." [49]

The Japanese

Unlike the Chinese, the Japanese were more feared than despised. They came in denser numbers, sank deeper entrepreneurial and workingclass roots in the L.A. basin, acted with more aggressive solidarity, and displayed élan and wit in fending off the humiliations that both organized capital and organized labor sought to impose on them.

Japanese settlement in Los Angeles arose from a unique coincidence of push and pull forces. For nearly two and a half centuries after 1638 Japanese governments isolated their country and suppressed emigration. This policy changed in the early 1880s when the Meiji Restoration launched a rapid industrialization and price deflation that devastated the farm economy of small landowners and landless peasants. Construction of Ujina Harbor on the island of Nihojima also uprooted a large fishing population there. At the same time, the Hawaiian planter class grew uneasy as the islands' 18,000 Chinese, originally indentured to the sugar plantations, rapidly founded their own businesses. The planters cast about for a safe new source of labor and found it in four wracked prefectures of southeastern Japan. Relaxing its emigration ban, the Meiji Restoration allowed over 30,000 impoverished peasants and fishermen to leave for Hawaii on "master and servant" contracts between 1885 and 1894. It also made *free* immigration of Japanese nationals legal in 1886.[50]

Hawaii's reliance on just one small area of Japan for its sugar workers heavily influenced the later immigration to the United States. "First," observes Roger Daniels in *The Politics of Prejudice*,

> "a very large percentage of California's Issei came by way of Hawaii. Second, since these areas were the only part of Japan whose people had had experience with transpacific migration, it naturally followed when the period of heavy free immigration ensued that this area furnished a disproportionate share of the migrants. In the five years from 1899 to 1903 more than 60 per cent of the non-Asian passports issued by the Japanese government went to residents of the four prefectures, and in 1908 a survey conducted by the semiofficial Japanese Association of America showed that the same group controlled almost half of the acreage tilled by Issei in California." [51]

Two material facts drew members of this highly recruitable labor pool to American shores. Wages in southern California at least equalled Hawaii's, and those in the Bay Area surpassed them. More important, the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act had intervened. With the traditional supply of workers from China cut off, a low-wage labor shortage had begun to develop at the state's ranches, orchards, and construction sites. The timing was fortuitous for the coming of the Japanese, and come they did. Daniels gives the U.S. census data for immigrant (Issei) and native-born (Nisei) Japanese in the half-century between 1880 and 1930:

Year	*United States*	*California*
1880	148	86
1890	2,039	1,147
1900	24,326	10,151
1910	72,157	41,356
1920	111,010	71,952
1930	138,834	97,456 [52]

The number of Issei living and working in California in any one year during this period exceeded the census totals, for the typical Japanese immigrant was a *dekaseginin*, or "bird of passage," who alit here for a time, nurtured a small nest-egg, and flew home with it.[53] Proportionally, sojourners were more apt to arrive before 1900. Many toiled in the fields; others were indigent student-laborers who worked as house servants in well-to-do homes while attending school or college. After 1902[54] a relatively greater fraction of the

Issei arrived with hopes of earning enough capital to set up their own permanent farming operations or urban businesses in this country. The 1907 "Gentlemen's Agreement" between the United States and Japan barred new entries by Issei laborers, however, and in 1924 the harshly anti-Asian Immigration Act stopped all classes of Japanese resettlement until 1952.

Few Issei made Los Angeles home in the early years of their migration from Hawaii or Japan. "Up to about 1907, the San Francisco Bay area, the area around Sacramento, and the upper San Joaquin Valley were the major foci of immigrant population," notes Daniels. "After that date the population grew more rapidly in the south."[55] There were three reasons for this reversal. Demand was growing for ranch laborers in southern California to replace the dwindling numbers of Chinese. Northern California cities, above all San Francisco, had mounted increasingly rabid campaigns to oust Japanese from their schools, jobs, and neighborhoods. And in 1906 a catastrophic earthquake leveled large areas of the bay city. The resulting turmoil provoked a surge of violence against Asians, many of whom had lost their livelihoods in the disaster. Upwards of 2,000 Japanese left for Los Angeles. "By 1910," Daniels says, "Los Angeles, which at the previous census had contained less than one per cent of the state's Japanese population, had more Japanese than any other county. By 1920 almost 20,000 (18 per cent) Japanese lived there."[56] Large numbers of U.S.-born Nisei contributed to the latter count.

The Japanese presence in Los Angeles, like that of the Chinese, was lopsidedly male. Over 4,500 Issei had gathered in the city's downtown by 1906. Most of them lived in the light industrial zone that stretched from Main Street to the river. Their lodging houses and businesses formed a rough crescent extending from each side of a central district that had recently come to be known as Little Tokyo. Here, along First, Alameda, and Los Angeles Streets and their feeders, Japanese laborers and German brewery workers mingled

uneasily. They patronized the Japanese bamboo, curio, and art shops, as did other Angelenos, but only the Issei worked in them. A second nucleus of Japanese laborers and businesses had emerged to the southeast along Sixth and Olive Street.[57] The fast-growing Japanese enclave supported its own newspaper, the *Rafu Shimpo*, and its own protective society, the Japanese Association. Founded in 1897 when the nearest consulate was 400 miles away in San Francisco, the Association fought racial friction by policing the community and demanding redress for flagrant cases of anti-Japanese violence.[58]

The class makeup of the Little Tokyo area changed after 1902. From that year until enforcement of the Gentlemen's Agreement began in 1908, its small entreprenurial character gave way to a rampant proletarianization. Laborers poured in from Hawaii, Japan, and San Francisco. In 1903, Henry Huntington imported scores of Japanese and African-American workers to take the jobs of Mexican trackmen striking his Pacific Electric Railway.[59] The Issei workforce also found local employment as store clerks and stock chasers, waiters and dishwashers, barbers, porters and bellboys, hod carriers, railroad car cleaners, window washers, gardeners, house cleaners, and janitors. At first their wages were generally lower than those earned by whites in equivalent jobs, ranging from 75 cents to $1.25 per day.[60] The wage gap between white and Japanese laborers disappeared as the latter reacted to their super-exploitation by organizing against their employers.

Most of these Issei had left Japan and Hawaii for the U.S. West Coast as free emigrants, not contract laborers. "On the other hand," says Ichioka, "they did not cross the Pacific entirely on their own resources--they had the help of someone." At their ports of departure, immigration companies and innkeepers put them in touch with employers and job middlemen in California. Some of the latter were former student-workers who had become large-scale labor contractors. "Labor contracting flourished from 1891 to 1907, coinciding with labor immigration to the United States," Ichioka asserts. "Newly arriving

laborers, unable to speak English and unfamiliar with American labor practices, relied upon their fellow countrymen who were labor contractors for initial employment."[61]

The big contractors funneled workers into the railroad, mining, agricultural, lumber, and fishing industries of central and northern California and also supplied migrant farm laborers to ranchers in the L.A. basin. While fees skimmed from the wages of contract laborers provided most of their income, they also charged workers for translations, medicine, food, and, in some cases, bunking. This system was rife with abuse. "In July 1906," Ichioka reports, "Abe Kumakichi of Glendale, a strawberry labor contractor, abandoned his laborers and fled with $1,500." Running off with the entire contract price and payroll was a common practice known as *mochinige*, and it provoked recurring tension between contractors and the workers they recruited.[62]

From the suburbs, Issei farmers descended on Little Tokyo to buy equipment, seeds, and supplies. "Pool halls, restaurants, bookstores, bathhouses, barber shops, boarding houses, variety stores, etc., were now opened with the trade of Japanese laborers in mind," note William M. Mason and John A. McKinstry in *The Japanese of Los Angeles*. Workers began to gather on east First and north San Pedro streets to recover from their day's toil and relax with friends.[63] In the words of Japanese-American historian Yuji Ichioka,

> "[p]oolhalls and bar-restaurants served as important social havens from the hardships and tedium of labor. In addition to providing the game of pool, poolhalls served as a general meeting place for workers to renew old friendships, to exchange work information, and to simply while away leisure time. Many catered to fellow countrymen from the same prefecture or village....Laborers were drawn to bar-restaurants for another reason. With *shakufu* or barmaids, the bar-restaurants had the attraction of offering female companionship. Without wives or sweethearts, the laborers craved such companionship and, however fleeting it may have been, sought it in the bar-restaurants." [64]

Beyond the city's borders Japanese immigrants pursued two livelihoods that had sustained their families for generations in southeastern Japan--farming and fishing. Agriculture was destined by 1910 to become the largest source of income for the Issei of Los

Angeles County. Some worked as field hands and ranch cooks, but an impressive number bought or leased their own land and quickly supplanted the Chinese as growers of the table crops that fed southern California's booming population. "[R]oughly three-fourths of the fresh vegetables consumed in Los Angeles were grown by Japanese farmers," state Mason and McKinstry. The county plots they cultivated soared from 1,950 acres in 1904 to 15,800 in 1916. Japanese immigrants also replaced the Chinese as the main labor force in the city's citrus groves during those years.[65]

Reaction to the success of Japanese agriculture in the Los Angeles Basin was muted. Not so in the state's Imperial and Central Valleys. There, white truck farmers found they could not compete with the Issei on a level plowing field and so, through their Farm Bureaus and Granges and other lobbies, they coaxed the progressive state legislature to adopt an Alien Land Law in 1913. Progressives sympathized with the Caucasian outcry because they themselves believed, in Mowry's phrase, that competition must be hedged by "the color line." The new law barred aliens ineligible to citizenship from buying land or leasing it for more than three years. It cast a very wide net, snaring Chinese, Koreans, Indians and other Asians as well as its chief target, the Japanese.[66]

Fortunately for the Issei the net was broad-gauge, and most of them managed to wriggle through. As one prominent progressive, Chester Rowell, predicted, Japanese farmers dodged the law by having citizen friends take a nominal 51 percent ownership of their land through a transfer of stock; the friends then leased the land back to the Issei. "For the growing number of Issei who had American-born children," says Daniels, "it was even simpler: they merely had the stock or title vested in their citizen children, whose legal guardianship they naturally assumed."[67] The Alien Land Law reminded Japanese farmers in the L.A. basin that they would have to contend with white racism for many years, but it had a negligible effect on their livelihood. Most of them were used to leasing, not own-

ing, land, and the few who had to relinquish their ownership merely made land barons of their minor children.[68]

These stratagems infuriated politicians like James D. Phelan, former mayor of San Francisco who had presided over some of that city's worst racial hostilities and now sat in California's senate. A lifelong and ultimately successful exclusionist, Phelan detested "philanthropists who are always talking about the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God." He too, says Daniels, "could quote scripture to support his position: 'The Lord made of one blood all the races of the earth [but He also] appointed the places of their habitation. This continent belongs to us. That continent belongs to them.'"[69] Backed by the American Legion and a white supremacist group, California's Native Sons and Daughters, Phelan set out to exclude new Japanese immigrants while plugging the holes in the Alien Land Law. He testified before a receptive U.S. House of Representatives immigration committee on June 20, 1919. The Japanese, he declared,

> *"are impossible competitors*, and drive the white settlers, whose standards of living are different, from their farms. The white farmer is not free from cupidity when tempted by Japanese to sell out at high prices, and they do sell out and disappear. The State, therefore, is obliged as a simple matter of self-preservation to prevent the Japanese from absorbing the soil, because the future of the white race, American institutions and western civilization are put in peril." [70]

Most white Californians shared these views. State and national politicians acted accordingly. In a 1920 initiative election, California's voters approved a second alien land law which tightened the mesh of the first: it prohibited Japanese non-citizens from owning or leasing land and from acquiring it through corporations in which they held a majority interest. More drastically it barred Issei parents from serving as guardians for their minor citizen children--a provision soon found to be unconstitutional.[71] Four years later the U.S. Congress passed and the president signed one of the harshest immigration laws in the nation's history. The 1924 Immigration Act halted the admission of all immigrants who were ineligible for citizenship. "From this point in time," says Ichioka, "it was diffi-

cult for [Japanese] immigrants to conceive of any real future for themselves in this country. The only future they saw was that of their American-born children, the Nisei. The anti-Japanese exclusion movement left an enduring legacy of bitterness and resentment which rankled in the hearts of Japanese immigrants through the 1930s."[72] It also set the stage for the tragic Japanese-American confinement in the concentration camps of California and other western states during World War II.

While the 1920 and 1924 laws were traumatic for the Issei and their children, confirming their strangeness in the eyes of white Americans, they came too late for their stated goal of reducing Japanese economic life to a nullity. "The 1920 measure was an attempt to lock the door after the horse had been stolen," Daniels observes. "Had it been enacted in 1913, when native-born Japanese were less numerous, it would have seriously inhibited Japanese acquisition of agricultural land. By 1920 its enactment was an empty gesture, an ineffective irritant..."[73] Many Issei farmers had left Los Angeles County after World War I to plant specialized crops elsewhere. Others had turned their plots over to their U.S.-born children or followed the Chinese into the more lucrative merchandising and brokerage of produce in Los Angeles.[74]

* * * * * * *

A century ago the AFL both reflected and mobilized the racism of white Americans. At its 1894 convention it had resolved to organize workers "irrespective of creed, color, sex, nationality, or politics," but it tacitly supported a range of, local union practices that kept minorities at arm's length. "High initiation fees, special licenses, technical examinations, and prohibitions on becoming apprentices, for example, militated against the admission of blacks into various AFL unions," states Tomás Almaguer in "Keeping the House of Labor Divided," a work we will shortly revisit. After 1900, when the AFL dropped its lip service to organizing workers regardless of race, it began segregating La-

tinos and African-Americans in separate unions. Japanese immigrants had never been admitted to its ranks, of course, and in 1904 it demanded their exclusion from the United States.[75]

The AFL's staunchest race-baiting ally at the turn of the century was the San Francisco labor movement. Twenty-five years earlier, San Francisco had been the volcanic core of anti-Chinese agitation. Now it seethed over the Issei. Hostilities briefly erupted in 1900. The local labor movement turned out hundreds of residents May 7 for the state's first big anti-Japanese protest meeting, chaired by Walter MacArthur of the Sailor's Union. In a rabble-rousing speech Mayor James Phelan effectively blamed the Issei for laws foreclosing their citizenship. "The Chinese and Japanese are not bona fide citizens," he declared. "They are not the stuff of which American citizens can be made."[76] This outburst of racial fear quickly ebbed, but it was followed by a much more explosive reaction when the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05 ended in a rout of the tsar's army. Few Americans had expected such a result. On the West Coast it triggered fears, heightened by continuing Issei immigration, years of incendiary rhetoric, and America's own imperial designs in the Pacific, that the Japanese were preparing to invade. This notion eerily foreshadowed the reaction of many westerners to the bombing of Pearl Harbor three and a half decades later: every person of Japanese background was either potentially subversive or an enemy plant. "In February 1905," says Ichioka, "the San Francisco *Chronicle* launched its front-page editorial crusade against the influx of Japanese labor. Organized labor followed suit in May by establishing the Japanese and Korean Exclusion League (later called the Asiatic Exclusion League) and intensified the agitation for the exclusion of Japanese labor."[77]

Physical attacks on the city's Japanese capped these provocations. The massive earthquake of April, 1906 further inflamed race relations, and in October of that year, over the

vehement protest of the Japanese Foreign Ministry, the San Francisco School Board confined Japanese and Korean students to an Oriental School previously reserved for the Chinese. To avoid a rift with Asia's strongest power, President Theodore Roosevelt and his Secretary of State, Elihu Root, entered a series of tense negotiations with the political leaders of Japan and San Francisco. The outcome was threefold: First, under what came to be known as the 1907 Gentlemen's Agreement, no alien could enter this country from its insular possessions, the Canal Zone, or elsewhere unless he or she had been issued a passport specifically for travel to the United States. This barred Japanese immigration from Hawaii, but since its nationals had not been singled out Japan signed the agreement. Secondly, the San Francisco School Board reintegrated its schools. Thirdly, in 1908, Japan stopped issuing passports to laborers seeking a first-time admission to the United States. The AFL's long campaign to exclude workingclass Japanese had finally succeeded, though with important loopholes that were not closed until Congress passed the Immigration Act of 1924.[78]

As with so many other aspects of their struggle for an American foothold, the Issei did not play the role of passive victims during the 1904-08 uprising. Hundreds of them gathered in downtown Los Angeles on February 20, 1907, two days after Congress authorized President Roosevelt to negotiate the Gentlemen's Agreement. Protesting that action, they warned the Japanese Foreign Ministry by telegram not to permit to the unraveling of Issei society by cutting it off from the mother country. What the labor contractors who led the demonstration feared most was losing their business if Japanese laborers could no longer come to the United States.[79]

Los Angeles and its unions clearly felt reverberations from the Russo-Japanese War, San Francisco school crisis, and Gentlemen's Agreement. "Asia is coming; Japan's Regiments Enter California," the labor weekly *Citizen* warned Angelenos in December,

1906. Its first-page editorial recorded the catalytic impact of Japan's military prowess on the exclusion movement. "In California there are close to 80,000 natives of Japan," it estimated, "and those natives who have come within the last year and a half are mainly well-drilled soldiers from the regular Japanese army....Is not an enemy more dangerous inside than outside of one's house? There is but one remedy, and it must be applied quickly. Close the door!"[80]

Job competition between the Issei and L.A.'s craft unions was inconsequential. At San Pedro, Wilmington, and White's Point the Issei had revived an abalone industry founded but abandoned by the Chinese. In the Gardena Valley they constituted a farm workforce that the Central Labor Council had no intention of organizing. In downtown Los Angeles they toiled outside the purview of the city's unions as window-washers, gardeners, and housecleaners. It is true that Issei store clerks, bellboys, stock chasers, barbers, and waiters marginally competed with whites in those semi-unionized trades; their employers, however, were mostly the Japanese-speaking entrepreneurs of Sixth Street and Little Tokyo. Henry Huntington's hiring of Issei strikebreakers during a 1903 walkout by Mexican track workers angered the Central Labor Council, but it was an isolated incident.

Unlike San Francisco, where white-Issei job rivalry was more abrasive, Los Angeles lacked a handy economic argument against the Japanese. Its exclusionists had to rely on demeaning stereotypes and racist slanders to win converts, and these alone could not carry the day. Ovnick notes that "[t]he Asiatic Exclusion League, so active in Fresno, Sacramento, Stockton and San Francisco, sent representatives to the southern city on several occasions between 1907 and 1913 'to organize a branch League if possible in that city, and do all in [their] individual power to awaken an interest in the movement,' but concluded that Angelenos were 'not...especially interested in the present Japanese agitation.' "[81]

Because Los Angeles was not fertile ground for Japanese race-baiting, it produced several outspoken labor activists who stood up for the cross-race solidarity of their class. One of these was James F. Maloney, a member of Webb Pressmen's No. 18 and a delegate to the 1916 California State Federation of Labor convention in Eureka. Maloney took issue with an anti-Japanese resolution that the Asiatic Exclusion League routinely introduced at such meetings and demanded that the federation organize "all the Asiatics in the State of California." He seconded Hugo Ernst, head of the San Francisco Waiters' Union, when that socialist delegate argued that the best way to remove Japanese immigrant workers as a source of labor market competition would be to organize them.[82]

Maloney was the last progressive-era L.A. union leader to go on record in support of a racially inclusive labor movement. He had three notable predecessors: Z.W. Craig, Fred C. Wheeler, and John Murray.

Craig we have met before as a longshoreman, union organizer, and partisan of a city-owned harbor. On June 1, 1906, at the very height of anti-Japanese hysteria in coastal California, he penned a courageous and far-sighted editorial for the *Citizen*. Craig was well aware that a move in Congress to exclude Japanese and Korean workers would fail and that organized labor could not wish them away: "It behooves those in the movement, then, to leave no stone unturned to continually branch out and organize the workers wherever they may be found." His mixed metaphors, unfortunate use of the shorthand "Jap", and tolerance for the AFL policy of racially distinct unions notwithstanding, Craig defied the core tenet of craft union exclusionism--he insisted that the Issei would make good union members. "The Jap is willing to be organized," he said, "and has demonstrated on numerous occasions that he appreciates organization." Citing a dispute at a Washington sawmill that employed both white and Japanese workers, he reported that

"[a] few days ago a hospital tax of 75 cents per month was added on their present onerous condi-

> tions. The Japs in that employ kicked, and demanded an increase in wages or the hospital fee cut out. They were on strike two days, and the white men (all of whom are unorganized) kept on at work and sawed wood....The Japs got their raise. They have approached the Labor Council at Seattle and asked to be organized. Why not?" [83]

Craig was onto something. A well-kept secret at AFL and state labor federation conventions, Asiatic Exclusion League meetings, and in union campaigns to banish the "unorganizable" Japanese was the fact that many Issei and Nisei had stood up to their employers. In Los Angeles, when the Japanese Association favored Issei businessmen over Issei workingmen, the latter formed their own protective league, the Japanese Young Men's Association.[84] Ichioka records other examples of Issei self-organizing: the Social Revolutionary Party in San Francisco and Berkeley, the Fresno Labor League, and the Japanese coal miners who banded together and won a place in the Wyoming United Mine Workers' Union--the "one notable exception to organized labor's exclusion of Japanese labor."[85]

The Issei's resolute proto-unionism was also evident in the orchards and fields. They first struck a southern California grower in 1891 and downed their hoes more frequently after the turn of the century. One of their tactics was waiting for the fruit to ripen on the trees before insisting on a new contract.[86] To secure a foothold in agriculture, says Almaguer, the Japanese had settled for lower pay than the Chinese laborers they were replacing. Once firmly rooted, however, they

> "startled Anglo employers by militantly demanding higher wages or the renegotiation of contract arrangements. They were willing to resort to strikes or work slowdowns to secure these demands....By the early years of the twentieth century, many of the small growers in the state expressed displeasure with the Japanese...At the California Fruit Growers' Convention in 1907, for example, one horticulturalist complained that Japanese labor was 'not as honest and reliable as the Chinese.' Furthermore, he added, 'They are cunning--even tricky....While they have no organized union, as we know them, they are clannish and have such a complete understanding among themselves that they can act promptly and in unison in an emergency." [87]

Their well-honed sense of solidarity reached across racial lines. At the 1916 meeting of the state labor federation in Eureka, Suzuki Bunji, a fraternal delegate representing Ja-

pan's labor movement, reminded his audience of a signal event that had occurred just two months earlier in San Francisco. Organized culinary workers had struck their employers there, and Japanese employees had walked out with them even though they were barred from the union. [88]

The most dramatic case of Issei cross-race unionism occurred in 1903 in the farm community of Oxnard, an hour's drive northwest of Los Angeles. Several overlapping conflicts made this a fascinating episode. First among them was the struggle between Issei farmworkers and a powerful labor contractor. Second, a tug of war between this contractor and a dozen small minority recruiters of labor. Third, the friction between a town recently founded by whites and the workers of color who produced its wealth. Lastly, and most revealingly, the L.A. Central Labor Council's intervention in these disputes as an *opponent* of the AFL's stand on Asian labor.

Oxnard was the site of a five-year-old factory owned by the American Sugar Beet Company. Some 700 white workers produced sugar there. In the outlying fields Japanese and Mexican contract laborers planted, thinned, and harvested the beets for a few dozen white growers. The dominant economic force in their lives was not the factory or the growers, however, but the Western Agricultural Contracting Company (WACC). Formed the year before by wealthy Ventura County businessmen, it had begun to muscle some small labor-recruiting firms from the beetfields while allowing others to eke out a meager existence as its subcontractors. Its profits came, typically, from commissions skimmed from the laborers' wages and from the articles its company stores sold them at inflated prices.[89]

By the fall of 1902 WACC had already supplied Oxnard's growers with 443 Japanese and 175 Mexican workers. "One direct result," Almaguer says, "was an overall worsening of the already impoverished position of minority farm labor in the area. Through its

monopoly on contract labor employment in Ventura County, WACC was able to purposely over-recruit farm laborers during the harvest season and thus directly create conditions that led to the lowering of farm wages."[90] Discontent bubbled through the workforce. It broke into the open the following winter when WACC imported 120 more Japanese from San Francisco and lateraled them to a subcontractor. The Issei, many of them student-laborers, resented this transfer and began meeting with other workers of both nationalities. On February 11, over 500 Japanese and 200 Mexican field hands and a few marginalized subcontractors founded the Japanese-Mexican Labor Association (JMLA), headed by Baba Kozaburo. Its meetings were conducted in Japanese and Spanish, with English serving as a common language when needed. The new union condemned WACC for paying workers less than it had promised, forcing them to buy goods at company stores, and handing them off to subcontractors. Under this system laborers had their wages skimmed twice--once by the subcontractor and again by WACC. The members of JMLA voted to quit work. They called 1,300 Mexicans and Issei out of the beetfields in early March.[91]

Thus began first strike in California's history involving hundreds of farmworkers. Caught unawares, the labor contractor tried and failed to set up an effective company union. The *Oxnard Courier* expressed the views of most townspeople when it declared that only a union "in the hands of intelligent white men" could properly represent the beet workers. A few strikers were jailed. On March 23 assailants unknown shot and killed a Mexican worker and wounded four Mexicans and Issei. This violent attack forced WACC and the beet growers to the bargaining table, where they offered to let JMLA sell its labor power directly to farmers on 2,000 of the 7,000 acres under contract. Pointing out that WACC's mock union had 60 men while it had between 1,200 and 1,300, JMLA refused this tender and held out for a much bigger slice of the sugarbeet industry. This it

achieved. In a March 30 settlement, JMLA gained a small wage increase and, more importantly, control of all the beet contracts save one for 1,800 acres on the Patterson Ranch. The WACC monopoly was broken. "A great deal of the success of the JMLA was due to its class-conscious Japanese and Mexican leadership," states Almaguer.[92]

Up to and for several years after 1903, organized labor turned a deaf ear on the grievances of Asian migratory farm labor. The Oxnard strike both expressed this willed indifference and inspired a notable exception to it: the entry of the L.A. Central Labor Council into the fray. Fred C. Wheeler, a member of Carpenters No. 332, and John Murray, a member of Typographical No. 174, made several visits to Oxnard in March. Both were socialists, and both went to unusual lengths to assist the striking Japanese and Mexicans. At the time Wheeler was the AFL's southern California organizer, named to that post by Gompers himself. Murray, an activist with the conservative printers' union in Los Angeles, later edited the *Citizen*, organized unions of Mexicans and Slavs, defended the Mexican revolution, and ended his life as Gompers' point man in Latin America. Their presence in Oxnard during the late winter of 1903 bore witness to the relatively advanced practice of the L.A. labor movement and its sometimes ally, the L.A. Socialist Party, on questions of race and nationality.

Both men sat on JMLA's side of the table during negotiations with the sugarbeet farmers and WACC. At one meeting Murray warned them they were fortunate the workers weren't striking for more. Wheeler underscored the union's demands, telling the farmers "you have the beets and we have the labor and want to work directly with you."[93] After the March 23 shootings, the two socialists returned to Los Angeles and submitted what was, for its time and place, an extraordinary resolution:

> "Whereas, For the first time in the history of organized labor on the Pacific Coast an opportunity has come to organize agricultural laborers; and
>
> "Whereas, About one thousand such laborers of Mexican and Japanese nationality have been or-

ganized at Oxnard, California, and have, for two months, bravely maintained a strike against starvation wages and iniquitous conditions; and

"Whereas, They have proved their courage and manhood by passing calmly through the trial of seeing many of their numbers shot down by the opposition and have emerged from this ordeal with unbroken ranks; and

"Whereas, The complete organization of agricultural laborers is necessary for the protection of all working men; now, therefore, be it

"Resolved, By the Los Angeles County Council of Labor that we declare our belief that the most effective method of protecting the American workingman and his standard of living is by the universal organization of the wage workers regardless of race or national distinction.

"Resolved, That while we are utterly opposed to the unrestricted immigration of the various Oriental races, we heartily favor the thorough organization of those now here, and we believe that the fact that men are able to do our work when we strike is sufficient reason why they should be organized, regardless of race or color. " 94

After an emotional debate, the labor council's delegates voted unanimously for the resolution. This, said the *San Francisco Examiner*, "was the first time that a labor council had put itself on record as in any way favoring Asiatic labor." Some historians have stressed the resolution's contradictory last paragraph, unwilling to concede that what aped AFL policy was less important than what defied it. (A similar contradiction drew fire seventy-five years later when the L.A. Central Labor Council simultaneously opposed the immigration of foreign workers--this time undocumented Mexicans and Central Americans--and moved to unionize those already here.) Such incongruities arise when old and new ways clash; it is the direction of change that counts.[95]

Buoyed by the active support of L.A.'s craft unions, JMLA asked the AFL for a charter which would have made it the labor federation's first farmworker union. "Evidence suggests that the San Francisco Council of Labor contacted Gompers and expressed its vehement opposition" to this request," says Almaguer. In a letter to J.M. Lizarras, secretary of JMLA's Mexican section, Gompers granted the charter with one hand but snatched it away with the other. "[I]t is understood," he told Lizarras, "that in issuing this charter to your union, it will under no circumstances accept membership of any Chinese or Japanese."[96] This decree incensed JMLA's members, Mexican no less than Japanese. On June 8, 1903, Lizarras returned the charter to Gompers with the following rebuke:

"In the past we have counselled, fought and lived on very short rations with our Japanese brothers, [who] toiled with us in the fields, and they have been uniformly kind and considerate. We would be false to them and to ourselves and to the cause of unionism if we accepted privileges for ourselves which are not accorded to them. We are going to stand by men who stood by us in the long, hard fight which ended in a victory over the enemy. We therefore respectfully petition the A.F. of L. to grant us a charter under which we can unite all the sugar beet and field laborers in Oxnard, without regard to their color or race. We will refuse any other kind of charter..."[97]

The AFL's unwillingness to issue JMLA a charter covering all its members may have sounded the union's death knell. Almaguer finds no sign that it continued to exist after June, 1903. When the Oxnard beet workers struck successfully that March and April, with a strong assist from the L.A. Central Labor Council, they left a high-water mark in Asian-American cross-race unionism that organized labor did not reach again for many decades.

Mexicans and Mexican-Americans

Just as the Issei filled a void left by the Chinese, so Mexicans moved into occupational niches vacated by Japanese laborers after the 1907 Gentlemen's Agreement. This change represented a comeback for the Mexican population and workforce. They had dominated Alta California until Mexico ceded it to the United States in the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, and they did not lose their considerable influence on local events until a tidal wave of midwesterners reached Los Angeles after 1885.

Three conditions shaped the twentieth-century Mexican resurgence. First, because both the 1790 U.S. Naturalization Law and the 1849 California constitution defined Mexicans as whites, the doors of citizenship opened to their American-born daughters and sons. Second, Mexicans whose forebears once ran southern California as semi-feudal *hacendados* and *rancheros* now found themselves corralled at the bottom of a thoroughly capitalist economy. Third, eligibility for citizenship in no way protected Mexicans from the racism of most white Angelenos; this fact, the proximity of Mexico, and the tenacity of a hybrid Chicano culture conspired to slow the process of assimilation.

Demographic trends mirrored the sweeping social transformation of Los Angeles between 1850 and 1910. The city's 1,215 Mexican-born residents in 1850 accounted for 75 percent of its population. By 1880, though their numbers had reached 2,160, their population share had dropped to 19 percent. Only 817 Mexican-born persons showed up in the 1900 census, but the city probably had some 1,000 men, women, and children of Mexican background or one percent of its residents at that time.[98] It was the low point of their presence here. The modern, ongoing explosion of L.A.'s Latino community originated in a 1900-1920 demographic "big bang" at the end of which the city harbored between 30,000 and 50,000 Mexicans.[99] Shoved northward by their country's protracted revolution and drawn into the unskilled work of an exponentially growing southern California economy, Mexicans had made themselves indispensable Angelenos.

Early twentieth-century Mexican men and women hoed the fields of L.A. County, slaughtered livestock, laid railroad track and worked in railroad yards, made brick, paved the city's streets, toiled as hod carriers and other construction laborers, and earned their pay in the city's bakeries, paper and textile factories, laundries, hotels, and retail trades. Casual gang and day labor supplied by employment agencies characterized much of this work. Mexicans, in other words, were chronically underemployed. These circumstances lasted well into the 1920s. "In Los Angeles and, indeed, in many communities, it is the Mexican[s] who do the common labor," explained Robert McLean, a Protestant religious leader. "In fact, we have imported them for that very purpose." What McLean told the National Conference of Social Work in 1929 epitomized Mexican labor during the entire progressive era.[100]

Richard Romo has documented the remarkable persistence of unskilled work among Mexicans in Los Angeles. Most adult immigrants reaching the city before 1907 toiled as laborers in its streets, small factories, and outlying fields. This was still true after World

War I. Surveying three generations of Mexican workers, Romo found the following:

Occupational Structure of First, Second, and Third Generation Mexicanos in Los Angeles, 1917-1918 [101]

Occupation	First	Second	Third	Number	Total Percentage
White Collar	**6.6%**	**4.5%**	**9.1%**	**24**	**6.7**
Clerical	3.8%	—	9.1%	15	4.2
Proprietor	1.4%	— —		4	1.1
Semiprofessional	1.1%	— —		3	0.8
Professional	0.3	4.5	—	2	0.6
Blue Collar	**91.8%**	**95.5%**	**89.0%**	**326**	**92.0**
Unskilled	71.6%	59.1%	47.7%	242	68.0
Semiskilled	7.2%	13.7%	11.7%	29	8.1
Skilled	13.0%	22.7%	29.6%	55	15.9
Student	**0.3%**	— —		**1**	**0.2**
Unknown	**1.4%**	— —		**5**	**1.1**
Totals (boldface only)				356	100.0

Romo culled the above data, as well as those for Mexicans in the table below, from 1917 and 1918 Los Angeles marriage records. By excluding never-married males they may slightly overstate the prevalence of skill, but their significance is clear. Mexican and Mexican-American men earned their living in the nether reaches of a racially split, or segmented, labor market. As late as 1917-18 nine out of every ten of them were blue-collar workers, and seven of every ten lacked craft skills. The youngest generation claimed a few more white-collar jobs, but it, too, remained largely unskilled. As the following table shows, the situation for white workers in 1917-18 was drastically different. Nearly half held white-collar jobs, and in the blue-collar trades the majority were skilled.

Occupational Distribution (%), Los Angeles Native White and Mexican Males [102]

Occupation	1920 (Native Whites)*	1917-1918 (Mexicanos)*
White Collar	**47.0**	**6.7**
Professional	3.9	0.6
Other White Collar	43.1	6.1
Blue Collar	**53.0**	**92.0**
Skilled	28.3	15.9
Semiskilled	18.7	8.1
Unskilled	6.0	68.0

Between 1900 and 1920 very few Mexicans or Mexican-Americans jumped from blue-collar to white-collar jobs unless they had a running start in the skilled trades--and very few did. "Native whites had positions in the occupational structure substantially higher than even second and third generation Mexicanos of the city," says Romo.[103] To a great extent Mexicans filled labor market niches in which the craft union movement showed no interest. They and organized white workers seldom competed for work. This was no accident. The city's craft unions, like the open-shop forces and the progressives, had a short-range stake in the split labor market. During the worklife of a skilled white carpenter or printer, the racially exclusive hiring hall, traveling card, and apprenticeship conferred obvious advantages on him even as they eroded his ability--and even more the ability of his sons, daughters, and grandchildren--to wrest a secure living from their employers.

"Skilled craft unionism in one sense received its white supremist outlook, as did white society at large, from the prior history of racial exploitation in America," Alexander Saxton points out in *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic*. "That outlook, however, was constantly reinforced because the diffusion of racist attitudes among white workers proved conducive to craft unionism."[104] Unlike industrial unions, which required the solidarity of all workers in a given product or service line, craft unions required the specialized solidarity of skilled white males against not only their employer but other wage earners. It was, therefore, the quintessential form of workingclass self-defense in a capitalist society that also happened to be profoundly racist.

Mexicans were likewise bound to living conditions and places that set them apart from white Angelenos. Racial covenants in property titles, a more generalized racism in the thinking of progressives, social workers, housing authorities, and many white workers, and the poverty and social cohesion of most Mexicans thwarted both their ability and

their willingness to live side by side with whites in relatively pleasant neighborhoods and comfortable homes.

Before 1906 most Mexicans lived in what they called *el barrio* and whites knew as Sonoratown, a rundown eastside neighborhood bordered by Main, College, Short, and Yale Streets. Here single men roomed in boarding houses while families occupied tiny adobes or the notorious courts described in Chapter 4. Jacob Riis had the barrio and its house courts in mind when his muckraking *How the Other Half Lives* compared some areas of Los Angeles to Manhattan's worst tenements. The barrio grew up where it did instead of elsewhere in downtown L.A. because it bordered the teeming industrial zone between Main Street and the river. Many Mexicans worked in the zone's small factories, food processing plants, and other business establishments. The transportation they could most easily afford was their own two feet, so they lived near their jobs.[105]

After work and on Sundays, people crowded along Main Street between Sixth and the historic Plaza. This thoroughfare held most of the barrio's shops, restaurants, and entertainment venues. Here, Antonio Ríos-Bustamante and Pedro Castillo tell us in their history of Mexican Los Angeles,

> "people gathered informally to read local newspapers and argue perspectives. There were several bookstores in the area, and most of them offered a selection of Mexican as well as U.S. Spanish-language publications....Often, workers would meet in pool halls and billiard parlors spread along the northern sections of Main Street....On weekend evenings, the streets were filled with people on their way to the theatre, the plaza, or to restaurants" [106] [118-19]

As with the Chinese and Japanese, the life of early twentieth-century Mexicans cannot be flattened into a story of victimization. It was full of initiative, beginning with individual decisions to quit Mexico for a far from hospitable land. In Los Angeles Mexicans wove a thick cultural fabric of social clubs, hometown and mutual aid societies, patriotic parades and fiestas, athletic leagues, Spanish-language newspapers, political forums, and workingclass associations. An early example of the latter was the somewhat oddly named

Los Caballeros de Trabajo (Gentlemen of Labor). Self-help groups led by the durable Sociedad Hispano-Americana de Beneficio Mutuo and the Sociedad Mutualista Mexicana loaned businesses money, sold low-cost health and life insurance, and offered poorer Mexicans a variety of welfare services denied them by the city's United Charities and the county's Outdoor Relief Division.[107]

Local newspapers reinforced the Mexican community's cohesion and apartness. They included *El Heraldo de México*, *La Prensa*, *Regeneración*, and *La Gaceta de los Estados Unidos*. Read throughout California, *La Prensa* defended Mexican workers and called for their unionization. Even more at odds with the city's open-shop forces was *Regeneración*, political voice of the anarcho-syndicalist Mexican Liberal Party. Published by Ricardo Flores Magón, Anselmo L. Figueroa, Antonio Villareal, Librado Rivera, and other party leaders who had fled the Porfirio Díaz dictatorship in 1903, *Regeneración* circulated widely in both countries and fanned the flames of rebellion against the Díaz government. Magón and the comrades who made Los Angeles their exile headquarters in 1907 championed the struggles of the city's Mexican workers. In 1910 Rivera and Villareal helped Juan Ramirez of the Central Labor Council and State Federation of Labor organize a union of Mexican day laborers and construction workers, No. 13097, which affiliated directly with the AFL. These activities quickly mobilized local and federal authorities against the Magonistas. At Díaz' bidding they were arrested, tried, convicted of violating U.S. neutrality laws, and jailed several times between 1907 and 1916. Over 2,000 Angelenos demonstrated against their 1912 imprisonment. *Regeneración* appeared only fitfully after that and ceased publication in 1918.[108]

Until the early 1930s the Spanish-language press and the barrio's elaborate network of voluntary organizations directed Mexicans' attention inward rather than toward an engagement with the wider issues of city government, infrastructure, and growth. It might

have been otherwise had the city regimes of 1900-15 responded to the needs of working-class Mexicans and helped them integrate them into the polity.

As Mexicans became Mexican-Americans and Chicanos in the second and third generations, however, an irreversible creolization took root. Cultural resistance chafed against cultural adaptation in most families. While much of the friction was generational, some of it was not. Young people spoke Spanglish, learned American dances, watched Hollywood movies, and created a hybrid popular music. Their parents, meanwhile, increasingly converted to Protestantism, served American food, and displayed both Mexican and American portraits on their walls. Long before Mexicans' segmented work routines dissolved into a broader, more fluid set of occupations, their cultural routines had turned polyphonic. "Ethnicity...was not a fixed set of customs surviving from life in Mexico, but rather a collective identity that emerged from daily experience in the United States," observes George J. Sánchez in his study of 1900-45 Los Angeles, *Becoming Mexican American.* "For over time, as Mexican immigrants acclimated themselves to life in the United States, they did not remain Mexicans simply living in the United States, they became Mexican Americans."[109]

No such turning point for workingclass Mexicans occurred in early twentieth-century Los Angeles, however. Theirs was a daily, grinding battle for survival, and though the work they did was indispensable to Los Angeles, the city was far from indispensable to them. Extraordinarily high rates of physical mobility marked their sojourn here. "In Los Angeles," Romo found, "first, second, and third generation Mexicanos had comparatively high degrees of spatial mobility, especially among unskilled and semi-skilled workers. In Boston, for example, 35 percent of the low blue collar workers could still be found in the city a decade later, whereas in Los Angeles, only 15.2 percent of the low blue collar Mexican workers were still in the city a decade later." Their transience had several

causes. First among them was a hostile urban climate brewed of racism and low wages. Mexican industrial laborers were lucky to take home $1.50 per 12-hour day before, during, and after World War I; on learning they could earn more in farm and railroad work outside the city where the cost of living was lower, they often left.[110] Second, the border was less than a day away; thousands of migrants shuttlecocked between periods of work and residence in Los Angeles and similar periods in Mexico. Third, Los Angeles had long been, and remained, a transfer point for laborers bound elsewhere. Generations of itinerant Mexican farmworkers in particular hoed and harvested crops northward from the Imperial to the Central Valley, often overwintering in Los Angeles. Many other immigrant families worked temporarily in Los Angeles before moving to permanent jobs in the Southwest and the Midwest. All these comings and goings contributed to the Mexican population's rapid turnover.

During the progressive era and well into the 1930s it was the common opinion of reformers, Chamber of Commerce officials, University of Southern California sociologists, Americanizers, and other respectable Angelenos that most Mexicans in their midst were "peons"--by which they meant illiterate, benighted rural folk who had no ability to cope with city life. Some Mexicans did come from the rural highlands of Aguascalientes, Guanajuato, Jalisco, Michoacán, and Zacatecas, but few of them fit the peon stereotype. The countryside they left had turned rebellious as agriculture grew more corporate and the *porfiriato* struggled to stamp out dissent. In the northern cities, where American capitalists welcomed by Díaz sought to impose modern time-discipline on an ancient, informal set of labor relations, workers defended themselves by organizing. The first workers' council, El Gran Círculo de Obreros, emerged in 1870. A National Congress of Mexican Workers and scores of workers' leagues and unions followed in its wake. With marxists, mutualistas, anarchists, and liberals competing for workingclass support, a fusillade of

strikes peppered Mexico's cities between 1877 and 1910. The most explosive occurred in 1906. That June in Cananea, Sonora, hundreds of striking laborers marched on the lumber yard where they worked and killed two of its managers. The Díaz government put down the strike with federal troops and armed American volunteers. Further south, in the states of Tlaxcala, Puebla, and Veracruz, over 6,000 textile workers walked off the job.[111]

Two streams of Mexican emigration, one rural, the other urban, brought Los Angeles few "peons" but thousands of restive workers tempered by official oppression, uncowed by their employers, and wary of authority. They had another trait overlooked by progressives. More boldly than the brothers and sisters they left behind, they were willing to risk everything for a better life. Misfortune did not hound them from Mexico; rather, they existentially uprooted themselves. The lives of Mexican expatriates in Los Angeles were therefore full of ferment. As Juan Gómez-Quiñones has observed in his groundbreaking study of Chicano labor, "[T]he whole tradition of workingclass activism...formed part of the heritage the immigrants carried with them to the United States."[112]

This heritage explains the audacious behavior of Mexican workers in the 1903 Oxnard sugarbeet strike. That year another contingent of Mexican workers took on L.A.'s most powerful industrialist, Henry Huntington, whose Pacific Electric and Los Angeles Railways had belwethered the open-shop movement. Huntington, an ardent supporter of both the M&M and the anti-union Citizens Alliance, paid his employees a good deal less while working them harder than their unionized counterparts in San Francisco. His hiring policies provided one of the clearest examples of the dual labor market in turn-of-the-century Los Angeles. Mexican sweat labor laid and maintained track; uniformed whites ran trains, collected fares, punched transfers, and earned higher wages. This labor regimen provoked unrest and work stoppages among Huntington's Mexican employees. No matter. With Pavlovian regularity the great man could count on armed intervention by Old

Guard and progressive city governments alike whenever he rang their bells. They realized that a successful strike followed by unionization of his railways might doom the open shop citywide.

Huntington coveted prestige as much as power. In 1903 he ordered his work crews to complete his new Main Street line before the annual Los Angeles Fiesta opened on May 6. Why the rush? On learning that Theodore Roosevelt would be the guest of honor, Huntington planned to have the president greet the Fiesta crowds from the platform of a Main Street train. His obsession with this idea prompted Council of Labor secretary Lemuel D. Biddle to instigate a walkout by Mexican track workers. Biddle, one of L.A.'s most intrepid recruiters, soon discovered that while unionizing Mexicans was one of his easier tasks, winning a railway strike was one of the hardest.[113]

With his help, two Mexican-Americans, A.N. Nieto and Alefo Fernandez, organized the Unión Federal Mexicano (UFM) and eventually enrolled it in both the local labor council and the state federation of labor. Workers on *el traque*, who had struck to no avail that February, enthusiastically joined the all-Mexican union. By the time Biddle announced its formation on April 23 between 700 and 900 had signed up. They demanded recognition of their union, a wage increase from 17.5 cents to 20 cents per hour, time and a half for night work, and double time for Sundays. Worried that a strike would delay the opening of the Main Street line, railway managers agreed to the raises. Huntington rejected the settlement, however, and broke off negotiations. "Mr. Huntington proposes to run his own affairs and can in no matter accept union dictation," one of his spokesmen told the *L.A. Times*. At the end of April 700 UFM trackmen walked off their Pacific Electric jobs. Hundreds of their countrymen quit Huntington's Los Angeles Railway the next day, raising the number of Mexicans on strike to 1,400. Only a handful of Irish-Americans and African-Americans continued to lay track.[114]

A crucial element of Biddle's strategy was the cooperation he sought from some 760 white railway conductors and machinists. Early that year two San Francisco unionists had organized them into Amalgamated Association of Street Railway Employees No. 203, but the Los Angeles Police Department under Charles Elton had no intention of letting them join the strike. Ordering his entire night force to obstruct the union, Elton kept Mexican trackmen from talking to their replacements. Angered by this show of official support for Huntington, a Mexican faith healer known as Santa Teresa led 28 Chicanas around police lines to a number of work sites, where they persuaded some 50 strike-breakers to join the union and quit their jobs. This was the sole breach of the police cordon, however. "Management kept small, police-protected construction crews working through most of the night," notes Thomas R. Clark, "and over the next few days they replaced strikers with about 90 Japanese and African-American laborers from Los Angeles and about 200 Mexican workmen transferred from company construction sites in nearby cities and towns." Huntington had raised wages on the Main Street line to 22 cents an hour, 2 cents more than the UFM had demanded.[115]

The white carmen's union, meanwhile, scheduled an April 28 strike for recognition, higher wages, and reinstatement of fired members. "Yet as soon as the first strikers left their posts," Clark reports, "groups of strikebreakers, company officials, and about 20 policemen took over the abandoned cars. In addition, at least one police officer rode each car that proceeded down the line. Other groups of policemen dispersed crowds of strike sympathizers or kept them away from the carbarns and moving streetcars." Disheartened, the remaining carmen and machinists refused to leave their posts. The Amalgamated Association's failure to support the UFM undercut the latter's strike and doomed both unions, neither of which survived the spring.[116]

For some white unionists, the solidarity displayed by the Oxnard and Pacific Electric

strikers debunked the AFL stereotype that Mexicans were too fearful of their employers to unionize. With Labor Council assistance, track workers struck Huntington's railways again in 1904 and 1910. Neither struggle achieved its aims, but the 1910 walkout was closely watched by workers throughout Los Angeles who expressed "a great resentment" at its defeat. A second 1910 job action by workers of Mexican origin humbled the powerful Los Angeles Gas Works. Organized by the Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.), colloquially known as Wobblies, the mostly Mexican and Chicano workforce struck for higher wages. The company held out for two weeks, then cut its losses. It agreed to pay its laborers a $2.25 daily wage and hire union members whenever possible.[117]

This victory sent a small shudder through L.A.'s craft unions, which opposed any and all Wobbly beachheads in the city. Partly as a counterweight to rising I.W.W. influence among Mexican workers, the Central Labor Council assigned one of its organizers, Juan Ramirez, to work with local Magonistas in what proved to be the successful enrollment of casual and construction workers into a new United Laborers No. 13097. Like most ethnically segregated unions of its day, it affiliated directly with the AFL. There was more than a little irony in this collaboration. Both the Wobblies and the Magonistas practiced an anarcho-syndicalism that the AFL despised. The Wobblies shared members as well as an ideology with the Mexican exiles, and they recruited for each other. Yet when the opportunity arose to organize day laborers, the Magonistas worked with L.A.'s craft unions, not the I.W.W. [118]

They did so because the Central Labor Council had enthusiastically supported the long Mexican revolution and the Magonistas who were the revolution's champions in Los Angeles. "The labor movement not only gave of its slim financial resources and gravely needed time and energy, but provided one of the leaders of the national movement in the person of John Murray," says Stimson. "Los Angeles socialists also raised money for de-

fense of the Mexicans on trial, and organized a branch of the party for resident Mexicans, just as the Central Labor Council formed a Mexican federal union and secured an AFL charter for it." In 1907 Murray resigned as the *Citizen's* editor to campaign against the extradition of Ricardo Flores Magón and his closest colleagues, who had been jailed during their first stay in Los Angeles. Later, between stints as a labor activist in Los Angeles, Murray reported on the Mexican revolution for the *New York Call* and, in 1918, helped his old enemy Gompers organize the Pan-American Federation of Labor. At the time of his death a year later he was the AFL's point man in Latin America.[119]

Murray was just one of many craft unionists and socialists who energetically defended the Mexicans during their encounters with American courts and police. Lead attorney for the Magonistas in Los Angeles was Job Harriman, the city's most influential socialist. William A. Vanna of the laundry workers, Marshal S. Culver of the electricians, and Lemuel Biddle of the Central Labor Council visited local unions in 1907 to raise funds for the anarchists. Stanley B. Wilson, who followed Murray as *Citizen* editor, "continually hammered home one lesson: American workers had to help the revolutionaries end Díaz's haven for capital."[120]

By 1909 the Magonistas had abandoned the Liberal Party's reforms for a syndicalist agenda that rejected craft unionism root and branch, yet the support they received from L.A.'s unions did not waver. Frances Nacke Noel and other members of the Women's Trade Union League worked shoulder to shoulder with the exiles, mobilized the Central Labor Council against their arrests and trials, and organized huge turnouts for them at rallies.[121] In March, 1911, the council formally embraced the revolution that had gained ground south of the border:

> "Whereas, the working classes of the Republic of Mexico have for years borne the yoke of peonage and have been subjected to every indignity by the employing class; and...
>
> "Whereas, in order to regain their rights...they have been forced to an appeal to arms and are now

in armed resistance to the tyrannical administration of government that has so long oppressed them;...therefore be it

"Resolved, that we deplore the fact that the United States Government has seen fit to mass large bodies of troops in the immediate vicinity of the Mexican Border and has ordered the vessels of the Pacific fleet to assemble and maneuver off the coast of Mexico at a time when the effect will be detrimental to the working class of Mexico engaged in their struggle for freedom; and be it further

"Resolved, that we call upon the working class of the state of California and of the states along the Mexican border to petition the President of the United States to withdraw the troops from their present rendezvous,...and further

"Resolved, that we urge the President and Congress of the United States to recognize the Revolutionary government of Mexico as belligerents and accord them the treatment accorded to any other nation engaged in warfare." 122

Over the next several years union leaders bitterly denounced President Taft's threats to intervene in Mexico and his decision to let *federales* pursue rebels into Texas. "The Central Labor Council of Los Angeles most emphatically protests against U.S. intervening in the present struggle in Mexico, except insofar as it is necessary to protect the lives of Americans and those dependent upon them." the council wrote Taft in February, 1913. "We believe the lives and liberty of the common people of Mexico [are] paramount to...property rights of Land Owners."[123]

Staunch support for the revolution strengthened the labor movement's bonds with the Magonistas and other Mexican exiles in Los Angeles, but it did not translate into durable support for United Laborers No. 13097. In January, 1912, after the union complained that it was being ignored by the Building Trades Council, Ramirez secured the council's agreement to help Mexican laborers find construction work through its hiring halls. The promised help did not materialize, however. "Without assistance from the skilled building trades unions," says Arroyo, "locals comprised of unskilled workers, as for example, United Laborers 13097, could not force employers to hire their members." The all-Mexican union, organized with high hopes during the citywide strike wave two years earlier, no longer existed by the fall of 1912.[124]

Craft union support for Mexican workers was far from dismal in Los Angeles; it exceeded that of most other urban labor movements during the progressive era. Still, it left

much to be desired. Many affiliates of the Central Labor Council found it easier to cheer on the revolution in Mexico than confront the split labor market in the U.S. Southwest. If successful, after all, the revolution might raise wages and slow emigration. The collective mobilization of Mexicans on *this* side of the border was more problematical, since it would hasten the day when they would compete directly with white workers for jobs and political clout. Where socialist influence was strong, as in the carpenters' and painters' unions and the Central Labor Council, the commitment to organize Mexican and Chicano workers remained strong also. But the socialist influence waned rapidly after World War I. At the same time, conservative politicians exploited weaknesses in the Mexican revolution, maneuvered to the fore, and seized command. "The revolution which tore Mexico apart for the better part of a decade simply never uprooted the fundamental political and economic forces, nor the social classes, extant under the *Porfiriato*," says Gilbert Gonzalez. "Realignments of the distribution of political power and economic resources brought new figures into power. But in the end the process more resembled a 'circulation of elites' than that of an entirely new class supplanting the old."[125] An enduring accomplishment of the regimes of Alvaro Obregón and Plutarco Elias Calles was the suppression of labor militancy through the Confederación Regional Obrera Mexicana (CROM), first in a long parade of government-controlled labor federations. Because CROM nudged Mexican workers toward corporate liberalism while the AFL under Gompers backed U.S. imperial aims in Latin America, the two labor centrals worked hand-in-glove during the 1920s.

The career of patternmaker J.W. Buzzell reflected these changes. In 1912 Buzzell drafted the Central Labor Council's resolution condemning a Mexican army raid through Texas and Arizona to outflank the revolutionaries. But as Buzzell rose into the council's leadership during World War I, he lost interest in Mexican radicalism on both sides of the

Rio Bravo. "Thoroughly schooled in business unionism and disillusioned with socialism, Buzzell and others like him were to lead the Central Labor Council until World War II," observes Arroyo. "So long as Mexicans remained cheap unskilled labor and did not compete for the better high-paying jobs, Buzzell was thoroughly indifferent to them."[126]

African-American workers

Negligible before 1890, the city's African-American population kept pace with the city's rapid growth over the next three decades. Black Angelenos numbered 1,258 in 1890, 2,131 in 1900, 7,599 in 1910, and 15,579 in 1920, but their share of the overall population edged upward only slightly from 2.5 percent to 2.7 percent. The recency of their arrival stood out even in this mecca of newcomers. Over 80 of every 100 African-Americans living in Los Angeles by 1910 had come from somewhere else.[127] For all these reasons their impact on the city during the progressive era paled in comparison to that of their more numerous Chinese, Japanese, and Mexican contemporaries.

Black migration to Los Angeles accelerated after the mid-1880s while a land boom gripped the city, less hospitable conditions prevailed in northern California, and de facto segregation and endemic racism in the East and Midwest made those regions a great disappointment for many African-Americans fleeing the post-Reconstruction South. White workers in the Bay Area, many of them Irish, had brought a virulent brand of anti-black ideology with them from the Atlantic coast. "Blacks planning migration to California were often urged to avoid San Francisco and to go instead to Los Angeles, which was considered a 'good town for colored folks,'" states Rudolph Lapp in *Afro-Americans in California*.[128] Like the Chinese, African-Americans found less head-to-head competition with whites for jobs in Los Angeles than in the Bay Area, and hence a somewhat milder and less strategically pursued racism.

There was, for example, little anti-black residential segregation in southern California

a century ago. Between 1890 and 1915 African-Americans moved into Victorville, Santa Monica, Pasadena, and other widely dispersed neighborhoods just outside Los Angeles. Within the city itself, they settled an eastside area bounded by First, Los Angeles, Second, and San Pedro streets, then leapfrogged southward along Central Avenue, eastward across the river to Boyle Heights, and westward to Temple Street at Occidental Boulevard and 35th Street at Normandie. None of the new neighborhoods was contiguous with any other area of black residence, and as late as 1920 African-Americans did not comprise a majority in any of the city's assembly districts.[129] Despite its political consequences this dispersion was a source of pride for many in the black community, not least the editors of local African-American newspapers. One of them, J.B. Loving, wrote for the *Liberator* in 1904 that

> "The Negroes of this city have prudently refused to segregate themselves into any locality, but have scattered and purchased homes in sections occupied by wealthy, cultured white people, thus not only securing the best fire, water, and police protection, but also the more important benefits that accrue from refined and cultured surroundings." [130]

Loving noted a key reason for the residential scatter of his fellow migrants: home ownership. During the "golden age" of black migration to Los Angeles, before whites drew a color line around their neighborhoods, newspapers like the *Liberator* advertised widely available, low-cost "bungalows" for African-Americans. Most sold for $900 to $2,500 with downpayments of $200 or less. Over 36 percent of black Angelenos lived in their own homes in 1910 compared to just 2.4 percent of black New Yorkers.[131] Here lay an anomaly. At a time when home ownership remained out of reach for all but a very few Asians and Mexicans--when their typical lot was the lodging house, railroad shack, or house court--why were so many African-Americans paying off mortgages in so many parts of the city? Historians of progressive-era Los Angeles seem not to have researched this question.

All agree, however, that by the mid-1920s deed restrictions, harassment of buyers and sellers, high prices, and other exclusionary real estate practices had begun to drive blacks from white neighborhoods and concentrate most of them along Central Avenue and nearby streets. Charlotta Bass, a 1910 arrival who edited and published the black newspaper *California Eagle*, believed that a heavy inflow of southern whites at the start of World War I created hostile conditions for the city's African Americans, inspiring a rash of "keep our neighborhood white" campaigns. "Negroes," bristled the Santa Monica *Weekly Interpreter* in 1922, "we don't want you here; now and forever, this is to be a white man's town."[132] Referring to the period between the war and 1930 in his dissertation "The Negro Migration to Los Angeles," Lawrence De Graaf describes the segregation that slowly hemmed in many aspects of black life:

> "Most restaurants outside of the colored district [along Central Avenue] refused to serve Negroes, hotels would not lodge them, and they were excluded from many theaters. Such discrimination received little protest from state or local governments....Many public areas were partly or entirely closed to blacks, especially in suburban cities around Los Angeles. Residents of several coastal towns prohibited Negroes from visiting their beaches or erecting bath houses on them, even in cases when the beach houses were owned by Negroes."[133]

White Angelenos' eagerness to sequester blacks residentially, economically, and politically catalyzed a self-help ideology and black nationalism within the Central Avenue community. Booker T. Washington, who visited Los Angeles in 1914, helped inspire the former while emissaries and local supporters of Marcus Garvey, founder of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) on the East Coast, championed the latter. Neither doctrine excluded the other--in fact UNIA's nationalism and pan-Africanism is best understood as a deepening of the self-help ideas that the Los Angeles Forum promoted before World War I. Founded in 1903 by members of the First African Methodist Episcopal Church but largely devoted to secular community uplift, the Forum evolved from an early defense against racism to encouragement of black enterprise and finally to agit-

prop on behalf of "Africa for Africans." The Forum's most energetic proponent of black nationalism was Hugh Gordon, a janitor with the L.A. Health Department. After the war he and his brother, Rev. J.D. Gordon, wholeheartedly embraced UNIA and helped it establish a Los Angeles base. Rev. Gordon was named Assistant President General of the national organization in 1920, second in rank only to Garvey. Despite its strong hold on many black Angelenos and larger local following than its rival, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, black nationalism eventually gave way to the more enduring equal rights activism of the latter organization in Los Angeles. The nationalist subcurrent, however, has never run dry.[134]

The compression of blacks into the 30-block Central Avenue corridor, while clearly the result of racist attitudes that cannot be blamed exclusively on white migrants from the South, also had one beneficial effect: it helped create a thriving hub of African American culture in the 1920s. The key early axis at Central and 9th drifted south to 12th Street. From that point there radiated a community of solid homes for established families and cramped apartments for recent arrivals, the elegant Somerville (later Dunbar) Hotel, a live theater, business and professional offices including those of the *California Eagle*, churches, political fora, civic organizations devoted mainly to black self-help and defense, and a welter of jazz clubs. "Some remember the 'Avenue' as a miniature Harlem, where musicians and literati gauged the community's pulse by day and transformed that energy into rhyme and music by night," says historian Lonnie Bunch.[135] Like their New York counterparts during the Harlem Renaissance, a majority of blacks in Los Angeles rose above the deprivations of racism to lead fully rounded, creative lives.

They did so while toiling in the nether reaches of the local labor market. Half the male black workers in 1910 lacked craft skills, compared to a quarter of foreign-born whites and a tenth of native-born whites. Between 1900 and 1920 the population and manufac-

turing censuses show a majority of the city's African-Americans working as household domestics, janitors, porters, and servants. Another large contingent earned laborers' pay in the construction and manufacturing industries, though proportionally it dwindled after 1910 as competition from Mexican workers rose. Other blacks worked as cooks, waiters, and draymen. They were excluded, however, from higher-paid transportation jobs as railway conductors and motormen and were also notably absent from the retail trades. In 1910 only 8 of L.A.'s 6,177 sales clerks were black. Outside the Central Avenue community, very few African-Americans made it into white-collar ranks. "Less than five percent of the males were in business and or the professions," says De Graaf. "These jobs were not always an accurate reflection of educational or previous employment level, as many migrants who had worked as teachers or skilled laborers in other states accepted lower status jobs in Los Angeles out of necessity." Fogelson and De Graaf found that the skewing of black jobs toward physical toil and domestic and personal service persisted through the 1920s, accompanied by a marked rise in the public hiring of black laborers, firemen, janitors, and police. Well before World War I African-American workers had secured that disproportionate foothold in municipal government that would sustain them throughout the 20th century and on into the 21st.[136]

Black wages were kept low by the work profile described above. In 1912 Pullman porters--holders of one of their community's most prestigious jobs--objected to their $25 monthly pay; it amounted to less than half the prevailing city wage. Stingy as their incomes were, however, they exceeded by two or three times what many of the city's African-Americans had earned as farmers in the South. Only a handful of them made a comfortable living in Los Angeles a century ago, but few were abjectly poor.[137]

The jobs blacks held severely limited their contacts with the city's labor movement. Though migrants from the Bay Area expected indifference from the craft unions--and re-

ceived it--they also faced little of the workingclass hostility they had fled. In 1893, a newly formed waiters' union made up of white workers helped African-Americans organize a union of their own. The Council of Labor offered it no assistance, however, and did not invite it to affiliate. Typically self-reliant, blacks formed an Afro-American Protective Association later that year to find jobs for workers who had no access to union hiring halls.[138] Thereafter most unions used both hiring halls and apprenticeship programs to keep blacks out of the skilled trades. Resentment against this policy spurred some middle-class African-American leaders to denounce the labor movement. The most outspoken of these was Jefferson Lewis Edmond, editor of the *Liberator* and a cofounder of the Los Angeles Forum. Edmond allied himself with the city's white progressives and shared their antipathy to unions. He reminded the *Liberator's* readers that Frederick Douglass had warned African-Americans to resist the blandishments of these workingclass organizations.[139]

On at least two occasions employers hired blacks to break strikes, turning organized labor's studied neglect into something more rancorous. The first instance occurred during the track workers' strike of 1903 (see above). When 1,400 Mexicans walked out, Henry Huntington filled their jobs with Japanese laborers and hundreds of African-Americans brought to Los Angeles by the Southern Pacific Railroad.[140] The second instance was an all-out attack launched against Teamsters' Union No. 208 by the Draymen's Association, which represented the city's freight-hauling firms. The teamsters had enjoyed a fairly stable relationship with one of L.A.'s most strategic industries, but in 1907, at the instigation of the M&M and other open-shop forces, the Draymen's Association refused to sign a new agreement with the union. Teamsters No. 208 was forced to strike and did so on May 1. Almost immediately the trucking and cartage companies hired strikebreakers, many of whom were African-Americans. The M&M, which had amassed a huge war

chest, paid sheriff's deputies to help city police escort the replacement workers across union lines. After ten days the strike collapsed. It was a stinging defeat for organized labor, one that consolidated the power and influence of the city's open-shop movement. With the Teamsters reduced from 500 to 35 working members and unable to defend draymen of any color, the freight employers found they no longer needed their African-American strikebreakers and gradually gave their jobs to whites.[141] Relations between unions and black Angelenos hit rock-bottom and remained there for the next three years.

A key avenue of rapprochement was George Washington Whitley's candidacy in the 1911 city council election. Outraged by the council's adoption and Alexander's signing of the country's harshest anti-picketing ordinance the year before, the labor movement closed ranks with the Socialist Party in a bid for control of Los Angeles. That June the party and the Union Labor Political Club named a joint slate of candidates for the city's legislative and executive offices.. Among the nine council candidates were five union men and Whitley. No other African-American had ever won a nomination for one of L.A.'s elective offices.[142]

Whitley had gained prominence in the black community first as a businessman and then as the guiding spirit behind the local chapter of the statewide Afro-American Council. Organized in the 1890s, the council defended blacks against abuse by police and prison officials and also lobbied for the appointment of blacks to state and city jobs. It was dominated by its Los Angeles branch, which had over 600 members in 1903. This base of support drew union and socialist political activists to Whitley. He addressed the Central Labor Council on March 24, 1911, and a few days later Harriman and long-time labor leader W.A. Engle spoke to a receptive audience at the Afro-American Council. These exchanges set the stage for Whitley's candidacy. "In all my experience as a political worker I have never noticed such enthusiasm as is now seen among my people," he

told the *Citizen* as the campaign began. "We'll be down on the ticket about 6,000 strong." To back up this promise the Afro-American Council mailed black voters letters urging them to cast their ballots for the labor-socialist ticket.[143]

Whitley's pledge to seek more city jobs for African-Americans if elected did not impress Jefferson Lewis Edmond. The newspaper editor threw his support to Mayor Alexander and the other progressive candidates, urging readers of the *Liberator* to do likewise. According to Douglas Flamming, who has chronicled the wary encounter between blacks and white reformers in Los Angeles a century ago, "Edmond came to regret his support for the progressives, and claimed that the insurgent-conservative coalition of 1911 had, by virtue of its anti-Socialist outcry, 'hoodwinked the greater portion of Negroes into support of their ticket.'" [144]

Actually, he was wrong about the hoodwinking. Whitley handily won his primary election on October 31, as did the other labor-socialist candidates. He picked up over 14,200 votes, at least 6,600 more than the black population of Los Angeles! Though the *L.A. Times* speculated that "a large element of the labor ranks" backed his incumbent rival, Barney 'Buttermilk' Healy, most of Whitney's votes clearly came from precincts occupied by white workers. A second black council candidate, Frederick M. Roberts, polled 2,647 votes. That December 5, when progressive and Old Guard forces combined to sweep the general election, African-Americans did not waver in their support for the losing Harriman ticket. "The number of African Americans in a ward was positively correlated with the vote for Harriman," James Ingram and Katherine Underwood found in their study of the campaign." Three days after the polls closed, Whitley appeared before the Central Labor Council and thanked it "for its loyal support" of his candidacy.[145]

A byproduct of this most pivotal election in the city's history was the brief and sad career of the Mutual Organization League. In 1910 the American Federation of Labor be-

latedly prodded its affiliates to organize black workers, and as the year ended Curly Grow of the Machinists asked the Afro-American Council to help do just that. The Council, still simmering over the haulage companies' betrayal of black strikebreakers in 1907, agreed. The result was the birth of the Mutual Organization League. Pooling members of both the Afro-American and Central Labor Councils, the League set out to attract black workers to unions while campaigning for the socialist ticket. It survived for a little over a year. There is no evidence that it boosted the number of black union members in Los Angeles or that the city's unions actively tried to recruit them. The labor council's interest in its new ally apparently ran no farther than harvesting African-American votes and hounding Chinese and Japanese workers out of jobs desired by whites.

The League's demise followed the defeat of labor-socialist candidates in the general election of 1911. While a few Central Labor Council delegates--Grow, Engle, and James A. Gray among them--seem genuinely to have tried to unionize African-Americans, the rise and fall of the Mutual Organization League bore the stamp of a political opportunism that organized labor still has not completely overcome.[146]

A White Male Base for City-Building

White craft-unionists lived lives that were intimately tied to those of the Asians, Mexicans, and African-Americans in L.A.'s non-union workforce. Rampant job and residential segregation of the latter three populations did not belie this fact but *demonstrated* it. Absent Mexican and Slavic laborers, most skilled white bricklayers would either have toted hods themselves or forfeited work. Without the low wages and racial covenants inflicted on immigrants and African-Americans, white Angelenos would have faced much stiffer competition for pricier homes. These and other immediate gains that flowed from racism to wage-earning whites carried a punitive cost: the long-range fragmenting of the working class. On this issue the Central Labor Council and its affiliates struggled among

themselves for a decade or more and remained of two minds. Those who took a politically long view urged their co-workers to welcome the three disaffected groups into the ranks of organized labor. Others, more numerous, refused to have anything to do with nonwhites and adamantly opposed their unionization.

One of the most telling results of the social and economic sequestering of Mexicans and Asians was their exclusion from the urban polity. Before and during the progressive era, their many civic and self-help organizations looked inward for economic self-defense, friendship, and cultural continuity. Their newspapers covered neighborhood issues, the motherland, and statewide jingoistic campaigns against alien land ownership, miscegenation, and the like. Very rarely did the two groups lobby the L.A. city council, let alone organize the sustained grassroots pressure that gave local lobbying its leverage. African-Americans tested the treacherous political waters downtown more often than other scorned minorities--but not a great deal more often or with notable success. The closest they came to casting the swing votes in a vital city election was 1911, but their own internal schisms and a huge turnout by the rest of the city made their role inconsequential.

Many circumstances diluted the political ambitions and influence of people of color in 1890-1915 Los Angeles. Their alienation from unions deprived them of a potential ally. Like Asians, blacks accounted for only 1 of every 50 Angelenos. Mexicans formed a larger and faster-growing contingent, but their transience and immigrant status often disarmed them politically. Many other immigrants thought of themselves as sojourners (even if they were not) and thus did not engage their host city politically. As "aliens ineligible to citizenship," Chinese and Japanese could not vote. Their encounters with local, state, and federal governments were mostly painful, replete with deportations, racially segregated schools and Civil Service lists, anti-peddling ordinances, and malign neglect.

Small wonder that they asked their consulates, not the city council, to redress their grievances. Mexicans did likewise. Knowing that few Mexicans voted or engaged in city politics, John Randolph Haynes observed, "the politicians do not base their strength upon them."[147]

From such predicaments it is easy to draw wrong conclusions. Here, for example, is the calumny Robert M. Fogelson, one of L.A.'s most celebrated historians, heaped on the heads of the city's progressive-era minorities:

> "Maladjusted Mexicans, uprooted Chinese and transient Americans all remained separate from the larger society....They lacked entrepreneurial and professional skills, placed a low priority on material achievement, and held modest expectations of future accomplishments....Unassimilated, unwelcome, and unprotected, these people were so thoroughly isolated that the American majority was able to maintain its untainted vision of an integrated community. After 1885 the growth of Los Angeles overwhelmed the original townspeople and their descendants....Exploited economically, separated residentially, isolated socially, and ignored politically, these people remained entirely outside the Los Angeles community between 1885 and 1930." [148]

Five sentences, five untruths. As this chapter has demonstrated, immigrants and African-Americans were thoroughly integrated into the urban economy, had highly developed entrepreneurial skills, prized material achievement, defended their interests with shrewdness and resiliency, rarely felt overwhelmed, and *constituted* the Los Angeles community no less than the city's whites, albeit in more or less segregated enclaves that lacked political clout. As an heir to the Oscar Handlin school of immigrant history, Fogelson strips first-generation Americans of their own resources and presents them merely as victims.[149] Nevertheless they were historical actors in their own right. As workers, property owners, and renters they tenaciously fought the racism that would deny them full participation in American life. Typical of their initiative was the long strike Chinese vegetable peddlers waged in the winter of 1878-79 to overturn an ordinance restricting their trade. Seven years later they squelched an anti-Chinese boycott by refusing to deliver vegetables to white families that had fired their countrymen.[150] It belabors the obvious to state

that without the economic contributions of African-Americans, Mexicans, Chinese, Japanese, Slavs, and other minorities, the city would have built its water and power infrastructure much more slowly and at a cost that might well have stymied this huge public enterprise. People of color are indirect and silent players in the politics of urban growth that unfolds in Chapter 11 of this dissertation. Out of sight and earshot, they very much deserve to be kept in mind.

So, too, do workingclass women. Like their progressive sisters, they did not vote in the 1905 and 1907 elections that funded the Owens Valley aqueduct or the March 6, 1911 straw poll that decisively pointed the city toward a municipal distribution system for aqueduct power. Nor did they play a significant role in the educational campaigns that preceded those elections and the equally pivotal public power bond election of 1914. Yet, as this chapter has shown, both groups of women fought on political fronts where men were less active, freeing male unionists and progressives to devote most of their energy to developmental reform.

* * * * *

We turn now to the unsung but indispensable role that organized craft unionists played in the city's economy, its politics, and above all the creation of its system of public water and public power. For all the reasons stated above, those directly responsible for this unrivaled municipal achievement were white, largely native-born males.

[1] In 1899 the census omitted blacksmiths, repair shops, and other small establishments. Additional factories and workers were left out in 1904. The undercount of wage workers thus grew with each enumeration. Note that salaried workers did not figure in these tabulations. Manufacturing census results were taken from "The Forty-Year War for a Free City: A History of the Open Shop in Los Angeles," 1929 booklet compiled from *Los Angeles Times* articles, p. 26. [2] Johnson, Daniel J. "Down in 'De Bloody Ate': Ward Politicians and Working-Class Voters in Progressive-Era Los Angeles," unpublished paper presented at a UCLA colloquium, April 3, 1997, pp. 4-5. My random sample was drawn from the 1908 Great Register at the Seaver Center in L.A.'s Museum of Natural History. The randomization sequence was provided by Prof. Eric Monkkonen. A reminder: women did not vote in California until 1911.

[3] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900, Population* (U.S. Government Printing Office: Washington, D.C., 1901), Vol. 1.

[4] Clark, pp. 210-11, based on U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Abstract of the Thirteenth Census of the United States, Statistics of Population, Agriculture, Manufacturing, and Mining ...With Supplement for California,* Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1913, pp. 33, 63, 84-85, and 95.

[5] Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Population,* p. 181; Fogelson, Robert M. *The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930,* Harvard Univ. Press, Cambridge, MA, 1967, pp. 64, 75-76, 198, 201. It was the large body of sober midwesterners one observer had in mind when declaring that the ambience of Los Angeles had changed "from a spirited fandango into a sedate covered-dish church supper." [Quoted in Lothrop, Gloria Ricci, "The Boom of the '80s Revisited," *Southern California Quarterly* v. 75, nos. 3–4 (Fall/Winter, 1993), p. 288.]

[6] Founded in Sept., 1901 by wives and female relatives of union men, the League set out to promote the consumption of union-made goods and services but quickly broadened its scope to include boycott, strike, and political work for organized labor. In 1902, when Typographical No. 174 was boycotting the *Times*, the League solicited invaluable support for the union from the city's women's clubs. "Too much praise cannot be given to the Women's Union Label League for the assistance they are rendering in this movement," said the printer's lead organizer, Arthur A. Hay. [Los Angeles Typographical Union No. 174. Minute Books, 1886-1916, Feb. 23, 1902, pp. 335-38 (hereinafter LATU).]

[7] This list was culled from union and labor council minutes, the *Union Labor News* and *Citizen, Proceedings* of the California State Labor Federation, minutes of L.A. City Council and L.A. County Supervisors' meetings, the John Randolph Haynes Papers at UCLA, *Municipal News*, L.A. *Times, Herald, Tribune, Daily News, Examiner, Express,* and *Record,* and various books and journal articles about L.A. labor, including several in Spanish. During the progressive era women's names appeared in print in the two forms illustrated by the following: Mary C. Engle and Mrs. W.A. Engle (where W.A. Engle was Mary's husband). I never found someone I knew to be a woman referred to in the indeterminate form M.C. Engle. Thus my informal census probably gives a fair indication of the average gender balance in the L.A. labor movement. Women also worked in L.A.'s canneries, millinery shops, telephone offices, barber shops, hospitals, and public school classrooms, but except for male barbers these worksites remained largely unorganized during the progressive era.

[8] Stimson, p. 133.

[9] Ichioka, p. 89.

[10] Women did not win the vote in California until 1911. [Ovnick, Merry. "Progressive Wordcrafting, Organization, and Success, 1906-1909," draft chapter 10 of her August 2001 UCLA dissertation "The Arts and the Craft of Persuasion: Developing a Language of Reform in Los Angeles Political and National Aesthetic Reforms, 1900-16".

[11] Walker, J.R., "Shinglers Union," *Union Labor News*, Dec. 25, 1903.

[12] "A Small Tribute of Respect by an Old Timer to an Old Timer," *Union Labor News*, July 27, 1906.

[13] Ichioka, p. 89.

[14] Craig, Z.W., "The Rights of Women," *Union Labor News*, March 9, 1906, p. 4.

[15] *Proceedings*, Eleventh Annual Convention of the California State Federation of Labor, Los Angeles, October 3-7, 1910, p. 17.

[16] Craig, Z.W., "The Rights of Women," *Union Labor News*, March 9, 1906, p. 4. Craig noted that in the Laundry Workers' union, women markers, washers, and distributors had long earned the same wages as men, and that similar conditions prevailed in the other organized trades.

[17] Stimson, pp. 92, 232-33.

[18] *Citizen*, March 21, 1913, pp. 1, 4 and March 4, 1913, p. 8.

[19] Ichioka, p. 89.

[20] *Proceedings*, Eleventh Annual Convention of the California State Federation of Labor, Los Angeles, October 3-7, 1910, pp. 3-5. The Laundry Worker delegates mentioned were William A. Vanna and Harry E. De Pue.

[21] Noel was a constant ally of L.A.'s unions but was not herself a union member. This paragraph draws on the minutes of many labor council meetings during the prewar period. [See especially Los Angeles County Central Labor Council Minute Books, 1909-1916 (hereinafter LACLC), housed at the Urban Archives Center, California State University, Northridge, Jan. 28, 1910, Jan. 29, 1915, and Jan. 28, 1916. See also "Random Shots" in the *Citizen*, Jan, 5, 1912, p. 7 and "News From the Labor Organizations" features on p. 7 of the *Citizen* for Jan. 26, Feb. 2, and Feb. 9, 1912.]

[22] Orrell, Lottie. "History of Garment Workers' Local Union No. 125," in the union's 17th-anniversary commemorative booklet *The Los Angeles Garment Worker*, Los Angeles, May, 1917, pp. 9-11 (unnumbered). A copy of the booklet is archived in Records of the San Francisco Labor Council, Call No. 69/139c, Box 9, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley.

[23] Stimson, p. 259.

[24] Orrell, p. 10; *Union Labor News*, "Central Labor Council," Nov. 10, 1905 and March 2, 1906.

[25] Orrell, p. 11.

[26] Orrell, p. 11.

[27] Ichioka, p. 89.

[28] See California State Federation of Labor, *Proceedings*, 12th-18th annual conventions (1911-17). Per capita voting tables appear near the start of each volume. Garment Workers No. 125, L.A.'s largest union in 1915, probably remained the city's largest in 1916-17.

[29] Perrys, p. 37.

[30] "The P.A. Newmark Strike is Won. Garment Workers Granted Every Demand," *Citizen*, July 3, 1914, p. 1; Perrys p. 37; LACLC, Feb. 28 and June 27, 1913; July 3 and 20, 1914.

[31] Ichioka, p. 89.

[32] *Proceedings*, Eighteenth Annual Convention of the California State Federation of Labor, Sacramento, CA, 1917, p. 49; Perrys, pp. 38, 39. Waitresses' and waiters' wages are for 1914.

[33] Kelley, Florence. "Women in Trades Unions," *Union Labor News*, Jan. 4, 1907, reprinted from *The Outlook*, Dec, 1906; Seller, Maxine Schwartz. "The Uprising of the Twenty Thousand: Sex, Class, and Ethnicity in the Shirtwaist Makers' Strike of 1909," in *Struggle a Hard Battle: Essays on Working-Class Immigrants*, Northern Illinois University Press, DeKalb, IL, 1986, pp. 261, 266, 270-71.

[34] Katz, Sherry. "Frances Nacke Noel and 'Sister Movements': Socialism, Feminism, and Trade Unionism in Los Angeles, 1909-1916," *California History*, v. LXVII, no. 3 (Sept., 1988), p. 185.

[35] "Women's Trade Union League Will Discuss the Unemployment Problem," *Citizen*, Feb. 12, 1915; LACLC, July 9, 1915; *Proceedings*, Eighteenth Annual Convention of the California State Federation of Labor, Sacramento, CA, 1917, p. 49.

[36] Ichioka, p. 89.

[37] For the San Francisco case, see Saxton, Alexander, *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California*, University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1971.

[38] Heading borrowed from Takaki, Ronald, *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans*, Penguin Books (orig. Little, Brown, 1989), New York, 1989.

[39] Takaki, p. 14.

[40] Hata, Donald Teruo, Jr., and Nadine Ishitani Hata, "Asian-Pacific Angelinos: Model Minorities and Indispensable Scapegoats" in Klein, Norman M. and Martin J. Schiesl, eds., *20th Century Los Angeles: Power, Promotion, and Social Conflict*, Regina Books, Claremont, CA, 1990, pp. 65-66.

[41] American Federation of Labor, *Proceedings, 13th Annual Convention*, Chicago, *Dec. 11-19, 1893*, p. 73.

[42] Foner, Philip S. *History of the Labor Movement of the United States*, Vol. 2, *From the Founding of the A.F. of L. to the Emergence of American Imperialism*, International Publishers (New World Paperback), New York, 2nd ed., 1975, pp. 204-05; Takaki, pp. 110-12; Ichioka, Yuji. *The Issei: The World of the First Generation Japanese Immigrants, 1885-1924,* The Free Press (Macmillan), New York, 1988, p. 100.

[43] Stimson, p. 30.

[44] Chinese occupations gleaned from deportation, residence application, and other U.S. District Court cases. [National Archives–Pacific Southwest Region, Laguna Niguel, CA: Record Group 21, U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California, Southern Division, 1907-1929, Los Angeles Criminal Cases Nos. 579-86, 814-28l; General [Exclusion] Cases Nos. 551-74, 586-600, 774-790, 840-41; Record Group 85, Segregated Chinese Case Files 1893-1935, Case Nos. 1-50, 281-320, 841, 2979, 4686; Hata & Hata, pp. 66-67; Williamson, Mrs. M. Burton. "The Haliotis or Abalone Industry of the Californian Coast: Preservative Laws," *Annual Publication of the Historical Society of Southern California,* v. 7, Part 1 (1906), pp. 22-24; Hayden, Dolores, Gail Dubrow, & Carolyn Flynn. "The Power of Place: Los Angeles," pamphlet, Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Planning, UCLA, Los Angeles, ca. 1990.

[45] Stimson, p. 61.

[46] Ichioka, p. 89.

[47] Arroyo, Luis Leobardo. "Mexican Workers and American Unions: The Los Angeles AFL, 1890–1933," Chicano Political Economy Collective Working Paper Series, #107, Chicano Studies Library Publication, University of California, Berkeley, 1981, p. 8; LATU, Sept. 29, 1895, p. 150; Stimson, p. 130.

[48] Stimson, p. 61.

[49] Ichioka, p. 89.

[50] Ichioka, Yuji. *The Issei: The World of the First Generation Japanese Immigrants, 1885-1924,* The Free Press (Macmillan), New York, 1988, pp. 42-44; Daniels, Roger. *The Politics of Prejudice: The Anti-Japanese Movement in California and the Struggle for Japanese Exclusion,* University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1962, pp. 2-6.

[51] Daniels, Roger. *The Politics of Prejudice: The Anti-Japanese Movement in California and the Struggle for Japanese Exclusion,* University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1962, pp. 5-6.

[52] Daniels, p. 1.

[53] Ichioka defines *dekasegi* as "the practice of Japanese laborers leaving their native place temporarily to work elsewhere; a *dekaseginin* is any person who engages in this practice. *Dekasegi* always includes the ideal of returning home eventually." [Ichioka, p. 3]

[54] In 1900, fearing that the rise of anti-Japanese sentiment on the West Coast would provoke a diplomatic crisis, the Japanese government briefly prohibited its laborers from emigrating to the continental U.S. and Canada. It relaxed this ban in 1902. [Ichioka, p. 52]

[55] Daniels, p. 12. See also Almaguer, Tomás, *Racial Fault Lines: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California,* University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1994, p. 184.

[56] Mason, William M. and John A. McKinstry. *The Japanese of Los Angeles,* County of Los Angeles Department of Museum of Natural History, Los Angeles, 1969; Daniels, p. 13.

[57] Mason & McKinstry, pp. 5-7.

[58] Mason & McKinstry, pp. 4-5.

[59] Stimson, p. 267; Clark, p. 387; Mason & McKinstry, p. 9.

[60] Ovnick, Merry A. "Art vs. Politics: The 'Japanese Problem' and Los Angeles' Reformers in the Progressive Era," paper delivered at OAH convention, San Francisco, April 18, 1997, p. 11; Ichioka, p. 27; Mason & McKinstry, pp. 7, 10, 12.

[61] Ichioka, pp. 54, 57, 60.

[62] Ichioka, pp. 57, 72-73, 81.

[63] Mason & McKinstry, p. 21.

[64] Ichioka, p. 89.

[65] Hayden, Dubrow, & Flynn (no page numbers); Mason & McKinstry, pp. 12-14, 31.

[66] Daniels, pp. 45, 49-51, 63; Mowry, p. 154. Mowry's observation in full: "There were limits to competition. To the progressive mind, one of those limits should be set at the color line."

[67] Daniels, p. 63.

[68] Hirabayashi & Tanaka, p. 150; Mason & McKinstry, p. 31.

[69] Daniels, p. 83.

[70] Ichioka, p. 89.

[71] Daniels, p. 88.

[72] Ichioka, p. 6.

[73] Daniels, p. 88.

[74] Mason & McKinstry, pp. 14, 31.

[75] Almaguer, "Keeping the 'House of Labor' Divided: The Attitude of Organized Labor Toward the Japanese-Mexican Labor Association in 1903," in *Work, Family, Sex Roles, Language,* The National Association for Chicano Studies, Selected Papers, Mario Barrera, Al-

berto Camarillo, & Francisco Hernandez, eds., Tonatiuh-Quinto Sol International, Berkeley, 1980, pp. 15, 19; Ichioka, pp. 3, 100.

[76] Daniels, p. 21.

[77] Ichioka, p. 68.

[78] Ichioka, pp. 52, 68-69, 71-72; Klein & Schiesl, p. 71; "Japanese in California," Statement of Hon. James D. Phelan, pp. 5-7; Daniels, pp. 32, 34-44.

[79] Ichioka, p. 70.

[80] *Citizen*, Dec. 14, 1906, p. 1.

[81] Ovnick, pp. 5-6; Stimson, p. 337; Modell, John. *The Economics and Politics of Racial Accomodation: The Japanese of Los Angeles, 1900-1942*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1977, p. 32.

[82] *Proceedings*, Seventeenth Annual Convention of the California State Federation of Labor, pp. 19-20, 36.

[83] Ichioka, p. 89.

[84] Mason & McKinstry, pp. 4-5. The JYMA was founded in the late 1880s.

[85] Ichioka, pp. 102-25.

[86] Daniels, p. 9.

[87] Ichioka, p. 89.

[88] *Proceedings*, Seventeenth Annual Convention of the California State Federation of Labor Held at Eureka, California, October 2 to 6, 1916, p. 16.

[89] Ichioka, pp. 96-97; Almaguer, "Keeping the 'House of Labor' Divided," p. 12.

[90] Ichioka, p. 96; Almaguer, "Keeping the 'House of Labor' Divided," pp. 12-13.

[91] Almaguer, "Keeping the 'House of Labor' Divided," pp. 13-14 and *Racial Fault Lines*, p. 191; Ichioka, pp. 96-97. Japanese beet-thinners earned $2.50 to $3.75 per acre rather than the prevailing rate of $5.00 or more.

[92] Ichioka, pp. 97-98; Almaguer, "Keeping the 'House of Labor' Divided," pp. 13-14 and *Racial Fault Lines*, pp. 192-99.

[93] *L.A. Times*, March 27, 1903 and *Oxnard Courier*, March 28, 1903, paraphrased and quoted by Almaguer, "Keeping the 'House of Labor' Divided," p. 17.

[94] Ichioka, p. 89.

[95] One historian who gives more weight to the resolution's foes and its retrograde last paragraph than to its progressive aspect is Luis Leobardo Arroyo. According to Arroyo the resolution "caused an uproar" and barely passed. Almaguer, who thoroughly researched the mat-

ter, says the vote was unanimous. [Arroyo, Luis Leobardo. "Mexican Workers and American Unions: The Los Angeles AFL, 1890–1933," Chicano Political Economy Collective Working Paper Series, #107, Chicano Studies Library Publication, University of California, Berkeley, 1981, pp. 8-9; Ichioka, pp. 98-99; Almaguer, "Keeping the 'House of Labor' Divided," pp. 17-18 and *Racial Fault Lines*, p. 200.]

[96] Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines*, p. 201.

[97] Lizarras, J.M. Letter to AFL president Samuel Gompers, June 8, 1903, cited in Murray, John, "A Foretaste of the Orient," *International Socialist Review* v. 4 (August 1903), p. 78.

[98] In this paragraph "native-born" means born in Mexico. Castillo, Pedro G. and Antonio Ríos Bustamante. *México en Los Angeles: Una historia social y cultural, 1781-1985,* Alianza Editorial Mexicana, México, D.F., 1989, p. 150; Castillo, Pedro G. "The Making of a Mexican Barrio: Los Angeles, 1890-1920," Ph.D. dissertation, UCLA, 1979, pp. 13-20; Arroyo, Luis Leobardo. "Mexican Workers and American Unions: The Los Angeles AFL, 1890–1933," Chicano Political Economy Collective Working Paper Series, #107, Chicano Studies Library Publication, University of California, Berkeley, 1981, p. 12.

[99] Romo, Ricardo. "Work and Restlessness: Occupational and Spatial Mobility among Mexicanos in Los Angeles, 1918–1928," *Pacific Historical Review* 46:2 (May 1977), pp. 161-62; Castillo, "The Making...," pp. 19-20.

[100] Monroy, Douglas. "Like Swallows at the Old Mission: Mexicans and the Racial Politics of Growth in Los Angeles in the Interwar Period," *Western Historical Quarterly* v. 14, no. 4 (October, 1983), p. 440; Romo, pp. 162, 165-67, 178; McLean, Robert N. "Mexican Workers in the United States," *Proceedings of the National Conference of Social Work*, Chicago, 1929, p. 537.

[101] Romo, p. 168. My boldface.

[102] Romo, p. 165. Data for native whites were derived from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States, Vol. IV–Population, 1920: Occupations* (Washington, D.C., 1923), pp. 168-73; data for Mexicans and Mexican Americans came from 1917 and 1918 Los Angeles marriage records.

[103] Romo, pp. 168, 172.

[104] Saxton, Alexander, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic*, p. 314. See also Saxton's Introduction, pp. 1-20, for a discussion of the chain of causality linking modes of production, class, racism, and the split labor market under capitalism,.

[105] Ríos-Bustamante, Antonio & Pedro Castillo. *An Illustrated History of Mexican Los Angeles, 1781-1985*, Chicano Studies Research Center Publications, Monograph No. 12, UCLA, 1986, pp. 104-05, 107-10.

[106] Ichioka, p. 89.

[107] Monroy, Douglas. "Anarquismo y Comunismo: Mexican Radicalism and the Communist Party in Los Angeles during the 1930s," *Labor History* v. 24, no. 1 (Winter, 1983), pp. 34-38; Ríos-Bustamante & Castillo, *An Illustrated History*, pp. 104, 123-26.

[108] Monroy, Douglas. "Anarquismo y Comunismo, pp. 34-38; Arroyo, pp. 14-15; Stimson, pp. 321-22; Ríos-Bustamante & Castillo, *An Illustrated History*, pp. 119-22.

[109] Sánchez, George J. *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945,* Oxford University Press, Oxford & New York, 1993, pp. 4, 9-12.

[110] Romo, p. 175.

[111] The *porfiriato* is the epithet commonly applied to the 1876-1910 dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz, against whom Mexicans launched their successful revolution. [Gómez-Quiñones, Juan, "Los primeros pasos: conflictos laborales y sindicalización de los chicanos de 1900 a 1920," in *Orígenes del Movimiento Obrero Chicano*, Gómez-Quiñones and Luis Leobardo Arroyo, eds., Serie Popular Era, México, D.F., 1978. Traducción del inglés por Isabel Fraire, pp. 59-62; Gonzalez, Gilbert G. *Mexican Consuls and Labor Organizing*, University of Texas Press, Austin, TX, 1999, pp. 11-12.]

[112] Gómez-Quiñones, p. 59.

[113] Wollenberg, Charles. "Working on El Traque: The Pacific Electric Strike of 1903," *Pacific Historical Review*, v. XLII, No. 3 (August 1973), pp. 358, 360; Arroyo, p. 16; Stimson, pp. 98-99, 208-09; Kazin, Michael. "The Great Exception Revisited: Organized Labor and Politics in San Francisco and Los Angeles, 1870-1940," *Pacific Historical Review*, v. LV, no. 3 (August, 1986), p. 382.

[114] Clark, p. 387; Gómez-Quiñones, p. 71; Arroyo, pp. 16-17; Wollenberg, pp. 358, 361

[115] Wollenberg, p. 365; Clark, pp. 384-85, 387-89.

[116] Wollenberg, p. 366; Clark, pp. 390-91; Arroyo, p. 17; Gómez-Quiñones, pp. 71-72.

[117] Gómez-Quiñones, pp. 73-74; Wollenberg, p. 367.

[118] Gómez-Quiñones, p. 74; Monroy, Douglas. "Anarquismo y Comunismo," pp. 38-39.

[119] Stimson, pp. 321-22; Ireland, Robert E. "The Radical Community: Mexican and American Radicalism, 1900-1910," *Journal of Mexican American History* v. 2, no. 1 (Fall, 1971), p. 24; Arroyo, pp. 13-14.

[120] LATU, Dec. 29, 1907, pp. 224-25; Arroyo, p. 14; Ireland, p. 24.

[121] LACLC, June 4 and Oct. 22, 1909; Monroy, "Anarquismo y Comunismo," p. 35.

[122] Ichioka, p. 89.

[123] LACLC, 1912: April 12, Sept. 13, and Sept. 16 (executive board); 1913: Feb. 14 (executive board and full council). After Pancho Villa raided New Mexico in 1916, U.S. troops under Gen. John J. "Blackjack" Pershing tracked him deep into Mexico.

[124] LACLC, executive board meetings of Jan. 9 and Jan. 15, 1912; full council meeting of Jan. 19, 1912; Arroyo, p. 19.

[125] Gonzalez, pp. 13, 17-21.

[126] LACLC, Sept. 13, 1912 and Sept. 16, 1912 (executive board); Arroyo, p. 19.

[127] A few African-Americans had lived in Los Angeles from its beginnings. At least two of them helped found the city in 1781. Bond, J. Max. "The Negro in Los Angeles," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Southern California, 1936, p. 44; U.S. Bureau of the Census: *Thirteenth Census of the United States. 1910. Vol. 1. Population*, Washington, 1913, pp. 854-855; *Fourteenth Census of the United States. 1920. Vol. IV. Population*, Washington, 1922, pp. 729-731; Flamming, Douglas. "African-Americans and the Politics of Race in Progressive-Era Los Angeles" in *California Progressivism Revisited*, William Deverell & Tom Sitton, eds., pp. 204-05; Bunche, Lonnie G., "A Past Not Necessarily Prologue: The Afro-American in Los Angeles," in Klein & Schiesl, *20th Century Los Angeles*, pp. 103, 110; Bunche, Lonnie G., "Black Angelenos: The Afro-American in Los Angeles, 1850-1950," California Afro-American Museum, Los Angeles, 1988, p. 19.

[128] Lapp, Rudolph. *Afro-Americans in California*, Boyd & Fraser, San Francisco, 1979, p. 27, quoted in Almaguer, p. 41. For other comments on the sources of black migration to Los Angeles see Fogelson, p. 77; Lapp, p. 24; and Bunche,"A Past Not Necessarily Prologue," p. 103.

[129] Tolbert, Emory J. *The UNIA and Black Los Angeles: Ideology and Community in the American Garvey Movement*, Center for Afro-American Studies, UCLA, Los Angeles, 1980, pp. 26-29; Flamming, p. 206; Bunch, "A Past Not Necessarily Prologue," pp. 103-04.

[130] Ichioka, p. 89.

[131] De Graaf, Lawrence. "The City of Black Angels: Emergence of the Los Angeles Ghetto, 1890–1930," *Pacific Historical Review* 39:3 (Aug. 1970), pp. 333. 343; Bunch, "A Past Not Necessarily Prologue," p. 103; "Black Angelenos," p. 21.

[132] Santa Monica *Weekly Interpreter*, April 26, 1922, quoted in Fogelson, p. 200. See also De Graaf, pp. 334-35; Fogelson pp. 145 and 195; Tolbert, p. 27; Bunch, "A Past Not Necessarily Prologue," p. 110; Bunch, "Black Angelenos," p. 29.

[133] De Graaf, quoted in Tolbert, ff. 11, p. 45.

[134] Tolbert, pp. 4-5, 27, 29, 34-35, 38-43.

[135] Bunch, "A Past Not Necessarily Prologue," p. 110; De Graaf, pp. 334-35.

[136] U.S. Bureau of the Census. *Thirteenth Census of the United States: 1910, Occupations,* pp. 560-62; *Fourteenth Census of the United States, Occupations,* pp. 1129-32; *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, Population,* pp. 199-202; Fogelson, p. 199; Tolbert, pp. 35-36; Bunch, "Black Angelenos," pp. 19, 22; De Graaf, pp. 331-32, 341-43.

[137] De Graaf, p. 343.

[138] Stimson, p. 133.

[139] Flamming, pp. 205, 208-09; Tolbert, pp. 27, 37. Summarizing the results of a 1926 industrial survey, Tolbert noted that only 676 of L.A.'s 40,000 unionists in that year were blacks and only 11 of the city's 106 local unions had black members. Approximately two-thirds of the black union members were waiters and musicians. The legacy of organized labor's progressive-era indifference to African-American workers had a long half-life. [Johnson, Charles

S. "Industrial Survey of the Negro Population of Los Angeles," National Urban League Department of Research and Investigations, 1926]

[140] Stimson, p. 267; Bunch, "Black Angelenos," p. 19; De Graff, p. 331. Bunch's estimate of 1,400 and De Graaf's estimate of 2,000 black replacement workers both overstate the case. The *total* of black and Japanese strikebreakers probably did not exceed 1,400.

[141] Stimson, pp. 311-12, 336.

[142] *Citizen*, April 28, 1911, p. 9 and June 16, 1911, p. 14; Ingram, James W. III and Katherine Underwood. "Gender and Ideology: The Socialist Party and the Women's Vote in the 1911 Los Angeles Mayoral Election," paper presented at 1995 meeting of Western Political Science Association, Portland, Oregon, p. 18.

[143] *Citizen*, July 7, 1911; LACLC, March 24 and 31, 1911; Flamming, p. 205; Stimson, pp. 362-64; Ingram & Underwood, p. 18. Stimson and Central Labor Council minutes occasionally refer to the Afro-American Council as the Afro-American League.

[144] Flamming's characterization of the anti-labor alliance as an "insurgent-conservative" coalition is not apt. The progressives were electoral insurgents in 1909, when they recalled Mayor Harper. By 1911, however, they not only *constituted* the local government but were nervously trying to preserve the status quo against the challenge launched by labor. Flamming, pp. 209-10.

[145] "Harriman Polls More Than Twenty Thousand; Negro is Socialist Nominee for City Council" and "Complete. How All Candidates Fared at the Polls, *L.A. Times*, Nov. 2, 1911; Ingram & Underwood, pp. 18-19; LACLC Dec. 8, 1911. The latter two authors say their ecological regressions show that "if a ward was 100% African American, then 100% of its votes went to Harriman. The R-squares are strong, the p-values statistically significant, so the findings merit attention."

[146] LACLC, Dec. 30, 1910; Feb. 20, April 7, 14, 21, 28, May 26, June 2, 16, 30, Dec, 8, 1911; Feb. 23, 1912; Stimson, pp. 336-37.

[147] Letter from John R. Haynes to Roy L. Garis, Aug. 29, 1929, Haynes Papers.

[148] Ichioka, p. 89.

[149] Handlin described immigrants as "masses of men....helpless, bewildered people." See Handlin, Oscar, *The Uprooted*, Grosset and Dunlap, NY, 1951.

[150] Klein & Schiesl, p. 67; Stimson, pp. 65-66.

7.

A Surprising Saga: The Rise of Organized Labor in Los Angeles

How strange and unexpected is the story of organized workers in early twentieth-century Los Angeles! Thwarted time and again by the nation's most imposing coalition of anti-union employers, they grew more, not less, determined. Policed and handcuffed by the local state, they tacked in a direction "critical legal" scholars have observed in no other group of legally suppressed workers--they became *more* radical. Organizing themselves by craft under the conservative influence of the American Federation of Labor, they upbraided the AFL for being too capitalistic. Chafing at the harsh treatment they received from L.A.'s mayors and council members, they fought tirelessly to place the city's huge economic infrastructure in the hands of these selfsame officials. Maligned by contemporaries and all but lost to historical memory, they left an indelible stamp on the modern city.

Duplex Origins: Printers and Workingmen

L.A.'s organized workers carried two distinct but interwoven traditions from the nineteenth century into the twentieth. One was business unionism lodged in the various crafts, and the other was social unionism pursued both by the crafts and by the Workingmen, Knights of Labor, Nationalists, Populists, Socialist Party, and other allied groups.

This double-helix adventure began in 1875 with the founding of Typographical No. 174, the city's first craft union. Local 174 set out against considerable resistance to organize L.A.'s newspapers and small job shops. Renouncing partisan politics, its printers focused their energies on wages, hours, the all-union shop, and other collective bargaining issues. "Organized labor is based on principles sane and substantial," one of their leading lights, Stanley B. Wilson, declared at a 1906 groundbreaking ceremony for the Labor

Temple.[1] He probably had in mind the printers' longstanding economism, but the timing of his public remark was ironic. Sixteen years earlier Typographical No. 174 had collided with *L.A. Times* publisher Harrison Gray Otis, igniting a struggle that raged through the city for a quarter-century. By the time Wilson spoke, the ferocity of this encounter had driven the main caucus of his union into radical politics. Wilson himself was undergoing a political transformation that would eventually enroll him in the Socialist Party. Few of the "sane and substantial" printers who preceded him in the late 19th century would have given socialism a second thought. Local 174, in other words, had belatedly plunged into social reform while remaining a force in contract bargaining and other aspects of business unionism.

Typographical No. 174's first years were lonely ones. No other craft union appeared in Los Angeles until 1882, when the rising pace of construction gave building tradesmen an edge over their employers. The plasterers demanded a $5 daily wage, won the city's first recorded strike, and celebrated their success by founding a durable organization. Soon they were joined by unions of painters, plumbers, carpenters, hod carriers, bricklayers, retail clerks, and cigarmakers.[2]

Just two years after the printers organized as a local of the International Typographical Union, the Los Angeles Workingmen's Party emerged from an undercurrent of anti-monopoly, anti-Chinese agitation. Its brief career propelled the local labor movement along a far more rebellious trajectory than the early printers envisioned, one that would roil the city until World War I. Half labor association and half political party, a polyglot gathering of mechanics, farmers, and wage workers, the Workingmen organized themselves into ward and language-group clubs led by a county central committee. At their first meetings in 1877 they praised the workers' movement and condemned monopoly, the hiring of Chinese, and the disproportionate taxing of the poor. Class differences

opened rifts within the organization, however. A coup led by L.E. Page ousted its founder, Alfred Moore. The Page faction quickly solidified its control, and on February 2, 1878 the southern California Workingmen's Party unveiled its platform at a rally attended by some 1,000 Angelenos--a tenth of the city's population.[3]

Notable for the enthusiasm it generated at the expense of the Democrats and Republicans, the platform attracted broad public support. It defended labor's right to organize, sought limits on corporate land ownership, urged the U.S. government to issue paper money, asked the state to create free public schools with free textbooks and compulsory attendance, and prodded the L.A. city council to create a public hiring program for the unemployed. The Workingmen took a fateful further step. "With unusual acumen," says Grace Heilman Stimson, party secretary A.J. Norton "envisioned an objective of organized labor during the next two decades when he urged Workingmen to seek a share in revision of the city charter." Party members responded by mounting a campaign to bar the employment of Chinese on public works. Endorsed by the city's voters, this gambit sacrificed class solidarity for a brief racial advantage, but it also prefigured the labor movement's many successful appeals to the electorate for charter reforms and city-building bond issues during the progressive years.[4]

Hegemony of the Crafts

A real estate boom of historic proportions gripped Los Angeles during the mid-1880s. The Santa Fe railroad company drove its final spike at the Cajon Pass in November, 1885 and forced the Southern Pacific (popularly scorned as "Espee") into a rate war. Fares for travel to Los Angeles from Chicago and St. Louis, previously hovering at $125, plunged to $1 in March, 1886 and stayed under $25 for the next year. Coupled with organized excursions and frenetic advertising for settlers in eastern newspapers, the cheap fares *in-*

spired what one historian called "such a flow of tentative migration, such an avalanche rushing madly to Southern California as I believe has had no parallel."[5] Thousands of get-rich-quick speculators rode the rails to Los Angeles, but they were far outnumbered by more sober Midwesterners who came to stay and work. "The population of Los Angeles was estimated to have increased from 11,000 to 80,000 during boom years, and most of the increment came in 1887," writes Glenn S. Dumke.[6]. Building permits rose accordingly. Though the boom ended in a slump after 1889, the city's population, commerce, and construction activity soon regained their historically high levels. Craft workers seized this opportunity to unionize and win higher wages. Building tradesmen chartered most of the new unions; others were created by bakers, cooks, waiters, and tailors. By 1888, when State Labor Commissioner John J. Tobin described the city as "pretty thoroughly organized," some 2,400 workers had banded together in 19 unions. Not all were deeply rooted, but Carpenters & Joiners No. 56 with 907 members, Typographical No. 174 with 212 members, Sheet Metal Workers No. 108 with 200 members, and nine or ten other locals formed organized labor's durable core during the era of craft unionism and progressive reform. A loosely knit eight-union Trades Council, formed in the spring of 1885, provided the fledgling movement with a modicum of coordination.[7]

Organized labor has always been hostage to the boom-bust cycles of the capitalist economy, particularly so in early 20th-century Los Angeles. Good times spurred the movement forward, recessions swallowed many of its gains. This sequence was complicated by bouts of intense organizing and an increasingly united open-shop opposition made up of employers, their trade councils, most daily newspapers, and the city government. The result of all these cross-currents was fitful growth lagging well behind that of San Francisco's labor movement--but growth nonetheless. By 1907 union membership in

Los Angeles had risen, fallen, and climbed again to an estimated 15,000 workers in 63 local organizations.[8]

Printing and building tradesmen dominated the occupational field during most of the progressive era, but the pace of light industrialization quickened after 1900. So did the provision of services. In an unpublished extract from the 1910 population census, Daniel Johnson counted 17,280 male workers in the building and printing trades, 16,481 in metalworking and other manufactures, 15,868 in services, 7,633 in transportation, 1,464 in agriculture, and 7,078 in other trades.[9] The distribution of *unionized* workers skewed heavily toward construction, however. Between 1905 and 1909, extending a secular trend, the labor movement organized 17 new building trades unions but only 8 in services, 7 in manufacturing, and 3 in transportation and storage.[10] Metalworking, the city's most important manufacturing industry, remained hostile to organizers, and the unions that carved out niches there did so on an open-shop basis.

"Three major characteristics emerge from the labor history of what were California's two largest cities," Michael Kazin has observed, referring to progressive-era Los Angeles and San Francisco. "First, with little opposition, urban federations of skilled craftsmen dominated the labor movement until the 1930s. White women, agricultural workers of all races, and menial laborers in the cities sometimes acted on their own, but the objectives and accomplishments of their isolated struggles were limited in almost every case by the ideological and institutional hegemony of craft unionists."[11] Kazin does not spell it out, but he is clearly speaking here of *white male* craft unionists.

Craft unionism achieved dominance within organized labor at a moment in the rise of monopolistic enterprise when more broadly-based insurgencies like the Knights of Labor were falling by the wayside. It was also a moment when new technologies had begun to

deskill workers and fracture crafts in the mass-production of autos, steel, and farm equipment but not yet in construction, printing, or the metal, needle, and hospitality trades. The latter five industries paced the growth of craft unionism in Los Angeles a century ago. One of their hallmarks, Alexander Saxton has observed, was that their skills were still transmitted primarily through apprenticeships, giving local skill groups the leverage they needed to raise wages. "Membership solidarity, he says,

> "was then enlisted on the basis of craft identification rather than by virtue of the old producer ethic of a generalized working-class consciousness....By 1900, when the Knights of Labor had dwindled to only a few thousand members, the craft unions of the AFL--clearly the dominant force of the labor movement--had reached a membership of half a million....But the same figure reveals how narrow the craft unions actually were: their members represented less than 10 percent of the industrial labor force." 12

Trench Warfare

No union better exemplified the ascendancy of craft unionism in Los Angeles than Typographical No. 174. This champion of "sane and substantial" union principles leveraged L.A.'s mid-1880s economic boom into higher wages and a nine-hour workday at job printers, the *Times*, *Express*, *Tribune*, and *Herald*, towing the press operators and other printing trades unions in its wake. Occasionally it struck to win its demands, but more often the mere threat of a walkout proved effective. In 1886, for example, the printers forced the *Times* to pay union-scale wages on Sundays and employ only union men in its job shop. This turn of events greatly vexed Harrison Gray Otis, but the feisty publisher had just installed costly new equipment and won a contract to print the *Great Register* of county voters, and he could not afford a strike.[13]

He soon had his revenge. After the real estate bubble burst in the late 1880s, Los Angeles skidded into a recession. The four newspapers demanded wage cuts from the printing trades. When negotiations reached an impasse, Typographical No. 174 threatened to strike. Two of the papers quickly caved in, agreeing to hold the line on wages. The *Her-*

ald gave up the fight somewhat later. Otis, however defiantly imposed the reductions. Hours before the strike deadline, he denied union members entry to the *Times* and its companion paper, the *Herald.* Technically the strike became a lockout--a feature of most major labor-management confrontations in Los Angeles during the progressive era.

The *Times* lockout continued well into the 20th century, poisoning the city's labor relations. During its first month Otis hired strikebreakers supplied by the national Printers' Protective Fraternity, a scab outfit made up of disaffected members of the International Typographical Union (ITU). Their full-scale employment charged the dispute with profound and lasting bitterness. Nothing union members did could have preempted the long lockout, for in Stimson's words "[t]he real conflict went far deeper than disagreement over a wage scale or the form of a contract. It lay rather in Otis' hatred of unionism, so thoroughly ingrained by 1890 that no compromise could have mitigated it."[14]

Out of this collision grew the elements of "total engagement...all of labor pitted against all of capital" which Carey McWilliams observed in early 20th-century Los Angeles.[15] The retooling of the Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association into an anti-union hammer, the invention of the Citizens' League for that very purpose, the recruitment of city government as a reliable strikebreaking ally, the resort to blacklists, summary firings, company spies, strikebreakers, and a large reserve army of the unemployed--all had their roots in the duel between Otis and the printers. On the union side, the clash spurred tenacious boycotts of the *Times* and its chief advertiser, the People's Store; infusions of organizing staff and money from the ITU, AFL, and the California Federation of Labor; the creation and periodic strengthening of central councils as command posts for organized labor; and the slow radicalization of Typographical No. 174 and other conservative unions. When the lockout began, both labor and capital in Los Angeles were atomized. Before it ended each had cohered into an army.

Industrial Unionism--the Road Half Taken

With a few important exceptions L.A.'s unions organized only the most skilled workers in the industries noted above. Craft unionism triumphed here, as in most other cities, after a period in the early-to-late 1880s when it faced a strong challenge from the Knights of Labor. The Knights not only drew skilled and unskilled workers into their assemblies but recruited professional people (other than lawyers) and employers (other than saloonkeepers) as well. Disdaining the preoccupation of "business" unionists with wages and hours, they launched a political struggle to replace capitalism with a "cooperative commonwealth."

"The Order of the Knights of Labor," says Saxton,

> "is customarily cited as a prototype of industrial unionism. Actually embracing a variety of forms, among which were local and national bodies of skilled craftsmen, industrial unions, cooperatives, mixed assemblies of wage earners, farmers, professionals and small proprietors, this organization spanned the dividing line between preindustrial and industrial experience. What most distinctly characterized the Knights of Labor was its inclusive membership policy and emphasis on producer rather than craft loyalty." 16

Six assemblies of Knights with over 300 members agitated for a noncapitalist Los Angeles during the mid-1880s. They, not Typographical No. 174, carried on the tradition of workingclass political organizing throughout that decade. Drawing members from the old Workingmen's and Greenback Labor parties, the Knights spoke more convincingly than the Trades Council for organized labor and, in Stimson's words, "enjoyed an unusual degree of prestige in Los Angeles."[17]

Nevertheless their foothold was precarious. Not only did they suffer from class frictions inherent in their producerist ethic and all-inclusive organizing, but these very attributes posed a greater threat to employers than did narrow craft unionism. For this reason the Knights were attacked more fiercely than the AFL and its affiliates.[18] Many of the city's early labor leaders who shared the Order's political vision believed that they could defend skilled workers more effectively if they were grouped in a single craft than if they

were lumped together with many other crafts, unskilled laborers, professionals and small proprietors. For several years Frank Colver, Arthur Vinette, Jonathan D. Bailey, and other activists kept one foot in the Knights and the other in the early craft locals. This double duty spoke to an unresolved rivalry between craft unionism and a more inclusive, more political form of labor organization.

By 1890, however, a series of failed strikes and a reputation for being "in sympathy with everything and involved in nothing" had led to the Knights' downfall and the hegemony of the skilled trades in Los Angeles.[19] The most classic examples of craft unionism during the progressive era could be found in construction and publishing. Workers in the latter industry chose to be represented by separate, often quarrelsome unions of bookbinders, flatbed pressmen, lithographers, mailers, newsboys, photoengravers, press feeders, printers, printing pressmen, stereotypers and electrotypers, and Webb pressmen. With middling success an Allied Printing Trades Council struggled to bring order out of this chaos.[20]

The decline of the Knights and defeat of the American Railway Union's Pullman strike in 1894 convinced Colver, Vinette, and the L.A. Council of Labor that their best hope lay in affiliation with the American Federation of Labor (AFL), even though they disagreed with many of the policies of its conservative leader, Samuel Gompers. Of the two setbacks, the Pullman debacle dealt the heavier, more direct blow. Eugene V. Debs had founded Chicago-based ARU in 1893 to bring all railroad workers into a single union. When workers in George M. Pullman's sleeping car company joined ARU and tried to open negotiations with their paternalistic employer, he locked them out, forcing Debs to call a labor boycott of all trains hauling Pullman cars. Although the AFL and craft brotherhoods of railroad firemen, conductors, locomotive engineers, and trainmen repudiated Debs' industrial unionism, they momentarily closed ranks behind the boycott. This fact,

coupled with the railroads' threat to fire any worker who refused to handle a Pullman car, jolted the boycott into a national strike. Scores of Espee and Santa Fe trains in and near Los Angeles stopped dead on their tracks on June 27, 1894, crippling commerce, tourism, and the mails. Although the *L.A. Times* condemned ARU on a daily basis, crowds at the city's three depots cheered the strikers and actors from two popular plays staged benefits for them. Both the Council of Labor, its affiliated craft unions, and the vestigial Knights gave the strike unstinting support. At a special meeting on July 1, 1894, members of Typographical No. 174 unanimously offered "the local railroad men engaged in this struggle our hearty commendations, and...we stand ready to grant them our moral and financial support, in order to achieve the victory which should crown their efforts."[21]

It was the mail stoppage that gave U.S. Attorney General Richard Olney a pretext to break the strike. Arguing that the union was a monopoly in restraint of trade, the former railroad lawyer demanded and won Sherman Anti-Trust Act injunctions against ARU in federal courts across the country. This legal strategy, based partly on a deception, was framed in at least a winking collusion with the railroads. "In southern California," states historian Louis A. Di Donato,

> "moving the mails had never been an issue; ARU had informed the Chief Inspector of the Pacific Coast they were ready to handle mail at any time. Some 300 Southern Pacific employees signed and sent on to management a statement that they were quite willing to move the mail. This did not deter management from coupling Pullman cars to mail cars....On Monday, July 2, federal officials wasted no time in moving against the strikers. The tough minded, law-and-order judge, Erskine Mayo Ross, would be the first judge in the country to issue an injunction against the unions." 22

Soldiers based in San Francisco decamped for Los Angeles as soon as the injunction was announced. Police collared strikers who ignored it. Debs and national ARU leaders in other cities were likewise jailed. In early July the conductors and locomotive engineers chose discretion over valor; they returned to work and ran the trains under guard by federal troops. Slowly the Pullman strike collapsed, pulling ARU down with it.

The Council of Labor reluctantly decided that it was no longer wise to remain aloof from the only successful national labor federation. On July 11, it applied for an AFL charter. Stimson offers two reasons for this abrupt decision after years of temporizing: the council's growing coolness toward radical political movements, and ARU'S downfall as an industrial union.

It is true that by 1894 the Knights and Populists had fallen out of favor with L.A.'s labor activists, but few of them renounced contrarian politics as such. In fact the labor council grew more, not less radical, after joining the national federation. Stimson, an otherwise clear-sighted chronicler in *Rise of the Labor Movement*, grinds an economist axe in her account of craft union support for the Knights, Populists, Socialists, and other progressive-era movements. She believes these alliances represented a "distraction into bypaths of reform."[23] Dismissing them as fool's errands, she meticulously records hundreds of wage and hour campaigns, which often ended in frustration, but downplays the labor movement's pioneer legacy of social reform and city-building.

Stimson's singleminded focus on workplace issues leads her to portray the 1894 AFL application as a decisive embrace of apolitical unionism. "Which course would bring greater benefit to labor: to pay close heed to immediate craft union goals, or to strive politically for ultimate revision of the economic structure of society?" she asks. "The Council was to find its answer in 1894...when it affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, an organization dedicated under Gompers' masterful leadership to business unionism, the attainment of here-and-now gains, and the conduct of industrial relations on a day-to-day basis of wages, hours, and working conditions."[24] Affiliation with the AFL also brought the city's unions a succession of organizers, personal appearances by Gompers at moments of crisis, and, in 1907 and 1910, an infusion of national union funds to fight the open-shop movement.[25]

Largely because of Stimson, "pure and simple' business unionism is the gold standard against which L.A. labor has been judged--and found wanting--by virtually all subsequent historians. Thomas R. Clark succinctly restates her verdict in his 1994 dissertation, "The Limits of Liberty":

> "The post-depression resurgence of working class collective action coincided with a shift in the tactical focus of the American labor movement. As Michael Kazin notes, after 1898, in both California and the nation, the period of experimentation that had characterized the 1870-1898 period gave way to greater concentration on the 'pure and simple unionism' advocated by Samuel Gompers and the American Federation of Labor. Despite pockets of resistance, union leadership shifted away from those who advocated political action and broad social reforms, and shifted toward those who preferred a strict emphasis on the traditional economic methods of the trade union--collective bargaining backed by the threat of strikes and boycotts--in order to win better working conditions for union members. It was also during this period, according to Kazin, that 'San Francisco emerged as the quintessential union town...[and] Los Angeles provided a contrasting study in weakness.' " 26

Recent scholarship, however, reveals that Gompers often tolerated and sometimes embraced the radical politics of city labor movements. Julie Greene, Alexander Saxton, Gary Fink, and Michael Kazin, among others, have shown that some local labor centrals not only far outran the AFL's own stand against radical politics and the close supervision of strikes and boycotts but wielded all the autonomy they needed to act without censure by the national federation. "[T]he labor movement was a significant political force in many American cities and industrial towns during the early twentieth century," Kazin insists. "Far from leaving their militant idealism behind in the Gilded Age, workers updated it and challenged the right and ability of urban elites to rule....To take the historical measure of the AFL requires abandoning the rigid dichotomy that views skilled workers as having had to choose between socialism or the 'labor aristocracy'."[27]

This insight has unfortunately not been applied to Los Angeles. While the city's unions pondered their strategic direction in 1894, the AFL was itself weighing the value of two related electoral strategies: "alliance with a political party, most likely a socialist or independent labor party," or "non-partisan political activity, relying on the trade unions themselves rather than on a party bureaucracy". A third option given undue weight by

Stimson--anti-political business unionism--barely made it into the debate.[28] From these contending views came the AFL's flexible approach to some of its local affiliates. Nowhere was this more evident than in Gompers' relationship with L.A's central labor body, which not only sponsored union labor parties during several turn-of-the-century city election campaigns but also secured the AFL's endorsement for its 1910-14 alliance with the Socialist Party.[29] Politically, when Los Angeles labor went its own way, Gompers usually went along.

A telltale instance occurred just eight years after the Council of Labor received its AFL charter. In May, 1902, Stimson says, the council decided "to adopt political action as a means of strengthening the campaign to win union demands." It convened two meetings of union activists to debate what the nature and form of that action should be. At the first, conservatives led by James A. Gray of Carpenters No. 426 defended the AFL policy of rewarding friendly candidates and opposing hostile ones in both the Democratic and Republican parties. Just as forcefully, radical unionists led by John Murray and Fred Wheeler urged the labor movement to reject the two capitalist parties out of hand and, by clear implication, join forces with the socialists. Most of the participants gravitated toward this stand. Before the second meeting on July 28, however, Gompers threatened to revoke the council's charter if it allied itself with the Socialist Party or any partisan campaign. When this warning failed to silence the radical majority, conservatives managed to refer final action on the issue to an assembly of the city's unions. This ploy won them nothing but time, however. Delegates at the September 20 assembly voted to field a Union Labor Party in that fall's elections. Its mayoral candidate was Retail Clerks No. 83 president George McGahan. The ULP backed the socialist county and state tickets in return for a socialist endorsement of its city candidates. By nominally separating the ULP from the Council of Labor, the radical majority believed they could simultaneously run a

partisan campaign and avoid a confrontation with Gompers. They were right. The wily labor leader winked.[30]

As for the strategic impact of the failed Pullman strike, Stimson speculates that

> "[t]he Pullman strike, which contributed to the demise of the ARU and the Knights of Labor and to the growth of the AFL, may also have strengthened local labor's determination to concentrate more closely on strict craft unionism. Although the Council of Labor had voted to enter negotiations with the AFL on June 6, it did not send for a charter until July 11, when the strike was all but lost. A dramatic failure of industrial unionism at a critical moment may have brought to Los Angeles labor, as nothing else could, a conviction that Gompers' federation was the most useful form of labor organization." 31

On the face of it this motive for affiliation with the AFL makes no sense. The Council of Labor had committed staff, money, and time to the ARU's defense. It had participated in and closely observed the strike and so knew that what doomed it was not industrial unionism per se but federal troops, hostile courts, and betrayal by the craft-based railroad brotherhoods. Oddly for a labor historian, Stimson cites only a booklet published by the anti-union *L.A. Times* as an authority for the determinative impact of the Pullman strike on craft unionism in Los Angeles. Yet the *Times*, which had already taken political heat for its lockout of the printers and would soon take much more, never equated the AFL affiliation as a turn to "strict" craft unionism. It merely surmised that the collapse of ARU and the Knights had spurred the growth of the AFL *by default*.[32] When L.A.'s unions chose their first national headquarters amid the profound depression gripping the city and country in 1894, moreover, they fully intended to continue the transformative politics of their early years. Nor did the AFL, which granted the Council of Labor its charter on August 15, insist that they do otherwise. Structurally speaking, however, craft unionism became the L.A. labor movement's organizing principle for the next 35 years.

A running battle with the Industrial Workers of the World early in the 20th century sharpened the conviction of L.A.'s craft unionists that the slogan "an injury to one is the concern of all" was ill-advised in the workplace, however much it might be apt in poli-

tics. The Wobblies made a determined effort to organize men in lumber camps, laborers, hobo miners, farmhands, and other wage workers generally overlooked by the craft unions. Mooring themselves locally at the harbor in 1905, then in downtown Los Angeles, the Wobblies preached the virtue of "one big union" for American workers. Their industrial anarcho-syndicalism and direct-action tactics drew critical support from the L.A. Socialist Party but rankled non-socialist labor leaders. For their part the Wobblies openly scorned craft unionism and the AFL.[33] In June, 1906 they challenged Z.W. Craig, business agent for Longshoremen's No. 3, to debate workingclass principles before an audience of dockhands. He refused. Normally fearless and polemical, Craig spurned the challenge because he viewed the Wobblies as organized scabs. "I have been instrumental," he told an I.W.W. leader,

> "...in getting some of your members discharged from their positions through a friendly foreman, because they came into our jurisdiction and went to work and absolutely refused to join our local....I have also shown them that under the allied trades council plan of organization we get all of the advantages proposed by the I.W.W., and at the same time leave to each trade, autonomy of their own affairs, or...self-government or home rule. With all of the trades in one local, the unskilled workmen being in such a large majority, they would outvote the skilled mechanics in regard to whose work they might know little or nothing, and upon which conditions they could not vote intelligently....The idea of the industrial plan of organization is faulty in its very foundation for that reason..." [34]

What Craig defended was actually a more flexible form of craft unionism than one might suppose from the disdain he expressed for Wobblies. Central labor councils, predating the national unions and active in Los Angeles since the spring of 1885, were a first step toward industrial unionism. A second step was the creation of allied trades councils made up of related locals [see the section on "Workers' Headquarters" below]. Though each craft controlled its internal procedures and discipline, it increasingly ceded approval for strikes and boycotts to the higher industrial organization. By 1906 allied councils had been formed by the printing and building trades unions, carpenters, brewery unions, electricians and power plant workers, and miscellaneous trades.[35] The Brewery Workers'

Section, for example, represented separate craft unions of beer bottlers, stationary firemen, machinists, brewery workers, beer wagon drivers and stationary engineers--at first sight a design for chaos. They acted in an *industrial mode*, however, by synchronizing contract expiration dates through their section, bargaining in tandem, and cooperating on the shop floor.[36]

The early building trades unions have been somewhat maligned as redoubts of narrow craft unionism, each surrounded by a moat of intolerance toward the others. As recently as 2005 in an otherwise sympathetic and insightful inquiry into the "Skilled Hands, Strong Spirits" of the twentieth-century's trades workers, Grace Palladino portrayed them as warily eyeing one another not only over craft-level prerogatives and jurisdictions but within their individual locals. Her book provoked friendly criticism from Dorothy Sue Cobble and other labor historians who insisted that the solidarities Palladino belatedly found in the 1930s had actually begun much earlier. Inter-craft solidarity among building tradesmen before the New Deal, said Cobble,

> "appears live and well if one looks at the local and regional level rather than at the national. Why?....Bargaining in the construction industry was essentially local in character despite the rise of national trade organizations. The various construction unions cooperated because without such cooperation they could never have succeeded in gaining power in the industry. Employers signed union contracts because otherwise they risked being shut down, and most trades couldn't stop production without the support of their 'brothers' in other crafts. The local building trades councils ensured such solidarity by sanctioning or giving their stamp of approval to strikes called by individual trades. In short, inter-craft solidarity was achieved and individual crafts gave up their autonomy at the local level, because without such a web of support they were doomed."[37]

Turn-of-the-century trades councils clearly harbingered the industrial unionism that emerged full-fledged in the mid-1930s. The skill and apprenticeships they required varied greatly. In the Building Trades Council, for instance, cabinetmakers voted with hod carriers. The Allied Printing Trades Council grouped together highly skilled newspaper typesetters and less skilled job printers. Within many craft unions, moreover, a category known as "helpers" introduced relatively unskilled workers into the membership mix.

These arrangements, consolidated during the 1910s and 1920s, formed a launching pad for the era of industrial unions. It is a misconception to assume that the latter arose *sui generis* and in total opposition to the AFL and its unions.[38]

Workers' Headquarters

One cannot overstate the importance of increasingly strong central labor bodies in the trench warfare that began with the 1890 *Times* lockout. From ineffectual beginnings in the mid-1880s Trades Council, these relatives of the French *bourses du travail* and Italian *camere del lavoro* became a consolidated force with the Central Labor Council of 1904-15. The latter institution played a more decisive role in collective bargaining, organizing, worker education, strikes, boycotts, politics, and citybuilding than any union headquarters that followed it. Not until the late 1990s did the Los Angeles County Central Labor Council under Miguel Contreras regain much of the clout wielded by its progressive-era counterpart.[39]

City centrals developed their hybrid character during the anti-monopoly turbulence that followed the 1870s and the later rise of craft unions. "Appealing to producer or class solidarity through neighborhood ties and shared values and traditions," says Saxton, "they provided a natural organizational form for the inclusive strategy of the Producer Ethic and of industrial unionism. Labor radicals and industrial unionists usually sought leadership in city central labor councils. By contrast, city centrals proved dysfunctional for the exclusive strategy of skilled craft unionism." Much of what Saxton says describes the labor bodies that arose in Los Angeles after 1900. "Dysfunctional," however, does not do them justice; "conflicted" would be more apt. These organizing centers simultaneously represented local unions based in single crafts and fomented cross-craft solidarity for strikes, boycotts, and politics. While loyally assisting conservative business unions, they championed radical causes. Saxton states that the AFL tried to curb the power of city

centrals by limiting them to actions that the national unions or the national federation had pre-approved.[40] This decree does not seem to have reached California, but if it did it clearly had little effect.

Key to the triumph of craft unionism in Los Angeles and San Francisco, says Kazin,

> "was the sustained influence of strong, citywide central labor federations....'City centrals' sponsored and financed whatever labor newspapers existed, and because of their inclusive, representative nature, they could forcefully bring working-class demands to the attention of state and municipal officials. Unlike cities in the East and Midwest where, according to David Montgomery, 'central labor unions were squeezed out of the role of local working-class leadership' after the 1880s by the increased power of individual locals, citywide federations in California remained, as the centuries changed, the place where strategy was made and influence generated for the labor movement as a whole."[41]

Arthur Vinette and his allies in the carpenters' and painters' unions led the agitation for the first Trades Council. They did so for reasons largely political, hoping to mobilize workingclass voters in municipal elections. While their electoral program has not survived, we can assume from Vinette's leadership that it had a broad anti-monopoly character and demanded the eight-hour day.[42] Printers joined the new body in 1885 with some reluctance. Politics was not their forte, and they affiliated only after declaring that they would not be bound by the council's electoral choices. They also secured its aid in settling a strike against the *Express*.[43] Here we see a dynamic that would rule L.A. labor for the better part of the next two decades: a politically aggressive left wing led by the carpenters and painters, a bread-and-butter right wing led by Typographical No. 174, and a series of central labor bodies firmly planted in both camps and engaged both in radical politics and the nitty-gritty of collective bargaining.

The Trades Council lacked authority, so the city's unions began a search that would continue throughout the progressive era for a more powerful labor center. In late 1890 the printers and four other unions created a new Council of Labor with a mandate to act in labor disputes when a majority of its union delegates so voted. This was a strategic step, for Otis had just begun his epic battle against Typographical No. 174; the printers knew

they would need help from the entire workers' movement led by a strong central body. With their president, P.H. Hurley, at its head, the Council of Labor reinforced the boycott against the *Times* and its chief advertiser, the People's Store, raised funds for the locked-out union, warned businesses not to advertise in the *Times*, and threatened to unseat politicians who didn't support labor's campaign against the hated newspaper. A boycott committee organized by the council drew 22 unions, 4 Knights' assemblies, 5 railroad brotherhoods, and 35 Populist farm groups into the war with Otis. In Stimson's words, "the new Council of Labor, arising directly from the controversy between the Typographical Union and the *Times* in the fall of 1890, was the guiding spirit which welded disorganized and impoverished fragments of unionism into a federated craft movement."[44]

This seminal role demanded more than repeated parries against the *Times* and its open-shop allies. The Council of Labor was the first central body in Los Angeles to organize workers both through its affiliates and on its own, creating a committee for that purpose in 1891. The recruitment of new unionists in the period between the end of the real estate boom and onset of the mid-1890s depression was steady, if not spectacular, and by 1894 the council represented 23 unions with 3,000 members. It also found time during its first four years to campaign for a statewide Australian ballot reform and repeal of the poll tax. In 1893 it persuaded the City Council and County Board of Supervisors to create a jointly-run free employment bureau.[45] Neither the council's boycott nor Typographical No. 174's efforts to crack the *Times* lockout brought Otis to heel, however. Relying on state coercion and a carefully manipulated labor market that mocked his slogan of "industrial freedom," the defiant publisher would hold the printers at bay throughout the progressive era.

The Panic of 1893 led to a prolonged economic slump that paralyzed the L.A. labor movement, eroded its gains, wiped out some unions, and scuttled a Building Trades Council that carpenters, painters, and other construction workers cobbled together in 1896. The Council of Labor, its core unions, and a Printing Trades Council barely survived. As the century turned, however, they began to grow again. Union membership rose to 10,000 by 1903 while the number of locals reached 82, three-fourths of them affiliated with the Council of Labor. A more durable Building Trades Council emerged on the crest of a new construction wave. In 1901 the council helped launch a semi-independent weekly, the *Union Labor News* (later the *Citizen*). Its first editor was L.W. Rogers, a friend of Eugene Debs and member of the American Railway Union during its ill-fated 1894 Pullman strike.[46] Over the next decade the Council of Labor and its successor, the L.A. Central Labor Council, would carry on a sometimes amiable, sometimes stormy association with the building trades and the labor newspaper.

Consolidation of strategy, tactics, and organizing grew apace in 1902 and 1903 with the founding of a San Pedro Labor Council, a District Council of Carpenters, and a Brewery Workers' Section representing the brewers', bottlers', and wagon drivers' trades. All reported directly or indirectly to the Council of Labor. During this period the council pursued three innovations that strengthened the movement internally and externally. Every two weeks it opened its meetings to all affiliated workers; it created the city's first strike fund; and it encouraged labor's rank and file to patronize "friendly" merchants by distributing monthly lists of their names and addresses. At the same time L.A.'s business community launched a campaign to break union contracts, strikes, boycotts, and the labor movement itself. It ceded its control of the workplace to the Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association (M&M), founded a militant local chapter of the anti-union Citizens' Alliance, and persuaded the city government to deputize strikebreak-

ers as special police. With open-shop forces mobilizing a powerful, coordinated attack on organized labor, the city's unions realized they had to weld themselves into a much tighter fighting formation.[47]

Fine-Tuning Authority

Early 1904 saw a wholesale revamping of the central labor body's constitution, one that strengthened the ties among some 80 affiliated unions and created a democratic-centralist structure that would remain intact for over half a century. Endorsed by the AFL, adopted at a citywide convention on March 19, and ratified by most of the city's organized workers in the weeks that followed, the new organic law set up three tiers of authority and action: local unions, department councils, and a new L.A. Central Labor Council (LACLC). Discussions preceding the ratification votes floated the names of seven or eight intermediate bodies, but Stimson notes that only an Electric and Power Council and a Miscellaneous Trades Council were added to the existing Building Trades and Allied Printing Trades councils. Unions joining the LACLC had first to join the departmental council most appropriate for their trade, sending each body the same elected delegates whose number was fixed by the size of the local. Only locals affiliated with the AFL directly or through national unions could participate in this structure.[48]

Under the new constitution, decisionmaking on strikes, boycotts, negotiated wages, and other critical issues originated with members of a local and then moved on to the departmental body and Central Labor Council, which exercised final authority. Article V, Section 4 stipulated that

> "all Unions affiliated with this Council shall submit to their Department Council for endorsement all changes in trade rules and schedule of wages, as well as propositions to strike to enforce same, and to levy boycotts; and the Department Council shall then report the same to this Council with such recommendations as the Department Council shall see fit."

Strikes and boycotts required a three-fourths majority vote of the council's delegates. Not every significant labor practice fell under its scrutiny, however. Local unions enforced

their own internal discipline and acted on all issues confined to their own employers--a proviso not meant to cover grave misconduct by their members, boycotts, strikes, and wage schedules affecting their trade as a whole or the entire labor movement. The central bodies could intervene in purely local matters only at the command of the affiliated union. Departmental councils, not the LACLC, controlled the use of union working cards. Inherited from the printers, carpenters, and other early L.A. craft unions, the working-card system was designed (with only rare success after 1904) to exclude nonunion job-seekers from the workplace. Departmental councils also ruled on disputes between unions in their trade and took final action on "all matters affecting exclusively the interests of the Unions affiliated therewith."[49]

The authority granted the LACLC was nevertheless imposing. It alone had the right to approve strikes, to lead or approve political agitation, and "to levy boycotts or declare the intention of so doing; to issue public statements either by circular or through the press; to issue appeals to the public or to the labor movement for aid, financial or moral; [and] to act in any matter involving the interests of all its affiliated Unions or of those represented in two or more Department Councils."[50] Without these grants of authority the remarkable feats of workingclass citybuilding described in chapter 11 would have been unlikely if not impossible, for the labor movement's long fight for public water and public power was emphatically carried, in its later phases, by the Central Labor Council.

Overall, the new constitution shifted power dramatically upward from the city's unions. Previously, the Building Trades Council had ordered its affiliated members not to work alongside men without cards. The strikes that ensued were short and mostly unsuccessful. As a result, says Clark, the weakened council "left power with its member unions, each of which issued its own working cards, called its own strikes, and only rarely acted in unity with other member unions." Under these conditions, "contractors success-

fully resisted closed shop demands... [U]nion workers often worked beside non-union workers, and many crews consisted entirely of non-union labor."[51] The 1904 constitution returned control of working cards to the departmental councils and gave final approval of strikes and boycotts to the LACLC. These changes reflected the growing strength of the open-shop alliance.

No substantial change in a movement's internal power relations can be completely controlled by a document. After 1904 the LACLC's new authority was asserted, contested, and ultimately reshaped in a number of ways. Lemuel Biddle, one of L.A. unionism's most respected veterans, roiled the waters in late 1905 by proposing that each local send delegates to a departmental council which would in turn elect the members of the Central Labor Council. Not only would his plan require the hasty formation of enough new departmental bodies to accommodate every local, but it would also weight the democratic-centralist scales toward greater central authority by denying locals direct representation in the LACLC. Opposition to Biddle's proposal immediately arose. Nevertheless his unanimous election as the council's president on January 31, 1906 cleared the way for his reform, and on August 1 seven of every eight union members casting ballots voted for it. Some unionists, says Stimson, "complained that a power-hungry cadre of labor leaders had engineered the reorganization despite the fact that only a small percentage of the total union membership had voted in the referendum."[52]

The issue continued to fester for the next year and a half. It was a time of political boldness and shopfloor frustration for L.A.'s unions. Boldness inspired the 1906 founding of labor's Public Ownership Party, which aroused popular support for construction of a costly 240-mile waterway from the Owens Valley to Los Angeles. Frustration erupted the next year at the near-demolition of the Brotherhood of Teamsters, one of L.A.'s strongest and most strategically-placed unions. Local 208 had been organized in 1900,

largely at the instigation of Council of Labor president Fred C. Wheeler, to give the labor movement more leverage against companies using over-the-road transportation for their supplies and products. On May 1, 1907 it pulled its members out of six large trucking companies that had dropped their labor contracts on orders from the Jobbers' Association and the M&M. The timing of the walkout was disastrous. Local 208 had just quit its international union and had no strike fund. The suddenness of the employers' attack also prevented the LACLC from offering much help. On the other hand the M&M had amassed a huge war chest which it used to fund a Draymen's Association lockout and hire sheriff's deputies who escorted hundreds of strikebreakers across union lines. The walkout collapsed after 10 days. Local 208 lost the right to represent draymen and drivers at the six companies. Overnight its membership plunged from 500 to 35.[53]

Criticism of the LACLC resurfaced after this disaster. At the same time Typographical No. 174, drained by the *Times* fight, asked the AFL for aid from a nationwide per capita tax on union members. The printers argued that their war with Otis would decide the fate of the local labor movement for years to come; they also believed--and made their view known--that a more democratic organization of the central body would encourage the AFL to vote the unusual tax. Calls for repeal of the Biddle reforms also came from the Miscellaneous Trades Council, which forced a referendum on the issue. In early August, 1907, L.A.'s unions voted 30 to 1 to restore direct representation in the LACLC by three delegates each.[54] The scales had tipped back toward greater responsiveness to the rank and file on the part of the central body. This reversal was true to the character of a movement that had consistently pioneered the fight for direct democracy and the widest possible franchise in the electoral politics of Los Angeles.[55]

Withholding Patronage

Boycotts weighed heavily on the minds of the labor leaders and rank-and-file unionists who carried the day for the new organic law. Its longest article dealt with them--and for good reason. Invariably, a boycott launched by one union made demands on the members of all others. They not only had to withhold patronage from the target firm but were expected to involve their families in the dispute, show up for demonstrations, and on occasion walk a picketline. The *Times* boycott had solidified the movement, but for 14 years it had also drained union resources without humbling Otis. Clearly this sanction had to be \used sparingly, when the odds for success were high. Thus the language of Article V:

> "The Council regards boycott as an extreme measure, to be resorted to only where the rules or principles of the Council or a subordinate Council or Union have been deliberately violated and the offending party refuses to submit the difficulties for arbitration. Recognizing this, the Council shall not order a boycott until the controversy has been passed upon by the Department Council affected, and a request therefrom has been made for such a boycott. The Executive and Arbitration Committee shall then make every possible effort to settle the dispute by arbitration. Failing in this....if it is deemed necessary that a boycott be declared, then the Council, by a three-fourths vote of all regularly accredited delegates present from organizations in good standing, shall declare notice of intention to levy a boycott." 56

While the LACLC greenlighted several boycotts over the next decade, it did so under the constraints of Article V. These were reinforced by a legal opinion the council's attorney, Fred Spring, handed it in October, 1909. Citing a July 6, 1909 California Supreme Court decision in *Pierce vs. Stablemen's Union, Local No. 8760*, he advised unions to limit boycotts to "mild, peaceable publications and oral statements directed to those whom they desire not to enter the employ of a boycott establishment, and appeals to the general public to cease patronizing the said establishment until the same had become fair in their treatment of organized labor." Picketing to enforce a boycott, Spring warned, would expose the LACLC to injunctions and lawsuits, for the right to withhold patronage did not supercede the right of non-union employees to enter their places of work. Though *Pierce vs. Stablemen's Union* yanked picketlines out of the boycott arsenal, it did allow

unions to pressure employees of an embargoed firm to stay home--in effect to strike --and thus left boycott law far more lenient toward organized labor than it is today.[57]

Spring's cautionary counsel did not chill the Central Labor Council's determination to make life poorer for open-shop companies. A few months after he delivered his opinion the unions of stage employees motion picture operators, musicians, bill posters, and printing trades formed an Amusement Department Council specifically to boycott the Regal Theater, which had refused to hire only union employees. The LACLC endorsed the action and mustered broad workingclass support for it that fall and winter. Though the Regal was a small firm, its boycott signaled the rising militancy which culminated in the citywide strike wave of 1910-11.[58]

The Central Labor Council unleashed the boycott weapon against more employers during that historic event than it had in any previous two-year period. Continuing its siege of the Regal Theater and *L.A. Times*, it warned shoppers away from the California Café, Yosemite Grill, A.D.T. & Western Union Telegraph Companies, L.A. Creamery, New Method Laundry, Cohn & Goldwater garment manufacturers, Clunes, Empress, Hyman, and College theaters, Meeks-Barnes and Walker bakeries, Bishop Cracker & Candy Company, Stevens Ice Machine Company, two leather and saddlery companies, the entire Pantages theater chain, three breweries, and twenty-four metal manufacturers.

Of necessity the bans on metal products and beer spanned a wide region. When the Mathie, Los Angeles, and Maier breweries broke with tradition in 1910 by demanding the open shop, the LACLC urged every worker in California to stop drinking their beer until they signed a union-shop agreement with their unions. Metal manufacturers were similarly targeted. In the wake of labor council envoys who crossed the state to boost both boycotts, workers in Bakersfield, San Pedro and the oilfields of Taft, Fellows, Coalinga, and San Luis Obispo waged sympathy strikes. The boycott's success created a Los Ange-

les beer drought that was eased by kegs shipped in from the Bay Area at the request of the San Francisco Labor Council. The LACLC asked its affiliates to fine members seen drinking "unfair" beer; it is not known home many of them complied.[59]

On June 3, 1910, the labor council went so far as to ask every central body and building trades council in America "to refuse to handle any of the products from the manufacturers of this city." This was a stunning list, one that overtaxed L.A.'s consumers as well as its unions. While the brewery boycott and a few like actions succeeded, most failed to change the labor policies of their target companies or nudge them toward the union shop.[60]

The LACLC knew it had bit off more than it could chew and quickly reverted to a last-resort use of the boycott. In January, 1912 it denied a request by Claude B. Wiseman of Waiters No. 17 to embargo sales of the *Examiner*, a Hearst daily that the printers' union had invited to Los Angeles in 1903 as a rival to the *Times*. Originally even-handed in its coverage and opinions of labor disputes, the *Examiner* favored employers during the 1910-11 strikes. Wiseman sought a boycott for that reason. The LACLC reminded him of the constraints imposed by its constitution. It also pointed out that despite the *Examiner's* editorial policy the paper had hired an all-union workforce and used only union-made machinery. "We therefore see no reason for hasty action," it said in prohibiting the boycott.[61] A year later, facing a Moving Picture Machine Operators' demand for simultaneous actions against several movie houses, the board warned that "a blanket boycott is a dangerous proposition" and directed the union to target one house at a time. The Operators acquiesced, choosing only the Bell theater for their boycott.[62]

Staffing Up to Bargain, Organize, and Strike

From the earliest days of the 1880s Trades Council, central labor bodies in Los Angeles were expected to help affiliated unions bargain with their employers. Such help was

de minimus at first, limited to settling strikes that had reached stalemate. As the open-shop campaign forced L.A.'s unions into a more intimate coordination of strategy and tactics, however, the councils began to intervene earlier in the bargaining process. Their first priority was defending wage and piece-rate schedules in each trade, but they also proposed language on work rules, outside contracting, and other issues. Only at the end-stage of failed bargaining sorties did the central labor council become physically visible to employers. Until then it sat at the negotiating table like Banquo's ghost.

Stimson captures the process as it had evolved a century ago:

> Unlike the complex contracts of today [1955], working agreements of the early 20th century were simple instruments, usually specifying only wages and hours but occasionally providing for a rudimentary form of arbitration and, rarely, the closed shop. Fairly systematic procedures had been developed by 1901. Most unions drew up contracts for six months or a year, roughly correlating their demands with the cost of living in L.A. and with labor's progress elsewhere. After submission to the Council of Labor for approval, the schedules went to the appropriate employers for signature. Unions directive unable to gain management's assent went back to the central body which, if mediation failed, could then authorize a strike or boycott. The Council of Labor's control over the labor contracts of its affiliates was part of the trend toward centralization of power in the labor movement" [63]

The late 19th-century movement had inherited a craft tradition of wage-setting traceable back to the days of guilds when skilled artisans not only controlled the day's stint but set their pay by fiat. In the 1880s and early 1890s most L.A. unions simply announced that the price of their labor had gone up and, as a rule, their employers went along. This hoary practice fell under increasing attack when the open-shop movement gained muscle after 1900. Even though a few unions continued to impose wage schedules on city work at the end of the progressive era,[64] the practice had vanished from private enterprise. Organized workers realized that a rollback of wage scales by one employer would affect other worksites in the same craft while the erosion of pay throughout a craft would likely affect others; for that reason they accepted the Central Labor Council's intervention in bargaining. By 1910 it was routinely monitoring wage and hour agreements, language governing work routines, and changes in union jurisdictions for conformity to

its rules. It had also become a far more visible, aggressive champion of labor's rights and interests.

The council's scrutiny occasionally rankled its affiliates. One instance occurred in the spring of 1910 when it reviewed draft agreements that the machinists, brewery workers, beer bottlers, stationary firemen, beer wagon drivers and steam engineers had reached with L.A.'s breweries. Like the tailors and newspaper mailers, these unions represented workers at all their industry's major employers. Their department council, the Allied Brewery Trades,[65] was a citywide force that warranted special attention from the central labor body. On March 24, after it had read the proposed agreements, the LACLC executive board recommended two changes. It asked the six unions to negotiate a common expiration date for their contracts, and it urged them to demand the exclusive employment of union men in the breweries. Though the first recommendation stirred no controversy, Brewers No. 7 objected to the second. Why it did so is not known, but it may have believed--presciently, as it turned out--that the breweries would not accept the all-union shop without a strike. The executive board refused to budge, imposing its standards on the leaders of a powerful local union. "This is a rule of the Council and a part of the laws of the Council," it reminded them. "We could not endorse any contract unless it contained this clause."[66]

Such chastisements were rare. Most of the time unions negotiating new agreements sought help from the LACLC. It not only steeled their resolve to defend the wage schedules of their trade, oppose the contracting-out of union jobs, and demand the eight-hour day for women workers, but it mobilized citywide strike support for them when negotiations failed. Labor historians have duly noted the failures of collective bargaining in progressive-era Los Angeles. There were failures aplenty--especially in the fight for the union shop. The mundane struggle for shorter hours, higher wages, and decent working

conditions produced better results, however, and it did so in large part because employers knew the LACLC and its predecessors could rally thousands of workers to their banner in times of crisis.

The LACLC's new duties, coupled with the demands of organizing, required a small cadre of full-time staff and an army of footsoldiers deployed through a variety of committees. Before 1900 no central body or local union paid anyone to take care of business. Most activists just volunteered their time. They served a year or two as appointed organizers or elected union officers, executive board members, and trustees, and for this sacrifice they earned only the thanks or damnation of their members. Not until 1904 did the District Council of Carpenters employ two full-time business agents. An earlier exception to the volunteer tradition appeared in 1894, when the AFL paid Cyren E. Fisk of the printers to organize workers in southern California.[67] Six years later the Council of Labor hired John Ince, a cabinetmaker, as its first paid organizer.[68] The California Federation of Labor took a similar step in 1903, voting Fred C. Wheeler its full-time organizer and assigning him to the Los Angeles area.[69] Among the many local unionists who served the two federations while making other notable contributions to the L.A. labor movement were machinists Lemuel Biddle and Edward H. Misner, printers James Gray and Tom Fennessy, longshoreman Z.W. Craig, barber Charles M. Feider, and blacksmith Juan Ramirez. Representing both the AFL and the state federation in 1903, Wheeler organized 22 unions. He also helped Biddle, the Council of Labor's full-time organizer, charter 13 others. Wheeler continued his outstanding work until 1905, when an Oakland delegate narrowly defeated him for the state job. "Biddle, the unpaid volunteer, and Wheeler, the official organizer, were the two individuals most responsible for the upsurge of unionism in Los Angeles between 1900 and 1904," notes Stimson.[70]

Biddle's stint as the Council of Labor's field man lasted one year. Thereafter L.A.'s central labor bodies relied heavily on their own committees and secondarily on occasional staff from the AFL, state labor federation, and national unions to back up the organizing done by local unions. The AFL's role was important but at times controversial In 1901, at Typographical No. 174's request, it loaned the *Times* boycott a union president from Syracuse, New York named Arthur A. Hay. It used funds from its 1907 per capita tax to assign Hay citywide duties and hire additional organizers, among them Fennessy and Feider. An opposition caucus that briefly seized the helm of No. 174 demanded Hay's removal, calling his efforts "entirely abortive and barren of results." Though he survived the attack, his remaining months in Los Angeles were troubled. He left the city with the LACLC's thanks in June, 1910, shortly after the onset of that year's fiercely contested brewery, metal trades, and leatherworkers' strikes.[71]

Total Engagement

One of Grace Stimson's few unfortunate remarks has led some historians to exaggerate the role that the San Francisco labor movement played in the 1910-11 strikes while downplaying the initiative and tenacity of L.A.'s unions.[72] Given subsequent developments, she says, "the most significant feature of this almost spontaneous campaign to unionize Los Angeles was the participation of San Francisco labor organizations and leaders." A close reading of her account and LACLC minutes shows that the northern city's labor and building trades councils sent substantial aid southward only *after* L.A.'s unions had emerged from their mid-decade doldrums, launched a series of strikes and boycotts in late 1909, and broadened these exploratory attacks on capital into an unprecedented citywide campaign. That long struggle exploded mainly from provocations by the open-shop alliance, but it arose also from a sellers' market in labor, steps the Central Labor and Building Trades Councils took to end their mutual estrangement, revived organizing by

carpenters, plumbers, painters, structural iron workers and sheet metal workers, and LACLC's effort to bring every union in Los Angeles under its wing. These developments were *local.* Because of them the 1910-11 campaign had built up an imposing momentum well before the main force of San Francisco and national union organizers reached Los Angeles at the request of the LACLC and its affiliates.[73]

The pivotal campaign opened with three short theater boycotts in mid-1909, a long one against the Regal Theater, and overlapping strikes by blacksmiths, leather workers shirt-makers, and railway car workers, trackmen, and electricians. These soon paled alongside walkouts by 315 brewery workers on May 19, 1910 and 1,800 metal workers on June 1. In March the Central Labor Council had instructed the unions of brewers, stationary fire-men, beer bottlers, machinists, beer wagon drivers, and steam engineers to negotiate higher wages and an all-union shop with L.A.'s four major beer manufacturers. The com-panies not only rejected these demands but threatened to drop their union contracts. A promise of unstinting support from the M&M stiffened their will. Meanwhile 15 national and many local organizers in the metal trades--brass workers, machinists, molders, sheet metal workers, blacksmiths, boilermakers, structural iron workers, and patternmakers--had quietly organized 40 percent of the employees of the Baker Iron Works, Llewellyn Iron Works, and 22 other firms.[74] "For years," says Stimson,

> "local metal-trades unions had been kept in subjection by the Founders' and Employers' Association and the Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association. Wages were low, the working day was ten hours, and, with union membership a sufficient cause for discharge of employees, labor organiza-tions were helpless to improve conditions. Workers could get jobs...only by renouncing and abstain-ing from union membership." [75]

Representing the L.A. Metal Trades Council, machinist Edward H. Misner and two San Francisco union activists sent the Founders' and Employers' Association a draft con-tract that called for a $4 daily minimum wage and an eight-hour workday. Fred Baker, militantly anti-union owner of the Baker Iron Works, immediately threw the draft into a

wastebasket. The metalworking unions called the men out on strike. "[T]o our great surprise," said national organizer Anton Johannsen, "over 90 percent of all the men in the industry, union and nonunion, responded."[76] The M&M once again applauded the companies' defiance and set about raising a $350,000 fund to reinforce it.[77]

Only with the battle-lines so decisively drawn did San Francisco's unions mobilize large resources of staff and money to support the 6,000 L.A. workers who struck their employers during the next two years. Their main motive for entering the 1910-11 labor war was self-preservation. Bay Area metal trades firms, under pressure from their low-wage rivals in Los Angeles, had threatened to walk away from their labor contracts unless wages, hours, and working conditions in the two cities were equalized. The San Francisco labor and building trades councils sent some of their best organizers to Los Angeles, raised donations from unions across the U.S., used that money to pay each striker $7 a week for 18 months, and created a multi-union General Campaign Strike Committee to administer this aid. Eventually all the unions in California were asked to contribute the 25-cent levy, and many did so.[78]

The brunt of the campaign, however, was borne by the workers, unions, and labor councils of Los Angeles. They taxed themselves, forfeited wages, walked picketlines, boycotted beer, endured arrests and prosecutions, held fundraisers, and battled both the Alexander regime and their employers for months and in some cases years. In his final report, the General Campaign Strike Committee's secretary-treasurer, Andrew J. Gallagher, gave full credit to the Los Angeles labor movement for launching this unprecedented strike wave:

> "Little warning was given San Francisco of the nearness of the struggle to come; but when on May 19, 1910, the Brewery Workers were locked out in all Los Angeles breweries, and when on June 1, 1910, the Los Angeles Metal Trades threw down the gauge of battle to the iniquitous Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association, we knew the great industrial war of our time was on, to be fought to the bitter finish..." 79

The strikes gained ground and generated great enthusiasm during the month of June. Local beer sales dropped over 50 percent. The Metal Trades Council reported that non-union men were "joining its ranks in droves," and the organizing both of new locals and of new members into old locals had begun to buoy the labor movement toward the highest density of its 35-year history in Los Angeles.[80] With signs of a workingclass *éclat* suddenly abundant, the M&M and other promulgators of the open shop abandoned whatever remained of their faith in a free market and summoned the municipal state to intervene on their behalf. First, they persuaded the city to let them deputize fired policemen to guard the factories. Next they cajoled Mayor Alexander into warning unions that any pickets blocking the streets would be jailed. More menacingly, says Clark, "between June 20 and June 27, 1910, seven of the largest 'iron works' owners--with financial and legal support from the Founders' Association and the M&M--filed for injunctions against the Metal Trades Council in Los Angeles Superior Court....In each case, judges issued restraining orders on the basis of the complaints alone." This was standard behavior for U.S. equity courts at the time, though unusual for Los Angeles. The writs barred any action that might be construed as "harassing" a plaintiff at his place of business. Against this arbitrariness labor lawyers Job Harriman and Fred Spring argued to no avail. The injunctions' fuzzy logic invited police to arrest union members merely for speaking to people near a picketline.[81]

What happened next runs counter to the received historical wisdom of our own day.

American "critical legal" scholars since the mid-1980s have asked why early 20th-century unions dropped their radical intentions for an economist "bread-and-butter" program. The answers have rung the changes on a single theme: labor injunctions issued by equity courts--i.e. "judge-made law"--defanged the U.S. labor movement.

Thus, speaking of court-induced "reverses" in the late 1890s and early 1900s, Christopher Tomlins argued that their effect "was to accelerate and generalize throughout the organized labor movement the adoption of strategies which abandoned all but the immediate economic struggle, and which concentrated on protecting the power of the leading national unions."[82] Impressed by "the constitutive power of law," William E. Forbath claimed that "[n]owhere else among the industrial nations did the judiciary hold such sway over labor relations as in nineteenth-century America. Nowhere else did trade unionists contend so constantly with judge-made law." Forbath's conclusion: "During the decades bracketing the turn of the century, courts exacted from labor many key strategic and ideological accommodations, changing trade unionists' views of what was possible and desirable in politics and industry. Judicial review and administration of labor legislation helped make broad legal reforms seem futile. Similarly, the courts' harshly repressive law of industrial conflict helped make broad, inclusive unionism seem too costly and a more cautious, narrower unionism essential."[83] Somewhat later Gloria Hattam declared that "a strong judiciary created a politically weak labor movement in the United States."[84]

Each of these observations dealt with organized labor on a continental scale, taking its cue from leaders of national unions and the AFL during the 1900-1930 period. Had Tomlins, Forbath, and Hattam looked more closely at local unions and central labor bodies, they would have found evidence moderating and in some cases challenging the tyranny of judge-made law. Clark, who bridges the gap between the above studies and class struggles in turn-of-the-century San Francisco and Los Angeles, finds that labor injunctions were a "rarity" in the latter city and attributes this fact to "weaker unions and a readily available police force."[85] However his explanation omits the role mayors and city councils played in making the police "readily available" and acting as the principal state

allies of Otis, the M&M, the Founders' Association, the Realty Board, and other anti-union forces. Not judge-made laws but council-made statutes were the open-shop weapons of choice. As events in 1910-11 vividly demonstrated, this legislative attack failed to humble L.A.'s trade unions. Instead it nudged them down a far more aggressive and radical road.

The June injunctions simply didn't work. "By 'holding their peace,' avoiding large or boisterous gatherings, and talking to men away from the work sites," Clark says, strikers "continued to picket throughout the city." The court orders showed metal trades unionists they were making a strong fight. To the attorneys who secured them--Earl Rogers for the M&M and Wheaton A. Gray for the Founders' Association--they showed the need for a more drastic remedy.[86] The two men drafted a blunderbuss anti-picketing law at the end of June and sharpened its language with city attorney John W. Shenk. On July 1 Shenk presented it to the city council. The nine councilmen--all of them progressives--moved to adopt the draft then and there, but when the Metal Trades Council's C.F. "Curly" Grow and LACLC president W.A. Engle protested its extravagant harshness they backed off and called for a public hearing on July 15. At the hearing Rogers, Gray, Fred Baker, iron manufacturer John Llewellyn, and L.W. Jutton of the Chamber of Commerce argued that picketing *intrinsically* threatened public safety and should be banned. They did not--and could not--claim that the recent picketing on L.A.'s streets had been violent. Among those who urged the council to reject the proposed law were members of the striking unions and labor lawyers Job Harriman and Fred Spring. They rooted their case in the constitutional right of free speech.[87]

Nine councilmen listened to labor's objections with their minds made up. On July 16 they all voted for the M&M's draft under an emergency provision that put it immediately into effect and ruled out its repeal by a public referendum.[88] Mayor Alexander signed it

into law less than an hour later. Breathtaking in its scope and fealty to the employing class, it prohibited "loitering, picketing, carrying or displaying banners, signs or transparencies, or speaking in public streets in a loud or unusual tone, for certain purposes." The devil was in the details:

> "Section 1. It shall be unlawful for any person, in or upon any public street, alley or public place in the City of Los Angeles, to make any loud or unusual noise, or to speak in a loud or unusual tone, or to cry out or proclaim, for the purpose of inducing or influencing, or attempting to induce or influence, any person to refrain from entering any works or factory or any place of business or employment, or for the purpose of inducing or influencing, or attempting to induce or influence, any person to refrain from purchasing or using any goods, wares, merchandise or other article or articles, or for the purpose of inducing or influencing, or attempting to induce or influence, any person from doing or performing any service or labor in any works, factory, place of business or employment, or for the purpose of intimidating, threatening or coercing any person who is performing, seeking or obtaining service or labor, in any works, factory, place of business or employment.
>
> "Section 2. It shall be unlawful for any person, in or upon any public street, alley or public place in the City of Los Angeles, to loiter in front of, or in the vicinity of, or to picket in front of, or in the vicinity of, or to carry, show or display any banner, transparency, or sign in front of, or in the vicinity of, any works, factory, place of business or employment, for the purpose of inducing or influencing, or attempting to induce or influence, any person to refrain from entering any such works, factory, place of business or employment, or for the purpose of inducing or influencing, or attempting to induce or influence, any person to refrain from purchasing or using any goods, wares, merchandise, or other articles, manufactured, made, sold or kept for sale therein, or for the purpose of inducing or influencing, or attempting to induce or influence, any person from doing or performing any service or labor in any works, factory, place of business or employment, or for the purpose of intimidating, threatening or coercing any person who is performing, seeking or obtaining service or labor, in any works, factory, place of business or employment.
>
> "Section 3. That any person violating any of the provisions of this ordinance shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction thereof shall be punishable by a fine of not more than One Hundred Dollars ($100), or by imprisonment in the city jail for a period of not more than fifty (50) days, or by both such fine and imprisonment.
>
> "Section 4. This ordinance is urgently required for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health and safety; and the City Clerk shall certify to its passage by a two-thirds vote of the Council, and cause it to be published once in the *Los Angeles Daily Journal*, and thereupon and thereafter it shall take effect and be enforced." [89]

Clark points out that since the ordinance banned picketing, loitering, and "loud or unusual" public speaking even when these activities were not intimidating or coercive, it "made picketing *per se* unlawful" during boycotts and strikes. Its sweeping harshness appears to have been unprecedented. Leaders of the Central Labor Council and three of its subcouncils called it a "war measure." In cities across the United States it served as a model for subsequent anti-union laws.[90]

The outcry against the picketing ban was full-throated and perceptive. Anton Johannsen, organizer for the United Brotherhood of Carpenters, contrasted the council's attack on free speech to L.A.'s reputation for democratic government. Progressives had taken credit more deservedly due organized labor for the initiative, referendum, and recall provisions in the city charter. In 1902 and 1904, however, leading progressives had "shied off" the recall only to use it to usurp the mayoralty in 1909. Now a progressive mayor and all-progressive city council had crafted a punitive law in such a way that the voters could not undo it by referendum. L.A.'s celebrated reformers were nothing if not hypocritical, and Johanssen skewered them for that characteristic flaw.[91]

Throughout the labor movement it was widely believed that the M&M had drafted the ordinance not only to nullify one of the few effective weapons workers legally possessed but to tie up strike funds in bail bonds, fines, attorneys' fees, and court costs. "For those and other reasons," Johannsen said,

> "we advised the strikers to tell them to go to hell, continue our picketline, and, in the event of any man being arrested, plead not guilty, demand a jury trial, refuse to engage a lawyer, refuse to pay any fines, and refuse to supply any bail. After a full explanation [was] made, the strikers took a secret ballot and, by a unanimous vote, decided to stand pat and take the consequences." [92]

This tactic was pursued. For the next seven months picketers massed in greater or lesser numbers. Mounting arrests seemed only to embolden them, so much so that only eight workers out of the thousands on strike went back to work by February, 1911. Picketers warned job-seekers away from breweries and metal shops and customers away from saloons selling "unfair" beer. Paddy wagons pulled up to the sidewalks and strikers were pushed inside by the dozen. When the wagons moved off to the city jail more strikers took their place, and the process was repeated. The Alexander regime hired scores of special police and motorcycle officers with the council's approval that winter and spring, beefed up its "secret service fund," and began charging picketers with conspiracy. Be-

cause this crime carried a $300 fine and/or a five-month jail term, it finally thinned the ranks of picketers, especially at the metal shops. Meanwhile hundreds of detainees waited in jail while their cases clogged the police courts. "The scheme of the enemy to cripple our finances was thwarted by the refusal of the arrested pickets to permit us to bail them out or pay their fines," said Gallagher. "[A]mong the heroes of this battle for principle were the men and women who gladly went to jail and remained there, that others might receive succor."[93] Job Harriman, who defended the strikers for small fees indefinitely postponed or no fees at all, told the U.S. Commission on Industrial Relations that 470 pickets had been arrested by February, 1912. Of these only 50 or 60 were tried, fewer than 12 convicted, and the vast majority set free with cases dismissed.[94] Juries selected at random overwhelmingly voted for the strikers--one reason why progressives tried to limit jury pools to "high-class" property owners six months later.

A Headquarters at War

The upheavals of 1910-11 brought enormous pressure to bear on the labor movement's top council. To meet this challenge the LACLC relied on its officers, executive board, and full-time secretary-treasurer--all elected--and on long hours of work by scores of union volunteers. Three council presidents led the labor movement during this period. The first was W.A. Engle, a musician who believed organized labor was "the great concrete form of law-abiding citizenship" and continued believing it after the mass arrests of picketers.[95] He served from January to July, 1910. The second was Fred Wheeler, carpenter, organizer, public ownership warrior, and indefatigable political candidate whom we have often met on these pages and will meet again. He served from July 1910 through January, 1911. The third was the machinist Edward Misner, a metal trades strike leader, organizer for the state labor federation, and political activist who had worked on most of LACLC's key committees. He served from February, 1911 to April, 1912. All three men were so-

cialists, reflecting the considerable overlap between the party and the labor movement during these years in Los Angeles.

In one of his first acts as president, Engle urged his executive board to pay all committee members the wage scale of their craft while they did the LACLC's work. The board agreed, knowing such work often required time away from a trade and a resulting loss of income. Engle also recommended paying the council's sole full-time activist, secretary-treasurer Lonnie Butler, a salary of $25 per week. Again the Board agreed. On the eve of strikes that would rattle Los Angeles to its political foundations, these union leaders expected more from their central body than it had previously been asked to give. They knew Butler and his volunteers would work whatever hours the coming struggle required and did not want them to suffer for it economically.[96]

The LACLC's main standing committees besides its Executive Board and Ways and Means panel dealt with organizing, legislation, and arbitration. As the need arose it supplemented these with a mind-boggling array of ad-hoc panels on specific strikes, charter reform, factory inspections, the aqueduct, the police, the unemployed, and dozens of other concerns. A sole preoccupation with the progressive-Old Guard onslaught would have been understandable, but the LACLC chose to fight on many fronts.

During 1909-12, for example, it constantly protested and agitated against the unhealthy food served and low wages paid to workers, especially its non-union itinerant laborers (see Chapter 11). In November, 1910, the LACLC endorsed a charter amendment creating a city-owned newspaper with space set aside for the views of socialists, progressives, and other parties polling at least three percent of the vote It named Fred Wheeler, Curly Grow, and William A. Vanna to a charter revision committee and over the next two years agitated with the socialists to plant workingclass reforms in the city's constitution while keeping anti-labor reforms out. Key among the former was proportional representation--

allotting city council seats to parties based on the total share of votes their candidates obtained. Most dangerous among the latter was an attempt by progressives in April, 1912 to write existing legislation, notably a ban on picketing, into the city's organic law. City council members tipped the odds in favor of this reform by barring the LACLC from the charter commission on the grounds that it was a political party--yet they raised no such objection against the Good Government party which had elected them. By threatening to send voters a rival list of charter reforms, socialists and the LACLC forced the charter commission to drop the legislative code from the charter. Labor's bid for proportional representation came to naught, however. City elections remained a winner-take-all affair for the parties that contested them.[97]

While the LACLC juggled these broader responsibilities, it bore the heavy burden of leading thousands of striking workers against the M&M, city council, and anti-union employers. It sent its leaders and activists before the city council in a failed attempt to repeal the July 16 ordinance and stop the dragnet arrests of picketers.[98] It hired the lawyers who defended the picketers in court. It urged its affiliates to levy a 25-cent per week strike tax on their members; most complied.[99] It publicized labor's version of the strikes. It approved, instigated, and rallied support for a record number of boycotts. And, finally, it did all it could to root the labor movement more firmly in L.A.'s workplaces.

A spectacularly productive LACLC committee during L.A.'s years of turmoil was the one devoted to organizing. In the fall and winter of 1910-11 its dozen members represented a cross-section of the city's building, metal, brewery, and printing trades and included Juan Ramirez, an organizer assigned to Los Angeles by the state labor federation.[100] Some of the twelve worked with LACLC affiliates to raise union density in their trades. Others organized new locals on their own. Uncharacteristically, says Stimson, in 1909 the state federation had called for the unionization of unskilled and migratory labor

"to offset the appeal of the IWW and prevent the use of such workers as strikebreakers"--the IWW being the Industrial Workers of the World, or Wobblies. Misner, Ramirez and others on the LACLC committee responded by helping the Metal Trades Council organize two unions of unskilled laborers--United Laborers No. 13097 for Mexicans and Laborers' Protective Union No. 13149 for Russians, Slovenes, and other eastern Europeans. Both were federal unions affiliated directly with the AFL; both joined the Central Labor Council in 1911. A San Pedro lumber handlers' local with 35 members also came into existence that year.[101]

In retrospect these events pose an historical puzzle. The LACLC committee and Metal Trades Council organized migrant laborers at a time when the latter body was stressed to the limit by its strike at two dozen manufacturing firms and the arrests of scores of its picketers. Except for machinists' and blacksmiths' helpers, it represented only highly skilled craft workers. Yet it deployed three staff activists at $5 a day to organize foreign-born laborers. Why? The likelihood that a struck metal firm would hire unskilled laborers to replace union machinists, patternmakers, and lathers was nil. As a gesture of solidarity the metal trades' decision to organize Mexican and Slavic unions made some sense, but that task could have been carried out more effectively by the skilled construction workers who worked with hod carriers and other laboring men as a matter of course. If there was an urgent reason for this metal trades sally into organizing, it has been lost to history.[102]

The LACLC committee, Ramirez, and local union volunteers organized workers at an accelerating pace from late 1910 onward. Several locals recorded their largest-ever memberships. New unions earned charters in the bakery, dairy, messenger, cereal, and businesses; elevator operators also founded their first local. In February 1911, LACLC secretary-treasurer Lonnie Butler announced that the council had gained 3,974 members and 22 new locals since the brewery and metal strikes began. Unions in the latter two trades

had nearly doubled their rosters. On average more than a hundred Los Angeles workers joined unions each week that spring; these advances continued at a slightly lower pace for the rest of the year.[103] By January, 1912, a central labor council that had entered the era of citywide strikes with 62 affiliates and 6,000 members departed it with 93 and 11,290. An additional 4,815 workers paid dues to unions affiliated with the AFL but not the LACLC.[104] The city's organized workforce had almost doubled its size during this turbulent period, demonstrating that the Chinese were wise to equate crisis with opportunity.

Consequences

"The spirit of unionism in the city of Los Angeles is better today than at any other time in the history of the movement," Juan Ramirez informed the state labor federation's October, 1911 meeting at Bakersfield.[105] He had more than organizing successes in mind. That spring, in a stunning victory for its eleven-month-old strike and boycott, the labor movement had forced the city's brewers to capitulate. It was a far from easy win. The brewery unions had pressed their strike against determined employers, police, courts, a progressive mayor and council, the M&M coalition, a hostile press (except for the *L.A. Record*), momentary chaos after the October 1, 1910 bombing of the L.A. *Times*, and sheer exhaustion. When victory came, however, it was nearly complete. The Maier & Zobelein firm was the first to give up the fight. In early April 1911, Edward Maier persuaded his counterparts at the Ranier Bottling Company and the Mathie and Los Angeles breweries to join him in a meeting with Curly Grow, a machinist who played a central role in labor's 1910-11 campaign, and E.P. Kraemer, a brewery union leader and the first man arrested under the anti-picketing law. The three employers offered to sign contracts they had rejected the previous May if the beer bottlers and drivers accepted smaller wage increases than the ones they had originally demanded. Since the contracts guaranteed the all-union shop, this was a small *quid pro quo* for an extraordinary coup in open-shop Los

Angeles, and the unions readily accepted it. The Mathie Brewery signed the agreement a week later. [106]

With customary effusiveness, the *Citizen* saluted the victory in an August 11 editorial. "The brewery workmen have to their credit one of the most intelligent, plucky, and effective contests ever waged by a body of organized workers," it declared.[107] Optimism ran high that fall though the dust had not settled before Otis blamed the labor movement for the deaths of 20 employees in the *Times* explosion, and not a single city official had showed up to greet the state labor federation's long-planned convention in the city on October 3.[108] Unchastened, over 10,000 union members paraded quietly through downtown streets on November 4 as crowds cheered them on. The L.A. County Building Trades Council had nearly doubled its membership since the spring of 1910. All the printing trades unions were negotiating hefty wage increases of $1 to $2 per week and, more important, the same contract expiration dates. Delegates at the AFL's annual meeting called on all the country's unions and central bodies to send funds and organizers to Los Angeles. For a year and a half the AFL had done little to support the local labor movement, but impassioned pleas by Job Harriman, Butler, Grow, Tveitmoe, and Gallagher finally prodded it to act. Meanwhile, the General Campaign Strike Committee ordered more organizers south from the Bay Area and vowed to bolster its support for the remaining battles. These included boycotts and self-initiated or lockout-induced strikes against two saddlery firms, three bakeries, several theaters, some twenty garment manufacturers, and--for the highest stakes--the twenty-four metal products companies.[109] Some of these contests were heading toward a labor victory, others were not.

The metal trades strike turned out to be L.A. labor's greatest disappointment. Hard-fought to the end, energized by the participation of scores of non-union workers, led by some of the city's ablest activists, it finally could not survive the hobbling impact of po-

lice intimidation and arrests. The brewery workers had overcome these obstacles with an effective boycott. Though the LACLC tried to gin up a statewide embargo of L.A. metal products, these were purchased mainly by construction firms, manufacturers, and local governments that were far less amenable than end-consumers to pleas for solidarity. The city of Los Angeles, for example, had contracted with the Llewellyn Iron Works to build its new Hall of Records. Strikers had disrupted the factory's routines enough for it to miss its deadlines, but rather than penalize the firm the city merely extended its contract by six months. On October 10, 1910 Grow and Charles M. Feider of Barbers No. 295 led a labor delegation to the office of Mayor Alexander. They asked him to broker a conference with the 24 companies. The Founders' and Employers' Association refused to meet, declaring that it would have nothing to do with any union.[110]

Although several small foundries and machine shops signed eight-hour agreements with metal trades unions, the walkout against the large firms gradually dwindled. Most of the original 1,800 strikers had drifted off to other jobs by February, 1912. Only 300, all skilled mechanics, continued the battle despite the loss of their strike pay (the General Campaign Strike Committee had ended its assessments after two out-of-state iron workers, John J. and James B. McNamara, confessed to the *Times* bombing on December 1, 1911).

The tenacity of the metal trades strikers had forced the major companies to raise wages and cut daily work hours from 11 to 10--gains that benefited only their replacement workers. According to LACLC secretary-treasurer Lonnie Butler, some metal contracts normally destined for Los Angeles had gone to unionized companies elsewhere. That much the long strike accomplished. It failed, however, to dent the open shop in L.A.'s important metal industry. On February 24, the unions of molders, machinists, boilermakers, blacksmiths, and patternmakers reluctantly gave up their 20-month struggle. The ver-

bal agreement they reached with the Founders' and Employers' Association specified small wage increases, a nine-hour day (eight hours for patternmakers), and a pledge that no striker would be discriminated against when working or seeking work in the metal industry. The metal shops retained their strikebreakers and other non-union workers. Almost at once they reneged on their non-discrimination pledge. Union men who tried to go back to work found they had been permanently blacklisted, cut off from the livelihoods they knew best. Their unions and the Metal Trades Council had suffered a defeat that they would not recover from for years.[111]

It is not true, as many historians have assumed, that the L.A. labor movement lost heart after the McNamaras confessed and the metal trades campaign groaned to a halt.[112] Unions continued to strike, boycott, and drive hard bargains with their employers during the years before World War I.

In 1912 the following occurred: Six new locals earned their charters. Plumbers No. 78 demanded the union shop, struck the only company that balked at the idea, and won its point. Linemen in Local 61 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers recruited many new members and won a wage increase by threatening to strike. The Building Trades Council called a county-wide walkout to enforce its working card system; 101 employers immediately met its terms and another 438 were shut down. For the first time in the city's history, the strike settlement gave every affiliated trade the right to work only with union members in its organized shops. Many non-union employees joined BTC locals as a result. That year Tailors No. 81 struck five garment manufacturers; the firms held out for 23 months but finally met most of the union's demands. The successful campaign brought it 40 new members. Aggressive organizing added 60 members to the ranks of Ladies' Tailors No. 52. Although the labor movement grew at a slower pace in 1912, it consolidated its previous gains. W.A. Engle, now a state labor federation vice-president

for the Los Angeles district, delivered a sober but optimistic report on the city's unions. In the gendered language of his day, he found they had welded themselves into "a solid, virile working organization...laying a much more stable foundation for constructive work than has ever before existed in southern California."[113]

And in 1913 the following occurred: Two new locals earned their charters in the city and five in the county. Despite a dour business climate and internal dissension, building trades unions gained over 3,000 members while their central body more than doubled its affiliated base. Barbers and the printing unions strengthened their leverage against employers--the barbers organizing nearly 100 percent of their trade and the printers controlling work at every city newspaper but the *Times*. The brewery trades continued to control their industry through the all-union shop. A few metal unions were still losing members, however, and two--the boilermakers and machinists' helpers--turned in their charters. Defying this trend, iron workers, blacksmiths, molders and patternmakers had recovered from their failed strike and were slowly growing again; machinists were celebrating a new contract with the breweries that brought them considerably higher wages. Garment Workers No. 125, a fast-growing union, launched one of the city's longest successful strikes against P.A. Newmark & Company; it ended in victory for the union shop. (See "Local 125: A Belwether Union" above). A sister union, Ladies' Tailors No. 52, parlayed a successful organizing drive into a series of strikes between 1912 and 1914 that produced contracts with five firms; these specified the eight-hour day and six-day work week, elimination of piecework, and equal sharing of layoffs by all members during slowdowns in the garment trade. Most of the culinary trades suffered chronically low wages and struggled just to maintain their locals, but the bartenders organized effectively against hard times and increased their membership by a third between 1911 and 1913. Meanwhile the M&M's power waned as recession gnawed at the businesses it repre-

sented, forcing them into cutthroat competition. The Central Labor Council and its affiliates took advantage of this opening to win the union shop at several more workplaces.[114]

Two years after the McNamara confessions, organized workers in Los Angeles held onto most of the gains they had made during the historic battles of 1910-11. A bleaker fate awaited them in 1914, though not so bleak as the one facing L.A.'s progressives. Already in terminal disarray, the progressive movement would not emerge from the war years. Organized labor would survive at low ebb, trudging through the unemployment crisis of 1914-15 and running in place thereafter. Lonnie Butler had warned of this predicament:

> "[S[ome means should be adopted whereby we can close the 'back door' of our unions; in other words, too many members are allowed to become delinquent or suspended and drift away from the organization, and while new ones come in to fill their places it does not give the stamina to the local union that it should have." 115

Surprisingly, the setbacks of the early war years--among them a citywide organizing drive that sputtered out as soon as it began and a bitter but brief split between the Central Labor and Building Trades Councils--did not translate into political weakness. Many union leaders and union-friendly academics today believe that the labor movement's ability to alter the course of society stems from its workplace density in a more or less one-to-one relationship. Yet such a notion is far too mechanical either to explain or guide the political behavior of unions. As Chapters 10 through 12 demonstrate, L.A.'s organized workers left their most enduring stamp on city government at moments when their penetration of key industries was shallow and their overall density, by contemporary standards, was low. Direct democracy and the municipal distribution of aqueduct electricity are gifts to present-day Los Angeles from a labor movement that lacked the conventionally understood levers of power.

In this light one of the most significant results of the 1910-11 campaign was the strong bond forged between organized labor and the Los Angeles Socialist Party. From 1902 to 1908 they had eyed each other warily, cooperating on some workplace and social issues but at loggerheads over electoral strategy. A thaw of sorts began in 1907-08 when the socialists opposed a discriminatory public speaking ban; their fight drew applause but not much street support from the city's unions. In 1909 the party nominated labor activist Fred Wheeler as its mayoral candidate, further warming relations between the two movements. Their alliance was sealed by the following year's tumult.

The anti-picketing ordinance and arrests of hundreds of strikers radicalized even conservative members of Typographical No. 174, the most conservative of unions. Union members throughout the city were impressed by Job Harriman's legal defense of the detainees and knew he had helped persuade the AFL to send more strike support to the city. At a profounder level, they realized that the time for tinkering with city government had passed and only a radical overhaul would serve their class interests. Weeks before the M&M converted the reform city council into its ventriloquist's dummy, the LACLC had urged its affiliated unions to create a Union Labor Political Club. As arrests accumulated during the fall of 1910, the club endorsed the Socialist Party's ticket in the November state elections. The following April it announced that until further notice it would "act in conjunction with the Executive Board of the Socialist Party."[116] Thus began the political mobilization that would produce a labor-socialist triumph in the fall, 1911 primary election and a united response by progressive and Old Guard forces to defeat the insurgency that December. Within three years of this reversal, progressives would pay the devil his due by abandoning what little remained of their reform agenda, fighting among themselves, and fading from the scene. These events, and the reasons for them, are recorded more thoroughly in chapter 11 as a prelude to labor's fight for a municipal power system.

Notes

[1] Wilson had served as Typographical No. 174's president and would later edit the city's weekly labor newspaper, *Citizen*. With the backing of his union, he campaigned as the Public Ownership Party's mayoral candidate in 1906. [*Union Labor News*, Sept. 7, 1906.]

[2] Stimson, Grace Heilman. *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,* University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1955, pp. 42-43.

[3] Stimson, pp. 14-21.

[4] Stimson, p. 19.

[5] Netz, Joseph, "The Great Los Angeles Real Estate Boom of 1887," *Annual Publication, Historical Society of Southern California,* Vol. X, parts 1-2 (1915-1916), p. 56.

[6] Dumke, Glenn S. "The Boom of the 1880s in Southern California," *Southern California Quarterly* v. 76, no. 1 (Spring, 1994), pp. 100-01, 105.

[7] Stimson, pp. 48-51, 69-74, 90.

[8] Stimson, pp. 291-92 and Appendix B, pp. 435-36.

[9] Johnson, Daniel J. Background material for a paper on Job Harriman's 1911 mayoralty race, based on 13th Census of the U.S., 1910, *Population*, pp. 168-731

[10] Stimson, p. 291.

[11] Kazin, Michael. "The Great Exception Revisited: Organized Labor and Politics in San Francisco and Los Angeles, 1870-1940," *Pacific Historical Review,* v. LV, no. 3 (August, 1986), pp. 375-76.

[12] Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America,* Verso, London and New York, 1990, pp. 306-07.

[13] Stimson, pp. 57, 72-74, 90.

[14] Stimson, pp. 104-09. The quotation is on p. 108.

[15] See full quotation on p. 18 of this dissertation.

[16] Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America,* Verso, London and New York, 1990, pp. 306-07.

[17] Stimson, p. 59.

[18] Saxton, pp. 305-06.

[19] Stimson, pp. 53-58, 67.

[20] Exceptions to skilled craft organization in 1890-1915 Los Angeles were two federal unions of Mexican and Slavic/East European laborers, local unions of hod carriers, railway trackmen, bootblacks, expressmen, fruit and vegetable vendors, porters--all short-lived--and a garment workers local that combined elements of craft and industrial unionism.

[21] Los Angeles Typographical Union Minute Books, 1886-1916, July 1, 1894, p. 80.

[22] Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America,* Verso, London and New York, 1990, pp. 306-07.

[23] Stimson, pp. 141-144, 148-152, 171.

[24] Stimson, p. 141.

[25] Los Angeles County Central Labor Council Minute Books, 1909-1916 (hereinafter LACLC), housed at the Urban Archives Center, California State University, Northridge, Nov. 5, 1909; June 24, Nov. 18, Dec. 2, 1910; March 3, Sept. 1, 1911; Stimson pp. 208-09, 290, 313-14, 319, 350.

[26] Clark, Thomas R. "The Limits of Liberty: Courts, Police, & Labor Unrest in California, 1890-1926, *Ph.D. dissertation,* UCLA, 1994, pp. 226-27.

[27] A variant of Greene's conclusions can be found in Saxton's *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic,* p. 308: "The political stance of craft unions frequently has been misunderstood. Far from avoiding partisan politics, they were likely to be immersed in them at the local level.... They tended to avoid commitment to mass campaigns like those of Socialism or the Populist movement.." In Los Angeles, however, that was exactly the kind of campaign union labor and union/socialist parties ran. Fink's observation that local labor movements rejected voluntarism by advocating "a program of legislated social reform approximating the welfare or guarantor state" is likewise off the mark for Los Angeles, where unions took a more radical path and wasted little time or energy agitating for a welfare state. [Kazin, Michael, *The Barons of Labor: The San Francisco Building Trades and Union Power in the Progressive Era,* University of Illinois Press, Urbana & Chicago, 1987, p. 4; Fink, Gary, "The Rejection of Voluntarism," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 26 (January 1973), pp. 805, 809; Julie Greene, "'The Strike at the Ballot Box': The American Federation of Labor's Entrance Into Election Politics, 1906-1909," *Labor History* v. 32, no. 2 (Spring, 1991), pp. 165-92.]

[28] Greene, p. 167.

[29] LACLC, Nov. 24, 1911.

[30] Stimson, pp. 229-32.

[31] Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America,* Verso, London and New York, 1990, pp. 306-07.

[32] In the passage cited, the *L.A. Times* made no mention of craft vs. industrial unionism but merely surmised that the collapse of ARU and the Knights spurred the growth of the AFL by default. [Stimson, ff. 32, p. 171; "The Forty-Year War for a Free City: A History of the Open Shop in Los Angeles," booklet compiled from October, 1929 *Los Angeles Times* articles, p. 5.]

[33] "Industrialism," *Union Labor News*, June 1, 1906; Weintraub, Hyman. "The I.W.W. in California: 1905-1931," Master's thesis, UCLA, 1947, pp. 16-23; Stimson, p. 309.

[34] Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America*, Verso, London and New York, 1990, pp. 306-07.

[35] Stimson, pp. 210, 215, 277.

[36] Examples of coordinated bargaining by brewery unions can be found in L.A. Central Labor Council (LACLC) minutes for March 24 & 25 and April 4, 1910.

[37] Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America*, Verso, London and New York, 1990, pp. 306-07.

[38] For some of the insights in this paragraph I am indebted to Richard Schneirov's "Rethinking the Relation of Labor to the Politics of Urban Social Reform in Late Nineteenth-Century America: The Case of Chicago," *International Labor & Working Class History* 46 (Fall, 1994), pp. 101-02.

[39] "[H]istorians tend to treat American labor exclusively in terms of its rise and fall," David Montgomery contends. "This emphasis obscures the crucial role of central labor unions...The assistance they provided strikers who had no unions or only frail unions of their own was especially significant between 1878 and 1883. They were also important centers of socialist agitation among workers and of the labor press." Everything in this statement is apt for L.A.'s central labor bodies in the progressive era. [Montgomery, David. "Strikes in Nineteenth-Century America," *Social Science History* v. 4, no. 1 (Winter, 1980), p. 90.]

[40] Saxton, p. 309.

[41] Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America*, Verso, London and New York, 1990, pp. 306-07.

[42] The city council had repealed its eight-hour ordinance that July, spurring the eight unions then affiliated with the Trades Council to demand a new law. Vinette was a leader of the pre-1900 eight-hour movement.

[43] Stimson, pp. 47-50.

[44] Los Angeles Typographical Union No. 174. Minute Books, 1886-1916, 1890: Dec. 7, p. 24; 1891: March 1, pp. 48-49; June 7 and Sept. 6 (pages unknown); 1892: Feb. 7, pp. 164-65; March 6, pp. 172-73; 1893: Sept. 24, p. 27; 1894: March 25, pp. 55-56 (hereinafter LATU); Stimson, pp. 51-52, 111, 123, 250-51.

[45] Stimson, pp. 124, 126-28.

[46] Stimson, pp. 184, 206, 209-10.

[47] Stimson, pp. 206, 210, 215, 275.

[48] *Constitution and By-Laws of the Proposed Central Labor Council of Los Angeles County*, majority report of Typographical No. 174 ratification committee, LATU, March 27, 1904, pp. 172-74; Stimson, pp. 275-77.

[49] *Constitution and By-Laws of the Proposed Central Labor Council,* Article V, Secs. 4 & 5; Article X, Secs. 2, 3, & 6; Stimson, p. 184.

[50] *Constitution and By-Laws of the Proposed Central Labor Council,* Article X, Sec. 7.

[51] Clark, pp. 252-53; Stimson, p. 241.

[52] Stimson, pp. 300-01.

[53] Clark, pp. 407-09; Stimson, pp. 205-06, 310-11.

[54] LATU, June 30, 1907, pp. 173-75; Stimson, p. 312. The 1907 reforms also confirmed the LACLC's status as a *county*, not a city organization. This jurisdictional issue was revisited in 1913, however. [Clark, p. 229; LACLC Executive Board, Oct. 20, 1913.]

[55] Chapter 10 covers the campaign for direct democracy (recall, initiative, and referendum) waged by L.A.'s unions and central labor bodies from 1893 to 1902 and their subsequent defense of these electoral reforms.

[56] Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America,* Verso, London and New York, 1990, pp. 306-07.

[57] LACLC, Sept. 3, 1909 and LACLC Executive Board, Oct. 13, 1909. Spring's typed opinion is attached to minutes of the latter meeting. He was an associate of Job Harriman.

[58] Stimson, p. 332.

[59] Gallagher, Andrew J. and O. A. Tveitmoe, *Labor's Greatest Victory: Final Report of General Campaign Committee for the Unionization of Los Angeles, Embracing Receipts and Expenditures June 1, 1910–April 1, 1912,* San Francisco, Sept. 1, 1912, p. 5 (copy on file at San Francisco State University Labor Archives); LACLC, May 20, June 3, 10, 17, 24, 25, Aug. 5, 1910; LACLC Executive Board June 6, 25, 1910.

[60] LACLC, Dec. 29, 1909; April 15 & 29, May 20, June 3, 1910; April 28, Dec, 29, 1911.

[61] LACLC, Jan. 5 & 12, 1912; LACLC Executive Board, Jan. 9, 1912. For the honeymoon and deterioration in the *Examiner's* relations with organized labor, see also LATU, Jan. 25, 1903, p. 31; Oct. 18, 1903, pp. 121-24; Jan. 31, 1904, pp. 151-52; LACLC Executive Board, Nov. 22, 1909, LACLC Aug. 18, 1911, Oct. 10, 1913, LACLC Executive Board April 17, 1914; *Citizen,* "Some Inside Facts," Jan. 26, 1912, p. 10 and "Los Angeles Sells Its Bonds But at a Tremendous Sacrifice," Feb. 16, 1912, p. 3.

[62] LACLC Executive Board, Feb. 3, 1913.

[63] Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America,* Verso, London and New York, 1990, pp. 306-07.

[64] Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors files contain several examples of wage-setting by unions after World War I. See two letters to the supervisors from Sheet Metal Workers No. 108 on Dec. 17, 1919 (OD 1539B) and May 5, 1920 (OD 1586B). Both are in Box 28 of the supervisors' old records.

[65] New name for the Brewery Workers' Section.

[66] LACLC Executive Board, March 24, 1910; LACLC March 25, April 1, 1910; LACLC Executive Board April 4, 1910.

[67] Stimson, pp. 151, 210.

[68] Stimson, p. 205.

[69] *Proceedings*, Third Annual Convention of the California State Federation of Labor, Los Angeles, Jan. 5-9, 1903, p. 59.

[70] Stimson, pp. 207-09. Stimson's tables recording the successes of AFL and state-assisted organizing in Los Angeles appear on pp. 209-15.

[71] LATU, *1901*: Oct. 27, p. 297; *1907*: Sept. 29, pp. 196, 199-200; *1909*: June 27, pp. 49-50; July 25, pp. 53-54, 60-64; Oct. 31, pp. 91, 98; *1910*: July 31, pp. 178-79; LACLC, July 23, 30, 1909; LACLC Executive Board, Oct. 20, 1909; LACLC June 3, 1910; Stimson, pp. 319-21, 325-29.

[72] A recent example can be found in Clark, who takes his cue from Stimson and assigns the primary impetus for the 1910-11 strikes to the San Francisco Labor Council and San Francisco Building Trades Council. See Clark, "The Limits of Liberty," pp. 440-41.

[73] LACLC Aug. 20, 1909, Sept. 10, 1909, Nov. 19, 1909, Dec. 27, 1909; Stimson, pp. 330-36 (the quoted passage is on p. 334).

[74] According to some accounts 1,500 metal trades workers struck on June 1, but later LACLC minutes say the number was 1,800. ["Why the McNamaras Plead [Pled] Guilty," speech given June 1, 1914 in Los Angeles by Anton Johannsen, general organizer of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and printed verbatim in the *Citizen*, June 12, 1914, p. 9; "Union Labor In Los Angeles Has Made Marked Progress," LACLC, Feb. 2, 1912, p. 1.

[75] Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America*, Verso, London and New York, 1990, pp. 306-07.

[76] Johannsen, Anton. "Why the McNamaras Plead Guilty," *Citizen*, June 12, 1914, p. 9.

[77] Gottlieb, Robert and Irene Wolt. *Thinking Big: The Story of the* Los Angeles Times, *Its Publishers and Their Influence on Southern California*, G.P. Putnam & Sons, New York, 1977, pp. 82-83; Stimson, pp. 340-41.

[78] Gallagher and Tveitmoe, pp. 5-6.; Johannsen, p. 9; Stimson, pp. 334-35.

[79] Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America*, Verso, London and New York, 1990, pp. 306-07.

[80] LACLC, June 3, 1910.

[81] This set of injunctions was the first-ever against a city strike and the first in L.A county since a preventive restraining order against San Pedro longshoremen in 1906. [Clark, pp. 442-44.]

[82] Tomlins, Christopher L. *The State and the Unions: Labor Relations, Law, and the Organized Labor Movement in America, 1880-1960,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge & New York, 1985, pp. 60-61.

[83] Forbath, William E. *Law and the Shaping of the American Labor Movement,* Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1991, pp. 6-7.

[84] Hattam, Victoria. *Labor Visions and State Power: The Origins of Business Unionism in the United States,* Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1992, p. ix.

[85] Clark, p. 372.

[86] LACLC, June 24, 1910; Clark, pp. 444-46.

[87] L.A. City Council Records, Vol. 81, pp. 500, 542-43, 564; Stimson, pp. 342-43; Clark, pp. 445-47 In a footnote, Clodius records M&M secretary Felix J. Zeehandelaar's admission that his organization was largely responsible for the wording of the ordinance. [Clodius, pp. 523-24. *Final Report and Testimony...[of] the Commission on Industrial Relations* (Washington, 1916), Senate Document 415, 64th Cong., 1st Sess., VI, pp. 5515-5516.]

[88] City Council Records, Vol. 81, p. 564; Clark, pp. 446-47. The nine councilmen, all elected on the Good Government slate on December 7, 1909, were Josias J. Andrews, Martin F. Betkouski, Miles S. Gregory, Robert M. Lusk (President), T.L. O'Brien, George H. Stewart, William J. Washburn, Frederick J. Whiffen, and George Williams.

[89] Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America,* Verso, London and New York, 1990, pp. 306-07.

[90] "Protest, p. 3; Clark, p. 446; Clodius, p. 524.

[91] Johanssen, p. 9.

[92] Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America,* Verso, London and New York, 1990, pp. 306-07.

[93] "Boy Scouts of Labor," *Citizen,* Feb. 17, 1911; City Council Records, Vol. 83, Feb. 3 and Feb. 14, 1911; Gallagher & Tveitmoe, p. 5.

[94] Gallagher & Tveitmoe, p. 7; "Testimony of Job Harriman," United States Commission on Industrial Relations, *Final Report and Testimony,* Vol. 6, pp. 5797-5802; "Picketing Cases Dismissed," *Citizen,* June 2, 1911, p. 7.

[95] Los Angeles *Citizen,* April 12, 1912, p. 13.

[96] LACLC Executive Board, Jan. 31, 1910.

[97] LACLC Executive Board, Nov. 28, 1910; LACLC, Dec. 10, 1910; Jan. 20, Feb. 3, 17, & 24, March 3 & 10, Oct. 27, 1911; Feb. 16, April 5 & 19, May 17, 1912; *Citizen,* April 12, Aug. 2, Dec. 6, 1912; Stimson, pp. 352-53.

[98] LACLC Nov. 28, 1910; April 7, 1911; City Council Records, Vol. 83, Nov. 29, 1910; "A Conspiracy," *Citizen,* April 14, 1911, p. 4.

[99] LACLC *1910*: Aug. 19, Executive Board Aug. 22, Sept. 30, Oct. 14 & 21, and Dec. 23. *1911*: June 9 & 16; LATU, Jan. 29, 1911, pp. 222, 224.

[100] LACLC, Feb. 10, 1910.

[101] LACLC, Nov. 4, 11, 25, 1910; Jan. 6, 1911. Stimson, p. 336;

[102] LACLC, Oct. 28, Nov. 4, 25, 1910; Jan. 6, 1911

[103] "Report of Organizer Ramirez," *Proceedings*, 12th Annual Convention of the California State Federation of Labor, Bakersfield, Oct. 2-6, 1911, p. 68; LACLC, *1910:* Nov. 25; *1911:* Feb. 10, 17, 24; March 3, 10, 17, 24; April 7, 14, 21, 28; May 12, 19, 26; June 2, 9, 23; Aug. 4; Stimson, pp. 353-54.

[104] In *Labor's Greatest Victory*, Gallagher and Tveitmoe claim that L.A.'s unions added 10,000 members during the two-year campaign, but this figure seems high. State labor federation secretary-treasurer Paul Scharrenberg conceded that some labor leaders may have inflated the gains. ["Union Labor in Los Angeles Has Made Marked Progress" (report of LACLC Secretary-Treasurer Lonnie Butler), *Citizen*, Feb. 2, 1912, pp. 1-2; Stimson, pp. 345-46. Gallagher & Tveitmoe, p. 6; "Paul Scharrenberg: Reminiscences," typescript interview tape-recorded by Corinne L. Gibb for the University of California, Berkeley Regional Oral History Office, Bancroft Library, May–August, 1954, pp. 44f.]

[105] "Report of Organizer Ramirez," p. 68.

[106] LACLC April 14, 21, Aug. 11, 1911; *Citizen:* "Complete Victory," April 28, 1911 p. 4; "Union Labor in Los Angeles Has Made Marked Progress," Feb. 2, 1912, p. 2; "President Misner...Makes Glowing Report of Labor Organizations," Feb. 9, 1912, p. 10; Stimson, pp. 348-49, 355;

[107] "Complete Victory," *Citizen*, April 28, 1911, p. 4.

[108] Stimson notes that an assemblage of bankers meeting downtown at the same time as the state's unionists drew a "rousing" welcome. [Stimson, pp. 348-49.]

[109] "Union Labor in Los Angeles Has Made Marked Progress," p.2; "Report of Vice-President for District No. 1," *Proceedings*, 13th Annual Convention of the California State Federation of Labor, San Diego, Oct. 7-12, 1912, p. 74; Stimson, pp. 349-50.

[110] Stimson, p. 349.

[111] "Union Labor in Los Angeles Has Made Marked Progress," p.2; "Twenty Months of Industrial Strife at End, *Citizen*, March 1, 1912, p. 1; "Butler's Report," *Citizen*, Feb. 14, 1913, p. 16; "Report of Vice-President for District No. 1," *Proceedings*, 13th Annual Convention, pp. 74-75; "Report of Vice-President for District No. 1," *Proceedings*, 14th Annual Convention of the California State Federation of Labor, Fresno, 1913, pp. 57-58; Stimson, pp. 349, 420-22; Perry, Louis B. and Richard S. Perry. *A History of the Los Angeles Labor Movement, 1911-1941*, University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1963, pp. 23-25 [hereinafter Perrys].

[112] See, for example, Clark, "The Limits of Liberty," pp. 456-57.

[113] The right to union-only work in an organized trade did not necessarily guarantee a union shop. If carpenters, painters, and electricians at a construction site belonged to a BTC union after 1912, no non-union employee in one of those trades could work with them. But if the plumbers at the same site were not organized or affiliated with the BTC, all or part of their work would be performed by non-union hands. The Perrys go further and state that by 1913 the carpenters no longer controlled hiring in Los Angeles (p. 31); LACLC Jan. 12 and 19, 1912; "Random Shots," *Citizen*, Jan. 19, 1912, p. 7; "Report of Vice-President for District No. 1," *Proceedings*, 13th Annual Convention, p. 74; Perrys, pp. 33, 36-37.]

[114] In 1914 the printers would win the all-union shop in the composing rooms of the *Herald, Examiner, Express*, and *Record*. ["Report of Vice-President for District No. 1," *Proceedings*, 14th Annual Convention, p. 57; Perrys, pp. 25-26, 29, 36-37, 39-41.]

[115] Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America*, Verso, London and New York, 1990, pp. 306-07.

[116] LACLC June 3, Sept. 30, 1910; April 7, 1911.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
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Organized Workers and the Making of Los Angeles, 1890-1915

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8.
The Two Strategic Poles of L.A. Unionism

For a quarter century after 1880 the printers and the heirs of the Workingmen marched to notably different drummers. L.A. Typographical Union No. 174, otherwise known as LATU, exemplified business unionism at its most aggressive and creative. Painters No. 267, Carpenters No. 56, and Journeymen Tailors No. 81 carried the Workingmen's passion for politics through the ebb and flow of Greenbackism, Nationalism, and Populism in the late 19th century and on into the socialist movements of the 20th. While a few carpenters and printers strayed into each other's camp, the basic strategic configurations remained fixed until developments in 1905-07 forced many "pure and simple" unionists to condemn the system of governance in Los Angeles.

It is not clear when LATU's disdain for party politics first emerged, but by 1884 it was full-blown. That October the painters and carpenters led a movement to create a Trades Council that would, among other things, seek the election of county supervisors partial to a nine-hour workday. The printers refused to participate as a body for a full year. Apparently believing the Trades Council was mainly a device to elect Democrats, they could not countenance such partisanship and affiliated only after winning assurances that they would not be drawn into any "distasteful" campaign. "Herewith they established a policy of avoiding political action unless their own immediate and specific objectives demanded it," says Stimson, "and they clung to that program with almost undeviating consistency in their early history."[1] Unlike the carpenters and painters, they recoiled from any political commitment beyond the AFL mantra: reward friends, punish enemies, respect no party.

This almost visceral response deepened during the late 1880s and 1890s. While Arthur Vinette, Lemuel Biddle, Fred Wheeler, Jonathan D. Bailey, and many other building tradesmen joined the Nationalists and/or populists, LATU stayed largely aloof. Not to its

liking the anti-monopoly, Demipub-damning agitation of these movements, each steeped in the producerist ideology of the Knights of Labor. Even their call for city ownership of gas, water, and rail utilities failed to enlist the printers' aid. When the State Farmers' Alliance gathered 600 activists in Los Angeles on October 22, 1891 to found the People's Party of California, the Council of Labor, Knights, L.A. Nationalist Club, carpenters, and painters all sent delegates but Typographical No. 174 declined on the grounds that the meeting was "political" --meaning partisan.[2]

Colver

Frank B. Colver embodied the printers' early tack toward political conservatism. He was born in Hudson, New York in 1833 and at the age of 19 took up the printer's trade for the free-soil *Cleveland True Democrat.* After completing his apprenticeship and joining the printers' union, Colver moved to Wisconsin while Frederick Douglass was stumping that state for the Republican Party. There he heard that a local paper had readied a slanderous attack against the famous abolitionist. He immediately warned Douglass, who rebutted the article before it appeared. When the Civil War began Colver enlisted in the Ohio Volunteers and rose to the rank of captain. He led his troops to Virginia, where he fell into Confederate hands shortly before the battle of Gettysburg. With several other officers he escaped from Libby prison. All but Colver were run down by rebel cavalry. He hiked 500 miles in 30 days through brush and ravines, dodging enemy units and finally reaching the safety of Union lines.[3]

After the war Colver began a long trek through Ohio, Missouri, and Kansas enroute to Los Angeles. He set type at several Midwest newspapers, joined the International Typographical Union (ITU), and led the printers' unions of Toledo and Topeka. Part craftsman, part entrepreneur, part undecided political activist, Colver ran the southern California distribution routes of four San Francisco papers after reaching Los Angeles in 1883, worked in succession at the *Times*, *Herald*, and *Express*, joined Knights of Labor Local

Assembly No. 2405, and simultaneously assumed a leadership role in LATU's 1883-84 strike against the *Times*. Members of the union responded to his obvious experience, kindliness and concern for their wellbeing by electing him their president in 1895 and repeatedly making him their delegate to the Council of Labor.

Unlike many other activists with one foot in the Knights and the other in the crafts, however, Colver did not move on into Nationalism or Populism. His divided loyalty, says Stimson, "expressed merely a fairly common indecision of the period" and was short-lived. From 1894 on he hitched his considerable skills to the improvement of printers' workaday lives and the Demipubs, renouncing drastic social change. Colver's most durable concern was winning respect for organized labor from other classes--and this could happen only if it shed its radical ideas and alliances. These convictions led him into journalism, both as an occasional columnist for the *L.A. Express* and as publisher of his own paper, the weekly *Labor World.* In 1896 when he changed its name to *Labor World and Silver Champion* and extolled the Democratic-Populist fusion ticket headed by William Jennings Bryan, his intent was not to praise populist ideas but to bury them once and for all in the Democracy.[4]

Publishing the *Labor World*, fellow printer Joseph Phillis lamented, was one of the great mistakes of Colver's life. In 1898 his paper backed the Republican Henry T. Gage for governor even though Gage was anathema to most workers. "This and other things brought down upon Colver's head the wrath of the unions both north and south," Phillis wrote. "The San Francisco Federated Trades passed resolutions denouncing the paper and its editor." Soon after the election, when Gage named Colver a San Francisco harbor inspector, even his own union repudiated him. Both the ITU and LATU welcomed him back into the fold a few years later, however, and he again served as the local union's Council of Labor delegate.[5]

Politics Writ Small

It was radical partisanship, not politics per se, that vexed the printers. They were perfectly willing to seek the ouster of any councilman who offended them. As the 1900 city elections approached, their board of directors counseled them as follows:

> "Of course our union is not organized for political purposes and we are not going to work as a political organization in this campaign, but if, as individuals, we can defeat the candidates of anti-union labor, such as the *Los Angeles Times* bosses, it is our undoubted duty to ourselves to look to it that such candidates as they uphold be defeated." 6

The board viewed elections as an "opportunity to show what we can do in the way of advancing the demand for the label." By this it meant the small logo or "bug" placed on all printing done by organized craft workers to credit their union or trades council and, more importantly, to make sure that city and county printing contracts went to unionized firms.

For LATU, voting/not voting to place the Allied Printing Trades label on public printing was the acid test that identified a city councilman or county supervisor as friend or foe. The tailors, bakers, beer workers, and other unions whose products were sold directly to consumers relied on the union label or card for the same reasons--but none so aggressively as the printers. At their bidding the Council of Labor convened an 1896 labor congress where they hoped to enlist support for their label. When the congress failed to act on the issue, Typographical No. 174 turned to the Populist, Democratic, and Republican parties, persuaded them to call for the label on all public printing, and secured a resolution to that effect from the city council on the eve of the 1896 municipal elections. Otis, who derided the label as a "totem," rallied the anti-union Printers' Protective Fraternity and other forces against the resolution, and in January, 1897 the new city council rescinded what it now said was "un-American class legislation."[7]

This stinging rebuke would have alerted more radical unionists to the fact that the skirmishing over union labels was only a symptom of a deeper ideological conflict--but

the printers doggedly clung to their minimalist politics. Because they played a belwether role in organized labor a century ago, they commanded resources for this pursuit that might have been better spent reinforcing the L.A. labor movement's ability to bargain with employers and the local government. Women's Union Label League No. 36, organized by former Council of Labor secretary Lemuel Biddle in September, 1901, devoted its early career almost exclusively to the printers' label and the *Times* and People's Store boycotts. Though LATU's lone political activity from the 1880s to the early 1900s was lobbying government officials to send their print orders to "fair" contractors, the results were dismal. The union was robust and aggressive, but it simply lacked the power to reward its few political friends on the label issue or punish its many enemies.[8]

Modern labor leaders who dutifully tag along after the Democratic Party will marvel at the singleminded devotion to nonpartisanship of L.A.'s progressive-era printers--and at their knack for sweeping other unions into that black hole. Enroute to the January, 1906 state labor federation meeting in Oakland, LATU's delegates picked up endorsements from L.A.'s flour and cereal mill workers, teamsters, theatrical employees, and wood mill carpenters for the following constitutional amendment:

> "No person shall hold office in the California State Federation of Labor who occupies any political position, whether elective or appointive." [9]

Explaining this drastic measure to national readers of *The Typographical Journal,* one of LATU's most forceful leaders, Francis Drake, wryly reminded them that as "oldline unionists, printers believe that politics and unionism are like oil and water." (Drake himself was one of the few printers who ventured early if not often into radical politics.) Formal introduction of the amendment by San Francisco's printers provoked days of consternation, debate, and parliamentary jousting at the state labor convention, all of which came to naught when it was tabled--i.e. buried alive--on January 6.[10]

Typographical No. 174's conservative allies were numerous enough to argue their anti-partisan politics through the more venturesome Central Labor Council and labor's weekly newspaper, the *Citizen*. "There are some effervescent men among the unions who would like to see us rush into politics, but the unions are industrial and not political," one "pure and simple" *Citizen* writer declared even as hundreds of activists prepared to launch a union labor party in December 1905. Three weeks later, in an editorial titled "The Foremost Question," longshoreman Z.W. Craig suggested that third parties were at best little more than blood banks for the Democrats and Republicans. Craig often marched at the van of labor trends, but here he brought up the rear. His editorial exposed the mechanistic view of union density that political minimalists took to be gospel truth but rarely made explicit and seemingly never examined. "If the organized labor movement included a majority of the voting population...it would certainly be justified in taking the reins into its own hands," Craig allowed. "But unfortunately, a majority of the working people are, as yet, not even organized on industrial lines..."[11] The notion that independent labor politics had to await the unionization of most American workers was an invitation to paralysis--and its numbing effect can still be seen among many if not most trade unionists today.

Politics Writ Large

Low union density seldom gave pause to the labor leaders who boldly carried the Workingmen's tradition of anti-monopoly agitation into the 20th century. These were men, and a few women, who never abandoned the communal ethic of the Knights of Labor while moving into craft unionism. And as craft unionists they paid as much attention to the gritty fight over wages, hours, and the open shop as any shop steward from Typographical No. 174, yet they had no patience for politics writ small. Whether through gas, water, and kilowatt socialism or by other means, they meant to remold Los Angeles city government in the interest of the working class. Their vision was influential. Because

they had solidly grounded themselves in their unions and won respect as workplace fighters, they were able to lead their members in an increasingly radical direction.

These activists, says Michael Kazin,

> "incorporated much of the critique and rhetoric of the political left rather than opposing it as did the national AFL leadership. Carey McWilliams's description of a 'more or less indigenous radicalism which has always gone hand-in-hand with the labor movement' can be explained by labor's ability to adapt the ideas of Marxists and egalitarian utopians like Henry George to its own trade union ends. The most successful unionists routinely spoke to workers and the general public in a language filled with allusions to 'class struggle' and 'monopoly rule.' Yet only a small minority had a desire, much less a strategy, for overthrowing the capitalist system. Their aim instead was to increase the power of trade unions in every area of society as a counterweight to organized corporate might." [12c]

Apt for late 19th-century, Kazin's summary understates the L.A. labor movement's growing commitment to evolutionary socialism in the years 1902-13, when even once-conservative members of LATU joined the Socialist Party. This trajectory shaped the careers of several activists who began their work in the 1880s or 1890s and left their mark on the nature and function of the municipal state in the first decades of the 20th century.

Vinette

One of the most adventuresome of these was Arthur Vinette. He founded the first carpenters' local in 1884, chartered a second in 1892, and served a third as recording secretary almost until he died in July, 1906. "Like Colver," says Stimson, "Vinette was active in the Knights of Labor, but in contrast to the printer, he also embraced such later movements as Nationalism, the People's Party, and Coxey's Army, and in 1904 joined the Socialist Party....Vinette's eager participation in various reform movements sprang from deep conviction that fundamental social change was essential to the progressive welfare of the working class."[13]

Born in Montreal to French-Canadian parents, Vinette moved with them to Troy, New York where he learned the ship carpenter's trade. Then he headed west on his own and did triple duty as miner, postmaster, and justice of the peace in Granite, Colorado. In those days the mining camp was full of rough characters who as often as not settled their disputes with guns. Vinette's style of dealing with them was to talk them into leaving the

area. It brought momentary peace to Granite, but it also forfeited the $40 fees Vinette would have earned if he had jailed the miscreants. His mining venture likewise failed to support him, and he pulled up stakes. He resettled in Los Angeles in 1883, the same year as Colver.[14]

On his arrival Vinette met carpenters who were toiling 10 hours a day for $1.50, which even then was scandalously little. He had no previous union experience but was a natural organizer and in 1884 he recruited 108 men into the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners No. 56. Their number soared to 250 a month later. Vinette's timing could not have been better. Los Angeles soon found itself in a real estate frenzy which induced a construction boom which in turn gave No. 56 enough leverage to hoist wages to between $4 and $5.50 a day. Unfortunately "the bursting of the boom reduced the membership of the union to such a degree that only about 20 remained loyal," recalled Joe Phillis, who knew Vinette at least as well as he knew Colver. Carpenters' No. 56 gave up its charter in 1892 and was replaced by the more durable No. 332.[15]

During Vinette's early years in Los Angeles he organized locals of his trade in Pasadena, Pomona, and Riverside. He also led a successful effort to cut the carpenters' daily stint to nine hours, a less successful campaign for the eight-hour day, and a movement by carpenters and painters to pull L.A.'s craft unions into their first central labor body, the 1885 Trades Council. One of the Trade Council's first acts was its intervention against a lockout of printers by the *L.A. Express*. After the lockout was defeated, LATU thanked the council and in particular Vinette for their aid. These and other initiatives won him acclaim as the "most active, prominent, and effective worker in labor circles in southern California in the 1880s and early 1890s."[16]

The first carpenters' locals in Los Angeles pursued a broad social unionism that was unfamiliar to the printers. Vinette ignited their enthusiasm for the noncapitalist restructur-

ing of society proposed by the Knights, Nationalists, and Populists. Unlike the printers, who sought public support only for their *Times* and People's Store boycotts, the carpenters relied on it as a matter of course and threw open their meetings in an effort to win Angelenos to their side. Vinette was both thoroughly grounded in his craft and devoted to the advancement of organized labor in the public arena.[17]

In his view, says Stimson,

> "unions were necessary for 'attending to the need of the hour,' but their members should at the same time be 'not unmindful of the full measure of justice which shall one day be meted out to all humanity, and which shall usher in the millennium'....This was the man who, more than any other, molded the early labor movement in Los Angeles and who was recognized by labor circles in the East, through his writings, as 'one of the watchmen detailed to keep the lights burning on the Pacific shore.' It was perhaps due to Vinette's philosophy that Los Angeles labor long persisted in an idealistic search for reform through movements extraneous to pragmatic trade-unionism." 18

His search for "the full measure of justice" led Vinette to promote three independent labor parties between 1888 and 1906. The first of these, the Los Angeles Union Labor Party, emerged in June, 1888 from a General Labor Conference called by the local Knights and attended by Vinette and Jonathan Bailey of Carpenters' No. 56, Jesse Butler of the old Workingmen's Party, and P.S. Dorney of the Knights. A year earlier, farmers, Knights, Greenbackers, single-taxers, and craft unionists had organized a National Union Labor Party to which the local party now affiliated. It sought a nonpolitical L.A. police force with an elected chief, wage equality for women, the election of workers to the state legislature and city council, laborers' lien laws, employers' liability for job accidents, and U.S. ownership of railroad and telegraph lines. E.S. Livermore, a LATU director, also attended the labor conference but could not pull his union into the new party.[19] Its impact on voters was negligible. Vinette also ran for city clerk on the ticket of a reincarnated Union Labor Party in 1902, and a few months before his death in 1906 he urged the labor movement to enter its own party in that year's city elections.[20] Both the 1902 party and 1906 Public Ownership Party played key roles in the seesawing relationship between socialists and organized labor.

In 1894 Vinette took a drastic step, one that put his life at some risk while demonstrating his belief that society owed workers a secure livelihood. The nation and Los Angeles had fallen into a depression a year after the Panic of 1893. When Congress refused to enact a public employment program, Jacob S. Coxey, a retired farmer and businessman, led an army of jobless miners, industrial workers, and tramps out of Massillon, Ohio toward Washington, D.C. on March 23, 1894. He hoped the testimony of his ragtag troops would pressure Congressional committees into voting them fiat money and creating tens of thousands of makework jobs. In Los Angeles a parallel series of events occurred. The city council balked at hiring idle workers and dribbled out a mere $10,000 for that purpose after being targeted by demonstrators and editorials. Two men, Vinette and Gen. Lewis C. Fry, decided to march their own columns of desperate job-seekers eastward across the continent. Fry started out with 600; only 200 reached Washington on June 28. Vinette's first attempt to follow them ran aground in Colton, where his men faced hostile crowds and tried to commandeer a freight train. Eight leaders, including Vinette, were arrested, brought back to Los Angeles, tried in Superior Court for fomenting a riot, and released on a technicality. Supported by the Farmers' Alliance and other populists, the intrepid carpenter set out again with something shy of 80 unemployed workers. Enthusiasm for the marchers had waned, and they faced police harassment along their 2,400-mile route. On July 25 Vinette and 10 of his exhausted men entered Washington only to find Coxey in jail, his and Frey's men dispersed, and every attempt to get through to Congress stymied.[21] Vinette returned home to find Los Angeles embroiled in an insurrection--the nationwide Pullman strike--that siphoned the public's attention from the treks back East.

Coxeyism, wrote Phillis,

> "was, at the worst, a wild, desperate attempt to attract the attention of the nation to the extraordinary, disgraceful, and unscientific economic conditions existing in a land where there ought to be plenty for everyone willing to work. I never discussed the problem of the Coxey Army with Arthur Vinette, but I am satisfied that he only looked upon the movement as a means to an end, and that he did not

expect much relief, if any, would come directly from it. It was more of a perambulating school of economic science than anything else." 22

Vinette and the Nationalist Movement

Nothing better illustrated Vinette's political approach to workplace struggles or consumed more of his attention in the early 1890s than the fight for a shorter workday. It was his optimism that had spurred the carpenters' eight-hour campaign in 1885, and he and they had reluctantly settled for a nine-hour workday. When the AFL set May 1, 1890 as the launch date for a nationwide eight-hour campaign, starting with the carpenters, Vinette quickly organized an Eight-Hour League that won public backing for the AFL goal on the grounds that it would alleviate joblessness. Under pressure, some employers adopted the shorter workday before May 1 without docking their workers' pay. The League also demanded the eight-hour day in city work, winning this legislated reform in the spring of 1889.[23]

Much of the League's success stemmed from an alliance with the fledgling Nationalist movement. Self-defined as a party, the Nationalists were actually a loose collection of clubs sharing the utopian anti-capitalist vision of Edward Bellamy's 1888 novel, *Looking Backward.* In the late 1880s they won many converts in California, especially among Espee-hating Angelenos. "Bellamy's doctrine of state socialism, with national ownership of all resources and means of production, and of complete political, social, and economic equality was immensely appealing," says Stimson, "and...the southern part of the state welcomed Nationalism with a fervor which pointed clearly to the area's well-known readiness to embrace new or unusual doctrines in various fields." By midsummer 1890 Los Angeles had 33 Nationalist clubs--two-thirds of the total in California. Vinette helped their overall leader, W.C. Owen, organize belwether Club No. 1 and became its secretary. With Jonathan Bailey, he called for close collaboration among Nationalists, Knights, and trade unionists. Leaders of the three movements took up his challenge, and

Bellamy's ideas penetrated labor's rank and file in an inchoate way without developing a large cadre there.[24]

Under Vinette's influence the Nationalists made a point of aiding unorganized workers in the spring of 1890. Owen proposed and they organized a Laborers' Co-operative Construction Company that successfully bid for work on the Flower Street sewer; it won no more contracts, however. In March, Club No. 1 exposed city contractors who were working men over eight hours a day. The City Council promptly demanded strict adherence to the law. It also ordered the Street Superintendent to hire more laborers and bar the use of Chinese labor and Chinese-made materials.[25] Most importantly, Nationalists, the Carpenters' "Old 56," and the Eight-Hour League joined forces to secure the eight-hour day for L.A.'s building trades in May.

When the first carpenters' local disintegrated over the next three years, however, so did the League. Neither the eight-hour law nor its companion, the ordinance barring Chinese from public work, was closely monitored after that, and enforcement lapsed. The eight-hour day proved to be as elusive a goal for L.A. workers in the progressive years as it has been for many full-time American workers in our own day.

The Nationalists, too, faded away as rifts opened in their movement. Some of them joined the Los Angeles branch of the Socialist Labor Party (SLP) which Lemuel Biddle organized. Others turned to populism and the People's Party. One of these was Arthur Vinette. By 1892 he had become secretary of the populists' L.A. County Central Committee. The People's Party, meanwhile, was preparing to hold its seminal convention in Omaha that July. Knowing the SLP had condemned populism as a tool of the "farmocracy," Vinette urged Ignatius Donnelly, a leading midwestern populist, to make sure the Omaha platform contained strong provisions for labor. "The wage worker," Vinette told him, "must be shown some direct benefit in the platform proposed if the new party would make sure of their votes....We favor a national law granting charters to industrial associa-

tions and providing the means to secure all the appliances needed to establish operations, the nation to retain sole ownership of the plant and the product and sell the latter at cost." The Omaha convention adopted Vinette's essentially Nationalist plank and declared that "the interests of rural and civic labor are the same; their enemies are identical." When populism waned in California after the mid-1890s, partly because it failed to win the decisive support it hoped to receive from trade unions, Vinette organized and was elected secretary of the L.A. County Labor Congress. From that point on he worked more and more closely with the Socialist Party while continuing to serve as recording secretary of Carpenters' Local 158. He ran for both a state assembly seat and the city tax collector's post on the party's 1900 ticket. During his final years Vinette was as staunch a socialist as he had always been a militant in labor's trenches.[26]

Only Phillis, a few close comrades, and Vinette's wife knew how much he had sacrificed for his beloved movement. Battle-weary and burdened by ulcers and cancer, he resigned from Carpenters' No. 158 in late May, 1906 and announced his intention "to strike out for the tall timber and mountain air," hoping to recover his health. The cure did not work. Vinette died two months later at an earlier age than most of his contemporaries. "Such men," the *Union Labor News* memorialized him, "live to fight and die fighting; and when the pioneer days of single-handed battling are over, when trades union men are numbered by the thousands in places where, years before, but a scant handful of the faithful used to gather, these pioneers in the labor movement pass with their period, fighting, fighting, fighting to the last gasp of their breath."[27]

After his funeral, Vinette's stoical wife revealed the impact his absorption by labor struggles had had on their life together. "During the hard times for years after our marriage," she wrote Phillis, "so many times he could not get work when men less known than he could get it, and many times when he did get work he would come home after working perhaps a half day discharged because he was 'a d---d labor reformer'." Black-

lists and neglect of family came with the reformer's territory. "Certainly the uplifting of the working classes was his only aim in life," his wife continued. "He was not a talkative man; not a social man in any way, though kindly and mild. On the very rare evenings spent at home he was always either lost in thought, writing, or talking of the better days to come. He certainly had better faith in humanity than I have, and I had thought that he had given much for nothing until I heard the kindly words spoken at his grave."[28]

Biddle

Lemuel D. Biddle judged the races and awarded the prizes at a mammoth 1906 Labor Day celebration in Chutes Park and would die exactly ten years later at the age of seventy. As one mourner summed up his life, "Lem Biddle was born in Labor, lived in Labor, and died on Labor Day. It is as though he were a man of destiny in the Labor movement."[29]

Biddle grew up hard in Philadelphia, born there in 1846 and sent to work at age ten with just three years' schooling. He earned an early living as a tobacco stripper, shoemaker, and machinist, struggled out of his childhood penury, and grasped the most radical philosophies he could find. Before coming to Los Angeles to work as a machinist in the late 1880s, he had joined the Knights of St. Crispin (a shoemakers' union), the Sovereigns of Industry (a network of cooperatives), the Knights of Labor, and the Socialist Labor Party, which nominated him for governor of Ohio in 1879. He reached Los Angeles just as the Nationalist movement was on the rise in California.

Biddle threw himself into the movement, along with Vinette, Bailey, and other trade union leaders and members. He quickly won notice for his organizing skill, eloquence as a public speaker, and appealing character. Years later, after he had spent nearly a lifetime in close-quarters combat with employers, the *Union Labor News* could still call him "the gentlest, the jolliest, the sweetest-tempered, and one of the most gentlemanly little men in Los Angeles."[30] In this case "little" yoked a term of endearment to a physical fact. The

1908 *Los Angeles Great Register* of voters identified Biddle as a five-foot, four-and-one-half-inch machinist with his "left index fingertip gone." It might also have added that he had a thick, drooping mustache as wide as his face.

Like Bailey, Vinette, and Wheeler, Biddle was simultaneously a skilled craftsman, an ideologue, a radical political activist, and--first and foremost--a militant union fighter. His earliest baptism by firing occurred in 1894 just before the Pullman strike. As an employee of the Southern Pacific Railroad he had joined Local 80 of the American Railway Union and with other members had denounced the carrier for failing to meet its payroll. He was dismissed and blacklisted. His second union, Machinists' Lodge No. 219, did not survive the strike. Biddle and other railroad machinists were denied work in their trade for the rest of the decade. He met this setback by helping other workers organize a Socialist Co-Operative Store and serving as its manager for 15 months. Thereafter he devoted much of his considerable energy to socialist politics. How he earned a living during the later 1890s is not known, but he returned to his craft in 1900, organizing Machinists' Lodge No. 311 and leading it through its first trials.[31]

The lodge's rank and file clearly revered him. They voted him their labor council delegate for a record 17 years. During this time he led two incarnations of the council and helped make it the command post for an uphill battle against the open shop. Later a crucial stage in this battle would open during the mayoralty of George Alexander. Though Biddle didn't know it at the time, he prepared machinists, sheet metal workers, boilermakers, patternmakers, and related craftsmen for this challenge by convening the first meeting of the Metal Trades Council on January 5, 1907. The labor council, California Federation of Labor, and AFL also sent him out as an organizer, mostly as a volunteer. In that capacity he recruited more new union members and chartered more locals (over 80) than any other activist. Biddle personally organized Henry Huntington's track workers

into the Unión Federal Mexicano in 1903 and eight years later helped enroll African-American workers in the short-lived Mutual Protective Association.[32]

No two unions diverged more emphatically over organized labor's mission in Los Angeles than Machinists No. 311 and Typographical No. 174, yet Biddle did not hesitate to assist the printers. In July, 1901 their boycott committee asked him to visit the *Times*' advertisers. He spoke with 60 of them, extracting promises from several that they would place no more ads after their contracts with the paper ran out. A. Hamburger & Sons, owners of the People's Store and one of the largest *Times* advertisers, refused to cooperate, however. With Arthur A. Hay as chair and Biddle, Tom Fennessy, and C. Stamps as members, the committee recommended and LATU launched the long boycott against the People's Store which stoked the labor-open shop conflict into an all-out war.[33]

Biddle and the Socialist Labor Party

It is unlikely that Biddle would have thrived in radical politics had he not met the tests of leadership in the more prosaic world of work. A few union members followed him into the 1890s Nationalist movement and Socialist Labor Party, a larger minority joined him in the union labor parties of 1902 and 1906, and still more shared his commitment to evolutionary socialism as the first decade of the 20th century gave way to the second. But even those who voted with their feet did not begrudge the road he traveled, for he had proved himself to them in all the ways that mattered.

Every political event Biddle experienced after reaching Los Angeles steeled him in the belief that it was futile to seek goodwill from Republican or Democratic regimes at any level of government. In 1894 he watched President Cleveland break the Pullman strike on the anvil of the U.S. Army. In 1903 L.A. police denied his striking Mexican track workers any contact with their replacements. The most instructive year was 1906, when Biddle tried and failed to persuade Mayor Owen McAleer to seat a union man on the Board of Public Works, tried and failed to prevent the use of city police as "special" deputies hired

by the M&M to break strikes, and tried and failed to shame U.S. Attorney Oscar Lawler into enforcing the eight-hour day on public projects.[34] Biddle's disdain for capitalist officialdom led him leftward out of the Nationalists into a local branch of the Socialist Workers Party (SLP), which he founded in 1890.[35]

He served the party for a decade. During that time it nominated him for presidential elector, clerk of the state supreme court, mayor of Los Angeles, and twice for city councilman. One of his comrades was Job Harriman, an Indiana farm-born religiously raised lawyer who began his adult life as a Democrat, joined the Nationalists in or about 1889, honed his oratorical skills in San Francisco where he was drawn to the SLP's militant socialism, and became the party's southern California organizer on moving to Los Angeles in 1895 and its mayoral candidate in 1896. Under Biddle's and Harriman's influence the SLP joined organized labor in an abortive 1898 campaign to place the initiative and referendum in the city charter.

The seeds of hostility between craft unions and the SLP had already been sown, however. Two years earlier, the national party had both denounced the populists and pulled away from most sectors of organized labor. Its leader, Daniel DeLeon, believed the AFL and its affiliates were irretrievably wed to the capitalist system. In 1898 DeLeon founded the Trades and Labor Alliance with the intent of creating a rival labor center and luring workers away from the AFL. Harriman and Biddle, who hoped craft unions could serve as the party's main allies on the long road to socialism, were greatly vexed by this development. When national activists Morris Hillquit and Max Hayes broke with DeLeon the following year while remaining in the party, so did they.[36]

Biddle, the Social Democracy, and the Socialist Party

Eugene Debs, meanwhile, had brought the remnants of his American Railway Union into close alignment with a new party then being formed in Chicago by disaffected SLP clubs, unions, and religious groups. With the visionary labor leader at its helm, the new

Social Democracy advocated direct legislation, proportional representation, and the nationalization of all industries. It quickly won the allegiance of the SLP's anti-DeLeon faction. In July, 1897, E.J. Mack, an ARU activist working for Frank Colver's *Labor World and Silver Champion*, founded the Social Democracy's Los Angeles branch. "The cordial relations between the Los Angeles labor movement and the ARU, as well as deep regard for Debs, contributed to the local popularity of the Social Democracy. "Membership grew rapidly," says Stimson, "and several prominent unionists, [including] W.C.B. Randolph of the carpenters and A.M. Green of the retail clerks, were interested from the start. In August, 1897, a few days after his election as president of the Council of Labor, Green became chairman of the executive board of the new socialist party."[37]

Biddle and Harriman gritted it out with the SLP several years more, hoping to rescue it from the DeLeon wing even as they were being drawn to Debs' movement. By 1900 they could no longer maintain this straddle; both men quit the SLP. With Hillquit and Hayes, Harriman helped plan the anti-DeLeonists' merger with the Social Democracy at the latter's March convention. Delegates nominated Debs for president and Harriman for vice-president, and the merger was consummated that July with the birth of the Socialist Party of America (SPA). The following October the socialists nominated Biddle for a city council seat.[38] It was the first of many times he ran for office on the Socialist Party ticket.

Most of the attraction Biddle and many other L.A. labor activists felt for the SPA was ideological and programmatic, but some of it arose from a belief that the new party had caught a wave of popular enthusiasm for a socialist challenge to the Demipubs. That a significant minority of union members in Los Angeles joined the SPA, supported its program, or voted for its candidates should not surprise us. It looked like a going concern. Nationally, Richard Schneirov has written,

> "the SPA...grew steadily in the first twelve years of the new century. Spurred on by a court-assisted, employer counterattack on the labor movement that pushed many militant trade unionists to the left and more generally the Progressive Era's reaction against competitive individualism, the SPA grew

from fewer than 10,000 members at its founding to 118,000 in 1912. Notably, the majority of the party's new members were native-born. Evidence that the party had become 'Americanized' came in the 1911 elections when 700,000 voters in state and local elections elected seventy-four major government officials. In 1912 party presidential candidate Eugene V. Debs won 6 percent of the vote." [39]

Growth often begets growing pains. In one of the ironic twists human striving sometimes takes, Debs' path diverged from Hillquits' and over the years 1900-12 he grew steadily more hostile to the AFL. His stridency, in fact, echoed DeLeon's. In 1910 Debs rebuked the craft unions for being "thoroughly outgrown, reactionary, and utterly hostile to revolutionary agitation and activity."[40] Labor historians have echoed his one-sided indictment, at least until recently, but Hillquit had the better of the polemic. He stated his more dialectical view of the relationship between socialists and craft unions at the party's first national congress in 1910:

"We may all prefer the industrial form of organization to the trade or 'craft' division, and those of us who are members of trade unions may quite properly advocate 'industrialism' within their organizations. If the labor movement becomes imbued with the understanding and spirit of Socialism, it will find a proper form of expression and action, and as long as it remains unenlightened and conservative, a mere different form of organization will not make it revolutionary, class-conscious, or progressive." [41]

Biddle and Harriman never lost respect for Debs, but they doggedly pursued a labor-socialist alliance that Debs and the party's "impossibilists" deplored. In John Enyeart's phrase the two Los Angeles leaders were "evolutionary," not "revolutionary" socialists.[42] They believed with Marx that class struggle was the engine of history and that the working class would put an end to capitalism. How and when this usurpation would occur was not a burning question for them, for they agreed with Hillquit that a socialist society could emerge only after a long period of ideological contention and independent politics. One important consequence of the evolutionary strategy was the Hillquitian wing's endorsement of local labor parties which were anathema to the impossibilists. In 1906, before and after his unanimous election as president of the Central Labor Council, Biddle helped his fellow unionists launch an Anti-Citizens' Alliance to fight the city's open-shop forces, and when that quickly evolved into labor's Public Ownership Party he helped

draft its declaration of principles. Paramount among these were its defense of direct democracy and its demand for municipal ownership of the city's water and electric power resources.[43]

Biddle remained as active in his sixties as he had been in the prime of life. In 1907 he served on a committee charged with alerting unionists to site work along the proposed Owens Valley aqueduct and preparations for a $23 million bond issue to finance its construction The committee strenuously but unsuccessfully opposed a decision by the Board of Civil Service Commissioners under John R. Haynes to exempt thousands of aqueduct workers from civil service protection. That year Biddle also visited the printers to solicit support for the Magón brothers, Mexican revolutionaries who had been arrested in Los Angeles.[44]

He contributed to the movement in more personal ways as well. According to his friend Joseph Phillis, Biddle had "an excellent tenor voice...frequently heard at social and other gatherings of labor organizations." He sang wherever he was asked--at the plumbers' union, the Women's Union Label League, and fundraisers for the Labor Temple.[45] Known in his last years as "the grand old man of the Los Angeles labor movement," he continued to galvanize workingclass crowds on street corners, stirring their anger at employers and their delight at his labor songs and humor.

Wheeler

Fred C. Wheeler tried more occupations in more places than any of his comrades, and it was their good luck that he settled on just two--carpentry and politics--when he reached Los Angeles. Stimson says Wheeler came to light in Minnesota in 1867, joined a carpenters' union in St. Augustine, Florida at the age of 19, lived briefly in San Francisco and San Diego, moved to Pasadena in 1892 where he was almost immediately elected president of the carpenters' union, organized support for the Populists, and made Los Angeles his permanent home a year or two later.[46] But much else happened along the way.

Wheeler metamorphosed from cowboy to actor of sorts (invited onstage by aides of the famous tragedian John McCullough) and from sailor to gold prospector. After punching cattle in Montana he reversed course to Chicago and soon found his savings had skittered away on its windy streets. "While he was wondering whether he was to starve or run into a piece of luck," the *Citizen* told its readers years later,

> "along came a man who was looking for gladiators. Wheeler immediately informed him that as a gladiator he could make Spartacus look like fourteen cents... and that for the small sum of $1 per, he would consent to decorate the boards for his stomach's sake and to the everlasting benefit of appreciative audiences. He was hired on the spot. But Wheeler's life as an actor was of short duration. For it was in McVicker's Theater in Chicago that the great McCullough suddenly became a raving maniac."

Wheeler's first stay in southern California was likewise brief. Still drawn to the wanderer's life, he trekked north to Alaska in 1897 "to get the yellow metal," lived eight months in an Indian village 90 miles west of Wrangle, panned for gold, and became a fascinated student of totem poles and the carving of same which he enthusiastically wrote about years later while preparing to run for a seat on the L.A. city council.[47]

His return to southern California in 1898 marked the end of Wheeler's wanderlust. Sinking roots and plying the carpenter's trade in Los Angeles, he once again earned the respect of his fellow unionists. They sent him to the Council of Labor as their delegate, and in 1898 and 1900 he was elected president of that body. For the rest of his life he dedicated himself to the struggles of the city's workers on the job and in the polity.

An Intrepid Labor Activist

The most notable trait Wheeler shared with Vinette, Biddle, and scores of their contemporaries was a simultaneous immersion in radical politics and workaday craft unionism. For years he led or helped lead Carpenters' No. 332, and in 1906 when the craft's three locals merged to form No. 158 with some 2,300 members, he was elected its secretary. The new union became the largest branch of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners and the largest local in Los Angeles. After affiliating with the Building Trades Council that summer, it opened a campaign for the closed shop, a wage increase

from $3.50 to $4.00 a day, and a Saturday half-holiday. Thirty-two large construction firms in the Employing Builders' Association (EBA) responded by formally imposing what had until then been a de facto open shop, but most of the city's 500 contractors seemed willing to reach a settlement with No. 158. Noting this divergence, Wheeler at first opposed an industry-wide strike and called for negotiations. He changed his mind when the Builders' Exchange, Mill Owners' Association, and Citizens' Alliance joined the EBA in fighting all three union demands and Wheeler's own members agitated for a strike. On the first of September, 2,300 carpenters, 350 bricklayers, and large numbers of plasterers and laborers quit work to enforce the Saturday half-holiday. Plumbers joined the movement a week later, and a full-fledged strike continued over the following weeks. Some 500 carpenters left for San Francisco to help that city rebuild after its devastating earthquake. "Slowly contractors began to yield," says Stimson. "Some of them granted all demands except the closed shop. Many more gave a Saturday half-holiday without pay to those workers who wanted it. Eventually, the carpenters achieved fairly general success. By 1907 most of them were working a five-and-a-half-day week at $4 a day, but they did not win the closed shop."[48]

Wheeler's strong personality, steadiness under fire, and solid base of support in Carpenters' No. 332 and 158 made him a force in the L.A. labor movement. His members repeatedly voted him onto the Council of Labor and its 1904 successor, the L.A. Central Labor Council (LACLC). After twice leading the council at the turn of the century, he chaired its key committees for the next dozen years, helped steel its authority for the marathon war against the open shop, and won its presidency a third time in 1910. By 1913, Wheeler had served the labor movement at its L.A. headquarters for 17 of the preceding 18 years--longer than anyone but Biddle.

The range of his interventions for the central labor body was impressive.

As a "vociferous" chair of a council committee in 1900, says Stimson, "he aired the wrongdoings of A.P. Cross, street sprinkling contractor, who paid his teamsters wages below the legal $2 minimum and exceeded the legal maximum of eight hours per day." Wheeler's committee pestered the city council until it ordered Cross to obey state wage and hour laws while on city contract. Shortly thereafter John Ince organized the teamsters into a union with 13 charter members.

Wheeler, who was first and foremost a skilled organizer, joined the Council of Labor committee that Ince put together in 1900 to recruit new members. His experiences as a volunteer with many other pressing duties convinced him of the need for a full-time organizer, especially after Ince resigned. Sent by his union to the AFL's annual meeting in 1902, Wheeler chided the national federation for doing little to help the L.A. movement. "The great influx of men from the East, mostly non-union, has put us to a great expense in gathering them into the fold," he told the delegates, urging them to grant "the unanimous wish of organized labor in California that we be given a general organizer." They approved this request, and Gompers promptly named Wheeler the AFL's district organizer for southern California. In that capacity, and while performing similar duties for the state labor federation, he brought 22 unions and 6,000 new union members into the movement in 1903.[49] His most remarkable accomplishment that year was the aid he gave Mexican and Japanese sugarbeet workers during their strike against growers in Oxnard, California. Defying the AFL's refusal to organize Asians, Wheeler and John Murray traveled to Oxnard, assisted the strike, and won a LACLC resolution of support for the field workers' binational union. Gompers, the labor movement's most influential racist, must have been appalled by this turn of events, but he never rescinded the appointment of one of his most successful organizers.[50]

Inevitably the aggressive unionism practiced by Wheeler and the LACLC sparked confrontations with the local state. Their frequency and intensity grew after 1906, when pro-

gressives hostile to organized labor won four of the nine city council seats. In the spring of 1907 Wheeler chaired a LACLC committee that fought a proposal favored by Meyer Lissner, Charles Willard, other progressives, and the city's chief water engineer, William Mulholland, to exempt aqueduct workers from the civil service. Their arguments failed to sway the Civil Service Commission or the city council. Both approved the exemption knowing that Mulholland's construction budget required cheap labor.[51] Setbacks like these lent urgency to Wheeler's long-held conviction that the interests of the working class were diametrically opposed to those of a city government run by the capitalist parties, whether Democratic, Republican, or progressive. Less than two years later he challenged progressive nominee George Alexander in a race for mayor which very nearly changed the political course of Los Angeles. It was not the first time Wheeler sought office as a Socialist Party candidate, nor was it the last.

Before reaching Pasadena in 1892 the peripatetic carpenter renounced the Republican politics of his early adulthood. His union experiences in Florida, particularly the GOP's unwillingness to punish labor law violators, cured him of free market, free labor thinking and fueled his search for a political movement grounded in the working class. "Probably my first lessons were learned of the class struggle when I joined the carpenters' union down in Florida over twenty-five years ago," he recalled in 1911. "Since then I have devoted a great amount of time to reading and studying the subject, and from the fact that I am a union man I could not consistently support either of the old parties. Their platforms, as practically applied, are antagonistic to the best interest of labor...The awakening to this fact came after an extended study and many years spent in actual contact with the workers."[52]

In southern California Wheeler was drawn to the anti-monopoly producerism of the People's Party, which had set out during the early 1890s to unite wage workers and fam-

ily farmers.[53] He helped organize the populists' L.A. County ticket in 1894. Though he retained a lifelong commitment to People's Party planks--most notably public ownership of key industries and the initiative and referendum--he realized by the end of the decade that populism could not win the hearts and minds of L.A.'s workers. Fatal to such an outcome was the opportunistic fusion of the People's and Democratic parties in 1896, but divergent class identities and the AFL's coolness to partisan politics also played a role. Wheeler was not long at loose ends, however. When Eugene Debs came to town to promote the Social Democracy in November, 1899, Wheeler enthusiastically turned out his fellow unionists to hear the former ARU president. He joined the new party in 1900. "There is no longer any more room for a Populist Party," Debs declared that September. "[P]rogressive Populists realize it, and hence the 'strongholds' of Populism are becoming the 'hotbeds' of Socialism."[54]

A Perennial Candidate

Wheeler did not follow the route Harriman, Biddle, and other activists took through the SLP to the Debsian party, but they knew him well. His leadership of the carpenters and Council of Labor had drawn their respect while preparing him for the decisive role he would play within the Socialist Party's evolutionary wing. In August, 1900 he chaired the new party's county convention, which nominated him for state senator. Two months later the city's socialists ran him for mayor. He lost both elections by imposing margins.[55] Undaunted, Wheeler would campaign for state and local offices seven more times over the next 15 years.

The ups and downs of his electoral career made him a legend in his own time, but two historical pivot-points stand out: the city elections of March 26, 1909 and June 3, 1913.

When Charles Willard, Meyer Lissner and other progressives chose George Alexander as their recall candidate in closed-door meetings during the winter of 1909, they excluded union members from their deliberations. (For details, see pages 33-34.) Their coup

against mayor Arthur C. Harper caught both the socialists and organized labor in a politically disheveled state. At low ebb, the Socialist Party lacked the resources for an effective campaign. Most labor activists resented the cabalistic nature of Alexander's nomination but could muster no zeal for the Democrat Harper, who had repeatedly offended them during his three years in office. Moreover their relations with the Socialist Party still suffered from the ill will generated by their decision to field a separate campaign organization in 1906. For all these reasons Wheeler faced an uphill battle when the socialists ran him against the highly organized, well-financed machine backing Alexander.[56]

Progressives tried to tar Wheeler with the same brush their San Francisco colleagues had used to indict that city's Union Labor Party and its corrupt mayor, Eugene E. Schmitz. It was a scare tactic they and Otis often resorted to when they felt threatened by a labor insurgency. "The recall leaders have nothing to say against Mr. Wheeler as a man," L.A.'s progressive daily, the *Express*, artfully conceded on March 24. "He has never been tried as a public official, however....In San Francisco the machine and vicious elements lined up behind the labor union candidate to attain their ends--with the result that the city officers were controlled by the machine and vicious elements and not by the respectable labor people. Los Angeles has no desire to have San Francisco's history repeated here."[57]

Despite the odds Wheeler stumped Los Angeles with characteristic fervor, calling for municipal ownership of the city's water, gas, and power utilities, an eight-hour day for all workers, and abolition of the contract system for public works. On a rainy March 26 he shocked the progressives by winning five of the city's nine wards. A heavy westside turnout saved Alexander, giving him edge by a scant 1,678 votes out of 26,466 cast.[58] Had the unions been less divided and the socialists less penurious, Wheeler would probably have claimed the mayoralty and slowed, if not derailed, the progressive capture of

city government. This, even more than the dramatic labor-socialist challenge of 1911, was L.A.'s most critical election during the first half of the 20th century.

During the 1911 contest Wheeler polled the highest vote of any city council candidate in the October primary only to fall with the entire socialist ticket in the December runoff. What impressed political observers, however, was his rising popularity with the local electorate. "Throughout all his political attempts he has retained the respect and votes of the people and has constantly increased his numerical standing," a writer for the *Citizen* reported in January, 1912. "When he first ran for office on the Socialist ticket he received 480 votes. Last time he was the recipient of more than 54,000 votes. That was more by three times than Victor Berger received when he was elected to Congress [as a socialist by Milwaukeeans in 1910]. Fred Wheeler can be elected."[59]

This prediction came true in early June, 1913. Campaigning once again for the city council on a platform that promised the municipalization of the city's electric power system, Wheeler outpolled John W. Shenk, the progressives' mayoral candidate, by some 4,000 votes. It was the first time Angelenos had elected a labor activist to public office since the last-gasp campaign of the Workingmen in September, 1879. "Not a voter in the city but what knows that I am a Socialist, and ran as such, and will try to uphold the principles of our movement," Wheeler declared a few days later. "For centuries men have asked, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' The Socialist Party answers in no uncertain terms--*you are!*" Though his greatest support came from the workingclass eastside, he fared surprisingly well in wards normally hostile to labor. It may have been, as the anti-union weekly *Graphic* put it, that "the Socialist Wheeler is justly regarded as an excellent citizen in spite of his radical political views." But it was precisely his radicalism and his determination to test it in practice that moved the Central Labor Council to pledge its support to the new councilman it called "a true and tried representative of the working class in our city."[60]

Two years later, running as an incumbent, Wheeler outpolled the second-place council candidate by nearly 7,000 votes and the new mayor, former police chief Charles E. Sebastian, by over 10,000. Elected with him was another labor-backed candidate, Estelle Lawton Lindsey, who at one time had written feature stories for the *L.A. Record.* She was the first woman ever voted onto the city council.[61] The 1915 contest was the last hurrah for the five-year-old labor-socialist electoral alliance. Thereafter, just a few halting steps behind the progressives who had long opposed them, both the Socialist Party and organized labor lost their ideological coherence and fell into political decline. Wheeler's 1917 re-election bid failed. He reclaimed his council seat in 1919 and held it throughout much of the 1920s, but the loss of an organized radical base constrained his legislative efforts. Luis Arroyo, who has written about Wheeler's work on the Oxnard sugarbeet strike, believes he ended his political career the way it began--in the Republican Party. The reciprocal impact of that arrangement has not been researched.[62]

A Reformer Invisible to Historians

Wheeler's political associations and tireless electioneering throughout the progressive era resonate for us only in the light of the goals he believed in, fought for, and sometimes achieved. The man who as a candidate openly declared his allegiances to labor and socialism was forthright about the ideology that shaped his waking hours. In 1902, at the same AFL convention where he asked for a southern California organizer, he drafted a resolution against private ownership of the means of production and distribution. When it provoked an unfavorable committee report, Wheeler took the floor to rebuke both the committee and the AFL's stand against partisan politics:

> "I want to say that you cannot serve God and Mammon, you cannot serve capital and labor at the same time. They tell us to stay out of politics, and some of the men who tell us to stay out of politics have been representatives of the American Federation of Labor in Washington, trying to secure favorable legislation. Their entire course has been one entire, gigantic failure....I want to say that if we wish to change conditions we must change the cause and we cannot do that if we confine our work to trade unions pure and simple." [63]

The last sentence was Wheeler's lodestar. As populist, socialist, and labor organizer, he crossed the boundaries of AFL craft unionism so often they became porous for him and for others who crossed with him. One sign of his unfettered spirit can be found in the support he prodded the Council of Labor to give Oxnard's Japanese and Mexican field hands in 1903, and in the meeting of unionists and socialists he convened at the Labor Temple in 1914 to condemn a threatened U.S. invasion of Mexico.[64] Those two years bracket a career perpetually on the cutting edge of reform in Los Angeles. Ingram's reform typology (Appendix 1) is as apt for Wheeler as it is for Haynes, Willard, and other self-described progressives in Los Angeles a century ago.

As a social reformer and councilman, Wheeler fought to democratize the tax burden, win an eight-hour day for working women, guarantee city employees a minimum wage, and employ thousands of idle men on city lands during the severe recession of 1914. Soon after his first election to city council in 1913 he discovered that a corrupt assessment procedure had kept many well-to-do Angelenos' property off the tax rolls. Among the 91 respectable citizens he summoned before the council to explain $1,080,000 in untaxed wealth were two avowed foes of unionized labor. While building a county hospital, Carl Leonardt had boasted that he worked his employees more than eight hours a day without fear of prosecution. One reason he enjoyed such immunity was the reluctance of U.S. Attorney Oscar Lawler and other officials to take labor law violators to court. In 1913, when Leonardt and Lawler reportedly paid no city tax on stock they owned worth $17,700 and $3,600 respectively, the *Citizen* estimated that Los Angeles had assessed its workingclass residents at par but taxed only one-third the value of property held by its wealthier citizens. "The men who own small homes and bicycles and one-horse wagons, the men who work for wages and keep the wheels of the city running are all on the city tax rolls all right," said Wheeler. "They never miss the common people. But these great aggregations of wealth seem to have a way of missing connections....I am going to do my

level best to see that every tax dodger is caught and made to pay his just share." Wheeler partially succeeded in this aim. He nailed a few missing assessments to the rolls, but his progressive colleagues refused to pursue tax cases against most of the city's "best men" who were, after all, their friends, associates, and political allies. "Several men acknowledged that the [new] assessments were just, and that they were ready to pay," Wheeler reported. "One in particular confessed to $115,000, but a Councilman said: 'Oh, he's a good fellow and gives to charity, and we ought to let him go.' And they did."[65]

The Fight for Proportional Representation

Social reform clearly mattered to Wheeler but did not absorb a large measure of his time. Like most labor activists and indeed most L.A. workers, he expected only crumbs of workingclass provision from governments which were essentially capitalist--and those crumbs could be won only through stubborn agitation which might better be directed elsewhere. Nor did moral reform engage his attention except as a progressive annoyance to be fended off. Structural and developmental reform, however, consumed his energies from 1907 through the early years of World War I. Though he failed in the one arena, his exploits in the other permanently changed his adopted city.

The structural change Wheeler tried hardest to achieve was *proportional representation*--specifically the apportioning of city council seats among political parties based on the share of votes their candidates received. In the December, 1911 city election, Wheeler and other labor-socialist candidates claimed nearly 40 percent of the ballots cast for the city council--about what Harriman won in his race for mayor.[66] Yet they were totally locked out of the 1911-13 council by an electoral system which erased all traces of party during vote counts even though parties had chosen and financed the candidates, had crystalized ideology into public opinion, had mobilized voters, and would soon shape city legislation. Everyone knew that in most local races party mattered more than persons, yet the fiction persisted that individuals, not parties, won elections. This fiction gained its

ultimate cachet under the progressives, née nonpartisans, who functioned as a party while claiming to be anything but. In 1911, with a little over 60 percent of the vote, they swept all nine city council seats. They would have won only 6 under proportional representation, and the labor-socialists would have won 3.

"We believe in majority rule but hold that the minority have certain rights," Wheeler wrote during his campaign for proportional representation two years later. "At present if any of that minority of 50,000 votes in our city desire to present a proposition to the council, it can only be done by courtesy of that body and then but for a limited time. Except by the initiative or the referendum...we have absolutely no voice in the management of the city's affairs for two years after each election." The reform he proposed would give the minority "the right to be represented and to be heard."[67] It held the promise of ending labor's long absence from the corridors of power.

Tracking other demands for urban reform, proportional representation originated with the populists in the early 1890s and quickly gained advocates in the labor movement, among them Wheeler.[68] His first chance to champion the reform with some hope of success came in the spring of 1912, when the L.A. Central Labor Council and a committee of the Socialist Party proposed their own amendments to the city charter. This unusual step followed the city council's refusal to name a union delegate to its charter revision commission on the grounds that the LACLC and its affiliates constituted a political party--a litmus test it did not apply to any progressive group. W.F. Bryant and George B. Anderson, respectively the campaign chairman and secretary of the Good Government Organization, were welcomed aboard as was E.O. Edgerton, secretary of the Municipal League. The Goo-Goos and the League had run some of the most aggressive political campaigns in L.A.'s history, yet by all reports councilman Jerry Andrews kept a straight face when he said he voted against a union nominee to keep politics out of the city char-

ter. Like every other city council member Andrews had run on the progressive slate two years earlier but clearly was not one of its brighter lights.[69]

Organized labor's exclusion was so transparently absurd that in March, 1912 the council relented and named Wheeler to its charter panel. He was the first craft unionist ever to serve in that capacity. Working from the inside while members of the union-socialist committee nudged the panel from the outside, he and they injected proportional representation into the debate over charter amendments. This debate had one overriding aim: to replace the city's mayor and council with a more centralized commission form of government. Commission government, in which experts shaped policy and a reduced number of legislators also served as departmental executives, ranked high on the list of urban reforms blueprinted by American progressives in the years before World War I. Some union activists went along with the reform, others believed it would insulate city government from the public. Thus divided, the labor movement did not take a clear stand on the issue but argued that the legislator-executives should be elected under the rubric of proportional representation.[70]

Wheeler carried this argument onto the 1912 Board of Freeholders which by law was charged with refining the panel's draft amendments and readying them for the ballot. In June elections to the new board Wheeler won the most votes, outpolling John R. Haynes, Meyer Lissner, and other progressives. He was the only labor candidate to win a seat on the charter-revising body, however, and except for Haynes and one or two others the freeholders had no interest in proportional representation. Led by Lissner, they saw the proposal as a ruse to hand socialists power through the back door when they could not win it through the front; they rejected it despite Wheeler's efforts and the LACLC's lobbying. Partly as a result, the *Citizen* reported that workers and socialists voted against the revised charter on December 3. "[C]ommittees representing the Socialists and Union Labor Political Club...repeatedly appeared before the charter framers, asking that a clause

declaring for proportional representation be incorporated," it declared in a post-mortem. "This the framers did not do. For this reason the Socialist Party failed to take any action regarding its endorsement at the ballot box. On the contrary the returns of the election show that Socialists voted overwhelmingly against it."[71]

Rival forces almost at once began work on a new set of charter amendments. First to enter the field was a Citizens Committee of business, rightwing progressive, and open-shop leaders led by Lissner and Stoddard Jess. They hoped to revive the ward-based electoral system that had helped them run the city before 1909, disguising it as "district" voting. When their retrograde motives became clear, an impromptu coalition of labor activists, socialists, and left-progressives formed a second charter-revising body known as the People's Charter Conference. Haynes, A. M. Dunn of the Good Government Organization, and George Dunlop, president of the *Municipal News*, were its progressive members, Job Harriman and M.E. Johnson its socialists, and W.A. Engle and Wheeler its labor delegates. In mid-December the People's Charter Conference (PCC) elected Dunlop its president.[72]

Lissner's decision to ally himself with the anti-union banker Jess, while Haynes and a few other left-progressives joined labor activists and socialists on the PCC, foreshadowed the permanent split that would cleave reform ranks in the June, 1913 mayoral election. Less durable was the PCC's tripartite collaboration--it would not survive the charter campaign.

The political struggle that uncoiled over the first three months of 1913 was one of the most intense not involving candidates for office in the city's recent history. Its issues were sharply etched, raising an important question about the nature of bourgeois democracy. Did an electoral minority, especially one whose social base persisted from year to year, have any right to representation? The People's Charter Conference insisted it did. While drafting planks that strengthened the city's ability to own and operate its own en-

terprises, it offered proportional representation as its indispensable reform. The Citizen's Committee argued just as tenaciously for a return to ward-by-ward voting in city council elections and an expansion of the council to 21 members. Labor's side of the argument, replete with mixed metaphors but nonetheless emphatic, appeared in the lead editorial of the February 21 *Citizen*:

> "Behind the Citizens' amendments, so-called, are lined up the same forces and influences that were the power behind the throne when the 'Old Guard' was in the saddle. One of these amendments provides not for a return to ward representation, but for district representation--a distinction without difference. Every vote cast for this amendment will be a vote for the return to 'Old Guard' methods with the power of corporate wealth once more supreme in city affairs. District representation makes rule of part of the people and part of the people may be corrupted all of the time. Proportional representation means rule of all the people and all of the people cannot be corrupted any part of the time." [73]

The two charter groups fought their campaign in every city daily, the *Municipal News*, the *Citizen*, public forums and debates, leaflets, political journals, and civic clubs. Business organizations, the *Times*, and the *Examiner* praised the work of the Citizens Committee; the Good Government Organization, Central Labor Council, and Socialist Party endorsed the PCC amendments. When the city council refused to send the revised charter to the voters--a stand that fractured the progressive party even further--the People's Charter Conference circulated petitions forcing it to do so. The vote was set for March 24.[74]

As the campaign entered its last weeks Wheeler did all he could to convince working-class Angelenos that they needed proportional representation. He kept the Central Labor Council focused on it, and through his "Booster Man" column in the *Citizen* he tried to clarify what for many was an opaque issue. "On the Citizens' Committee there was not a single representative of labor," he wrote. "On the People's Committee all classes were equally represented. They adopted Amendment No. 8, which provides for proportional representation. Big Business said: 'We don't want it. It will turn the City Council over to the Socialists'....So they drew up a proposition to elect six councilmen at large and the other fifteen by districts (or wards)....Don't be fooled by this bunco game." [75]

Sadly for Wheeler and the labor movement, the city's voters were neither fooled by the Citizens Committee nor drawn to the polls by the People's Charter Conference. Most of them stayed home on March 24--a day when only a fifth of L.A.'s registered voters cast ballots. That fifth decisively rejected ward voting and every other significant Citizens Committee amendment except one abolishing the city's *Municipal News* while approving every PCC amendment but proportional representation. The latter's defeat by the slim margin of 1,258 votes out of 36,150 cast ended the campaign for proportional representation in the pre-war era.[76] It has not been revived since. "Four more votes to the precinct would have been sufficient to pass the most important piece of legislation that has been before us in many years," said Wheeler. "To the men who have given the best years of their lives to the labor movement, who have worked for the cause in season and out of season, who have given their time, talents and money without reserve--to these men it is intensely discouraging to see the workers...refrain from voting on a measure that would have been of as much benefit as ten years of organized effort on the industrial field."[77]

Wheeler's *cri de coeur* needs to be tempered by an acknowledgment of the circumstances that depressed the turnout. First among these was voter exhaustion. In the year ending March 24 Angelenos had been summoned to the polls five times for initiative, referendum, primary, general, and charter elections; to the degree they read newspapers they knew they faced three more elections by June 3. Voters could be forgiven for staying home--and by droves and in *all* social classes they did. Secondly, the March 24 ballot was a mind-boggling document. It offered the voter eight PCC amendments, eight more from the Citizens Committee, and two from the city council. Several of the amendments were arrayed in either-or pairs. In the case of proportional representation and ward-based elections, the choices were maddenly complex. The ballot asked Angelenos not to vote for both but to choose one or the other, or choose one and vote against the other, or vote against both. Said the *Municipal News* of this instructional stew: "[T]he average voter

will have to give more study to the subject than is usually the case. This special study is necessary because some of the amendments are conflicting and should they all carry a most confused state of municipal government would be the result."[78]

What the PCC lost was a good deal more than one ballot item. Many labor activists and socialists, including Union Labor Political Club member Rezin A. Maynard, saw the defeated measure as a culmination of the city's passion for democracy. In a March 14 *Citizen* editorial, Maynard had ranked proportional representation at the top of a Los Angeles list that included an early declaration for women's suffrage (1896), the initiative, referendum, and first recall provision in any city charter (1902), the first recall of a city council member (1904), the first municipal newspaper (1911), a decisive vote for women's suffrage (1911), and the recall of judges (1911).[79] Now these mostly labor-led accomplishments had been denied their capstone. Future generations of Angelenos would inherit not a fully democratic city but a tantalizing might-have-been.

Wheeler's successful exertions for developmental reform were as notable as the failure of his chosen structural reform. Craft unionists, populists, and evolutionary socialists had created a robust tradition of municipal ownership--sometimes characterized as "gas and water socialism"--dating back to the 1890s and borrowing from the *ayuntamiento's* construction and operation of the Zanja Madre (main irrigation ditch) soon after Los Angeles was founded.[80] Perhaps because Otis, Mulholland, Willard, and other icons of the city's pellmell growth detested unions, historians have missed the fact that organized labor boosted the city's rapid growth just as much as the Old Guard and the progressives. The three groups differed mainly in their class orientation toward growth--who would receive the lion's share of its benefits--and in the degree and nature of the constraints they would place upon it. Otis favored unbridled growth in the interest of the city's larger agglomerations of capital. Most progressives favored regulated growth in the interests of smaller

capital and the professions. Unions and a handful of left-wing progressives favored municipal ownership of the infrastructure for rapid urban growth in the interests of the city's remaining classes.

Wheeler's pro-growth credentials rivaled those of Willard and other developmental reformers--and this fact, too, has flown below the historian's radar. Wheeler not only supported the Owens River aqueduct but, as a councilman, insisted with Mulholland that outlying towns annex to Los Angeles if they wanted aqueduct water. "The policy of the City Council is 'No annexation, no water'," he declared in 1915:

> "After spending nearly $25,000,000 for the aqueduct, we hold that if any one wants city water they should shoulder their share of the burden in the cost and interest. The people of the [San Fernando] valley...voted 27 to 1 for annexation. They also voted to put in their own distributing system costing not less than $3,650,000, every dollar of which is to be paid by themselves. In other words, they bring their buckets to our well and pay for the water at regular rates....
>
> "Why annexation?....We are now paying $4,000 a day interest alone. This will be the first step to reduce this staggering load without costing us a dollar." 81

The tireless carpenter also stumped for an expanded county road network, the city's right to engage in excess condemnation,[82] and the financing of large infrastructural projects by a high rate of bonded debt. During the socialists' 1911 mayoral campaign, he warned voters to reject the charge by Otis and many progressives that a Harriman's victory would drive capital from the city: "You will be told by the machine gang that if Job Harriman is elected mayor of Los Angeles the bankers will refuse to buy the bonds which are to complete the various enterprises Los Angeles has under way. Take no stock in such talk. The same thing was tried in Milwaukee in order to hamper [socialist] Mayor Seidel....[T]he bankers were glad to take any old bonds Milwaukee had to offer. The bankers will frighten no one here."[83] These were the words of a workingclass leader who had thoroughly committed himself to urban growth through public debt and public ownership.

Power to the People

We do not know what Wheeler thought about the long-run prospects for gas, water, and kilowatt socialism. His comments on the subject in the *Citizen*, LACLC minutes, and

other contemporary sources leaned toward the practical, emphasizing the lower rates and better service that would flow from a not-for-profit enterprise. If he wrestled with more theoretical questions, the evidence may not have survived in written form. Did he find it problematical, for example, that while he fought to place the city's electric power system in the hands of "the people" he was actually handing it to an avowedly capitalist local government? Did he expect this government, by evolutionary means, to come under workingclass or at least popular control anytime soon? If it did not, would the struggle for municipal ownership still prove beneficial by awakening workers to the need for socialism and their pivotal role in achieving it? These questions cannot presently be answered.

What we do know is nonetheless interesting. We can hear Wheeler's passion for municipal ownership, and some deepening of his approach to it, in a March 30, 1914 speech he made to a packed city council chamber at the end of a hearing on the rates L.A.'s three gas companies charged consumers.

> "The question before us is not one solely of whether the rate we shall fix shall be thirty cents, or forty cents, or fifty-two cents, or sixty cents, or seventy cents. The real question before us tonight is...shall the private corporations for private gain be allowed to continue to determine the charges to be paid by the people of this city for any certain commodity in the form of a public utility?
>
> "....There are three companies here, three sets of officials, three sets of office expenses, three sets of works, three sets of machinery, three sets of parallel mains and pipes, [three sets of] physical disadvantages to overcome as was the case just mentioned by the gentleman in New York where the ground was so filled with pipes it was almost a physical impossibility to get more in....
>
> "My friends wish to continue three sets of gas companies in this town. I say that we should have one company and that one company be so large that every citizen in the city of Los Angeles shall be a stock holder in that one company absolutely....
>
> "And so, with the great corporations that have come into being and which have been allowed to go unbridled, we say it is about time we would take from them their great power....it is time we should put a check on those corporations and they should be taken by the people and run in the interests of the people and for the people." [84]

Wheeler's sense of what the people should own ranged wider than might be assumed. In November, 1910 he persuaded the Central Labor Council to lobby for a charter amendment creating "a municipal newspaper owned entirely by the city, and where each of the different political parties will be entitled to a column in the paper every day."[85] Voters approved the weekly *Municipal News* in 1911 and the city council reluctantly

funded it in April, 1912, whereupon it began reporting on city developments with none of the hyperbole and swagger of the commercial yellow press. Regularly filling its opinion columns were writers for the Demipubs, Good Government Organization, Socialist Labor Party, and Socialist Party--the latter two having no access to city dailies other than the *Record.* This democratic foray into the burlesque that passed for journalism in 1900-1915 Los Angeles rankled the council, the Municipal League, and other progressives who already had the ear of the *L.A. Express* and needed no other. They drafted the charter amendment that voters endorsed in 1913, abolishing the new paper on the grounds that it would save the city money.[86]

Prior to his election as a city council member in June, 1913 Wheeler joined longshoreman Z.W. Craig, Job Harriman, members of the Alembic Club, and other union activists, socialists, and left progressives in criticizing the Alexander regime for its failure to pursue full municipal ownership and management of the harbor. "The government and the city have spent millions of dollars in harbor improvements, but the railroad companies are reaping an unearned harvest," he said. "We could spend millions more and get no beneficial results if we continue to let the corporations control the situation." As a step toward full municipalization he urged the city to build or acquire its own harbor railroad, break the Southern Pacific's stranglehold on truck access to the waterfront, and put up its own wharves and warehouses at the outer harbor.[87]

Nothing more emphatically distinguished Wheeler as a developmental reformer, however, than his promotion of municipal electric power. Everything else he worked on, from the *Municipal News* to the harbor and the county road bonds, was a dress rehearsal for that decisive role. Chapter 11 describes his championship of public power at length..

Wheeler Provokes the "Impossibilists"

From the foregoing account of Wheeler's life it is clear that workingclass political power in the here and now interested him no less than socialism down the road, and it is

just as clear that he believed the second condition would not be reached without some considerable experience of the first. This worldview made him an evolutionary socialist and reformer. It also inspired him to march in the van of workers who from time to time cobbled together labor parties for city or state elections. In 1906 Wheeler pushed union members to form their own campaign organization. The context was the historic 1910 metal trades strike, and the injunctions against picketing that swiftly followed. At a June 26 meeting of over 1,000 union workers, says historian Thomas Clark, "Wheeler and the others waved copies of the restraining orders as they implored workers to put an end to 'class government.' Wheeler argued that the M&M controlled both major political parties and all three branches of government."[88]

L.A.'s best-known carpenter was defined by his enemies no less than his friends. Otis could not abide him. Most progressives abhorred his politics even if they admired the man. The "impossibilist" left wing of his Socialist Party flat-out hated him for what they saw as his dalliance with organized labor. Most galling to the impossibilists were his loyalty to the AFL, his encouragement of and participation in the Union Labor Party of 1902, his pursuit of laborite reforms, and his ensconcement in that bourgeois den of iniquity--the city council.

"Harriman and Wheeler," observes Kazin,

> "embodied the close relationship that existed between their majority, reformist wing of the Socialist Party and the mainstream of the California labor movement. Members of this faction --who ranged from Wheeler the veteran carpenter to the eccentric millionaire Gaylord Wilshire--considered themselves a loyal, if more idealistic, part of the AFL. Horrifying more doctrinaire Marxists, they sought fusion with municipal labor parties in San Francisco and Los Angeles in the vain hope that a pragmatic electoral strategy would advance the cooperative commonwealth more than would the preservation of ideological purity." [89]

Kazin aptly captures the antagonism that erupted between evolutionary and revolutionary socialists in California a century ago. The explanation he gives for it, however, is imprecise. Rather than ideological purity versus electoral pragmatism, the contest between the two wings pitted two equally ideological, equally strategic approaches to so-

cialism against each other. Impossibilists believed that direct action by their cadres and class-conscious workers (*not* accessed through craft unions) would destabilize the capitalist state and open the way to a socialist revolt. Meanwhile they opposed any "compromise" with capitalism or its parliaments. In this the impossibilists resembled Europe's Blanquist Communards of the early 1870s who proclaimed, "We are Communists because we want to attain our goal without stopping at any intermediate stations, without any compromises, which only postpone the day of victory and prolong the period of slavery."[90] Evolutionary socialists did not oppose direct action but concentrated their energies on the educational and practical value of reforms won electorally through collaboration with organized labor, other workers, small proprietors, and radical professionals. The alliance of classes they set out to forge was broader than that of the impossibilists and their approach to socialism more dialectical--but neither wing developed a persuasive theory for the revolutionary usurpation and exercise of power. Writing history backwards lets Kazin call the reform wing's program "vain". It's a pity, isn't it, that we can't write history forward to see which wing really had the better of the debate?

Wheeler's alienation from his party's left wing may have arisen from nothing more profound than his long and close association with wage workers like himself. He was patient with their limitations and keenly aware of their potential. On April 3, 1909, the socialist weekly *Common Sense* criticized the party's City Central Committee, made up largely of full-time workers. "You do them an injustice," Wheeler wrote the editor two weeks later. "It is true the committee was not made up of men of great experience in that particular line, but they did the best they could under the circumstances....As working men who labored all day and spent three or four nights a week, they were not in a position to do as much as trained political workers. Personally, I highly appreciate their efforts and take this means to express the same."

From this small fissure a wider crack opened. Wheeler retained majority support in the Socialist Party through the first years of World War I after receiving its nominations for mayor in 1909 and the city council in 1913. He was the only union activist it sent to the 1912 national party convention in Indianapolis.[91] But as the left wing grew more strident and assertive during this period, its disenchantment with Wheeler grew apace.

Their mutual antagonism reached a boiling point in 1914. Early that year Wheeler was fully engaged in work that offended the impossibilists. He and Emanuel Julius, speaking for the Socialist Party's Law Committee, invited the Central Labor Council to join socialists in lobbying for city legislation. His defense of a single ballot issue for the aqueduct power bonds further identified him as a "parliamentary cretin."[92] The final insult was Wheeler's stand during a flareup of hostilities between the party and organized labor.

At a city assembly of the Socialist Party on January 25, 1914, members of the evolutionary wing introduced the following motion:

> "Resolved. That every nominee of the party must be a member in good standing of his craft if eligible or fair to Organized Labor if an employer."

The resolution was defeated, much to the surprise and anger of the city's unions. After trying to undo the damage with no success, the Central Labor Council denounced the Socialist Party for being "unconscious of working class interests." On March 28 it urged the city's union members to withhold their votes from socialist candidates until such time as the party rescinded its "organized-labor-wrecking policy."[93]

Wheeler sided with the labor council throughout this controversy. Outraged by what they saw as his betrayal of socialist principles, the impossibilists moved to oust him from the party. "Councilman Wheeler has been persistently attacked since his election by a coterie of cranks who have sought to embarrass him in his official acts and position," declared the *Citizen*. "It was from these the charges emanated." The demand for a party-wide referendum on the city's most successful vote-getter arose from the German Branch

and Branches 2, 15, and 25. A mass meeting of party members was called for July 12 to settle the matter. Sixteen days before that convocation the Central Labor Council, itself led by socialists, expressed heartfelt support for its former president:

> "WHEREAS, The labor unions of this city took a very prominent part in the election of the said Fred C. Wheeler to the City Council, knowing that he has been an active member for many years and during all that time he has done everything within his power to advance the cause of Organized Labor, through his knowledge and activity...Now, therefore, be it
>
> "RESOLVED, By the Central Labor Council of Los Angeles, in regular meeting assembled, Friday night, June 26, 1914, [that we] protest against the action taken by Branches 15, 2, 25 and the German Branch of the Socialist Party in attempting to force the resignation of the only working class representative in the City Council, and be it further
>
> "RESOLVED, That we do hereby pledge our faith in Fred C. Wheeler and request the members of the Socialist Party of Los Angeles to stand loyal to their councilman...who has worked consistently to advance the cause of the toilers and who has reflected credit upon the Socialist Party and the Trade Union Movement..." 94

After this resolution was unanimously adopted, machinists Handwright and Curly Grow and the retail clerks' Stanley Gue visited the four Socialist Party branches in an attempt to have them withdraw the referendum. It failed. Their resentment of Wheeler was too strong. At the party's July 12 assembly, it quickly became clear that however vocal the impossibilists had become, they were outnumbered. Calling them a "small coterie," the *Citizen* identified one of the ringleaders as "Miss Bourke McCarty, whose chief interest in the labor movement seems to be a rabid hatred of organized labor, and who is now running a paper published in a scab print shop." Others who spoke against Wheeler that Sunday afternoon were O.C. Zahn, Paul Wedderin, Samuel Weisenberg, E.B. Zittel, and C.C. Showen. The predominance of Germanic names suggests a link to the left wing of European marxism, of which the German branch was the most impatient. Wheeler was passionately defended by evolutionary socialists in and out of organized labor, among them Grow, Stanley B. Wilson, Frances Noel, W. Sokoloff, William F. Ireland, and R.A. Maynard. As the debate ended, Grow called for a vote on the demand for Wheeler's res ignation. It was overwhelmingly defeated, 119 to 30.[95]

Wheeler went on to win socialists' backing for his re-election, but the dispute over the union status of party members continued to rankle the LACLC and its affiliates. From 1914 on relations between the party and the labor movement deteriorated--part of a larger decline in radical unionism that accelerated in the 1920s. Wheeler's political career continued, but it is fitting that we bid him farewell in 1914, the year in which he and his labor comrades changed the course of history in Los Angeles.

Divergence and Convergence: The Two Political Poles of Organized Labor in Los Angeles after 1905

Politically-driven labor activists like Vinette, Biddle, and Wheeler both typified the national white male trade unionism of their day and, in Los Angeles at least, transformed it into something more menacing to capital. They and the sizeable majority of rank-and-file union members who supported them between 1890 and 1915 prevented the Los Angeles labor movement from narrowing its vision to the "pure and simple" trade unionism that had emerged nationally by the latter year, with its stress on private collective bargaining, non-interference in or by the state, and a lean electoral policy of rewarding labor's "friends" and punishing its "enemies." The economism advocated by Sam Gompers, John Mitchell, and other AFL leaders failed to gain hegemony in Los Angeles during this period. Here, union activists led several third-party movements between 1898 and 1906 and in 1911 helped carry the local Socialist Party to the brink of municipal power.

For some local labor leaders, among them Francis Drake, Stanley Wilson, and James Roche of LATU, the embrace of radical politics came reluctantly and late. They had once mistrusted third parties, and like most printers had hoped to outmaneuver the capitalists at their own parliamentary game. By 1905, however, their views had shifted. They all joined the movement late that year to create a labor party.

Several developments combined to radicalize the conservative wing of organized labor for a brief period in the 20th century's opening decade. First among these was a marked

acceleration of the open-shop campaign, with coordinated private-public attacks against planing mill workers (1901-02), iron molders (1902-03), electric railway workers (1903), foundry workers (1906), longshoremen and construction workers (1906-07), teamsters (1907), and, throughout this period, the printers and their *L.A. Times* and People's Store boycotts. Employers, trade associations, the M&M, the police, and a succession of city councils all helped to mount these attacks. More than anything else the gradual merger of Old Guard and progressive parties into a single anti-union force goaded organized labor to reject politics writ small, which had produced few discernible results.

The second development was the successful 1904 recall of sixth-ward city councilman James P. Davenport. This unlucky legislator had offended his workingclass constituents by voting to site a slaughterhouse in their midst and award the city's printing contract to the *L.A. Times*. LATU's Tom Fennessy led the campaign to unseat him. In this effort the printers were joined by Richard H. Norton, a member of Federal Labor Union No. 9614 and vice-president of Haynes' Direct Legislation League, who propagandized against Davenport and helped round up recall signatures. Mainstream progressives, including the Municipal League, sat on their hands during the campaign, never having shown any fondness for this most rambunctious form of direct democracy. Davenport's ouster that September was the first recall of a city council member in the state of California and one of the first in the country. Though very much in keeping with the printers' goal of rewarding friends and punishing enemies, it demonstrated the value of a more radical politics while opening their eyes to the anti-democratic bias of most reformers.

The third development was the brief 1906-08 reversal of the AFL's historically cautious stance toward political action by local unions and central labor bodies. During this contrarian interlude Gompers and his lieutenants urged local affiliates to hold their own political conventions, grill political candidates early in the nomination process, elect union members to office and at all times vote class-consciously, and, where the Demipubs

could not be trusted, to launch their own union labor parties.[96] This momentary summons to boldness by the national federation coax many printers and other business unionists into independent politics.

The fourth and last development was the debut of the Owens Valley aqueduct as a burning public issue--one which gave unions a chance to rally voters behind their decades-old demand for municipal ownership. They seized the moment by fielding a Public Ownership Party in the 1906 city elections. Its mayoral candidate--*mirabile dictu*--was Stanley Wilson, long a LATU leader and champion of "sane and substantial" unionism. Wilson, Drake, Roche, and Fennessy and other printers helped mobilize the new party.[97] Several of them went on to become socialists and lifelong advocates of municipally supplied water and power.

LATU was severely buffeted by these changes, however, and by the counter-coup that followed. Many of the printers enthusiastically backed the political turn their leaders had taken. As a more detailed account in Chapter 11 makes clear, progressive and Old Guard forces saw the Public Ownership Party as a serious threat and warily tried to pool their resources behind a joint mayoral candidate. Their prolonged backstage maneuvering ceded the campaign's ideological agenda to the labor party. Unionists made good use of this opportunity, galvanizing public support for the Owens River aqueduct, municipal hydropower, and what later generations would call "gas and water socialism."

Alas, the voting base for labor candidates was much smaller than the voting base for the structural and developmental reforms that labor backed. The Public Ownership Party lost the election. This setback sent a tremor through LATU, widening a fault line which had been there for at least two years.

In 1904 a dissident caucus led by Charles L. Howe, Miles L. Farland, and C.F. McDonald accused the union of botching the campaign against the *L.A. Times*. They strongly criticized the ITU's International President James M. Lynch, and when LATU's

top leadership called for his re-election they accused it of seeking "to gag the minority." Drake, Fennessy and Ralph Criswell condemned the dissidents for expressing their "malicious" and "false" views in a leaflet that circulated outside the union. On March 27 delegates to the printers' monthly meeting voted for Lynch by a substantial plurality. Fennessy, Wilson, and other members accused the dissidents of "non-unionlike conduct" and brought them to trial. The vote to censure them fell short of a two-thirds majority, however, and the episode ended inconclusively.[98]

This stalemate failed to silence the Howe faction. Seething at the treatment it had received, it looked for a way to seize power while waging a drumfire criticism of the union's leadership. Its first opening came in late 1905, when Drake and Wilson played a prominent role in founding the Anti-Citizens' Alliance (ACA), soon to metamorphose into the Public Ownership Party. Howe and his supporters pushed through the resolution (see above) that sought to bar unionists who held political office from serving as leaders of the state federation of labor. It also blocked a move by Drake and others to contribute ten cents per capita to the ACA.[99] Early in 1908 the dissidents began concentrating their attack on Fennessy, Arthur A. Hay, and other printers whom the AFL and ITU had named their local organizing representatives. Farland submitted a resolution that March calling the long campaign against Otis a "sheer waste" of the union's money and demanding that the ITU withdraw Fennessy from Los Angeles. The resolution's momentary acceptance and final defeat by a 76-53 vote on April 26 signaled the rising strength of the Howe faction.[100]

A month later Howe came within a hair of winning LATU's presidency. He and W.E. McLernon each received 134 votes from the chapels (worksite units), and to break the tie outgoing president Ralph Criswell asked delegates at the May 31 meeting, whom he called "the union's highest sovereign," to decide the contest. In a secret ballot McLernon

won, 102-186. With seeming grace Howe accepted the verdict, saying he had tired of factionalism and would do all in his power to advance the union.[101] He may have meant what he said at the time, but his subsequent union career belied the statement. In May, 1909 Howe became LATU's president, and by cleverly exploiting a flaw in the union's election rules his allies claimed every seat on the executive board. The rules let each work unit of two or more job printers nominate and vote for as many candidates as it pleased. Orchestrating this procedure in the small job shops they controlled

, the dissidents took command of LATU even though they were a minority of its members.[102]

Howe and his supporters immediately sought revenge against their opponents and executed an abrupt about-face in the union's political orientation. From June through December, 1909, they virtually ransacked LATU, defied the AFL and ITU, heaped vitriol on the Central Labor Council, and condemned union political action as a heresy worse than scabbing. Stanley Wilson, who often displayed petty and opportunistic tendencies as editor of the *Citizen*, joined the dissidents in their attacks on Fennessy, McLernon, Hay, and Drake.[103] The bill of their indictments was impressive:

• In June, without opposition, LATU's freshly minted delegates endorsed Howe's demand that President Lynch *immediately* replace McLernon as the ITU's southern California organizer.[104]

• In July Howe's regime assailed the "political ring" of Fennessy, Hay and Drake for sacrificing all other interests of the union to the *Times* fight and boasted that the shipwreck of their hopes in the recent election has sent Drake scurrying to San Francisco, Hay to cover under the wing of the AFL, and Fennessy out of all influence within LATU. Howe urged the AFL to abolish the office of its special representative in Los Angeles, calling Arthur Hay's boycott work "entirely abortive and barren of results. When the

Central Labor Council adopted a resolution opposing Howe's demand and LATU learned that its 12-year delegate to the council, Ben C. Robinson, had signed it, Robinson was immediately replaced. The new delegate, one E. Ferguson, thereupon accused Central Labor Council secretary Lonnie Butler of misconduct.[105]

• In August, a resolution drafted by Farland and H.G. Heidelberg called the ITU's refusal to recall McLernon "humiliating." LATU took President Lynch to task for stating that the Howe faction had undermined the *Times* fight and asked him either to "prove his charges or else apologize." A companion resolution charged Lynch with "malfeasance in office."[106]

• Also in August, by a 61-5 vote, the printers declared that "any member of Typographical Union No. 174 holding a municipal office shall not be eligible to an office, elective or appointive, in this union." This was more than a rhetorical flourish. While no active union member had won an elective or appointive city post in the 30 years following the collapse of the 1879-80 Workingmen's regime, that record of futility had finally ended in the spring of 1909 when Mayor Alexander named LATU's Ben Robinson to the Fire Commission. Howe and his followers clearly saw LATU's new policy as a way to punish Robinson for his disloyalty in the Hay affair. This was indeed politics--or non-politics--writ small. Progressives in the Good Government Organization must have found the union's office-holding ban silly as they went on to sweep all nine city council seats that December.[107]

• In September, LATU asks the AFL to remove Fennessy as its general organizer in southern California. "His commission...gives him a voice and vote in the Central Labor Council," it said. "In that body he antagonizes the measures introduced and supported by this union through its regularly elected delegates." Reminding the AFL that Fennessy was

until recently an officer of LATU, it claimed that "his policies and methods met with such general disapproval that he was retired."[108]

• In October, LATU held a special meeting for President Lynch, who visited the union in the interest of harmony. Lynch declared that the personal attacks against him were handicapping his effort to fight the *Times* and unionize L.A.'s job printing offices. His attempt at reconciliation failed. To much applause Heidelberg indicted Fennessy, Hay, and McLernon and read a resolution that demanded McLernon's recall and urged Lynch to cede full control of the *Times* boycott to LATU. This resolution was adopted by a 95-24 vote.[109]

• Also in October, Farland reported on his attendance at the first meeting of the Union Labor Political Club. The Central Labor Council had organized the club to defend labor's interests in the upcoming primary and general elections, but Farland was having none of it. "No good could possibly be accomplished for organized labor by any action at this time, even if said action were in good faith and not open to question," he intimated. He was particularly aggrieved by the club delegates' election of Arthur Hay as their president, noting that Hay had lost the printers' confidence "by many questionable acts." On Farland's resolution LATU not only withdrew its delegates from further participation in the club but informed the city's newspapers of this fact "in order that all candidates for office may know that this union does not sanction the *pernicious activity in the political field* of any of its members." To make its intentions unmistakably clear, on Oct. 31 Howe sent the following statement to Mayor Alexander and all other city candidates:

> "This union does not wish to enter politics as a body, and desires to make it plain that any man who states that he can control this union in any way is misrepresenting it and deceiving you." 110

LATU's absolute renunciation of any and all politics was mailed out at a moment when Howe and his cohorts had fatally overreached themselves. Without consulting the membership, they had publicly circulated several issues of a newsletter called *Publicity* to

build support for their stand against close ties with the AFL, ITU, Central Labor Council, and any other labor body outside the printing trades. *Publicity* was clearly a caucus organ, yet its costs were charged to LATU. Conservative printers who had supported Howe were surprised and disillusioned by this break with protocol. Exploiting the opportunity thus handed it, Typographical No. 174's left-wing majority moved to overthrow the Howe regime. Criswell introduced, and delegates at the December 26 meeting passed, a resolution dismissing *Publicity's* staff and replacing Farland as its editor. A month later Robinson was restored to his old position as LATU's delegate to the Central Labor Council, and *Publicity* was discontinued.[111]

The end-game for the dissidents opened on January 30, 1910, when Robinson charged Howe with "conduct unbecoming a union man" and vice-president Criswell appointed a committee to investigate the charge. In February, on the committee's unanimous advice, LATU summoned Howe to a trial. The beleaguered president realized his cause was hopeless. Before the trial could be held he picked up his ITU traveling card and left for Spokane.[112] Meanwhile, in an election which Howe did not contest and none of his allies fared well, Criswell was elected president.[113] He had already decided to deal gently with Farland. The vindictive editor had been stripped of his seat on the Allied Printing Trades Council, and with other contributors to the bootleg *Publicity*, faced a trial for anti-union behavior. As chair of the trial committee, Criswell had two options: he could ask his committee to let the case proceed, or he could do his best to end LATU's turmoil. He chose the latter course. This is what his committee told the union:

> "We would also ask you to consider that the preferring and trying of charges tends to keep the union in a state of unrest; it is a menace to our good and welfare, and serves as a formidable weapon in the hands of those who are trying to undermine our institution by preventing that fraternity in our midst which is so essential to our success. Therefore, while we deplore the action of the five men in question in their efforts to belittle the union by airing the alleged grievances to the general public, we deem it to be for the best interest of then union that the entire matter be dropped, and so recommend." 114

--And thus the issue was laid to rest. Criswell rose to the presidency, and LATU once again turned outward to confront its enemies in the workplace and political arena. Printers who had developed an interest in socialism during the 1905-07 interlude now joined the Socialist Party and sought to overthrow the reform government that had mobilized courts and police against the citywide strikes of 1910-11. The union was still divided ideologically, but for the next several years it followed a more radical path than its founders could have imagined. Campaigning as a socialist, Criswell ran for the city council in 1913, lost, ran for Congress in 1914, lost, ran for mayor in 1915, lost, ran again for city council in 1917, and won. Criswell promoted charter reform and the Mulholland, or annexation, plan for the distribution of aqueduct water. Historian Albert Howard Clodius called him "among the most able, respected, and conscientious members of the council" during the 20 years after 1915.[115]

As elected officials Wheeler and Criswell were anomalies. No other trade unionists joined them in the progressive years. Electoral exile in no way minimized the impact organized labor had on the growth and nature of modern Los Angeles. The activists we have met in this chapter and will meet again in those that follow were determined to reshape the municipal state from the inside if possible, but from the outside if need be. And mostly from the outside they would succeed.

[1] Stimson, pp. 47-50.

[2] Los Angeles Typographical Union No. 174. Minute Books, 1886-1916, Oct. 4, 1891, pp. 128-29 (hereinafter LATU); Stimson, pp. 143-45, 147-49, 152.

[3] Phillis, Joseph. "'Labor Agitators' I Have Known: IV–Capt. F.B. Colver," *Citizen*, Feb. 10, 1911, p. 8.

[4] Phillis, "'Labor Agitators' I Have Known: IV–Capt. F.B. Colver," p. 8; LATU, April 3, 1892, p. 184; April 29, 1895; Feb. 23, 1896, p. 192; June 30, 1897, p. 149; June 25, 1899, p. 99; March 25, 1900, p. 148; Stimson, pp. 39, 44, 101, 147, 173, 176, 179.

[5] Phillis, "'Labor Agitators' I Have Known: IV–Capt. F.B. Colver," p. 8.

[6] LATU, Sept. 30, 1900, pp. 179-81.

[7] There were three exceptions to the printers' failure to punish their union label foes. In 1904 they led the unprecedented recall of a city councilman, J.P. Davenport [see pages 513-30]. During the statewide elections of 1908 they helped the Lincoln-Roosevelt League defeat Otis as a delegate-at-large to the Republican convention. Typographical No. 174 soon discovered that non-union shops were printing the League's literature, however. When it apprised the Central Labor Council of this fact, the council asked union members not to vote for the League's candidates. Only two of the latter won their primary elections on August 11. Besides Otis and the Printers' Protective Fraternity, the leading foe of the printers' label--and of the Typographical Union generally--was the United Typothetae of America. A century ago it fought the label on public printing all across America. The 1896 Labor Congress took no stand on the label because it believed direct democracy, free and unlimited coinage of gold and silver, government postal savings banks, and nationalization of the country's railroads and telephone/telegraph systems were far more pressing issues. The Congress also endorsed the free harbor at San Pedro and the Populist-Democratic fusion ticket headed by William Jennings Bryan. [LATU, March 29, 1896, pp. 197-200; Sept. 30, 1900, pp. 179-82; Stimson, pp. 178-80.]

[8] LATU, July 28, 1895, p. 133; Sept. 29, 1895, pp. 146 & 153; Sept. 27, 1896, pp. 49-52; Sept. 30, 1900, pp. 179-82, 216, 220-22; "Woman's Label League," *Union Labor News*, Nov. 10, 1905; Stimson, pp. 179-82. [Stimson, pp. 322-23]

[9] LATU, Sept. 30, 1900, pp. 179-81.

[10] International Typographical Union, *The Typographical Journal*, Jan. 1906, p. 56; *Proceedings of the Sixth Annual Convention of the California State Federation of Labor*, Oakland, CA, Jan. 1-6, 1906, pp. 17, 20-21, 31-33, 35-36, 38-39, 46-47, 51.

[11] *Citizen*, "Labor Union Party," Dec. 22, 1905 and "The Foremost Question," Jan. 19, 1906.

[12] LATU, Sept. 30, 1900, pp. 179-81.

[13] The three carpenters' locals were Nos. 58, 332, and 158. [Stimson, p. 44.]

[14] Phillis, Joseph. "'Labor Agitators' I Have Known: I–Arthur Vinette," *Citizen*, Jan. 20, 1911, p. 8.

[15] Phillis, "'Labor Agitators' I Have Known: I–Arthur Vinette," p. 8;

[16] Phillis, "'Labor Agitators' I Have Known: I–Arthur Vinette," p. 8; Stimson, pp. 44-50.

[17] Stimson, pp. 46, 51-52, 69.

[18] LATU, Sept. 30, 1900, pp. 179-81.

[19] Stimson, pp. 91-92; LATU, May 6, 1888, p. 22; Nov. 4, 1888, pp. 56-57.

[20] "Planning for Union Labor Vote," *L.A. Express*, Aug. 6, 1906; Stimson, p. 306.

[21] Stimson, pp. 154-59.

[22] LATU, Sept. 30, 1900, pp. 179-81.

[23] L.A. City Council Records, Vol. 29, April 1, 8, June 3, 10, 1889; Simson, pp. 45-46, 96.

[24] Griffiths, David B. "Anti-Monopoly Movements in California, 1873–1898," *Southern California Quarterly*, v. 54, no. 1 (Spring, 1972), p. 95; Phillis, "'Labor Agitators' I Have Known: I–Arthur Vinette," p. 8; Stimson, pp. 98-100;

[25] Stimson, p. 100.

[26] Griffiths, pp. 96, 99-100. Vinette's quote is taken from a letter he wrote Donnelly on Feb. 5, 1892 [Donnelly Mss., Minnesota State Historical Society, Microfilm roll 102]; Phillis, "'Labor Agitators' I Have Known: I–Arthur Vinette," p. 8; Stimson, p. 225.

[27] "Death of Arthur Vinette," *Union Labor News*, July 27, 1906 p. 4;

[28] Mrs. H.A. Vinette letter to Joseph Phillis, July 31, 1906, quoted in Phillis, "'Labor Agitators' I Have Known: I–Arthur Vinette," p. 8. I have not been able to learn Mrs. Vinette's given name.

[29] Stimson, p. 99.

[30] "Ghost of a Strike," *Union Labor News*, Dec. 15, 1905.

[31] Phillis, Joseph, "'Labor Agitators' I Have Known: VII–L.D. Biddle," *Citizen*, March 3, 1911, p. 1; Stimson, pp. 164-65.

[32] *Union Labor News:* "Central Labor Council," Dec. 29, 1905; "Central Labor Council," Aug. 3, 1906; "State Organizer Biddle," Aug. 24, 1906; "Report of Organizer Biddle to State Convention," Jan. 11, 1907; editorial page, Jan. 18, 1907; "At Work with the Workers," Feb. 7, 1913, p. 12; Phillis, "'Labor Agitators' I Have Known: VII–L.D. Biddle," p. 1; LATU, Nov. 26, 1911, p. 4; Unidentified Sept. 27, 1906 newspaper article, "Printers' Alliance Seeks Compromise, Haynes Papers, Box 203, folder "Trades Unions-Printing." California Federation of Labor *Proceedings:* 1907, pp. 74, 87-91; 1908, pp. 57, 61, 82; 1908 (Oct.), p. 88; Stimson, pp. 98-99, 164-65, 204, 205, 207-08, 267; Arroyo, Luis Leobardo, "Mexican Workers and Ameri-

can Unions: The Los Angeles AFL, 1890–1933," Chicano Political Economy Collective Working Paper Series, #107, Chicano Studies Library Publication, University of California, Berkeley, 1981, pp. 16-17.

[33] LATU, July 29, 1901, pp. 275-77; Nov. 24, 1901, pp. 303-07; Stimson, pp. 249-56.

[34] Phillis, "'Labor Agitators' I Have Known: VII–L.D. Biddle," p. 1; Clark, pp. 387-88; Di Donato, p. 164; *Union Labor News*: "Central Labor Council," Jan. 26, 1906; "A Slap in the Face,' March 2, 1906; "Police as Strike Pickets," April 3, 1906, p. 4; "Lawler Declines to Prosecute," *L.A. Record*, Sept. 8, 1906.

[35] The Socialist Labor Party was cobbled together in 1877 from marxist elements of the International Workingmen's Society and the Social Democratic Workmen's Party. After tinkering with Greenbackism, it reorganized in 1890. ["Socialist Labor Party Principles," *Municipal News*, April 17, 1912]

[36] In a typical sortie, the Trades and Labor Alliance tried to absorb San Pedro's dock workers when they organized as Longshoremen's Local No. 3 in 1901. [Greenstein, Paul, Nigey Lennon, & Lionel Rolfe. *Bread & Hyacinths: The Rise and Fall of Utopian Los Angeles,* California Classics Books, Los Angeles, 1992, pp. 17, 19-21, 29-31; Stimson, pp. 219, 221-22; Clodius, Albert Howard. "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles, 1890-1910," dissertation, Claremont Graduate School, Claremont, CA, 1953, pp. 52-52. ["Longshoremen's Union," *Union Labor News*, Nov. 15, 1905].

[37] Stimson, pp. 222-23.

[38] Stimson, pp. 223-25.

[39] Schneirov, Richard. "New Perspectives on Socialism I: The Socialist Party Revisited," *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* v. 2, no. 3 (July 2003), p. 246.

[40] Enyeart, John. "'Boring Within': Evolutionary Socialists and the AFL," typescript of paper read at 22nd Annual Southwest Labor Studies Conference, San Francisco State University, Feb. 22-24, 1996, p. 3; Debs, Eugene V. "Industrial Unionism: A Letter to Tom Mann," *International Socialist Review* 11 (August 1910), p. 90 (quoted in Enyeart).

[41] LATU, Sept. 30, 1900, pp. 179-81.

[42] Enyeart, pp. 1-2.

[43] *Union Labor News*: "It was an Outpouring of the People" and "Central Labor Council," Feb. 2, 1906; "Public Ownership Party," Feb. 23, 1906; "Public Ownership Party Platform," Oct. 19, 1906, p. 1.

[44] *Citizen*: "Central Labor Council," May 22, 1907, p. 7; "Ten Thousand Wage Workers Coming to Los Angeles," May 31, 1907, p. 1; Ingram, James W. III. "Building the Municipal State: Coalitions and Infrastructure Development in Los Angeles, 1889–1939," typescript of paper prepared for delivery at 1994 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, New York City, p. 5; LATU, Dec. 29, 1907, pp. 224-25.

[45] Phillis, "'Labor Agitators' I Have Known: VII–L.D. Biddle," p. 1; LATU, Nov. 24, 1907, p. 216; *Union Labor News*, Feb. 23, March 9, 1906.

[46] Stimson, p. 205.

[47] *Citizen*, 1913: "Fred Wheeler Was Actor With John M'Cullough," Jan. 10, p. 2; "Booster Man," Jan. 17, p. 12; "Booster Man," April 4, p. 10.

[48] "Builders United for Open Shop," *L.A. Express*, Aug. 12, 1906; "To Insist on Closed Shop," *L.A. Examiner*, date unknown but approximately Aug. 20, 1906; "Won't Shut Down Upon Labor Day," *L.A. Times*, Aug. 31, 1906; "Thousands of Mechanics at Noon, Saturday, Claim Half Holiday," *L.A. Record*, Sept. 1, 1906; Stimson, p. 304.

[49] Stimson, pp. 205-08.

[50] Almaguer, Tomás. "Keeping the 'House of Labor' Divided: The Attitude of Organized Labor Toward the Japanese-Mexican Labor Association in 1903," in *Work, Family, Sex Roles, Language,* The National Association for Chicano Studies, Selected Papers, Mario Barrera, Alberto Camarillo, & Francisco Hernandez, eds., Tonatiuh-Quinto Sol International, Berkeley, 1980, pp. 15-17. For a detailed account of Wheeler's role in the Oxnard strike, see pp. 274-78..

[51] *Citizen*, May 22, 1907, p. 7 and May 31, 1907, p. 1. For a detailed account of the civil service exemption, as well as a correction of the May 22 date to May 24, see pages 616-22 under the heading "Ditching the Civil Service."

[52] "Our Candidates: Fearless Champions of the Rights of the People," *Citizen*, June 9, 1911, p. 6.

[53] At their Omaha convention in 1892, populists endorsed a platform based on the assumption that "the interests of rural and civic labor are the same; their enemies are identical." Since rural labor included millions of family farmers who owned their means of production while "civic labor" did not, the interests of the two classes often overlapped--especially with regard to monopoly--but were hardly identical. [Quoted in Griffiths, pp. 98-99]

[54] Griffiths, pp. 111-12; Klotsche, J. Martin, "The 'United Front' Populists," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* (June, 1937), p. 389; Stimson, pp. 151, 224; LATU, Oct. 29, 1899, p. 116.

[55] Stimson, pp. 224-25.

[56] Stimson, pp. 324-25.

[57] "Utter Rout of Machine," *L.A. Express*, March 24, 1909.

[58] Johnson, Daniel J., "'And Never the Twain Shall Meet': Working Class Politics in Los Angeles, 1903–1909," unpublished paper presented at the 19th Annual Conference of the Southwest Labor Studies Association, April 17, 1993, pp. 6, 18-20 (my numbering); Clodius, pp. 208-10; "New Elections Due to Direct Legislation," unattributed 1912 or 1913 newspaper article listing direct democracy elections since 1902, Haynes Papers, Box 43, folder "Direct Legislation–Los Angeles–1913 (2); Stimson, p. 325; Clark, pp. 438-39.

[59] "Political Observations," *Citizen*, Jan. 26, 1912, p. 10; Stimson, p. 364. Wheeler received 54,444 votes in the Dec. 65, 1911 general election.

[60] *Citizen*, 1913: April 4, p. 1; May 30, p. 6; June 6, pp. 1-2; July 4, p. 1; Los Angeles County

Central Labor Council Minute Books, 1909-1916 (hereinafter LACLC), housed at the Urban Archives Center, California State University, Northridge, June 27, 1913; Stimson, p. 224.

[61] *Citizen*, 1915: May 7, p. 1; May 28, p. 5; June 4, pp. 1, 3.

[62] The Perrys err (p. 118) in stating that Ralph L. Criswell of Typographical No. 174 was elected to the city council in 1915. He ran unsuccessfully for mayor that year and did not win his council seat until 1917. [Perry, Louis B. and Richard S. Perry. *A History of the Los Angeles Labor Movement, 1911-1941,* University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1963, pp. 118-21 (hereinafter Perrys); Arroyo, p. 19.]

[63] LATU, Sept. 30, 1900, pp. 179-81.

[64] *Citizen*, April 17, 1914, p. 1

[65] *Citizen*, 4/25/13 p. 2; 7/25/13 pp. 1-2; 8/1/13 pp. 1, 4; 8/8/13 p. 3.

[66] *L.A. Express*, Dec. 13, 1911; *Citizen*, Dec. 8, 1911, pp. 1-2; Stimson, p. 407.

[67] *Citizen*, Jan. 17, 1913 pp. 1-2; Feb. 7, 1913 p. 14.

[68] Stimson, pp. 146, 149-50, 178.

[69] *Citizen*, 1912: March 1, p. 3; March 22, p. 2; April 12, p. 13.

[70] *Citizen*, 1912: March 1, p. 3; March 22, p. 2.

[71] It is not clear how the labor newspaper determined that socialists voted against the charter amendments, especially since they lived in throughout the city. [*Citizen*, 1912: June 7, p. 1; Aug. 2, p. 3; Dec. 6, p. 1.]

[72] The hyperbolic full name of the Old Guard charter-drafting group was Citizens Committee of One Thousand. [*Municipal News*, "Two Charter Clinics at Work," Dec. 18, 1912, pp. 1-2 and "Citizens' Committee to Amend Charter," Jan. 8, 1913; *Citizen*, Dec. 20, 1912 pp. 1, 2, 5; Jan. 3, 1913, p. 8; Feb. 21, 1913 p. 4.]

[73] LATU, Sept. 30, 1900, pp. 179-81.

[74] Among the other PCC amendments was one dividing the city's executive branch into nine departments, each monitored by one of the nine council members. Among other Citizens Committee amendments was one extending private harbor land leases from 15 to 40 years, another giving the Harbor Commission complete control over leases, franchises, and wharfage rates, and a third abolishing the city's newspaper, the *Municipal News*. [*Municipal News*, Dec. 25, 1912, p. 2; 1913: Charter Conference Completes Its Work," Jan, 8; "Conference Ready to Submit Charter" and "Charter Amendments Formally Endorsed," Jan. 15; "Sign Petitions for Amendments," Jan. 29; "Council Declines to Issue Call for Charter Election," "Charter Amendments Merit Your Ballot," and "Both Speakers Favor Proportional System," Feb. 5; "Citizens Committee Plans to Submit Work," Feb. 12; "Begin Campaign for Charter Amendments" and "Reed Explains His Vote on Charter," Feb. 26; "Will Debate Rival Charter Amendments," "Proposed New Amendments: Centralization—Distribution," and "Good Govt. Indorses Thirteen Amendments," March 5; "Opposes Return to Ancient Ward System," "Proposed New Amendments--Plans for Representation," and "Will People Approve

Return to Ward Rule?," March 12; "Proposed New Amendments--Opposing Clauses Analyzed," March 19; *Citizen* 1912: Dec. 27, pp. 1, 3; 1913: Jan. 3, p. 8; Jan. 17, pp. 1-2, 3; Jan. 24, pp. 4, 5; Jan. 31, p. 1; Feb. 14, p. 1; Feb. 28, p. 1; March 14, pp. 1-2, 7; March 27, p. 3.]

[75] LACLC, Feb. 14, 1913; *Citizen*, 1913: Jan. 17, p. 1; Jan. 24, p. 5; March 7, pp. 1, 11.

[76] "Election Results May Bring in Entire New City Administration," *Municipal News*, March 26, 1913; *Citizen*, March 28, 1913, p. 1.

[77] *Citizen*, March 28, 1913, p. 15.

[78] "People Will Vote on 18 Amendments," *Municipal News*, Feb. 19, 1913, p. 1.

[79] *Citizen*, March 14, 1913, pp. 1-2.

[80] Ostrom, Vincent. *Water & Politics: A Study of Water Policies and Administration in the Development of Los Angeles,* The Haynes Foundation, Los Angeles, 1953, pp. 28-30, 52-53; Van Valen, Nelson. "A Neglected Aspect of the Owens River Aqueduct Story: The Inception of the Los Angeles Municipal Electric System," *Southern California Quarterly,* v. 59, no. 1 (Spring, 1977), pp. 103-04.

[81] LATU, Sept. 30, 1900, pp. 179-81.

[82] Under "excess condemnation," Wheeler pointed out, cities could buy more land than they needed for street or other improvements in order to sell the new frontage when the improvements raised its value.

[83] *Citizen*, Sept. 22, 1911, p. 15; Oct. 22,1915, pp. 2, 4. Despite Wheeler's prediction, the Otis-progressive scare tactic seems to have worked.

[84] LATU, Sept. 30, 1900, pp. 179-81.

[85] LACLC Executive Board, Nov. 28, 1910.

[86] *Municipal News*, 1913: "Committee Reports on Municipal News" and "Old Guard to Rescue Non-Partisan Ballot," Feb. 12; "Why Not Make Daily of the Municipal News," Feb. 19.

[87] *Citizen*, April 25, 1913, pp. 1, 3; Sept. 12, 1913, p. 1.

[88] *Citizen*, July 1, 8, 1910; Clark, p. 448.

[89] LATU, Sept. 30, 1900, pp. 179-81.

[90] *Volksstaat* was a German Social-Democratic newspaper. Blanquists, followers of the French radical Louis Auguste Blanqui (1805-81), believed the revolution in Europe would flow from the work of the radical intelligentsia. [Quoted in Engels, Frederick, "Program of the Blanquist Communards," *Volksstaat*, No. 73, 1874.]

[91] "Commends Work of Committee," *Common Sense*, April 17, 1909; "Socialists Elect Delegates to National Convention," *Citizen* March 22, 1912, p. 3.

[92] Lenin, V.I. *The Revolutionary-Democratic Dictatorship of the Proletariat and the Peasantry*, March, 1905.

[93] LACLC Executive Board, March 17 and 24, 1914; LACLC, March 28, 1914; Perrys, p. 118.

[94] LATU, Sept. 30, 1900, pp. 179-81.

[95] *Citizen*, July 17, 1914, p. 1; LACLC, July 20, 1914; Perrys, p. 118.

[96] Greene, Julie. "'The Strike at the Ballot Box': The American Federation of Labor's Entrance Into Election Politics, 1906-1909," *Labor History* v. 32, no. 2 (Spring, 1991), pp. 165, 169.

[97] LATU, Jan. 28, 1906, p. 57; Nov. 25, 1906, pp. 124-26.

[98] LATU, 1904: Feb. 21, pp. 155-61; Feb. 28, pp. 162-64; March 27, pp. 178-81, 183; April 24, pp. 191-215; May 1, pp. 216-19.

[99] LATU, April 30, 1905, p. 294; 1906: Jan. 28, p. 57; Feb. 25, pp. 64-65; March 25, p. 72.

[100] LATU, 1908: March 29, pp. 244-45; April 12, pp. 248-49; April 26, p. 254.

[101] LATU, May 31, 1908, p. 265.

[102] At the Feb. 27, 1910 meeting the union's leftwing majority, now back in power, proposed amendments to LATU's constitution which would limit executive board nominees to one per work unit and allow the entire union membership to vote on each candidate. [LATU, May 30, 1909; Feb. 27, 1910, pp. 130-31.]

[103] Stimson, pp. 326-28.

[104] LATU, June 27, 1909, p. 46.

[105] LATU, July 25, 1909, pp. 53-54, 57, 60-64, 68-69.

[106] LATU, Aug. 29, 1909, pp. 79-81.

[107] LATU, Aug. 29, 1909, pp. 78-79.

[108] LATU, Sept. 26, 1909, pp. 82-83.

[109] LATU, Oct. 10, 1909, pp. 88-89.

[110] LATU, Sept. 30, 1900, pp. 179-81.

[111] LATU, Dec. 26, 1909, pp. 111-14; Jan. 30, 1910, pp. 116, 122; March 27, 1910, p. 138.

[112] LATU, 1910: Jan. 30, p. 123; Feb. 27, p. 124; March 27, p. 136; April 24, p. 144; May 29, p. 156; July 31, p. 177.

[113] LATU, May 29, 1910, pp. 153-54.

[114] LATU, Sept. 30, 1900, pp. 179-81.

[115] *Citizen* 5/30/13 p. 6; 10/16/14 pp. 1-2; 3/5/15 p. 3; 4/9/15 p. 5; 5/7/15 p. 1; LATU, April 30, 1916, p. 293; Clodius, p. 551.

9.
The Triumph of Home Rule

Without the California State Constitution of 1879 or something very much like it hatched at roughly the same time, Los Angeles as we love or love to hate it would not exist.

Legislators at Sacramento, not the Los Angeles city council, would have enacted the laws and set the policies that shaped the city during the progressive era and beyond. Those worthies would almost certainly have placed their growth chips on San Francisco, not the still-unimpressive cow town south of the Tehachapi Mountains.

Lacking the powers granted it by the 1879 Constitution, Los Angeles would have had only limited authority to buy out private utilities and take control of its own water and electric power supplies. In all likelihood these resources would have remained in private hands. One notable casualty would have been the city's ability to annex scores of outlying towns by providing them with water.

Even with municipal ownership Los Angeles would have lacked the bonding capacity to borrow the huge sums it spent a century ago on its Owens Valley Aqueduct and municipal electric system. Together these enterprises underwrote the city's phenomenal growth. They spared Angelenos from the statewide 2002 power blackouts, and they continue to supply them with reliable, low-cost water and power today. The city would have grown without aqueduct water and power, but at a far slower, less celebrated, less maligned pace.

To the limited extent that it did borrow, Los Angeles would not have been compelled to seek the debt approval of two-thirds of its qualified voters, and the hard-fought grassroots campaigns that championed the city's growth would probably not have come to

pass. The direct democracy rights of initiative, referendum, and recall for which California was widely praised a century ago, and which originated in the Los Angeles working class, were guaranteed by a city charter that owed its existence to the 1879 Constitution. Without the home rule provisions of that forgotten document, the city's governing apparatus would have remained modest well into the 20th century, a mere or caretaker state instead of the imposing overseer of kilowatt and water socialism that it actually became.

A Polity at War with Itself

None of the local powers noted above appeared on the wish lists of the Republicans and Democrats who banded together--*presto chango!*--as Nonpartisans for the runup to the constitutional convention of 1878-79. Fiercely partisan, the Non-Partisans campaigned to elect delegates who would defend the status quo against the specter of anarchy they saw in the fast-rising Workingmen's Party and rural Grange clubs. What was the status quo? Mostly it entailed the micromanagement of California's cities, towns, and counties by Sacramento and deference to the large corporations that had recently commandeered the state's economy. Both these top-heavy institutions had been thrown at risk in the winter of 1878. Under pressure from Workingmen, Grangers, and a few rebellious Democrats, the legislature had scheduled a constitutional convention for the following September, preceded by the popular election of delegates.

The resulting 1878 political campaign was as bitterly fought as any in California history, yet on one point most of its combatants agreed: the state's original constitution, framed three decades earlier, had become a liability. Outmoded by the growth of population, it could not mediate the warring classes, economic shocks, and radical politics spawned by the rise of large-scale industry. California's population had ballooned from some 50,000 in 1849 to nearly 850,000. Business failures had soared, banks and mining stocks had collapsed. Monopolies, epitomized by the Southern Pacific Railroad, had

warped both the capitalistic market and the political process.[1] Declared the Democratic-leaning *Los Angeles Express*,

> "Our people are in a state of fermentation; our industrial interests are out of balance; a large portion of the people are struggling for existence while a few have aggregated to themselves the great bulk of this world's goods; the laws have operated partially, and have been bent to the side of wealth; combinations of capital are becoming more powerful than the State; great corporations, some of them monopolies, are using their power selfishly and oppressively; the lines between the rich and the poor are being more rigidly drawn; classes obnoxious to democratic equality are arising...and the whole system of social, industrial, and political machinery is out of gear." [2]

The most critical flaw of the 1849 constitution was its disproportionate gift of power to Sacramento. While it had directed the legislature to organize a system of counties, cities, and towns, in almost the same stroke of the pen it had hobbled their ability to incur debt, levy assessments, impose taxes, and extend credit.[3] Under such constraints, even as Los Angeles grew five-fold in population between 1850 and 1880, its minimalist mayor-council government wielded little control over the city's economic future; most laws regulating the lives of Angelenos were written in Sacramento and enforced by the governor.[4] What was true of Los Angeles was true elsewhere. Whether the Southern Pacific and its allies installed their own regimes in city after city was therefore largely irrelevant. By capturing the legislature they had captured the state.

Most lawmakers who voted for a constitutional convention applauded this state of affairs but could not ignore the widespread demands for a new organic document. They believed they could structure the campaign to elect delegates so that it would produce a large conservative voting bloc, thwart the aims of Grangers and the Workingmen's Party of California (WPC), and safeguard both corporate interests and their own lofty status as overseers of counties, cities, and towns.

Rise of the Workingmen and Grangers

What alarmed conservatives was the fact that their *bêtes noires*--radicalized workers and family farmers--had gained political traction during the 1870s. United in the Patrons

of Husbandry, or Grange, farmers had organized scores of local branches while communicating with one another through the *Pacific Rural Press*. They had also reached out to city workers, appealing to a shared hatred of large corporations and the politicians they had bought and paid for. Throughout rural California the Grangers nominated and stumped for convention delegates pledged to their cause.[5] The Workingmen did likewise in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and other cities on or near the coast. No California political debut has ever been more stunning than that of the WPC. The new party exploded from San Francisco's sandlots, immediately became an economic force in that city, spread north and south, and survived just long enough to leave an indelible imprint on the ideology, workplace goals, and organizing methods of the Bay Area labor movement.[6] Its first meeting took place on Sunday, September 23, 1877. Ten days later a gathering of 700 mostly young, mostly immigrant wage workers formed the WPC and elected Denis Kearney its president. A brilliant but mercurial and racist tactician, incendiary in his rhetoric and often arrested, Kearney sensed the mood of the sandlots with uncanny accuracy and used it to create powerful ward organizations of craftsmen, factory operatives, and laborers.[7] His program, and theirs, sought to

> "...unite all the poor workingmen and their friends into one political party for the purpose of defending themselves against the encroachments of capital on the happiness of our people, and the liberties of our country. We propose (1) to wrest the government from the hands of the rich and place it in those of the people where it properly belongs; (2) we propose to rid the country of cheap Chinese labor as soon as possible because it tends still more to degrade labor and aggrandize capital; (3) we propose to destroy land monopoly in our state by such laws as will make it impossible; (4) we propose to destroy the great money power of the rich by a system of taxation that will make great wealth impossible in the future;...(6) we propose to elect no one but competent working men and their friends to any office whatever....This party will exhaust all peaceable means of attaining its ends, but it will not be denied justice when it has the power to enforce it."[8]

Kearney was nothing if not quixotic. He had helped craft a party and a platform whose aims were defiantly political. Workingmen's voices had led the chorus demanding a constitutional convention. Yet in April, 1878, Kearney declared that no WPC city or ward

officer would be permitted to run for a delegate's seat. This edict sparked an uproar in the ranks. "Here is a proposition two months before election to shut down on 2,000 men, our best and most zealous men, and compel us to root around and get dolts, idiots and soft-heads; and then fill the convention full of dummies," the party's secretary, H.L. Knight, rebuked his president. "If we did, they would be playthings in the hands of lawyers, scribes and etc."[9] Though Kearney's erratic leadership split the WPC into two factions, the party vigorously campaigned to elect its convention nominees and inject its anti-monopoly, anti-Chinese program into the heart of California politics.[10] An indispensable step toward this goal was the naturalization and voter registration of white immigrant workers, which the WPC undertook that spring. Every branch club and ward unit took part in the nomination of delegates, and in May the WPC candidates began their dogged drive for votes.[11]

The Los Angeles County workingmen shared most of the aims but not the priorities of their San Francisco counterparts. While they hated monopoly just as much and the Southern Pacific even more, expulsion of the Chinese ranked lower on their list. "By shifting emphasis from the basic Chinese issue to the evils of monopoly, government corruption, and social inequalities," states Stimson, the L.A. party "brought wide general support, just as the inclusion of land and railroad planks attracted the remnants of the Granger movement. These broader objectives differentiated the southern party from the northern....Enjoying steady growth in membership and influence during 1878, it reached the climax of its power toward the end of the year.[12] On May 30, 1878, Workingmen met in Stearns Hall to ratify the nominations of John S. Thompson, John P. West, and Edward Evey as convention delegates. Of the three only West and Evey had worked with their hands as radicalized farmers, but all subscribed to the L.A. party's platform. West, how-

ever, did so cantankerously. When it came time for nominees to pledge support for the workingmen-farmers' platform at the constitutional convention, he demurred, refusing to sign his name to this or any other binding commitment. If the party pressed him on the point, moreover, he said he would sever all ties with it. The pledge was quickly forgotten, and West's nomination was ratified along with those of Evey and Thompson.[13] This tempest in a teapot did not deter West from voting the WPC position on nearly all issues at the constitutional convention.

The "Non-Partisan" Response

The Workingmen's campaign for convention seats, buoyed by their election victories in the Bay area, clearly alarmed the owners of California's large corporations and the leaders of the Democratic and Republican parties. Three months before delegates were chosen, the legislature ordered the state election commission to purge from the voter rolls all persons who had not cast ballots on September 5 or October 15, 1877.[14] This attack on the popular franchise blunted the WPC's naturalization and voter registration drive but did not stop the Workingmen from achieving their highest-ever turnout on June 19, 1878.

More fundamental as an anti-WPC strategy was the decision by Democrats and Republicans to field joint "non-partisan" slates across the state. They acted at the prompting of corporate dailies like the *Alta California* which viewed the WPC as a red menace that only a united front of the two capitalist parties could put down.[15] "Throughout the period from the passing of the enabling act to the election on June 19th the conservative press of the larger cities proclaimed day after day the awful possibilities of the siege of communism, and the press of the interior re-echoed these sentiments," writes Carl Brent Swisher in his influential *Motivation and Political Technique in the California Constitutional Convention, 1878-79*. "Still, there was no lack of insight in the statements of some newspapers that the nonpartisan movement was itself partisan, and was a fusion to prevent re-

form."[16] Republicans and Democrats shucked their differences to back the same candidates in 30 of California's 50 counties. There, with few exceptions, the delegate election became a pitched battle between Non-Partisans and Workingmen. Kearney denounced his city's Non-Partisan ticket as a collection of "thieves, villainous and murderous bloodsuckers, a band of criminals and robbers."[17]

In Los Angeles County, all the Democratic nominees were Non-Partisan fusion candidates save for Volney E. Howard, a foe of corporations who led a Democratic slate in the first senatorial district. Typical of those who shed their partisan loyalties as easily as snakes their skins was James J. Ayers, *Evening Express* editor and ally of county farmers in their long cargo war against the Southern Pacific Railroad. "How proper it is," said Ayers, "that in framing a new Constitution we should endeavor to avoid the strife and prejudices of narrow partisanism. I do not feel that I surrender my Democracy when I assist in a non-partisan movement for a purpose so pregnant with importance to the whole people." With notable suppleness the *Express* anointed the unrepentant Democrat Howard *and* the Non-Partisan Ayers to carry the entrepreneurial banner against Workingmen whose leader "fulminates the most anarchical and incendiary methods. So bold and defiant have been the utterances of this man, and so un-American and lawless have been his public acts, that the thinking and conservative people of the State...would be committing a fatal error if they should entrust the men under his control with power."[18]

What are we to make of California's first large-scale experiment with "nonpartisanship"? Two observations:

First, nonpartisanship clarified an otherwise murky fact: Republicans and Democrats differed on little but tactics. Strategically, they both sought to preserve the hegemony of capitalist enterprise and capitalist ways of thinking in California. In normal times--that is when no third force butted in on their *pas de deux*--the two capitalist parties competed for

"power, prestige, and spoils"[19] and masked their cloned character by ranting at each other on all manner of secondary issues, waging political campaigns full of sound and fury signifying little. One such quarrel involved the structure of capitalist business. While Republicans cast their lot with large corporations owned by coteries of stockholders, Democrats like Volney Howard who had seen the Southern Pacific Railroad extort subsidies from towns south of the Tehachapis wanted the state to charter nothing more imposing than limited partnerships.[20] Both parties, however, celebrated the private capture of socially produced wealth. A modern example of their equivalence on the national stage was the 2002-03 debate between Republicans and Democrats over the invasion of Iraq: both parties were for it, but they argued heatedly over its timing and the breadth of the alliance behind it. The persistence of a shared strategy despite many eye-catching tactical collisions explains why "Demipub" correctly identifies our two-party system.

Second, nonpartisanship was first and foremost a defense against popular insurgencies from the left. In 1877-79 these insurgencies were launched by the Grangers and the Workingmen. It did not matter that both movements embraced capitalism as warmly as any coupon-clipper--they hated its monopoly stage. That heresy was enough to send a tremor through Demipub ranks and promote Non-Partisan slates in 30 counties. Nearly three decades later, when L.A.'s Republican and Democratic progressives made their first serious bid for power, they, too, campaigned as nonpartisans and did so for like reasons. The force driving them together in 1906 was not the despised Southern Pacific "octopus," whose tentacles had locally weakened, but a labor movement which had grown unruly at work and rebellious in politics.

Workingmen Out-Organize the Non-Partisans

We do not know how a wholly partisan election would have turned out on June 19, 1878. Perhaps the Workingmen and Grangers would have fared better at the polls than

they did--but they fared well enough to jolt the Demipubs and set the stage for a bitterly fought constitutional parley in September. Non-Partisans had entered the final days of the campaign confident of a decisive victory. They did not get it. The final vote tally showed they had elected 77 delegates, the Workingmen 51, Republicans 11, Democrats 10, and independents 3. Workingmen and their farm allies had carried San Francisco, Los Angeles, and 11 other counties. In Los Angeles they elected Edward Evey and John West, who reaped by far the county's highest vote count, and very nearly elected Thompson. Voters sent Non-Partisan James Ayers and Democrat Volney Howard to Sacramento. "[T]he Workingmen's Party has developed a strength which places it in the position of one of the powerful political organizations in this State," a chastened *L.A. Express* conceded on June 20. "If it has not swept the State, it has come so near doing it as to cause an astonishing degree of anxiety in the minds of conservative people....The returns coming in from the Northern portion of the State are generally favorable to the Non-Partisan ticket; but it is a remarkable circumstance that the railroad towns, where the corporations would seem to exercise the greatest influence, are all strongly Workingmen."[21]

For very rough clues to the voting patterns that would shape the convention we look first to the social status of the 152 delegates. All were men. Only two had been born in the state. It was no surprise that lawyers predominated. There were 57 of them, plus a district judge, a justice of the peace, a deputy sheriff, and a corporation president. Of these 61 delegates most were Non-Partisans, Republicans or conservative Democrats.

Most of the 61 votes just tallied were more likely to defend the status quo than to risk major changes.

Five physicians, three journalists, two teachers, and one bookkeeper constituted a small group of professionals and semi-professionals. A grocer, restauranteur, and nine merchants, mostly of the small retail variety, also joined this middle sector at the conven-

tion as small capitalists whose voting predilections depended on whether they identified more with the laboring or the expropriating class. Several, in point of fact, had run on Workingmen's tickets.

Many of the 22 votes just tallied were likely to play a "swing" role at the convention.

One delegate's occupation was unknown.

The big surprise was the large number of delegates who relied mainly on their own labor power. Of these, 39 farmed for a living and 29 worked for wages, mostly in blue-collar jobs. Dairymen, grain growers, carpenters, miners, tinners, gardeners, sign painters, millers, coopers, and cooks, they gave the 1878-79 constitutional convention a far more democratic cast than any California lawmaking body before or since.

The 68 votes just tallied were far more likely to demand change than accept a continuation of the status quo.[22]

Regional concerns cut across these class lines. When workingmen and farmers tried to blunt the impact of large corporations on their lives, Sacramento's control of local legislation thwarted their efforts. The resentments fueled by this dilemma flared up everywhere, but they burned hotter in Los Angeles and San Diego than in northern California. Below the Tehachapis, farmers and merchants had endured a far more traumatic experience at the hands of the railroads. "Representing the interests of San Francisco and eastern capital," political scientist Steven P. Erie observes, "the Southern Pacific treated Southern California as a colony." To service its huge debt and protect its core investments in the Bay Area, "the railroad saddled Southern California with high shipping rates and poor schedules." Southern cities lacked the statewide political clout of San Francisco and were less adept than the northern city at wheedling special laws from Sacramento. Declared the *L.A. Express:* "San Francisco and the middle counties, having the largest representation, out-voted us; having the shrewdest parliamentarians, out-manœuvred us;

having the greatest wealth, out-lobbied us; being the upper dog in the fight, choked us down in about the most effectual manner they could devise." Thus it was not only the Workingmen's candidates Evey and West who rode north determined to win home rule for Los Angeles, but also the Democrats Ayers and Howard.[23]

The nuances of region and the tug of war for swing votes modified but did not override the most decisive struggle at the convention. This struggle, Alexander Saxton proposes, "took the form of a contest between the two-party establishment on the one hand, operating as a united front, and the Workingmen on the other."[24] Representing only a third of the delegates, the Workingmen knew they had to out-organize the Non-Partisans in the months preceding and days immediately following the convention's September 28, 1878 start date. They met weekly during the summer to draft amendments and plan their line of attack. In response Non-Partisans caucused with conservative Democrats and Republicans, gaining a wide numerical edge over their rivals who had not yet built bridges to the Grange. Some farmer delegates, says Swisher, "distrusted the clannish Kearneyite agitators"--but this exaggerates their differences to the point of deception. Watchful waiting was more the farmers' mindset. Though some 83 Non-Partisans and Demipubs organized the convention, selecting its committees and electing the corporate lawyers' candidate J.P. Hoge its president, the Workingmen conciliated the Grange and helped them elect J.A. Johnson secretary. It was an omen of much greater cooperation to come.[25]

The Workingmen Patronized

The intelligence, flexibility, and resolve of the Workingmen at Sacramento were underrated by most of their contemporaries. Class condescension had everything to do with this error. Ayers, who was both a delegate and the sometimes pompous editor of the *L.A. Evening Express,* had his paper make the following declaration three days after the Workingmen's remarkable performance in the June 19 election:

"There will doubtless be enough capable men in the Convention to guide the inexperienced members in framing a Constitution which will meet the needs of the State. The only question is, whether the men elected by the Workingmen's tidal wave will submit to the advice of their more experienced colleagues."[26]

Historians have been no more perceptive. Hubert Howe Bancroft, one of the state's better-known 19th-century scribes, reportedly dismissed the Workingmen delegates as "more fit to clean legislative halls than to sit in them."[27] Swisher played the same chord in 1930, though with a lighter touch. "[I]n general ability or in special training for the political arena," he said, "the workingmen delegates were not the equals of the delegates-at-large....The non-partisan group contained many of the best lawyers and shrewdest politicians in the state, and had in general a high degree of ability in political engineering."[28]

Naturally such condescension toward Workingmen and Grangers deflated later assessments of what they achieved at Sacramento. The celebrated single-taxer, Henry George, pilloried the convention as a graveyard for reform, declaring that it had failed to "lessen social inequalities or purify politics."[29] And in truth when worker and farmer delegates did not vote their combined maximum strength, they usually lost an issue. The 1879 constitution embalmed more than a few of their defeats. Hoping to abolish the poll tax, they watched the convention clap a two-dollar levy on all male citizens aged 21 to 60. They sought federal ownership of the state's railroad tracks but had to settle for a rate-regulating California Railroad Commission that was soon captured by its intended targets. The Workingmen's most retrograde reform also failed. They had long demanded the expulsion of the Chinese from California and a halt to their immigration. Short of that, they insisted that the Chinese be stripped of their right to fish, sue, and own property. None of these demands won a majority vote. "Corporations were still barred from employing Chinese," states Swisher, "but the withdrawal of their charters for doing so had been dropped and enforcement of the provision was left to the legislature. Chinese

exclusion and persecution, one of the workingmen's chief reasons for going to the convention, had been largely rebuffed."[30]

Nevertheless: No constitution ever sent more profound changes rippling through California than the one on which Workingmen and Grangers left their stamp in 1879. For the first time in organic law, it brought the state's free-wheeling corporations under tighter rein. More decisively, it broke Sacramento's grip on local governance--a feat that drastically altered the circumstances in which Los Angeles would work out its history. Rather than a graveyard, this document was a true seedbed for reform.

Historians have delved much deeper into votes during the 1879 constitution that taxed and regulated corporations than into those extending home rule to California's cities and towns. This is understandable. The convention's duel with corporations had an immediacy and a David-Goliath bravura that the home rule debate rule lacked. Though the impact of home rule was immeasurably greater, it was also attenuated. All the chapters of this dissertation after the present one, dealing with events from 1890 to 1914, bear witness to the home rule constitution.

First, however, we turn to the legacy of corporate regulation that workers and farmers willed the state in 1879. The role of the laboring classes in this regard has not been generally recognized.

The Half-Heartedness of Regulation

Framing the debate over regulation was the document's very first section; it guaranteed Californians the right to buy, own, and protect private property. Grangers and Workingmen supported this right as vociferously as delegates loyal to the great corporations, but they fought to extend the notion of property. They insisted, for example, that delegates recognize the stake artisans, mechanics, and laborers owned in holdings for which they furnished labor or materials. The new constitution awarded workers a "mechanic's

lien" against such property equal to the value of the work they had done.[31] Similarly, Grangers demanded that banks be taxed for the farm and other mortgages they held. In January, 1876, the state supreme court had ruled that mortgage credits were not property and therefore could not be taxed. Delegate W.W. Moreland argued that for "the purposes of taxation, bonds, notes, mortgages, evidence of indebtedness, solvent debts, franchises, and everything of value capable of transfer or ownership, shall be considered property." In the same breath he added that "growing crops...shall be exempt from taxation." Moreland's amendment did not pass, but one very much like it did.[32]

It was sandlot support for the Grangers' tax proposals that solidified the alliance of the two laboring classes midway through the convention. "The farmers and the workingmen were coming more and more to stand together, as against the representatives of the great moneyed interests," says Swisher. At the outset no southern Californian had been placed on the corporations committee. This fact greatly exercised James J. Ayers. "To the people of that end of the state the question of railroad discrimination is of vital importance," he declared. "We ask that General Howard and Mr. West be added to the committee." Convention leaders granted his request.[33]

Workingmen, Grangers, and a rump contingent of Democrats led by Volney Howard fought strenuously to discipline the railroads and strike down the legal arrangements that shielded corporate owners, managers, and stockholders from financial responsibility for their actions. As the committee's sole Workingmen, West and a delegate named Clitus Barbour kept their comrades closely informed about the issue and ready to vote *en bloc* for radical reforms. The first of these, introduced by a farmer named J.V. Webster, made each stockholder of a corporation or joint stock association "personally liable for his proportion of all the debts and liabilities contracted or incurred during the time he was a stockholder, as the amount of stock owned by him bears to the whole of the subscribed

capital stock, or shares of the corporation or association." After a heated debate in which opponents argued that Webster's proposal would drive capital from the state, it was sent to the full convention and adopted by a 81-40 vote. Barbour, other Workingmen, and former duelist and state supreme court chief justice David S. Terry then argued for the following amendment:

> "The directors or trustees of corporations or joint stock associations shall be jointly and severally liable to the creditors and stockholders for all moneys embezzled or misappropriated by the officers of such corporation or joint stock association."

Opponents attacked this measure on the grounds that it would make it nearly impossible for large businesses to hire directors. Worried that a backlash against the proposal would undercut the chance for railroad regulation which had brought him to Sacramento, Howard broke ranks with the Workingmen and tried without success to limit the amendment to cases of negligence. It was adopted as Terry had drafted it by an even larger margin than the section it amended, garnering 88 votes. Swisher estimates that 50 of the 52 Workingmen cast their ballots for it while more than half the other delegates either opposed it or did not vote at all.[34]

Over the next decade many of the constraints placed on corporations in 1879 were weakened, poorly enforced, or voided by the California Supreme Court and legislature.[35] The Workingmen deserve much of the blame for those setbacks. During the fall 1879 state elections they refused to join forces with a pro-constitution party and instead fought that party for votes. Republicans won most of the legislative offices and set about unraveling as much of the new constitution as they could.

The Decisiveness of Home Rule

This fate, however, did *not* befall its home rule provisions. Quite the opposite happened. Over the next three decades home rule was upheld by the courts, honored by the legislature, conferred on more cities and towns, extended to counties, and exploited ag-

gressively and creatively by local governments. Contemporaries of these events in Los Angeles extolled them. Later generations seized the benefits of home rule knowing little of how it had come to them and even less about the workingclass votes that had made it possible. Today it seems only natural that cities should legislate their own affairs, but this was a novel and hotly contested idea in 1879. A convention speech by L.A.'s Volney Howard bristled with anger at the status quo:

> "[I]t is a remarkable fact that all the opposition comes from the advocates of centralism, the whole of it. They are opposed to local government, that is the whole thing....It is notorious that every job is gotten up by a clique who have an axe to grind at home, and they send it to the Legislature and get it adopted, and the legislature saddles it upon the people in the cities and towns. That is the history in this state."[36] 1062

Like Evey and West--the two Workingmen elected with him from Los Angeles--Howard wanted the convention to end Sacramento's meddling in the local affairs of virtually all the state's cities and large towns. This was not to be. The strong Bay Area delegation led by John S. Hager sought home rule for San Francisco alone, arguing that its unique city-county government required special sanction. Hager's proposal limited the right of self-government to places with more than 100,000 inhabitants--that is, only to the Bay city. Howard, Clitus Barbour, and other labor delegates opposed this limitation. It was temporarily dropped, then revived just before the final vote on home rule. Meanwhile the Non-Partisans mounted a rear-guard defense of the state's right to micromanage its cities and towns. The threat posed by these "sycophants of centralism," as Howard called them, persuaded Workingmen and southern California Democrats to accept a discriminatory population threshold they knew would exclude fewer and fewer cities over time.[37]

So radical did home rule appear to Non-Partisans and some anti-monopolists that they could not conceive of it as anything but secession. J.E. Hale, who had worked shoulder-to-shoulder with Hager on railroad regulation, now accused him of plotting "to set up a

government independent of the State of California." Claiming that under home rule San Francisco might seize control of all ships passing through the Golden Gate, he denounced this " boldest...attempt at secession." Alexander Campbell, another Hager ally on railroad issues, tried unsuccessfully to amend the home rule proposal so the state legislature could void all or part of any city's charter at any time. Why would anti-monopolists who had vilified the Southern Pacific's capture of Sacramento now fight to preserve Sacramento's hegemony over local life? The answer cannot be extracted from the convention proceedings or from *Motivation and Political Technique in the California Constitutional Convention*, Carl Brent Swisher's classic 1930 study of the mindset of the delegates. We can infer, however, that after disposing (so they thought) of railroad traffic through the legislature, the liberal anti-monopolists felt free to retain a powerful state government as a check against the dangerous classes. This feeling might explain their fevered rhetoric against home rule, their rush to equate it with anarchy and secession. It almost certainly explains the *L.A. Herald's* tirade against the new constitution in March, 1879:

> "[T]he finest demagogic achievement of the Constitutional Convention was that recorded in its chapter devoted to 'Cities, counties and towns.' There was a world of surrender on this head to the mob element by the gentlemen who were elected by the Non-Partizan movement....The whole proposition was designed as a surrender to Denis Kearney and the Sand Lot."[38]

Hager tried to calm his overheated colleagues. Insisting he was no secessionist, he said his home rule proposal was merely "intended to and does give the people the privilege of framing and adopting a charter for themselves, subject to general laws, and to the approval of the Legislature." Howard and most Workingmen and Grangers backed him up, likening home rule to the town governments of New England that had won DeTocqueville's praise. Their argument was strained, but it prevailed. After quashing the Campbell amendment, delegates adopted home rule by a clear majority. It was encumbered not only by the 100,000-population threshold, however, but by two other com-

promises that its backers reluctantly accepted to ensure its passage.[39]

Keystone of Home Rule: the Freeholders' Charter

Both of these compromises lay at the core of the political process in which home rule was embedded. What this reform specifically granted cities of a certain size was the right to adopt charters regulating the conduct of their local affairs within the rubric of California's general laws. Section 8 of the new constitution spelled out a charter-writing sequence. It authorized city councils to start the process by scheduling the election of a board of freeholders. The freeholders would then draft a charter and submit it to the city's voters. If endorsed by the voters, the charter would go to the state legislature for final approval or rejection, but not amendment.[40] An approved charter was the concrete expression of the city's right to rule itself. Typically, it delineated the structure of local government, its legislative and executive offices, its police powers, its authority to tax and engage in debt financing, its ability to regulate, buy out, and operate public utilities, and the role of its qualified voters in candidate, bond, charter, direct democracy, and other elections.

Lower-case democrats at the convention strenuously objected to the language on freeholders and legislative review. Since freeholders by definition owned real estate, Section 8 barred renters from the charter-drafting process. One plebian delegate pointed out that the freeholder clause ignored the new constitution's bill of rights, which repealed the property requirement the state had previously placed on voters and office-seekers. Another delegate (ironically named Bourbon) saw the clause as an attack on the working class and demanded that "electors" be substituted for "freeholders." His motion drew high-minded demurrals from Morris M. Estee and other liberal Non-Partisans. Estee, who prefigured L.A.'s early 20th-century progressives in his calibrated dislike of the Southern Pacific and visceral disdain for people who worked with their hands, said this:

"[I]n selecting men to frame an organic law for a city, we should select men who are well known in the community, and we would be more apt to find them among freeholders than among any other class. These men are to control the destinies, to a certain extent, of a great city....and they should be selected from among the best minds in the city."

Hager himself was only slightly less dismissive of those who lacked the wherewithal to buy their homes and so lived in rented hovels, house courts, and tenements. "If a man has a little homestead," he said, "he has something to look out for--something to protect--and in that respect there is more safety in taking men from that class of the community." As principal drafter of the home rule reform, Hager all but guaranteed the defeat of Bourbon's amendment by opposing it. He also insisted that Sacramento be accorded a one-time review of local charters. This concession to central authority survived the objections of the Workingmen. Failing to win a completely democratic form of home rule but assured of an historic victory in principle, West, Evey, other Workingmen, Grangers, and Howard joined Hager to lodge Section 8 in California's organic law. California thus became only the second state to grant its cities and towns home rule.[41]

Home Rule, Municipal Debt, and Direct Democracy

The freeholders' charter crowned the new powers won by California's municipalities--but home rule involved much more than the right to draft such a document. Just as basic to the self-governance of a locality was its right to incorporate. The 1879 constitution not only directed the legislature to set general rules for incorporating cities and towns, it also ended that body's practice of creating municipal corporations through special, or city-specific, laws. This important function now passed to the cities themselves. Further constraining the legislature, the 1879 constitution barred it from imposing nearly three dozen kinds of special laws on cities, most significantly those affecting the police and taxing powers.[42] These changes, coupled with freeholders' charters and a marked new leniency toward municipal debt, ended the state's hands-on management of local affairs.

Unshackling debt had long-range impacts that cannot be overestimated. Between 1849 and 1879 Sacramento had sharply curtailed the ability of cities and towns to raise assessments, levy taxes, and incur debt. Workingmen and other home rule advocates understood that a freeholders' charter won at the cost of continued state budgetary meddling would be a Pyrrhic victory indeed. At the 1879 convention they broke Sacramento's grip on local finances, first by enabling cities, counties, and school districts to float general obligation bond issues worth up to 5 percent of assessed valuation, and secondly by transferring the authority to approve or reject any bond issue from Sacramento to voters in the issuing jurisdiction. Some of the old resistance to local borrowing survived in this turn to a popular referendum: before a school, road, irrigation, or other public bond could be sold to investors, fully two-thirds of the voters had to approve it. But the decision whether to shoulder added debt and higher property taxes now rested with local electorates, not state politicians.[43]

One result of this appeal to voters was the extraordinary impulse it gave to a partial, but permanent, subversion of representative government in California. Side by side with the election of councilmen, mayors, boards of supervisors, senators, assemblymen, and governors, the state now had its first encounter with direct democracy. "The shift away from state legislative control over local government," Winston W. Crouch and Beatrice Dinerman observe in *Southern California Metropolis*,

> "brought the local electorate into an active role as a counterweight to local legislative bodies. It caused the state to exchange the previously established system of representative government in cities for a mixed system of democratic and representative principles. In the new system, the voters were given some decision-making tasks that had belonged previously to the state legislature and some that had been exercised by local legislative bodies, that is, by city councils and county boards of supervisors."[44]

Of all California's cities, Los Angeles would most dramatically exploit this aspect of home rule and extend it under workingclass and progressive prodding into a broad use of

the referendum, initiative, and recall. (See chapter 10 for details of this development.)

A second important result of the 1879 constitution's encouragement of local debt was its impact on the economics and politics of growth. Two political scientists--Steven P. Erie and James W. Ingram III--have closely examined this outcome for Los Angeles. Urban growth, says Erie,

> "cannot be understood historically apart from the municipal bond market. Before the New Deal, cities financed their public infrastructure and utilities almost exclusively with long-term general obligation bonds sold to Wall Street underwriters and investment syndicates....One of the signal features of early Los Angeles' state-based growth regime--unlike its entrepreneurial predecessor--was its heavy reliance upon the municipal bond market for capital formation. Between 1905 and 1932 the city of Los Angeles and the Metropolitan Water District (MWD) marketed $412 million in water, power, and harbor bonds alone--the equivalent of $3.9 billion in 1991 dollars--with a considerably smaller and poorer population."[45]

The constitution's call for popular approval of debt, moreover, changed urban politics. "[B]ecause of the 2/3 majority required of local bond issues in California," Ingram says,

> "developmental reform required lots of votes. Those who wanted to do more than clean up the corruption in the local state--who desired the local state to become an agent of a positive goal like economic growth--needed to build a mass coalition behind their goals."[46]

As chapter 11 demonstrates, the most consistent champion of L.A.'s debt-based growth a century ago was the city's organized working class. Progressives usually supported infrastructural bonds. So did more conservative members of L.A.'s business and professional classes. The growth consensus broke down mainly over municipal hydropower, which the labor movement fought for with considerable success during the early decades of the 20th century.

The Fight for Ratification

> *"The conservative groups in California, the able lawyers and business men, were never happy over the work of the constitutional convention. First of all, it was not their work. It was done and was forced upon them by mediocre representatives of the masses. They felt the injury to their pride along with the stab at their purses, for then, as now, California had its aristocrats who were proud of the state as the work of their own hands and who took offense when others sought to exercise control.*
>
> -- Carl Brent Swisher in *Motivation and Political Technique in the California Constitutional Convention, 1930*[47]

Delegates at the Sacramento parley packed their bags on March 3, 1879, voted 120-15 for the state's new organic law, and headed home. The lopsided vote belied the true sentiments of Non-Partisans and the two parties they represented. It was not enough for Workingmen and Grangers to weld together a voting majority at the convention; now they had to forge a statewide majority for the document it produced. This task became more daunting when a split ruptured the San Francisco Workingmen while Denis Kearney was stumping the south for the new constitution. Arrayed against the Workingmen and Grangers in the ratification campaign were nearly all Republicans, most northern California Democrats, owners and managers of most of the state's corporations, and all but a few large city newspapers. Corporations opened a propaganda office in San Francisco, flooded the state with broadsides, and raised $3 million to defeat the constitution. Banks threatened to call in loans and raise rates drastically if voters affirmed it. On May 5, Swisher reports, conservative forces rallied in Downieville, Healdsburg, Marysville, Modesto, North San Juan, Petulama, Placerville, Red Bluff, Sacramento, San Jose, San Mateo, Santa Cruz, Sonoma, Stockton, Suisun, Tehama, Ukiah, Vallejo, Winters, and Woodland.[48] Many of those who despised the new constitution believed it would ignite an apocalypse. The *Alta California*, voice of Democratic corporate anti-reform, invoked both a nightmare scenario and a way around it:

> "The document is the production of the communistic combination of the Kearneyites with the Grangers in the Convention, and the same combination would claim the right to control the Legislature and the administration charged with superintending the enforcement of the new system....The success of Kearneyism means ruin to the Democracy....The only hope for the restoration of the Democracy to power, or even to the condition of a healthy minority, is the overthrow or complete discouragement of the Workingmen. Nothing would contribute to that end more effectually than an overwhelming rejection of the new Constitution."[49]

If northern California alone had cast ratification ballots the *Alta California* might have whistled in the dark to good effect. But for reasons heretofore explained the southern counties cast a less jaundiced eye on the work of "the mediocre representatives of the

masses." In Los Angeles every daily paper but the *Herald* urged voters to approve the document, though most did so grudgingly. The *Herald* was far from grudging in opposition. The new organic law, it said, "could not have been more radical and sweeping in its provisions if its every clause had been matured in a Ward Club conference of the Kearneyites....[It] is so violent in its remedies that our whole existing social fabric will be thrown into chaos." With enormous relief, then, this editorial ally of the Southern Pacific grasped all the straws in the wind--and there were many--that suggested a calamitous defeat for the Workingmen. "The fact is that the new Constitution will be beaten by seven thousand majority as the case stands today," it beamed on April 20. Six days later: "The Kearneyite Constitution, it is now apparent, will be defeated by a large and satisfactory majority....California will, under no circumstances, give less than ten thousand, and she will probably give thirty thousand, majority against an organic law which, if adopted, would simply annihilate the State as an industrial and commercial community." Again on May 2: "There was a tremendous outpouring of the opponents of the new Constitution in front of the Cosmopolitan Hotel last night. At eight o'clock fully twenty-five hundred voters were drawn up in front of the stand. The adjoining balconies and windows were crowded with ladies." Finally, on the eve of the vote: "[T]he defeat of the new Constitution is assured by a majority of from twelve to twenty thousand."[50]

Such was the wishful thinking of Non-Partisans from San Diego to the Oregon border. Ten months earlier during the runup to the Sacramento meeting they had gravely underestimated the organizing skills and tenacity of Workingmen in the cities and Grangers in rural California. Over the following eight months they had made the same mistake at the convention. Now, in the ratification campaign, they made it again--the anti-Kearneyites were nothing if not stubborn. Both the Granger clubs and most of the Workingmen's ward organizations bestirred themselves to get voters to the polls. It was they, more than

Democrats of the Volney Howard stamp, who led the fight for ratification. On May 7, 1879 Californians narrowly endorsed the new constitution by 77,969 ballots out of 145,093 cast. San Francisco and neighboring Alameda County voted heavily against it, partly because some Workingmen had rebelled against Kearney. The pro-constitution vote was heaviest in Los Angeles, San Joaquin, Solano, Sonoma, and one or two other large counties. By far the largest winning margin--more than 2,200 votes--came from Los Angeles, where the Workingmen had campaigned hard and effectively for ratification.[51]

The May 7 balloting proved to be the L.A. Workingmen's last hurrah. Riven by class conflicts, shucking the labor aspects of their program, hapless in the municipal posts they had won the year before, they disintegrated as a party in the fall of 1879. A similar fate overtook their northern comrades. Within a year, says Stimson, the Workingmen were no longer a political entity anywhere in the state.[52] How jarring the contrast between their career--meteoric in its fire and brevity--and the enduring legacy they left Californians of their day and ours! The 1879 constitution, it is now clear, was their last will, testament, and bequest.

Angelenos of the next generation praised this gift while failing to recognize or credit its source. "One great thing the constitution did--and it was a step into almost unknown territory, it gave home rule to cities," Charles Dwight Willard declared in 1912.

> "The spirit of the constitution and of the people was so emphatically in favor of allowing cities to run their own affairs that the early legislatures began passing charters without regard to what they contained, and the precedent once established has been followed ever since in California. This was a matter of vast importance, for it gave our cities a chance to develop politically in a way that at last reacted to help the state as a whole."[53]

It is worth noting that when Willard wrote this passage the full-bore home rule enjoyed by California's city-dwellers was almost unprecedented on the continent. Several states let large cities govern themselves, none so thoroughly as Los Angeles. In the East as the 1910s began, municipal autonomy was cramped. New York City, the *Pacific Outlook*

pointed out, "cannot determine for itself what regulations it shall have respecting the liquor question, but is bound and shackled by the law known as the 'Raines' law, passed by the Legislature at Albany."[54]

Aftermaths

The legislature and courts were not kind to the corporate, labor, and anti-Chinese planks of the constitution, but they treated its empowerment of cities with respect. "Municipal home rule was comparatively limited in the 1879 constitution," Crouch and Dinerman remark. "[I]t was a lodgment, inviting further efforts to enlarge the area of municipal autonomy."[55] One of the first barriers to fall was the 100,000-population threshold for drafting a freeholders' charter. In 1887, after much agitation by citizens of Los Angeles, state voters approved a new threshold of 10,000 which allowed that city to draw up its first home rule charter a year later. The legislature approved it in 1889. The charter of 1889, as it was known, embodied the ideal of a minimal "night-watchman" government. Voters elected a mayor and nine ward-based councilmen for terms of only two years. The street department and water commission did little to spur administrative capacity or economic growth. Beginning in 1902, L.A. voters repeatedly amended their charter to create institutions of growth, regulation, direct democracy, public enterprise, and a semi-autonomous governmental cadre. They finally replaced the 1889 charter with a new one in 1925. Meanwhile the state's population threshold for home rule dropped to a mere 3,500 in 1892. The near-universal home rule opportunities thus created were used cautiously, however. By 1980 California still had some 347 general law cities (governed by the legislature) and only 80 charter cities, the largest of which was Los Angeles.[56]

Several other barriers to home rule were gradually breached. One of these was the legislature's repeated enactment of "general" laws which did not directly govern local life but which localities could not ignore.[57] As charter cities began to assert their independ-

ence, they found themselves increasingly hemmed in by statutes designed to hoard Sacramento's power. Los Angeles parried the problem with frequent charter amendments (1902, 1904, 1905, 1909, 1911, 1913) that defined and enlarged municipal capacity. It was not until 1914 that state voters ended this fencing match. A constitutional amendment they endorsed that year gave cities freedom to govern themselves *subject only to conditions specified by their own charters*. During the progressive era the courts routinely upheld this powerful rollback of general law and state interference.[58]

The economic underpinnings of home rule were likewise strengthened. When growth-hungry regimes emerged in Los Angeles and other cities around the turn of the century, they found that 5 percent of assessed value set too tight a cap on borrowing for the water, sewerage, energy, harbor, road, bridge, rail, and fire protection improvements they desired. The cities demanded relief and the legislature obliged. When the Municipal Bond Act took effect on February 25, 1901, it immediately *tripled* municipal debt limits to 15 percent of valuation.[59]

Its timing was almost perfect. Drought had momentarily parched Los Angeles, and the possibility of a chronic water shortage had been drummed into a seeming crisis by William Mulholland. In 1905 the city borrowed $1.5 million to lay the groundwork for a 240-mile aqueduct from the Owens River Valley. Two years later it shouldered an enormous new debt of $23 million to build the fabled conduit. Without a 15 percent bond ceiling--twice the national average--Los Angeles would have forfeited its aqueduct dream as well as the world's largest municipally-run water and power agency and much of the headlong growth that transformed the city in the first three decades of the century.[60] The new bond limit, though legislated, drew its sanction from the 1879 constitution's encouragement of borrowing and voter referenda. Like cosmic inflation, this original impetus drove the city's growth through every twist and turn of debt from early stinginess to a

plethora of general obligation bonds, pressure on the debt ceiling and taxes, sinking funds, capital strikes by New York investment syndicates, self-imposed borrowing limits, debt pyramiding by special tax districts, and finally, in 1932, a switch to revenue bonds that bypassed both state and municipal debt limits.[61]

Home rule was the *sine qua non* of L.A.'s transition from a skeletal urban government in the 1890s to an imposing regulator, promoter, financier, and owner of huge public enterprises in the pre-World War I years. "Los Angeles' statist growth regime could not have been constructed without the extensive powers granted under the California Constitution," says Erie. This was especially true of the city's tradition of municipal ownership. "The operation of water and power utilities has repeatedly been held by California courts to be a municipal affair subject to local control through a home rule charter," Vincent Ostrom reports in *Water & Politics*. "As a proprietary operation as distinguished from a general governmental function, the courts have been inclined to allow municipal utilities broad discretion to act within the limits imposed by their home rule charter."[62]

What Willard (1912), Ostrom (1953), and Erie (1991) do not acknowledge is the indispensable role non-elites played in writing and ratifying the 1879 home-rule constitution, planting the seeds of direct democracy, unshackling debt, reforming city charters, and creating municipally-owned enterprises. None of these developments would have occurred without the leadership of the organized working class. Elaborating on that fact is the burden of the remaining chapters.

Notes

[1] Swisher, Carl Brent. *Motivation and Political Technique in the California Constitutional Convention , 1878-79,* Pomona College, Claremont, CA, 1930, pp. 5-6, 9, 15-16.

[2] "Reforms Needed," *L.A. Express*, May 31, 1878, p. 2.

[3] Crouch, Winston W. & Beatrice Dinerman. *Southern California Metropolis: A Study in the Development of Government for a Metropolitan Area,* University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1964, pp. 65-66, incl. footnote 1; Jones, Helen L. & Robert F. Wilcox. *Metropolitan Los Angeles: Its Governments,* The Haynes Foundation, Los Angeles, 1949, p. 7.

[4] Town Hall Report Committee. *A Study of the Los Angeles City Charter: A Report of the Municipal and County Government Section of Town Hall,* Los Angeles, 1963, p. 44.

[5] Deverell, William. *Railroad Crossing: Californians and the Railroad, 1850-1910,* University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1994, p. 48; Swisher, pp. 9-10, 21.

[6] For a lucid analysis of these events see Alexander Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California,* University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1971. Saxton's premise--that Chinese workers served as the anvil on which San Francisco's white workers hammered together a modern trade union movement--is not particularly apt for the rise of organized labor in Los Angeles. Here, observes David B. Griffiths, the Workingmen's Party "was relatively free of factionalism and anti-Chinese agitation." [Griffiths, "Anti-Monopoly Movement in California, 1873–1898," *Southern California Quarterly,* v. 54, no. 1 (Spring, 1972), pp. 93-94]

[7] Ingels, Helen Havens. "The History of the Workingmen's Party of California," *Master's thesis,* University of California (Berkeley), 1919, p. 20; Shumsky, Neil Larry. *The Evolution of Political Protest and the Workingmen's Party of California,* Ohio State University Press, Columbus, OH, 1991, pp. 27-29; Swisher, p. 10.

[8] Ingels, pp. 20-21.

[9] *San Francisco Evening Bulletin*, April 29, 1878; Deverell, p. 46.

[10] Griffiths, David B. "Anti-Monopoly Movement in California, 1873–1898," *Southern California Quarterly,* v. 54, no. 1 (Spring, 1972), pp. 93-94; Swisher, p. 23; Ingels, pp. 65-66.

[11] Shumsky, pp. 207-08.

[12] Stimson, Grace Heilman. *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,* University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1955, p. 20.

[13] *L.A. Evening Express*, "The Workingmen's Ratification," May 31, 1878, p. 3; "The Results of the Election," June 28, 1878, p. 2. The stubbornly independent West also refused to honor another WPC rule, adopted at its first convention in San Francisco, that barred Workingmen from membership in any other political party. Up to the time of his nomination West kept one foot in the Republican Party, albeit its "non-partisan" wing.

[14] Shumsky, p. 143.

[15] Shumsky, p. 208;

[16] Swisher, pp. 22-23.

[17] *L.A. Evening Express*, "Our Pandora's Box," June 8, 1878, p. 2; *Alta California*, May 27, 1878.

[18] *L.A. Evening Express*, "The Sentiments of a Candidate," June 17, 1878, p. 4 and "The Election To-Morrow," June 18, 1878, p. 2.

[19] Swisher, p. 9.

[20] Swisher, pp. 45-48, 57.

[21] *L.A. Express:* "The Election Yesterday," June 20, 1878, p. 2; "The Results of the Election," June 28, 1878, p. 2; "The Vote of This County," July 1, 1878, p. 3; Untitled table, July 3, 1878, p. 1; Swisher, p. 24; Stimson, pp. 21-22. Shumsky says the Workingmen won 52 seats at the convention (p. 208). Stimson gives slightly different results: 80 Non-Partisans, 52 Workingmen, 10 Republicans, and 9 Democrats (p. 22).

[22] Swisher, pp. 25-26, 31. The voting pattern I propose differs from that of Deverell [p. 48], who follows Swisher in identifying three blocs: the Workingmen, Non-Partisans, and rural delegates mostly from farms. The overlap of Workingmen and Granger interests was too great to separate them in this way. As the convention progressed, their mutual wariness gave way to a de facto and at times a calculated alliance.

[23] Editorial, "The Necessity of Good Representation," *L.A. Express*, June 10, 1878, p. 2; Swisher, p. 48; Erie, Steven P. "How the Urban West Was Won: The Local State and Economic Growth in Los Angeles, 1880-1932," *Urban Affairs Quarterly* v. 27, no. 4 (June, 1992), p. 527.

[24] Saxton, p. 124.

[25] Swisher, pp. 33-38, 42.

[26] Editorial, "Constitution-Making," *L.A. Evening News*, June 22, 1878, p. 2.

[27] Quoted without reference by Shumsky, p. 142. Possible sources are Bancroft's *The History of California*, 7 vols., History Company, San Francisco, 1884-90 and *Chronicles of the Builders of the Commonwealth*, 7 vols., History Company, San Francisco, 1891-92.

[28] Swisher, pp. 26-27.

[29] George, Henry. "The Kearney Agitation in California," *Popular Science Monthly* 17 (August 1880), pp. 446-49 (quoted by Shumsky, p. 209).

[30] Ingels, pp. 79-88, 92, 98-100; Deverell, pp. 48-55; Swisher, pp. 86-92.

[31] Ingels, pp. 90-92.

[32] Swisher, pp. 66-77.

[33] Swisher, pp. 54-55,

[34] Swisher, pp. 55-59. See Swisher's thumbnail portrait of the colorful David Terry on p. 29. A description of Barbour, one of three workingmen lawyers, appears on p. 30.

[35] Griffiths, pp. 93-94, esp. ff. 6; Swisher, pp. 112-14; Stimson, p. 22.

[36] Willis, C.B. & P.K. Stockton, official stenographers. *Debates and Proceedings of the Constitutional Convention of the State of California*, 3 vols., Sacramento, 1880, p. 1062 (hereinafter Willis & Stockton).

[37] Willis & Stockton, pp. 340, 1059-64, 1484-85.

[38] Willis & Stockton, pp. 1059, 1061-64, 1408; Swisher, p. 63; Editorial, "A Demagogic Achievement," *L.A. Herald*, March 16, 1879, p. 2.

[39] Willis & Stockton, p. 1062.

[40] Willis & Stockton, p. 1483.

[41] The first home-rule state was Missouri, preceding California by four years. As adopted by the 1879 convention (but later amended in several ways), Section 8 stated that any citing having 100,000 or more inhabitants "may frame a charter for its own government, consistent with and subject to the Constitution and laws of this State, by causing a Board of fifteen freeholders, who shall have been for at least five years qualified electors thereof, to be elected by the qualified voters of such city, at any general or special election, whose duty it shall be, within ninety days after such election, to prepare and propose a charter for such city ....Such proposed charter shall then be published in at least two daily papers of largest general circulation in such city for at least twenty days, and within not less than thirty days after such publication it shall be submitted to the qualified electors of such city, at a general or special election, and if a majority of such qualified electors voting thereat shall ratify the same, it shall thereafter be submitted to the Legislature for its approval or rejection as a whole, without power of alteration or amendment, and if approved by a majority vote of the members elected to each house, it shall become the charter of such city...and supercede any existing charter and all amendments thereof, and all special laws inconsistent with such charter....The charter so ratified may be amended at intervals of not less than two years, by proposals therefore, submitted by legislative authority of the city to the qualified voters thereof, at a general or special election held at least sixty days after the publication of such proposals, and ratified by at least three fifths of the qualified electors voting thereat and approved by the Legislature as herein provided for the approval of the charter. In submitting any such charter, or amendment thereto, any alternative article or proposition may be presented for the choice of the voters, and may be voted on separately without prejudice to others." [Willis & Stockton, p. 1406; Crouch & Dinerman, p. 67. For Estee's role at the convention see Deverell, p. 51 and Swisher, pp. 33, 54-55, 63.]

[42] "During the period between 1879 and 1907," say Crouch & Dinerman, "taxes upon property formed the chief sources of revenue both for the state and for its local governments." In Los Angeles after 1900. however, bonded debt became the most important source of funds for

infrastructural developments. [Willis & Stockton, pp. 220-22, 1482-83; *L.A. Herald*, Feb. 6, 1879, p. 1; Crouch & Dinerman, pp. 67-68, 113-14; Jones & Wilcox, pp. 7-8.]

[43] The 5% of valuation debt ceiling was approved after delegates rejected efforts to set a lower limit. [Editorial, "Our Wants in the Convention," *L.A. Evening Express*, June 11, 1878, p. 2; Ostrom, Vincent. *Water & Politics: A Study of Water Policies and Administration in the Development of Los Angeles,* The Haynes Foundation, Los Angeles, 1953, p. 86; Willis & Stockton, pp. 222, 225; Crouch & Dinerman, pp. 68-69.]

[44] Crouch & Dinerman, p. 68.

[45] Erie, p. 522.

[46] Ingram, James W. III. "Building the Municipal State: Coalitions and Infrastructure Development in Los Angeles, 1889–1939," paper prepared for delivery at 1994 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, New York City, p. 11.

[47] Swisher, p. 114.

[48] Swisher, pp. 101-02, 105-08.

[49] *Alta California*, April 22, 1879.

[50] *L.A. Herald,* all 1879: Editorial, "A Demagogic Achievement," March 16, 1879, p. 2; editorial, March 20, 1879, p. 2; editorial, "A Jesuitical Programme," April 20, p. 2; editorial, "A 'Keel-Over,'" April 26, 1879, p. 2; "A Rousing Demonstration," May 2; Last Night's News. Pacific Coast. Victory Assured...," May 7, 1879, p. 2.

[51] "State Election Returns," *L.A. Herald*, May 19, 1879; Stimson, p. 22; Swisher, pp. 109-10.

[52] Stimson, pp. 24-27.

[53] Willard, Charles Dwight. "Constitution of California," *California Outlook*, vol. 12, no. 10 (March 2, 1912), p. 12.

[54] "State Should Not Fix Local Rates," *Pacific Outlook*, Vol. 10, No. 5 (Jan. 28, 1911), p. 10, quoting Frank G. Finlayson, president of the Los Angeles City Club.

[55] Crouch & Dinerman, p. 72.

[56] Town Hall Report Committee. *A Study of the Los Angeles City Charter: A Report of the Municipal and County Government Section of Town Hall,* Los Angeles, 1963, pp. 44-45; Hunter, Burton L., *The Evolution of Municipal Organization and Administrative Practice in the City of Los Angeles,* Parker, Stone & Baird Co., Los Angeles, 1933, pp. 71-73; Crouch & Dinerman, p. 72; Howell, Anne V. "Los Angeles City Government, 1781–1981," Los Angeles Department of City Planning, 1981, p. 4;

[57] One proposed law, blocked by representatives of Los Angeles and other cities, would have authorized district attorneys to appoint local officials. "[A]ny attempt on the part of the legislature of California, at the behest of the machine bosses which dictate its actions, to deprive the city of Los Angeles of the power to govern itself...should be resisted with all the resources of the city," the *Pacific Outlook* declared in 1907. "The city of Los Angeles does not desire to

interfere with the administration of the affairs of the county of Los Angeles, and it should brook no interference with its own affairs on the part of the county." ["Comment," *Pacific Outlook*, vol. 2, no. 22 (June 1, 1907), pp. 7-8.]

[58] Crouch & Dinerman, pp. 73-74.

[59] *California Statutes*, 1901, p. 27; "Notes and Recent Decisions," *California Law Review*, School of Jurisprudence, University of California, Berkeley (1941), p. 779.

[60] Erie, pp. 523-24.

[61] "Notes and Recent Decisions," p. 779; Ingram, pp. 12-13; Hunter, pp. 89, 98, 106, 116, 134, 164; Erie, pp. 523-24.

[62] Erie, p. 523; Ostrom, Vincent, *Water & Politics: A Study of Water Policies and Administration in the Development of Los Angeles,* The Haynes Foundation, Los Angeles, 1953, p. 87.

10.
Revenge of the Outsiders

"Organized labor has been the great concrete form of law-abiding citizenship, and...should have some voice in making the laws and ordinances under which it shall be governed." – Union activist W.A. Engle, April 12, 1912 [1]

"Let me in, I hear music. Let me in, open up the door!" [2]

At the apogee of their power in 1878 and 1879, the Los Angeles Workingmen could not have foreseen the long political drought that lay ahead. Had they not just elected two of the county's three delegates to the state constitutional convention in Sacramento? swept the December 2, 1878 municipal elections? and led the fight to ratify the new "home rule" constitution? Indeed they had, but soon they would be done in by their own irreconcilable differences.

The Workingmen, like the Knights of Labor, had invited men of diverse backgrounds into their ranks on the assumption, soon proven wrong, that all would resolutely defend wage workers, oppose monopoly, and demand the exclusion of the Chinese. This popular platform helped the party's candidates win 12 of 15 city council seats, fill two Board of Education vacancies, and claim all other city offices in the 1878 elections. Demonstrating that nothing can fail like success, they utterly wasted their opportunity to govern Los Angeles. Rancor over the party's support for a few non-Workingmen exploded when the new city council appointed one of them to a low-level post. In the resulting brouhaha dissidents expelled their county chairman, S.J. Beck, who also happened to be the council's president. The council plunged into chaos. It lacked both the wherewithal and the will to nudge the Chinese out of Los Angeles, replace contract labor with eight-hour day labor, or legislate any of the other planks in the Workingmen's platform. When expulsions did occur, they were not of Chinese from the city but of Workingmen from the party. The county central committee ousted two city council members for "disloyalty" in May, 1879. Ward

clubs began disbanding, and that August one of their most prominent leaders, Jesse Butler, quit the council under duress. "The Workingmen's Party was a spent force," says Grace Stimson. Abandoning its anti-Chinese and pro-labor demands, it lost most of its races in the next municipal elections and promptly collapsed. Nationalists, Grangers, and Populists picked up the pieces.[3]

From that moment in 1879 until the carpenter-socialist Fred Wheeler won a council seat 34 years later, the organizations of labor in Los Angeles failed to launch a single candidate from their own ranks into public office. *Après nous, le sécheresse* should have been the Workingmen's epitaph. And what a drought it was! Running unaffiliated or on tickets named by Republicans, Democrats, Populists, labor union parties, Socialist Laborites, and Socialists, union members repeatedly campaigned for city attorney, clerk, treasurer, auditor, tax collector, council, the mayoralty, the state senate, the assembly--and captured *no* seats. Wheeler himself epitomized both their failure and their tenacity. In 1900 he campaigned for the state senate and mayor and lost both races; lost for secretary of state in 1902, mayor in 1909, county office in 1910, and city council in 1911. His two successful council races came in 1913 and 1915. He lost once more in 1917.

Of course the city's unions backed occasional non-labor candidates they hoped would favor their class--a leap of faith that often ended badly. In 1902, the labor movement turned out enough Seventh Ward voters to seat one Edward Kern on the city council. Kern had left Iowa 17 years earlier for a middling job in L.A.'s Commissary Department, had briefly joined the Teamster's Union, and had promised to defend the Seventh Ward's workingmen. Once in office, however, he voted for boxing bans, prohibitions of Sunday park music, and other moral reforms that antagonized organized labor.[4] Kern's passion for moral reform did not extend to his own person. He joined his fellow councilmen in a secret deal to lease railway magnate Henry E. Huntington a three-mile strip along the L.A.

river for 21 years at no cost. Dubbed "The Riverbed Scandal" when it came to light in 1906, the million-dollar giveaway so outraged the electorate that Kern and his colleagues cancelled the deal on threat of recall. Their legislative careers never recovered. At the behest of the Southern Pacific Railroad, Mayor Owen McAleer named Kern chief of police in 1906; he retained that post for two and a half more years under mayor Arthur C. Harper. Exposés by the *Herald* and *Express* in late 1908 and early 1909 revealed that both Harper and Kern owned stock in sugar companies linked to the local liquor industry and both were skimming money from eastside prostitution. These revelations galvanized the recall campaign against mayor Harper, who resigned in disgrace a few days after his police chief turned in his badge. Three years later, in El Paso, Texas, Kern committed suicide.[5]

"Kern...was placed in office by the trades union vote," the *Citizen* reminded its readers in 1906, but he was now "the willing tool" of the Southern Pacific, Huntington, and "all corporate interests antagonistic to the unions. There has been no request of the working people, however just, that Ed Kern has not flouted and refused."[6]

The labor weekly identified another labor-backed politician, Arthur D. Houghton as an even more flagrant betrayer of his constituents. His sudden and seemingly inexplicable transformation from labor hero to labor pariah is a strange footnote to the story of the Davenport recall, told below. Houghton and Kern demonstrated the irrelevance of the AFL's "reward friends, punish enemies" electoral strategy in an era when the L.A.'s unions had few friends among Republican, Democratic, or nonpartisan politicians. Conceding this fact, the *Citizen* urged the unions to pursue an alternative strategy the AFL had briefly adopted in 1906-08. "The lesson from all this is plain," it said. "[W]e should follow the advice of President Samuel Gompers and 'elect men from our own ranks.'[7] Sadly, experience rendered *both* strategies bankrupt in Los Angeles.

Los Angeles was simply a very hard nut for labor candidates to crack. The printers'

strike and boycott against the *L.A. Times* made an enemy of the city's most influential newspaper during the 1890s. Its publisher, Harrison Gray Otis, began organizing a business, civic, and media coalition known throughout the U.S. for its anti-union ferocity. Exploiting the growthmania usually rampant in the city, Otis and his allies convinced many Angelenos that union officeholders would stifle progress. Moreover the Republican and Democratic nominating conventions that dominated local politics until 1906 let few labor hopefuls pass through their turnstiles. The fading Southern Pacific machine behind these highly scripted events rarely followed its Eastern counterparts in sprinkling political favors on the working class.

Independent labor candidates faced obstacles nearly as imposing. As Michael Kazin has pointed out,

> "They had to assure manual wage-earners, their natural constituency, that a 'workingmen's administration' would improve their lives while simultaneously convincing members of other classes that a victorious labor party would not plunge the city into riot and bankruptcy. Spontaneous strikes and acts of violence scared away undecided voters, and the daily press trumpeted in banner headlines any mistake made by union candidates and officeholders. So it is not surprising that Union Laborites and Socialists usually failed to win and always failed to hold municipal power." [8]

An exception to this dismal record was the United Labor Party of San Francisco, whose candidates won the mayoralty and several council seats in 1901 and ran that city for the better part of a decade. The workingclass party emerged from a violently suppressed teamsters' strike. Its electoral triumph provoked an all-out assault by San Francisco's progressives and most of its capitalists, but when a few of the more opportunistic coupon-clippers got over their shock they began coaxing favors from the new mayor, Eugene E. Schmitz, in return for their support. Before long Schmitz and his allies found themselves slogging their way through the criminal courts. Much of the ensuing press coverage took delight in tarring Schmitz and San Francisco's unions with the same brush. In Los Angeles, the *Times, Express,* and *Graphic* used the scandal to warn voters off all local labor nominees, especially those led out of the trenches in 1906 by the Public Ownership Party.

Decrying the existence of "a well-matured and somewhat dangerous plan on the part of the labor unions to capture the machinery of the city government," the *Graphic* declared: "It goes without saying that it is the duty of all citizens who do not want to see Los Angeles reduced to the subjection that prevails in San Francisco, to head off this union movement with a most decisive beating at the polls.'"[9]

Exacerbating all the locally distinctive barriers that L.A.'s unions faced in the electoral arena were the more systemic political handicaps of class: low wages and long, usually tiring hours on the job. All too often workers lacked the money, energy, and time to mount successful campaigns.

Union Workers Need Not Apply...

The failure to elect workers or reliable friends to public office vexed unionists during the 1880-1915 period, but it was not what angered them most. Despite the progressive narrowing of the franchise and the lack of proportional representation, union members saw elections as tolerably fair contests. Quarreling with the results of popular choice would have been unseemly, and they rarely blamed others for their defeats. It was much harder for them to remain silent when the city insisted on contracting out its blue-collar work. The most galling thing, however--the thing that stuck in rank-and-filers' craws--was that neither they nor their leaders were ever found worthy of service in any meaningful *appointive* post. The ward machines failed them, and the municipal state failed them even more. Public sewers, for example, crumbled and oozed after the turn of the century. Union bricklayers, cement workers, and engineers *volunteered* to patch them--or better yet, to redesign them--but they heard not so much as a no-thank-you from Mayor McAleer while the outfall sewer continued to leak a fearful fraction of what it carried toward Santa Monica Bay.[10]

Rebuffs of this kind were the chronic lot of L.A.'s unions after 1890. None chafed the labor movement more profoundly or with greater political effect than the city's refusal to

seat a union man on one of its most influential boards. At the start of 1906 a revamped Board of Public Works replaced the City Council as supervisor of municipal projects. Workingclass voters had played a key role in adopting the charter amendment that forced this change. Its aim, never fully achieved, was to rid the public works board of Demipub patronage. Circulating petitions in 1905 and early 1906, the Building Trades Council led the campaign for organized labor's representation on the new body. The Central Labor Council sent Lemuel Biddle, James Gray, and Frank Colver to urge Mayor McAleer and the city council to make such an appointment.[11]

"[T]here are scores of mechanics in this city who can sketch and figure as well as do hard work," argued the *Union Labor News*, "and...they are generally men so capable and honest they can be trusted to avoid graft and secure for the public the best materials and work for the money expended." The labor weekly named eleven union members whose experience and skill more than qualified them for a seat on the Public Works Board. They included Richard Albright, "an expert in concrete and cement construction, now being used more and more for public and other buildings and as reinforced by the use of twisted steel rods is to be the building material of the future"; J.C. Crow, foreman for the building of neighboring Venice which involved "all lines of construction in wood, iron, concrete, plastering"; and A.W. Merrill, past president of the plumbers' union, "a gentleman in speech and manners, well educated and of good business ability [who] has given much attention to the training of plumbers' helpers [and] is ambitious for the elevation of the craft.."[12]

All to no avail. The mayor handed the selection of Public Works board members to three civic organizations known for their hostility to unions --the Chamber of Commerce, Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association, and Municipal League--and accepted their recommendations above all others. "After several months of argument," says Stimson,

McAleer and the council "ignored unionists in making the appointments."[13] This snub deeply offended the ideal of citizenship held by many organized workers. In their view, craft workers were duty-bound to offer their skills, workmanship, and discipline to the city in return for its acceptance of their active role in the polity. "Organized labor has been the great concrete form of law-abiding citizenship, and...should have some voice in making the laws and ordinances under which it shall be governed," W.A. Engle, a former Central Labor Council president, declared years later when union members were excluded from a city charter revision committee.[14] In 1906, Mayor McAleer and the council not only refused labor's offer but belittled it, heaping injury on insult. In an editorial titled "A Slap in the Face," the *Union Labor News* vented its anger at the city's decision:

> "In the making of the Board of Public Works there were practically but two expressions of public opinion--one as annunciated by the select committee of prominent, powerful, rich business men, and the other recording the desires of an organization of citizens numbering ten thousand. Ten thousand wage workers vs. fifty rich merchants. That was the case brought up before the City Council for decision. What was the result? Did the councilmen obey the mandate of the majority? Did they appoint a Board of Public Works composed of workingmen? No. Did they appoint one man out of the ranks of the ten thousand who demanded representation? No, not one." [15]

Resentment against Old Guard and progressive politicians who treated workers with this degree of disdain deepened during the summer of 1906. It was one of the reasons union members decided to organize their own Public Ownership Party for that year's municipal elections. Labor's spurned suitor status continued until late 1909, when newly elected progressive mayor George Alexander named Ben C. Robinson of Typographical Local 174 to the Board of Fire Commissioners.

Less than a year later Robinson resigned. In the interval a series of strikes by thousands of metal trades, brewery, and electric railway workers had rattled Los Angeles, posing an unprecedented threat to the city's open-shop status. When a Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association attorney drafted the harsh anti-picketing statute of 1910 and Mayor Alexander signed it on July 16, provoking the arrest and trial of hundreds of strikers who had engaged in peaceful picketing, it convinced Robinson that he had no business

serving this particular reform administration. In a July 22, 1910 letter to the Central Labor Council, he explained his resignation:

> "I identified myself with the Good Government movement and accepted an honorary office--not salaried--believing and trusting that the assurances given me and fellow-workers would be lived up to, namely, that discrimination would not be shown in the enactment and enforcement of laws in behalf of special interests. The present anti-picketing ordinance, passed unanimously by the City Council and signed by the Mayor, and which the city attorney states is so worded that an appeal, as has been the custom, against enforcement cannot be taken by the referendum, is such an arbitrary, unfair and unjust measure that I must, in justice to myself and co-workers, sever all official connection with the present Good Government administration." [16]

Progressives running under the Non-Partisan banner gained a secure foothold on the city council in 1906. Three years later, as Good Government candidates voicing a rhetoric of classlessness, they won every elective city office. They maintained a firm grip on power until 1913. During this entire period of progressive ascendancy in Los Angeles, the working class had no effective voice at the city council or city hall. The drought extended to labor legislation as well as rulings from the city and district attorneys. Labor's failure to win favorable laws or fend off harmful ones had long been evident, but it became an extraordinary thing under progressive rule. Between 1909 and 1912 the council imposed scores of time-disciplining--laws on L.A. workers, targeting saloons and the free lunches they served, dance halls, boxing matches, gambling, and workers' social clubs (chapter 2). At the same time the council and mayor took steps to hobble unions in the workplace, most notably through the ban on picketing during the 1910 citywide strikes.

Small wonder that most accounts of the city's labor movement begin and end in recitals of failure! This historiography is so incomplete, however, as to be false. In novel and subversive ways, the Workingmen's successors in Los Angeles used the 1879 constitution to pry open city government and transform it into an instrument more imposing than anything progressives had dreamed of. Denied access to power by traditional means, L.A.'s organized workers devised and used new means to win mass support for public ownership.

Political Gatecrashing: The Struggle for Direct Democracy

"Workingmen had long been aware that their well-being was especially sensitive to the form and processes of city government. In the very infancy of the local labor movement during the 1880s, several farsighted individuals had stressed the importance of workers' participating in framing amendments to the city charter." [17]

What follows, then, is a worst-case study of the role organized labor played in creating L.A.'s modern urban infrastructure through the exercise of popular democracy. I speak here of that triple threat to politics as usual--the initiative, referendum, and recall. Los Angeles was the first California city, and one of the first in the nation, to write all three of these potent outsider's weapons into its charter.[18] After that signal 1902 triumph, workingclass Angelenos joined forces with the state labor federation and a small contingent of progressives led by John R. Haynes to plant direct democracy in California's constitution.

A comparison of labor politics in Los Angeles and San Francisco a century ago sheds light on my "worst-case" qualifier. During most of the progressive years, wage workers either ran the northern city through their Union Labor Party or strongly influenced its electoral politics through their voting strength in the South of Market and Mission districts.[19] This circumstance enabled them to play a direct hand in developing the Hetch Hetchy water supply and the city's first municipal railway.

Los Angeles was notoriously different a century ago. It was the citadel of the open shop--a place employers all over the U.S. tried to emulate in their battle against the working class. With a few notable exceptions, rates of unionization in industry after industry stayed stubbornly low, and so did wages. No anti-union bias among workers created this circumstance; rather it arose from a durable though highly conditioned alliance of Old Guard capitalists and progressives who shared little but their antipathy toward organized labor. Through its control of the mayoralty, city council, prosecutor's office, and courts, this alliance stifled picketing, winked at employers who blacklisted union activists, encouraged them to hire off-duty police as strikebreakers, drove companies with union con-

tracts out of business, lured jobless men and women to Los Angeles during recessions, and in countless other ways eroded workers' ability to organize. This selfsame alliance also undercut labor's ward-based political power through a denial of patronage and reforms that instituted at-large voting and direct primaries.

The impenetrability of the Los Angeles government to organized workers, at least by ordinary means, had profound consequences for the labor movement and the city. Union activists reacted in three distinct ways to their political marginalization:

- Those partial to business unionism did nothing. They believed their mandate went no further than negotiating wages and hours, settling grievances, calling strikes and boycotts, and petitioning local government for an occasional favor such as the award of city printing to a unionized newspaper. On June 5, 1892, two years into Typographical No. 174's epic battle with the *L.A. Times*, Frank Colver asked his fellow printers how he should vote on some municipal issues then before the Council of Labor. "Keep out of politics," they told him.[20] The printers did not abandon their hidebound economism for over a decade. Until then their outsider status was self-imposed.

- Politically-engaged unions tacked in the opposite direction. They set out to mobilize voters through anti-capitalist or at least anti-monopoly parties. Between 1886 & 1915 they created, led, or joined the United Labor Party (1886), Union Labor Party (1888), People's Party (1892 & 1896), Socialist Labor party (1892-98), Social Democrats (1900), Union Labor Party (1902), Public Ownership Party (1906), and Socialist Party (1908-13). The years of progressive hegemony goaded many rank-and-file workers as well as activists into a close alliance with the Socialist Party, which shared their dedication to municipal ownership.[21] Together they nearly captured the mayoralty in 1911. On the other hand, the local government's indifference to workingclass concerns led other union members to oppose any municipalization project that would place the city' utilities under the thumb of

a progressive mayor and council. This contradiction in labor's ranks, of modest import at first, grew sharper under progressive rule and came bitingly into play during the 1914 public power campaign (chapter 11). Meanwhile, despite dogged organizing, none of the above-noted parties won so much as a single public office until socialists and workers elected Fred Wheeler to the city council in 1913.

• The third way workingclass men and women reacted to their political marginalization a century ago has been almost universally overlooked by labor and other historians, but it transformed Los Angeles. Using the charter-writing power granted by California's 1879 home-rule constitution, L.A.'s unions gave their growth-addicted city a robust tradition of direct democracy that has survived to this day. The initiative, referendum, and recall they championed as electoral rights of the people harkened back to the New England town meeting and made local government more responsive to its public and less an institution-for-itself than most progressives intended.[22] One of these rights--the initiative--became a principal means by which Los Angeles built the largest publicly owned and managed urban infrastructure in the United States. Direct democracy in the political realm resonated with municipal ownership in the economic. Together they nudged the socialist program as far down the road as it is ever likely to get in a large American city under capitalism.

Urged on by L.A.'s unions, voters finally embedded the initiative, referendum, and recall in the city charter in 1902.[23] It was a prescient victory for organized labor, for with the sole exception of elections triggered by direct democracy, union workers continued to struggle at the outer edges of the polity well into the twentieth century. One instance of their prolonged marginalization speaks for all the rest. Early in 1912 the city council named 15 citizens to a panel charged with rewriting L.A.'s charter. Most of them came from progressive strongholds, including the Good Government Organization, Municipal

League, *Los Angeles Express*, and a board exploring the consolidation of city and county governments. Virtually all had been intrepid partisans of one political cause or another. This obvious fact notwithstanding, when the Council of Labor asked for but was denied a seat on the panel, councilman Jerry Andrews explained that he and his progressive colleagues were honor-bound to keep politics out of the drafting of the charter! [24]

The city's unions met this rebuff by successfully submitting their own charter planks to a vote of the people. Leading their detour around the city council was W.A. Engle, a member of Musicians Local 47. "Organized labor has been the great concrete form of law-abiding citizenship," he reminded L.A.'s progressives. "It should have some voice in making the laws and ordinances under which it shall be governed."[25]

Engle's declaration goes a long way toward explaining the labor movement's tenacious subversion of the more autonomous city government sought by Charles Dwight Willard, Meyer Lissner, George Alexander, Stoddard Jess, and most other progressives a century ago.

An Itch for Reform

Subversion began with the immediate successors of the L.A. Workingmen. During the early and mid-1880s, while agitating for nationalized railroad and telegraph lines and other anti-monopoly measures, a few embryonic unions and Knights of Labor assemblies also demanded local charter reforms. Los Angeles was then toiling under a charter which the legislature and governor had imposed in 1878--one year before the constitutional convention met in Sacramento to debate and ultimately adopt home rule. A board of freeholders began drafting the city's first home rule charter in May, 1888.[26] Around the same time Knights District Assembly No. 140 convened a General Labor Conference of local unions and its own local units. Arthur Vinette and Jonathan Bailey of Carpenters No. 56, E.S. Livermore of Typographical No. 174, P.S. Dorney of the Knights, and Jesse Butler of the

erstwhile Workingmen persuaded the conference to launch the city's first union Labor Party. It was short-lived, but it left its mark. It proposed a ban on child, Chinese, convict, and contract labor, an eight-hour workday, equality for women workers, and a popularly elected nonpartisan police chief. Over several months in 1888, it urged the freeholders to write these planks into their draft. This they refused to do. Knights and trade unionists reluctantly opposed the resulting charter even though it did something dear to their hearts—empowered the city to buy, own, and manage its own water supply.[27] Just a few years later they would use this provision with telling effect to champion a municipally owned water system for Los Angeles.

Though it passed by a citywide vote of 2,642 to 1,890 in October, 1888 and was ratified by the legislature three months later, the new charter failed to equip Los Angeles for the population and commercial tsunami that had suddenly engulfed it or for the steadier growth that followed.[28] Its only strong point was the control it gave the city over its water supply and developments along its streets. Administratively, Los Angeles remained a 19th-century "night-watchman" state lacking the authority and competence to manage a large urban infrastructure. Politically, it could not hope to harness the energy and will of its people to the high-debt sacrifices it would soon ask them to make. A fatal weakness of the 1889 charter was its fragmentation of authority and responsibility. It made the mayor a figurehead and handed most administrative duties to a city council riven by partisan quarrels. The council oversaw four departmental executives and named the members of four voluntary boards and commissions, who shared authority with eight elected town officers. If the Southern Pacific railroad played Democratic and Republican politicians against one another in machine-like fashion over the next 15 years, it was the 1889 charter that made this possible. William H. Workman, who chaired the 1888 freeholders, complained that by 1900 city government had become "a political bureau for the reward of men who control

votes."[29]

Far from dampening the labor movement's enthusiasm for charter reform, the political setback of 1888-89 aroused it. "Workingmen had long been aware that their well-being was especially sensitive to the form and processes of city government," Grace Stimson observed. "In the very infancy of the local labor movement during the 1880s, several far-sighted individuals had stressed the importance of workers' participating in framing amendments to the city charter."[30] Charter reform became a habit of mind for labor activists at a time when few progressives contemplated it and years before it was embraced by the progressive movement as a whole. Workers championed it, moreover, under far more difficult conditions than progressives faced in 1909 when they used the initiative process to impose direct primaries and at-large council elections on the city. Not until 1906 did the California constitution permit cities to amend their charters through initiatives.[31] Before that change, workingclass Angelenos seeking to inject fresh air into their charter had to lobby city councils and boards of freeholders who were usually ill-disposed to act on petitions from the street.[32] That unionists took up the challenge so often was not surprising. It concretized their ideal of municipal citizenship and, in 1902, gave them the means by which they made their signal contribution to local governance: *direct democracy.*

Expanding the Franchise

Direct democracy appealed to a much larger group of Angelenos than wage workers alone. Although the city's politically marginalized unions stood to gain the most leverage from this innovation, few people saw it as class legislation when union members and populists began agitating for it in the early 1890s. Because the initiative, referendum, and recall would pry open city government for any group of voters that had an axe to grind, L.A.'s unions realized early on that they could use the fight for these reforms, and then the reforms themselves, to win over voters who might never support a ban on contract labor,

an eight-hour workday, or a labor candidate.

This political fact of life proved both durable and helpful to organized workers. The longshoreman and editor Z.W. Craig reminded his workingclass readers of its value in 1906, four years after Los Angeles embraced direct democracy and five years before it was adopted statewide. Writing in the L.A. labor movement's weekly newspaper, *The Citizen*, he observed:

> "We elect many good men to office, but they do not stay good. What we want most is a system that will keep them good. If they were likely to lose their jobs, if they did not attend to business, they would walk the chalkline for the same reason that a man does in private employment. This law [the recall] is already in the charters of Los Angeles and San Diego, thanks to the hard work of some members of organized labor, and it has a most wholesome effect on those who are disposed to fall by the way....*Organized labor by standing for such just measures as these, can obtain the support of every other good citizen. Labor does not, nor should not, ask for any class legislation.* It does not need it. It can take care of itself if it simply gets what the president calls 'a square deal.' " 33

For such an insight to be put to the test, unionists had to inscribe the recall and its companion reforms in the city's governing document. The resolve to do so was no sudden impulse; rather it arose from California labor's longstanding efforts to pry open the electoral franchise.

In 1890 a newly minted Council of Labor and the San Francisco Federated Trades launched a campaign against the poll tax and for the Australian, or secret, ballot. Elections up to that point had been devoid of privacy; employers in Los Angeles often scrutinized their workers as they voted. Thanks largely to pressure from organized labor, the legislature adopted the Australian ballot in 1891 and directed local election authorities to install private voting booths in polling places.[34] Over the next 20 years unionists continued to target the poll tax while fighting for longer polling hours, low candidate filing fees, proportional representation, voting rights for itinerant workers, and women's suffrage.[35]

A few progressives wholeheartedly joined these efforts. Others gave them grudging support, but some, like Charles Dwight Willard, viewed many of them as threats to the political ascendancy of their entrepreneurial-professional class. In Los Angeles, the fact

that progressives generally sought to limit the franchise while unionists tried to expand it was one reason why organized labor seldom took part in the cross-class political coalitions that historians have found elsewhere during the Gilded Age and early progressive eras.[36] Class conflict was rawer, sharper, and less amenable to compromise in Los Angeles than it appears to have been in most American cities a century ago.

It was in the seedbed of workingclass suffrage reforms that the campaign for direct democracy took root. Its first stirrings occurred within the country's two National Farmers' Alliances and their outgrowth, the People's Party, which drew Arthur Vinette, Fred C. Wheeler, Jonathan Bailey, and other Los Angeles union leaders into its ranks. Emanating from the South and upper Mississippi valley, the Farmers' Alliances raised the volume of post-Civil War agrarian and proletarian dissent against the growing monopolies of land, finance, and transportation. A California chapter was formed in San José in November, 1890. Its president, Marion Cannon, condemned "the robbery practiced upon the producers of the Pacific coast by grasping railroad combines." Ten years later California's progressives would adopt his rhetoric while jettisoning most of his program. The San José chapter called for government ownership of railroads, free coinage of silver, abolition of national banks, and a halt to monopolistic land speculation. Knowing these demands would fall on deaf ears in Sacramento, Cannon and his colleagues set out to embed the initiative, referendum, and recall in the state constitution and city charters.[37] Their enduring legacy in California was not a scattering of small postal banks, free coinage of silver, or a return of unearned land grants to the public, but a plebian wave of direct democracy on which, with no little irony, Arnold Schwarzenegger would ride to the governorship over a century later in October, 2003.

The California Alliance was determined to link arms with trade unionists in Los Angeles. It quickly enlisted Arthur Vinette, the intrepid carpenter who had helped Lemuel Bid-

dle and William C. Owen organize the city's Nationalist Clubs in 1889 only to watch the Nationalist movement collapse the following year. Biddle, a machinist, promptly joined the Socialist Labor Party (SLP) but Vinette, like many California Nationalists, saw the Alliance as a more reliable stepping-stone toward a third party. In May, 1891, bearing out his hopes, scores of Alliancemen met in Cincinnati to launch the national People's Party. Their platform denounced land speculation and called for public ownership of railroads and telegraph lines, popular election of U.S. senators, and widespread adoption of the initiative and referendum. Stimson says the last plank was written "to attract the labor vote," implying that unions had been agitating for direct democracy. When the populists, as members of the People's Party were known, held their first nominating convention in Omaha on July 4, 1892, they again championed these new rights of suffrage while declaring that "the interests of rural and civic labor are the same; their enemies are identical." Vinette sent the convention a "co-operative labor bill" for inclusion in its platform.[38]

The populists and the SWP vied for support from organized workers between 1891 and 1898, after which they were both outbid by the Social Democracy and its long-lived successor, the Socialist Party. Although the populists initially played the stronger hand in this contest, the SLP won the loyalty of Job Harriman and several influential labor leaders. It argued that no unity could exist between socialism and the "farmocracy"--yet like the People's Party it sang the virtues of the initiative, referendum, and recall in every city election from 1892 to 1898.[39]

Direct Democracy's Most Dogged Champion

This platform quickly won a solid core of adherents in workingclass Los Angeles. When Cannon and his fellow Alliancemen returned from Cincinnati in 1891, they immediately set out to organize a People's Party of California. Through their efforts, 600 delegates from the state's radical farm, labor, and reform groups gathered in Los Angeles on October 22 for the party's founding convention. Among them were Grangers, Alliance

members, Nationalists, women's suffrage leaders, Knights of Labor, and politically active unionists. Local labor movement participants included Vinette, Jonathan Bailey and nine other Knights, three men each from the carpenters' and painters' unions, and Michael M. McGlynn of Typographical No. 174 who attended with two other members of the Council of Labor. Vinette, the other Los Angeles Nationalists, and the union delegates helped draft the new party's statement of principles. These echoed both the anti-monopoly planks of the populist movement and its insistence on direct democracy.[40]

Support for populism was more robust in the Los Angeles basin than in most American cities. Here the Knights and unions of painters, carpenters, tailors, retail clerks, sailors, and longshoremen helped organize rallies and voter turnout for the People's Party. Close association with the party convinced them that direct democracy could become a potent weapon in the hands of an educated rank and file. During the 1890s this view spread to a larger number of unionists who remained loyal to the Demipubs. The following developments call our attention:

- Most of the elected workingclass leaders mentioned above campaigned for the People's Party in the 1892 L.A. city and county elections while a few stumped for the SLP. They helped write their parties' platforms, each of which demanded charter amendments establishing the voting procedures for direct democracy. In its fledgling effort the People's Party did remarkably well, drawing over a third as many votes as the winning county candidates. Because some populists ran on fusion tickets with Democrats, 1892 was the year the initiative, referendum, and recall first moved from their agrarian origins toward the political mainstream. But it was just a beginning. "Not for a decade were these [electoral rights] to find general acceptance among political reformers," observes Albert H. Clodius in an influential dissertation about the city's Progressive movement.[41]

- In 1893 the Council of Labor polled its affiliates on the initiative and referendum.

Twelve unions endorsed the two reforms; only one opposed them.[42]

• Early in 1894, Stimson records that "on its own initiative and with the help of the Knights of Labor Assembly No. 2405," the Council of Labor sought to amend the charter." Both groups called for the initiative and referendum, reduction of official salaries, and improved wages and working conditions for public workers, The city's charter-drafting committee' adopted only the salary reductions, however, and the charter reform movement went nowhere.[43]

• 1894 was a critical year for the future of L.A. unionism. Tremors from the Pullman strike shook the local movement. Two contingents of angry jobless men left Los Angeles, joined Coxey's Army, and by fits and starts trudged all the way to Washington DC. Drawn both to populist reforms and a secure berth in the eight-year-old American Federation of Labor (AFL), the Council of Labor faced agonizing choices. One of these was what to do about the Pacific Coast Council, a regional labor federation closely aligned with the populists that had urged its member unions to stay out of the AFL. While struggling to make up its mind, the L.A. central body awkwardly managed an on-and-off relationship with the coastal federation. When the latter organization called a meeting of farm and labor activists in San Francisco that February, L.A.'s unions sent Bailey, W.A. Cole, and Frank Colver. They joined the other delegates in prodding local governments to adopt direct legislation, proportional representation, and municipal ownership of utilities. "Clearly," Stimson says, "the People's Party had left its mark upon the labor movement." This fact notwithstanding, Typographical No. 174 led L.A.'s unions into the AFL five months later.[44] It was no coincidence that the national labor body, meeting in Denver that December, gave a ringing endorsement to direct legislation.[45]

• Although labor support for the populists had waned by the fall of 1894, Fred C. Wheeler of the carpenters, Cyren Fisk of the printers, and Jonathan Bailey of the Knights

helped draw up the People's Party ticket for Los Angeles County. Running once again on a platform favoring the initiative, referendum, and recall, the local Party surpassed its 1892 vote harvest. Mounting pressure from the left and the virulence of the Pullman strike alarmed Democratic leaders. They embraced many elements of the People's Party program after the election and began seeking fusion with the populists. In the national elections of 1896 fusion was consummated. This development caused the rapid decline of populism as an independent force but injected direct democracy further into mainstream political thinking in Los Angeles.[46]

- Workers who prodded their unions to take political stands could usually count on opposition from more conservative members. One way they dealt with it during the 1890s was by creating independent vehicles for reform. In March, 1896, activists from 15 Los Angeles unions, the Knights, and the Farmers' Alliance cobbled together a Labor Congress that acted as the Council of Labor's political stalking horse while remaining technically aloof from the central body. With this distinction drawn, the congress won support even from business unions like Typographical No. 174. It drafted a program steeped in populist ideals, summoning L.A.'s workers to help insert the initiative, referendum, and recall into the city's charter.[47]

Passing the Baton

Exactly when L.A.'s organized workers began leading the movement for direct democracy is unclear, but once that happened they kept a firm grip on the issue. The 1891 People's Party convention and its aftermath can be likened to the 20-yard stretch in a relay race where one runner hands the baton to the next. From 1891 to 1896 populists and unionists raced side by side, each grasping the direct democracy baton. Then, weakened by fusion with the Democrats, the populists drifted to the sidelines while the Los Angeles labor movement ran into the new century, baton in hand.

This prolonged 1891-96 exchange was both a seminal period for trade union politics

and, ultimately, a great national disappointment for the populists. They had demanded laws dear to the hearts of organized workers, had nominated workers as People's Party candidates, and had created Citizen Alliances and Industrial Legions to enlist workers in local reform campaigns. These initiatives failed to bind wage workers and radicalized farmers into a single movement. Generally speaking, L.A. labor kept its distance. Its attitude toward the People's Party, Stimson found, was less a partnership than "a composite of partial doctrinal approval and astute appreciation of the potential usefulness of Populism to the craft union movement." The American Federation of Labor likewise adopted many populist planks (including the initiative, referendum, and recall) "without giving formal recognition to the People's Party."[48]

Internal rifts, fusion with the Democrats, and the AFL's rebuff combined to derail the populist movement in L.A. and nationally by the end of the century. "There is no longer any more room for a Populist Party," Eugene V. Debs declared. "[P]rogressive Populists realize it, and hence the 'strongholds' of Populism are becoming the 'hotbeds' of socialism."[49] Debs' movement, which coalesced first in the Social Democracy and then in the Socialist Party at the century's turn, became the leading anti-capitalist force in Los Angeles. Despite the SLP's dual-unionist tendencies and failure to attract as many workers as its left-wing rival, the older formation managed to survive on the margins of the local polity. Meanwhile, the slow-motion baton exchange had ended. Organized labor had become the main, and certainly the most tenacious, champion of the initiative, referendum, and recall in Los Angeles. In 1898 it summoned its scarce reserves of energy for a series of campaigns that would last nearly five years, fend off much Old Guard opposition, and culminate in the nation's most impressive set of direct democracy reforms.

What brought the decade-long argument over a more open franchise to a head? Economics played the key role. With Populists, Knights, and other L.A. dissident groups at the turn of the century, workers shared a radical reaction to the Panic of 1893 and the fol-

lowing four years of depression. Thousands of idled men gathered in the city's parks and riverbed. In mid-1893 they clamored for a public works program that took four years to materialize and eventually hired only 765 of the unemployed. The same crisis of overproduction driven by fierce market rivalries that had pushed the nation's corporations into a series of job-crunching mergers also bonded them more tightly to the state. This development threatened workers and middleclass reformers alike, especially at the state and local levels. Among progressives the manipulation of the California legislature and the L.A. city council by a phalanx of railroad, electric railway, jobber, and liquor lobbyists induced a passion for regulation. Among the city's left-leaning unions, it steeled the demand for direct democracy.[50]

Local developments, moreover, threw the defects of the existing charter into stark relief. The crucial year was 1898. While L.A.'s unions remained financially stressed--only seven with 400 members still paid dues to the Council of Labor[51]--the city was rebounding from its long depression. It set aside $3 million that year for a breakwater at San Pedro harbor and moved to wrest control of its water supply from private companies.[52] Its bank deposits rose to $12 million.[53] And in 1898 Henry Huntington hazarded his first large investment in the Los Angeles Railway, a gambit that would lead in a mere 22 years to his ownership of two thriving electric railways running over 1,200 miles of track, dozens of suburban subdivisions, the Pacific Light & Power Company, and more southern California land than anyone else could dream of.[54] Small wonder that the adrenalin rush and worry of a cow town consumed by growth affected nearly the entire social spectrum, from the Board of Trade, Chamber of Commerce, and the *Los Angeles Times* to the middle classes, populists, socialists, and wage workers. In varying degrees all of them understood that the old charter with its weak mayor and scattered responsibilities could no longer serve their interests. As the rumblings for a new charter began, the L.A. labor movement and its allies

faced an unprecedented opportunity to plant the initiative, referendum, and recall in the city's governing document.

Opening Gambit: 1898

Progressives, who later claimed full credit for the campaign, were barely in evidence at its birth. On March 10, 1898 a collection of odd bedfellows gathered at the Southern California Music Hall to map out yet another path to charter reform. Delegates from the Council of Labor rubbed shoulders with free-market representatives of the Chamber of Commerce, Board of Trade, and Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association. Republican, Democratic, and People's Party loyalists showed up. So did Silver Republicans, the League for Better City Government, and the Jeffersonian Society, which had called the meeting. As the standard-bearer for L.A.'s embryonic progressive movement, the League attended this one meeting but no others. Willard's elite organization hemorrhaged members throughout 1898 and all but sank from view.[55]

The Music Hall delegates narrowly elected the Chamber's W.C. Patterson their chair. Later, from the floor, representatives of the Socialist Labor Party, Prohibition Party, and Teachers' Alliance asked to join the charter movement and were welcomed into it. Cyren E. Fisk, president of the Labor Council, an early AFL organizer in Los Angeles, member of Typographical 174's board of directors, warhorse of the *Times* boycott, one of a half-dozen unionists Otis hated most, and outspoken member of the Labor Congress that agitated for direct democracy in 1896, observed that the meeting was proceeding aimlessly. He asked each delegate to consult with his or her organization and at the next meeting present its nominee for a board of freeholders to be elected on a date set by the city council. Fisk's proposal was adopted.[56]

A week later five of the committee's members--John Humphreys, William J. Hunsaker, C.C. Wright, Herman W. Frank, and Henry W. O'Melveny--urged the city council to call a freeholders' election. "The present charter was adopted when the city had but

little more than one-third of its present population and when its territory was far less in area than now," their letter stated, "and said charter has been outgrown..." With the possible exception of Humphreys, these men represented the conservative end of L.A.'s political spectrum and no doubt were discomfited to find themselves in the same company as the Council of Labor. Impressed as much by their credentials as by the central point of their argument, the council agreed to hold an election but delayed setting a date.[57]

The *L.A. Times* immediately mounted a scathing attack against the entire charter *committee*. "[L]et us hear from the Spanish-Americans," it beseeched, "the Fruit-growers' Association, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals,...the Ancient Order of Hibernians, the ditto of Encarnadined Hombres,...the Ruskin Art Club...If we are going in for a polyglot charter, representing specifically and particularly everybody and everything, by all means let us have the entire porcine creature or nothing." [58] This was an unusual stance for Otis and his editorial writers to adopt, since they had never before and would only once again object to a select group of city organizations on the committees that launched charter reforms. What irritated the *Times* about *this* group was the middle to left side of its political spectrum—the Democrats, Teachers' Alliance, Populists, SLP, and Council of Labor that a letter to the editor lumped together as "the Socialistic and mongrel element."[59] The letter was unsigned—a device the paper often used for its most caustic denunciations.

The *Times* continued its barrage on its editorial and news pages alike (there was no discernible difference between them). Though these attacks came as no surprise to the labor and socialist delegates, they dismayed some of the conservatives, who began absenting themselves from the committee. Its work slowed, and the city council put off calling a freeholders' election. During the spring, Patterson, Hunsaker, O'Melveny, M.J. Newmark, and most other businessmen who had supported the committee's work concluded that their

interests lay elsewhere than in a civic collaboration with the city's unions. Only C.C. Wright, a judge, and Herman Frank of the Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association (M&M) soldiered on for a few more months. It was Judge Wright who finally cajoled the council into scheduling the freeholders' election for July 8. Candidates were to be nominated by petition, too little time remaining for the anticipated naming of candidates by the Music Hall group or any other. [60]

In his June 15 letter of withdrawal, the Chamber of Commerce's Patterson implicitly echoed the *Times*' criticism of the charter committee he had headed. "[I]t is and has been my firm belief that municipal government is a business matter and not a partisan affair," he wrote, "and that the construction of a charter for this city should be in the hands of a non-partisan board of freeholders."[61] The distinction he and the *Times* drew between a non-partisan process (good) and one open to all individuals and parties (bad) was as mystifying in 1898 as it seems now.

Nevertheless the plebeian remnants of the original charter committee shrugged off the mounting criticism and renewed their work. The local People's Party was partly responsible for instigating the new effort. At a mid-June charter committee meeting, reported the *Times*, "all the small-bore politicians of the Democrats, Populists et al. were present in force, with a liberal sprinkling of Socialists and Council of Labor representatives." This motley assemblage voted Fisk and F.H. Gill, a member of Cigar Makers No. 225 and advocate of the Debsian brand of socialism, onto a 15-member executive committee charged with overseeing the charter campaign. Nine men were selected to run for freeholder on a Citizens' Non-Partisan slate, among them Sam J. Chappel of Typographical Union No. 174 and J.B. Millard of the School Teachers' Association. Working against a greater number of labor candidacies was the requirement that a freeholder must have owned real estate in Los Angeles for at least five years. This fact, largely ignored in the literature, explains why the Labor Council often backed business and professional candidates for

freeholders' seats and then hounded them to adopt the direct democracy reforms it wanted.[62]

Otis's characterization of the committee's nominees was sulfurous—and clever. "The city cannot afford to hold charter elections in order that cranks shall try their theories on a dog," his next editorial declared. "Men who have been failures in the undertakings of life will never be able to prepare a charter for Los Angeles that the citizens of this city will adopt; therefore let us have a board of freeholders that are possessed of public confidence and are not mere theorists who desire to try their governmental nostrums on this community."[63] Otis lobbed this verbal grenade not just at Chappel and Millard but at the nominees of three institutions dear to his heart—William LeMoyne Wills of the M&M, Lawry J. Mathews of the Board of Trade, and Myer Joseph Newmark of the Chamber of Commerce. He hoped to shame that threesome and other respectables off the Citizens' Non-Partisan slate—but he only half succeeded. Wills and Mathews stayed put, securing enough signed petitions to run as candidates of the original charter committee. Newmark had his cake and ate it, too, keeping both his Citizens' Non-Partisan nomination and his place on a new, opposing slate of right-thinkers acceptable to the *Times*. There he was joined by the aforesaid O'Melveny and Patterson, only to have the latter abandon that commitment, too.[64]

In Otis's manichean world-view, the election campaign that followed pitted a "mongrel ticket" formulated by cranks against a ticket made up of "representative citizens in the best sense...lawyers and business men of standing, discretion and influence."[65] Voters disappointed the feisty publisher, as they would many times during the Progressive era. When the ballots were counted on July 9, Angelenos had elected seven freeholders exclusively from the slate Otis anointed, four from the slate of the original charter committee, and four from an amalgamation of the two. Of the labor candidates, J.B. Millard won a

freeholder's seat while Sam Chappel fell some 150 votes short.[66]

The Union Reform League Joins the Movement

Chappel, however, would continue to play a background role in the freeholders' deliberations as an early, possibly founding member of the Union Reform League (URL). The League had been planted in L.A.'s political soil earlier that year by one Rev. William Dwight Porter Bliss, a Congregational minister and fervent devotee of Christian socialism who briefly visited Los Angeles before returning to Boston. His was a wistfully metaphysical approach to the cooperative commonwealth, one that held employers largely faultless and believed the rise of monopoly capitalism was sanctioned by God. "If the capitalist says 'the people be damned,'" Bliss cautioned, "there is little use, there is no moral superiority, there is not even justice in retorting, 'the corporations be damned.' The fact is the average corporation carries out, but what has been until very recently the almost universal and approved instinct of the American people." Rather than inquiring how labor might be strengthened in its *mano a mano* with capital, the crusading reverend championed political and distributive reforms ranging from free state labor bureaus, postal savings banks, and higher taxes on land to the selective municipalization of public utilities and, not least, the initiative and referendum.[67]

Some of these planks attracted L.A.'s labor activists in the late 1890s, but by skirting any direct attack on shop-floor labor relations they failed to ignite much workingclass enthusiasm for the URL itself. This was a moment of great political flux and experimentation among left-leaning unionists. Chappel, a labor council delegate and vice-president of Typographical No. 174 who had led an independent labor political club, probably viewed Bliss's organization as a useful stepping-stone from the fading People's Party to something more durable--Debs's Social Democracy, for instance. The same was true of other union men who joined Bliss's organization in 1898. While engaged in the URL's charter agitation, A.M. Green chaired the Social Democracy's local executive board, helped lead

Retail Clerks No. 83, and presided over the Labor Council. W.C.B. Randolph, a carpenter, likewise devoted his free time to both the URL and the Social Democracy. Jonathan D. Bailey, also a union carpenter, had served the Knights of Labor as a Master Workman, moved on to the Nationalist clubs, later run for office as a People's Party candidate, and now helped guide the URL as a member of its executive board. The political outlook of a fifth unionist and Bliss follower, George H. Hewes of Carriage & Wagon Workers No. 65, is less well known, but he helped carry labor's demand for direct democracy to the board of freeholders in the summer of 1898.[68]

When the newly elected freeholders began meeting that July, they concerned themselves almost exclusively with reforming the structure of city government. Who should have the power to appoint and remove members of the various municipal commissions? Should members of the city council and board of education be elected at-large or by ward? Should city elections be held during or between presidential years? How long should franchises be granted for, and should ownership of the franchised railway or other public utility revert to the city at the end of that period? These were the riveting issues until the freeholders received a memorial, sometime in the first half of August, from the Union Reform League. Signed by Bliss, Hewes, F.D. Jones, William H. Knight, John R. Haynes, and Rev. J.B. Irvine, it called for the insertion of the initiative, referendum, and recall in the new city charter.[69]

"The principle of the Referendum and of the Initiative," the memorial declared, "is nothing new.

> "It is simply the principle of the American *town meeting* applied to the conditions of city life ....The object of the measure is not to obtain radical legislation, but simply to prevent the passage by city government of special legislation, the sale or giving away of public franchises or other favors... [I]t is the most important measure for which we ask, and also...its importance depends *wholly* on the *adequacy of the way in which it is adopted.* It will be possible for your board to frame a measure which will make the thoughtless public think it is obtaining the Referendum and yet make it utterly worthless, save for a cover under which private interests can raid the public purse and obtain from a corrupt council and a helpless public all they may care to steal." [70]

What the URL statement warned the freeholders off was requiring a prohibitively high number of petition signatures to force an initiative, referendum, or recall election. Seattle had recently passed just such a measure, one that called for a signature count equal to 25 percent of the votes cast in the last city election.[71] That bit of chartered chicanery resembled the famous black box that, when turned on, promptly turned itself off. Unmoved by the URL's caveat, the board of freeholders first refused and then agreed to write the initiative and referendum into the charter but set the signature threshold at 15 percent—half again as high as the URL and the city's unions had recommended. The recall idea was dropped entirely. On October 5 the freeholders completed their work and launched a campaign to win the electorate's support for it.[72]

The unions' profound disappointment with the direct democracy provisions of the draft charter was exacerbated by the back-of-the-hand dismissal of their only two workplace demands—a $2 minimum wage for city workers and the substitution of "force-account" or city-hired labor for the hated practice of using privately contracted labor on public works. Although they agreed that the freeholders' draft offered several improvements over the existing charter, unions, socialists, and the URL felt obliged to call for its defeat. It was defended principally by Otis and the League for Better City Government, then on its last legs.[73]

Workingclass agitation against the charter alarmed the freeholders, who feared their five months' work would come to naught. On November 22 they broadcast an emergency appeal "to the laboring men of the city of Los Angeles." After arguing that state law, not charter language, should set the municipal minimum wage, they insisted that the contract labor controversy was best left to the wisdom of the city council. Their open letter made no concessions to working men and women or their unions, failing even to address the issue of direct democracy. Nevertheless, it solicited their support for the charter "in behalf

of yourselves and especially of the school children of this city."[74]

It is easy to see why this appeal had no effect. Thirteen days later Angelenos handily rejected the proposed charter by a vote of 8,173 to 6,789. Three of the wealthier westside wards cast their ballots for it. All five workingclass wards voted it down by wide margins.[75] For Otis, not yet alert to the subversive scope of direct democracy, the outcome was lamentable. "It is greatly to be regretted that the proposed new charter failed to secure the approval of a majority of the voters," a *Times* editorial stated on December 6.[76] Organized labor, regaining its confidence after the depression years, did not dwell on the lost opportunity of 1898 but steeled itself for a renewed battle to win the initiative, referendum, and recall. The city's two socialist parties and the URL did likewise.

Enter John Randolph Haynes

The Union Reform League had flared into existence at a fortuitous time for the direct democracy movement. A year earlier there would have been no charter campaign to join and radicalize; three years later it would have entered the game too late to matter.[77] When it emerged in 1898, however, it caught the attention not just of a handful of trade unionists but of an unusual progressive who became California's best-known advocate of direct democracy. Dr. John Randolph Haynes was a wealthy capitalist investor and physician to L.A.'s upper crust, yet at the same time a man appalled by the inequities of the system that had made him rich. Though the advice he gave the city's unions often had a patronizing tone, his work on their behalf was effective and heartfelt.

Haynes held himself aloof from L.A.'s political storms during the first decade after his arrival from Philadelphia. He spent that time building his practice, net worth, and friendships with the city's social and economic leaders, among them Otis, with whom he later had a drastic falling out. During this early period of self-promotion, however, the insistent drumbeat of reform kept intruding on his thoughts. He finally resolved to march to it after hearing Rev. Bliss preach a sermon on Christian socialism at his church in January, 1898.

His biographer, Tom Sitton, describes his epiphany:

> "Haynes had considered himself 'practically an anarchist' in that he could not see 'any way out of the existing order of things except to throw everything over and start fresh.' ....Bliss's message, delivered in a revival atmosphere, transformed this pessimism into a realization that the world could be changed for the better without violent revolution, and supplied Haynes with a program to pursue that goal..." [78]

Within a month or two Haynes became Bliss's ablest sponsor, introducing him to L.A.'s professional elites and chairing a Committee of One Hundred that organized the city's branch of the Union Reform League.[79] What made the URL a perfect vehicle for the 44-year-old Haynes was the fact that its reforms challenged capitalism only at the margins—i.e. they engaged his idealism without threatening his social position in Los Angeles. No such indulgence befell the likes of A.M. Green and W.C.B. Randolph, who joined Haynes in the URL but had little if any social status to protect. Many of the trade union members who followed Chappel, Green, Randolph, and Hewes as agitators for direct democracy after 1900 were more profound socialists than Bliss or Haynes—and none of them ever crashed the parties of the privileged where Haynes was both a frequent invitee and a gracious host.

These distinctions mattered. In fact they were the crux of the successful partnership between union activists and Haynes during the prolonged charter campaign. Organized labor and its allies had demanded the initiative, referendum, and recall throughout the 1890s with little help from progressives. Except for his intervention as a signer of the URL's memorial to the freeholders, Haynes lent only passive support to the project in 1898.[80] This circumstance was about to change, however. "Haynes continued to study the intricacies of direct legislation through 1899," says Sitton. During that time, both within and outside the URL, Haynes met many union activists and discovered how tenacious labor's advocacy had been not just for this charter reform but for the recall as well.[81] The result of these encounters was a potent outsider-insider collaboration. Haynes became a forceful champion of direct democracy. While union leaders mobilized their members to

canvass workingclass neighborhoods, distribute leaflets, turn out voters, and pressure elected officials from below, Haynes wined and dined the city's opinionmakers and either convinced them of the need for direct democracy or neutralized their fears about very real dangers this innovation posed to their leadership status. Neither Haynes nor organized labor alone could have brought the direct democracy campaign to a successful conclusion. In tandem, each proved indispensable to the other.

A Constitutional Contretemps: 1900

The next attempt to write the initiative, referendum, and recall into the city charter got under way in May of 1900, when Mayor Fred Eaton invited delegates from seven community organizations to a non-partisan convention at the Chamber of Commerce building. Eaton charged them with nominating 15 candidates for a new board of freeholders, which would then set out to write a completely new charter. All seven organizations—the Board of Trade, Chamber of Commerce, Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association, Board of Education, Bar Association, four socialist clubs considered as a unit, and the Council of Labor—responded favorably, though one socialist club refused to participate. At the convention's second session on June 8, the socialists introduced a resolution calling for a direct democracy charter amendment but were ruled out of order. The delegates then took up the task of assembling a freeholders' ticket.[82]

They quickly agreed to select two candidates sponsored by each organization, for a total of fourteen, while electing the fifteenth at large. The socialist nominees were to be split one each between the Socialist Labor Party and the Social Democracy. As this process actually unfolded, however, most candidates were named by competing blocs of delegates. The Chamber of Commerce, Board of Trade, Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association, and Board of Education banded together to choose eight conservatives including Harry Chandler, Otis's second-in-command at the *L.A. Times*. Independently, the Bar Association selected two men. The Socialist Labor Party, Social Democracy, and Labor Council

together endorsed shoemaker O.A. Sossaman, C.C. Ford of Carpenters No. 426, former *Herald* editor W.A. Spalding, and H. Gaylord Wilshire, a socialist whom the *Times* dubbed a "bill poster by profession, golf player by preference and reformer by sufferance." The Labor Council also backed John R. Haynes, who was narrowly elected the candidate-at-large.[83]

Despite the conservative cast of the new freeholder ticket, a *Times* editorial writer found its method of selection "clumsy, illogical, unbusinesslike, and unsatisfactory." This time the newspaper got it partly right. By what logic did the Socialist Labor Party make a nomination while the Democratic, Republican, and Prohibition parties could not? For Mayor Eaton, however, fairness wasn't the issue. He believed a convention reflecting the right, center, and left of L.A. politics would more effectively jump-start a new charter movement than a primary election or the collection of petition signatures, either of which would have been more inclusive. As it turned out, his decision was wise. The movement gained momentum. Otis nearly choked on the socialists' "grossly disproportionate" share of the 15 freeholder nominees, but he simply had to live with it.[84]

Fortunately for him there was no limit to the number of candidates. Each convention nominee had to secure 484 valid petition signatures--three percent of the latest mayoralty vote--before he could run for a freeholder's seat in a city election. Convention delegates themselves provided between 65 and 100 of those names. Fred C. Wheeler, then a leader of Carpenters Local No. 332, helped collect the rest from union members and other Angelenos. But any citizens who had owned city property for five or more years could do the same. Through this process eight additional candidates, among them J.B. Millard of the City Teachers' Alliance, secured independent places on the ballot.[85] Otis actively promoted most of them.

The election took place on July 27. Millard and three other independents won free-

holder seats; so did the two Bar Association lawyers, six business-bloc nominees, and four of the five candidates supported by labor. Haynes's ballot total led all others. Millard, a school principal and former teacher, would soon join the board's labor-leaning minority in backing a direct-democracy charter clause.[86]

The freeholders knew well before their deliberations began that they would have to grapple with the initiative, referendum, and recall. The nominating convention had placed these issues firmly on the agenda, along with the business community's proposals for a strong mayor, civil service, and other features of a modernized charter. And of course the city's unions and socialists kept pressuring the freeholders to adopt the three electoral reforms. On September 21 Council of Labor secretary W.M. Tomlinson led a union delegation that gripped the board's attention with demands for direct democracy, a $2 minimum daily wage for city laborers, direct hiring of day labor for all city work, and the city's right to buy out public utilities. As presented by Tomlinson, the direct democracy recommendations were especially detailed: for the initiative and referendum a five percent petition would suffice; for the recall, ten percent; no direct democracy special election to be held sooner than six months after a general election; and no more than two such special elections to be held per calendar year.[87] Clearly L.A.'s top labor leader favored a direct democracy mechanism that the public could readily exploit—but only as a last resort when traditional forms of suasion had failed.

Though the freeholders it had helped elect were outnumbered by conservatives, organized labor enjoyed disproportionate influence over the board thanks to Haynes's maneuvering. He had used his leverage as top vote-getter to win the chairmanship for Spalding and stack the legislative committee with men who favored direct democracy, himself included. "Owing to the fact that I received the highest number of votes cast for any of the...candidates, almost a unanimous vote, I had much to say about the organization of the board," Haynes later recalled. With the aid of lawyers from the Social Reform League (a

URL offshoot), he couched labor's longstanding demands for the initiative, referendum, and recall in statutory language, Then he lobbied skeptical board members for these reforms almost beyond their endurance. He cornered freeholders in their offices and homes, Sitton quotes him as saying "so that they could not eat in peace."[88]

A week after the labor leaders' visit, Haynes rose from his freeholder's seat to offer his most cogent defense of direct democracy. The problem with city councilmen and other legislators was not that they were intrinsically corrupt, he said. Rather they were so well insulated during their terms of office that "instead of being our servants they are our absolute masters." When they passed laws no one liked, or refused to pass laws everybody favored, the people had no timely redress. Previous attempts to solve this problem--to make government more responsive--through at-large voting, civil service reform, and the election of "honest" men, had all failed. Haynes then turned to his most skeptical colleagues:

> "Few of us would be so bold as to claim the right that this board of freeholders should make a charter without referring it to the people, but how many of you claim that your representatives in the city council may have the privilege of granting valuable franchises for long periods of years and making large appropriations of money? Yet you look upon it as a dangerous innovation to refer such action to the people."[89]

With a convert's zeal, Haynes next went a step too far. Direct democracy, he declared, would be "the death of the lobby" because no one could lobby all the people. Partisanship and party machines would fade away as citizens increasingly voted "their own interests." Haynes spoke at a time when corporations lacked the means to lobby all the people, and so lobbied or bribed mainly politicians. He could not have foreseen how single-interest campaigns armed with huge corporate budgets, sophisticated (and eventually computerized) voter lists, and deceptive mass media messages would set the terms of public debate. But even today there is a vestigial truth in what he said. Initiatives and referenda still give voters ways of influencing legislation that are more direct and better focused than candidate elections. By making a "dangerous innovation" look like a modest stretch of the democra-

tic principle, which in fact it was, Haynes persuaded the skeptics on his charter board. The fact that the *L.A. Evening Express* and the local Democratic and Republican party platforms had recently endorsed direct legislation made the arguments in its favor by Haynes and the Council of Labor seem politically safer than they actually were.[90]

Freeholders debated the issue for a few more days. On Oct. 1 they voted overwhelmingly in favor of the three electoral reforms. Petition signature thresholds for the initiative and referendum were pegged slightly higher than those Tomlinson had proposed, but they were not onerous. The recall was another matter. Once again it was adopted in theory and denied in practice. If voters in a single ward wanted to remove their councilman from office, they would need to collect a number of valid petition signatures equal to 25 percent of all the ballots cast *citywide* for mayor in the latest general election.[91] That impossibly high standard betrayed the view of most freeholders that unless a huge number of voters not limited to his constituents thought otherwise, a duly elected lawgiver had a right to hold office for the full length of his term.

A day after the freeholders' vote for direct democracy Haynes announced the creation of a Direct Legislation League to promote the new electoral system, first locally and then statewide. His organization allied itself with the seven-year-old National Direct Legislation League, whose president, Eltweed Pomeroy, would soon begin praising Los Angeles as the demiurge of American municipal reform.[92] But the satisfaction Haynes and local union leaders felt in the first weeks of October quickly gave way to deep disappointment. They watched their great work die aborning.

The wrench in the machinery was the California constitution's home rule clause. While it gave cities the power to draft and thereafter amend their charters, it did *not* authorize them to replace valid charters with entirely new ones. The first hint of trouble surfaced on August 7, when city attorney Walter F. Haas advised the freeholders that they were an

illegally constituted body. Stunned, they dropped the problem into the city council's lap and kept on writing the charter. This rather strange exercise in denial lasted until mid-October, when the State Supreme Court arranged to sit *en banc* in Los Angeles. Haas drafted a friendly lawsuit to settle the issue. Before he could submit it, however, the court ruled in a similar case that once a city had adopted a charter it could only amend it, not replace it root and branch. This decision, issued on October 17, effectively froze the freeholders' work. They toyed with a subterfuge--recasting the draft charter as an amendment and sending it to the voters--but this ploy seemed too clever by half and was soon dropped.[93] A similar fate met an attempt in February, 1901 to offer the draft as a collection of individual amendments. It failed when the city council announced it lacked the funds for a special election. Chastened, the freeholders handed their draft to the council in the hope that it would serve as the springboard for yet another reform campaign.[94]

Three Developments Brighten the Outlook for Direct Democracy

That campaign began in 1901 and at long last gave the L.A. working class its victory. Unlike the failed efforts of 1898 and 1900, it drew much of its strength from developments within the labor movement. The first of these, in December 1900, was the American Federation of Labor's reaffirmation of its nationwide call for the initiative and referendum.[95] Though the L.A. Council of Labor had taken the further step of demanding the recall, it was emboldened by the AFL's support.

The second development was a tenacious strike and boycott by the city's planing mill workers. It began in October, 1901, ran headlong into harsh reprisals from the city government, struggled gamely on for another year, and collapsed just before the December 1902 charter election. The heavyhanded suppression this strike inspired--a stinging rebuke to the city's unions, a reminder of their outsider status--was all the evidence they needed that without direct democracy they would never break through the wall of class privilege that surrounded local government.

When hundreds of members of Amalgamated Woodworkers Local No. 144 met in late September, 1901 and voted to strike by October 7 unless employers granted their door and sash departments an eight-hour day with no loss of wages, they had reason to believe that the free interplay of market forces championed by Harrison Gray Otis and the *L.A. Times* would bring them victory. Arrayed against them were 12 planing mills joined in a Millmens' Association that was itself embedded in a web of open-shop groups promoted by Otis. Through the Brotherhood of Carpenters the mill workers had allied themselves with other unions in the L.A. Building Trades and Labor Councils. The two camps were thus closely matched. By the nominal, as opposed to operative, standard of "industrial freedom," they were poised for a fair contest.[96]

It was the operative standard, however, that mattered. The "free" labor market that Otis invoked simply would not have existed without constant interventions by the state in the form of time-disciplining laws, infrastructural subsidies to large and small enterprises, strikebreaking by police, and the other class-targeted measures identified in Part 1 of this study. A more classic case of having your cake and eating it too cannot be imagined.

The city's 12 planing firms, having spurned the eight-hour day in early October, found to their horror that their non-union employees were as eager as their unionized ones to vote with their feet. Before the month was over 10 of the 12 firms caved in to Local 144's demands. The two holdouts were the Hughes Brothers and Carpenter & Biles. On November 1 nearly 80 of their workers walked out. The Labor Council backed their strike. So did the Building Trades Council, whose agent, Jim Gray, induced several craft unions to refuse to work with materials from the two struck mills. The boycott failed to shut them down, however, so Local 144 sent picketers to their gates. Police Chief Charles Elton at once ordered his officers to clear a path for strikebreakers and arrest Gray. While Gray sat fuming in his jail cell a police captain named Bradish warned him, "You shan't run a boycott in this town." The woodworkers ignored that threat and extended their picketing to a

saloon owned by a Hughes Brothers stakeholder who had pledged $25,000 to break the strike. One picketer, A.H. Ryan, waved a sign saying "The Proprietor of the Original Mug Saloon Is Not Fair to Organized Labor. Boys, Keep Away". He, too, was jailed and then released by a judge who explained that the city had no law against carrying signs or banners.[97]

"The Los Angeles *Times* presented the incident as proof that 'Jim Gray and his gang of lawless union agitators' endorsed violence and intimidation," says historian Thomas R. Clark. "Los Angeles Police Chief Charles Elton praised the actions of his arresting officers" and was reportedly "furious" with the judge. So, it appears, was the city council. On December 28, it deftly sidestepped the U.S. Constitution and banned the carrying of signs on Los Angeles streets. Such displays, the council said, might cause horses to panic.[98]

It took one more act of municipal meddling to defeat the walkout. Arrests and a growing police presence had utterly failed to dampen the strikers' mood. In March, 1902, they carried out a plan to buy an Eighth Ward planing mill, clearly intending to draw business away from the Hughes Brothers and Carpenter & Biles. While Local 144 readied the mill for operation as a workers' cooperative, a construction boomlet induced the Building Trades Council to revive its boycott of scab materials. Both developments so alarmed the two holdout companies that they agreed to negotiate a settlement of the eight-hour workday issue. At that instant the decisive civic hammer fell. The Los Angeles Fire Commission denied Local 144 a permit to start up production. This blow snuffed the life out of the boycott and strike. With the union mill permanently shuttered, Hughes Brothers and Carpenter & Biles withdrew their offer to negotiate. By December both their factories were running at full speed on a nine-hour schedule. All the other planing mills soon reverted to the longer shift. Within a year Local 144 ceased to exist.[99]

"The permit was not denied for safety reasons," Clark asserts, "but on the grounds that

nearby home owners complained that a planing mill would decrease the value of their property." Labor leaders pointed out that other factories were turning out the same products (doors, sashes, railings, molding, shingles, and cabinets) in the same neighborhood without incident, but this argument had no effect whatsoever on the Fire Commission and city council.

> "The Los Angeles *Record* had closely followed the failed efforts of residents of the largely working class Eighth Ward to prevent the construction of a gas works in their neighborhood, on the grounds that the smell and hazard of the gas works decreased the value of their homes. At that time, however, the Fire Commissioner claimed that he could not deny a permit to the gas works for that reason. For organized labor and its supporters at the *Record,* the Fire Commissioner's decision to now deny the union's permit to run a planing mill was blatantly political, designed to thwart the union's efforts and serve the interests of the city's planing mill owners." [100]

Among the many Local 144 members who saw direct democracy as a way to end such political meddling, at least two actively championed the reform during the electoral campaign of 1902. That fall Charles F. Frazier and Sam Mitchell helped revive a lapsed Union Labor Party and ran for the city treasurer's office and school board, respectively, as its candidates.[101] Namesakes of this party had briefly surfaced in 1886 and 1888 with negligible results. Its 1902 reincarnation, though typically failing to elect anyone, spent much of its energy agitating for direct democracy on the city's streets. Frazier, Mitchell, and other party activists stirred up a much livelier grassroots interest in the reform than had been evident in 1898 or 1900.

This was the third and most important labor development affecting the outcome of the charter campaign. The ULP ticket was led by mayoral candidate George McGahan, president of the retail clerks union. He and his running mates shared an open contempt for Demipub city administrations that were "owned and controlled by employers of labor who roll up dividends fleeced from the scant earnings of men, women, and children."[102] Like local socialists, ULP organizers campaigned for municipal ownership of utilities, free school books, and equal pay for men and women as well as direct democracy. Both groups viewed electoral work as part of the class struggle.

Because their aims were so similar, L.A.'s fledgling Socialist Party decided not to contest that fall's city election, throwing its weight behind the ULP in exchange for the latter's support of socialist candidates at the county and state levels. The rift that this unusual decision opened between evolutionary and revolutionary socialists did not heal for eight years (see pages 596-600). It was exacerbated by the ULP's disappointing finish on December 1. McGahan's ticket fared poorly on the westside but drew a good deal of support from blue-collar wards like the Sixth, where it attracted half the votes of the winning candidates. It would have attracted even more if fewer workers had voted Democratic as the best way to keep Republicans out of office. During the campaign the ULP's street-corner proselytizing for a direct democracy charter plank gained far more traction than its agitation on behalf of its own candidates.[103]

Endgame: 1901-1902

When newly elected Mayor Meredith Snyder, a Democrat, convinced the mostly Republican city council late in 1901 to help him organize a new charter revision committee, neither he nor it had any intention of reviving the fight for direct democracy. Much dearer to their bipartisan hearts was the opportunity to boost the city's growth by relaxing the old charter's constraints on taxes and municipal debt. That "antiquated instrument," said Snyder, "handicaps the administration of the city's affairs." Accordingly the 20 citizens he and the council chose (first and foremost themselves) brought a passion for growth to their deliberations—in particular growth subsidized by public indebtedness, high taxes, and the support of a disciplined civil service and strong mayor.

Among the thoroughly respectable men named to the committee were A.B. Cass, former president of the Chamber of Commerce; J. Ross Clark, a capitalist with stakes in the Salt Lake Railroad and other enterprises; clothing merchant H.W. Frank; State Senator Fred Smith; a contingent of mostly high-priced attorneys; and all nine city councilmen. Not a single representative of the Council of Labor unions that had battled long and hard

for charter reform was asked to join the committee. Haynes was similarly excluded.[104] Both the unions and Haynes continued to fight for their prized reforms, however.

The early work of the committee, undertaken in March, 1902, was desultory. Mayor Snyder proposed Smith for the chairman's position; he took that office by acclamation. At attorney Joseph Scott's suggestion the committee invited citizens to submit written charter amendments for its consideration. Repeated conversations probed the merits of ward versus at-large voting for members of the city council. Failed quorums often reduced the few members in attendance to idle banter about the city's problems.[105] No one could have foreseen that a radical set of proposals would emerge from such humdrum beginnings.

What galvanized the committee and impelled it down a road it had not planned to travel was the stubborn call for direct democracy from the ranks of labor and a banquet that Haynes cleverly arranged for all 20 committee members at Levy's Café on April 3--a night on which they had scheduled a regular meeting. Earlier Haynes had spoken with Eltweed Pomeroy, then visiting Los Angeles, and had invited the National Direct Legislation League president to address the group. Sitton captures the mood of the event:

> "Haynes briefly addressed the group concerning the need for direct legislation and then introduced Pomeroy, who delivered an eloquent speech in favor of the initiative and referendum....Since the hour was getting late, committee member Frank Finlayson, a friend of Haynes's who had promised that afternoon to consider direct legislation, suggested that the meeting be conducted at the restaurant. The other contented members agreed. Finlayson then asked for a committee resolution calling for the initiative and referendum to be included in the charter amendments after consideration by his public utilities subcommittee. The resolution passed unanimously, and after discussion of a few other subjects the meeting came to a close, 'when all drank to Dr. Haynes and sang "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow"'.[106]

In the days that followed, Haynes persuaded three members of the group's public utilities subcommittee--Frank Finlayson, Walter F. Haas, and William M. Bowen--to reintroduce the initiative and referendum planks drafted by the 1900 freeholders. Haynes believed the recall measure was too prickly for the committee's conservative majority to embrace. Worried that it might undermine his entire case for reform, he did not propose it. Neither did a Council of Labor delegation which met with the panel on two occasions later

that month. Led by carpenter W.H. Smiley, it warned the panel against requiring an onerous number of signatures on petitions and urged it to call for initiative and referendum elections when at least five percent of the voters demanded them. Like Haynes, however, the city's unions put off their agitation for the recall to a more favorable moment.[107]

Sometimes help comes from unexpected quarters, and by this route the recall was revived in early April. One day as Bowen leafed through documents from the 1900 campaign he came upon the recall plank, and without giving it much thought he added it to the ones his subcommittee was drafting. The irony of this act became clear on July 3 when Bowen cast the committee's lone vote against sending the recall amendment to the voters. According to the *Times*, he believed the measure "might subject officials to constant harassment from their enemies."[108]

A similar concern appears to have led Haynes' Direct Legislation League and the progressive belwether Municipal League to withhold their support for the recall even as the committee was moving to recommend it. In the first two weeks of June the two organizations circulated an identical petition for the committee's perusal. It declared their support for "direct legislation," which they defined as a system giving voters the power to adopt ordinances and annul those passed by the city council but *not* to snatch elected officials from their seats with the vaudevillian recall cane.[109]

The views of Haynes and Charles Dwight Willard at this juncture were highly interesting. Haynes' reluctance to publicly endorse the recall measure he had drafted two years earlier clearly survived Bowen's intervention. Why else would his Direct Legislation League remain close-lipped on this reform for the next several months? Willard, a fixture on Haynes' letterheads and spearhead of the year-old Municipal League, resolutely voiced most progressives' distaste for the recall. He had every intention of seeing his political allies elected to all or most city offices, and his tireless trudge toward that goal ended with

the electoral coup of 1909. Where Haynes sought enlightened municipal government, Willard sought power for "the best men". Arming voters to remove such men from office at any moment, no doubt because of class hostility, was not an idea that he gladly entertained. By the time the charter election came round in December, 1902, Haynes had decided that openly supporting the recall amendment was a risk worth taking. Willard just as emphatically opposed the recall in discussions with his Municipal League colleagues and other progressives.[110]

Meanwhile the labor movement had long since ended its tactical silence on the issue. Once the charter committee adopted all three measures of direct democracy in early July, the Central Labor Council and its affiliates launched a precinct-level campaign to plant them in the city charter. They did so despite their belief that the signature thresholds for successful initiative, referendum, and recall petitions had been set too high--5%, 7%, and 25% of the electorate, respectively, for general elections and a good deal higher for any special elections that might be required.[111] It was through these technical constraints, rather than an all-out attack on direct democracy, that the charter revision committee's nine city councilmen shored up a few of their prerogatives of office while ceding others to the voters.

Contemporary observers marveled at the fact that the nine councilmen twice voted to relax their grip on power--especially in the case of the referendum and recall. (They did so first as committee members, and later as council members approving their own report.) "It must be admitted," wrote Willard,

> that the city council in adopting the commission's [sic] report had very little conception of its radical nature....and they allowed [the] amendments to go through unchanged. The recall they regarded as a joke which would never get by serious-minded people when it went to the ballot. Indeed, it was generally supposed that the politicians would see to it that none of the trio pulled through." [112]

Willard's oft-repeated declaration that Haynes singlehandedly won the day for these reforms by snookering the council into committing political hara-kiri has been taken at

face value by many historians and journalists.[113] The paper trail he left for later generations to peruse was second only to Haynes', he was the better writer of the two, and their claims on our attention were equally self-conscious. These circumstances made it easy for the twentieth-century disciples of Clio who followed Willard to parrot his opinion about who had made history in Los Angeles and, in the present instance, who had lodged the recall in the city charter. "This was devised and put into the instrument by Dr. John R. Haynes," Willard flatly claimed.[114] That judgment ran roughshod over four crucial facts. First, the city's unions had begun demanding the recall years before Haynes took up the cause; second, there is no evidence that all nine city council members in 1902 were dimwatted; third, we know they pondered and debated all the direct democracy measures at length; and fourth, these eminently political characters were bulldogged by the labor movement and workingclass voters in the precincts at least as vigorously as they were prodded from within their own circle by Haynes and his friends.

In the months just before the charter election, a controversy erupted over a franchise granted to the Los Angeles Railway Company by a pliant city council over the mayor's veto. The contract was sloppily or corruptly drawn, giving Henry Huntington free rein to operate his electric railway as he saw fit. Public anger reached the boiling point when he began running freight, not just passengers, through the central business district. Foes of Huntington used the occasion to drum up support for the initiative and referendum, especially the latter.[115]

Swept along by a tidal shift in public opinion, the city's political parties and daily newspapers expressed near-unanimous support for the *idea* of direct democracy in the last half of 1902. Their affection for the charter amendments actually on the ballot, however, ranged from robust to tepid. Among the enthusiasts were the *L.A. Record*, the socialist parties, and the populists, who welcomed all three measures. The *Express* and the Republican and Democratic parties echoed Willard's rejection of the recall while praising the

initiative and referendum. So, initially, did the *Herald*, but it later warmed to the recall. From the *Times* came a grudging and short-lived endorsement. Haynes, who had been Otis' personal physician, managed to talk the bombastic publisher into printing a few favorable comments after the charter committee gave direct democracy its thumbs-up. "The plan has much to recommend it," one of his editorials declared. "Its principal merit lies in the fact that it would bring the enactment of local laws and the choice of local officials nearer to the people."[116]

Otis's true feelings about direct democracy soon asserted themselves, however. At first his criticisms were oblique. One editorial accused the charter revisers of biting off more innovations than the city could chew. Proposing a short list of worthy amendments--a stronger mayor, at-large voting, a civil service, an independent water department, a board of public works, a higher public debt ceiling--it asked, "What more is necessary?" The implication was that direct democracy did not belong in the charter.[117]

A comment about the *Times'* editorial tactics a century ago may shed some light on what happened next. While Otis loved to wade slam-bang into controversies, on occasion he found it useful to cloak his opinions in a fraudulent kind of reportage. Direct democracy presented him with such an occasion. On the one hand the three charter amendments worried him and he hoped to block them; on the other hand he wanted to avoid a final reckoning with Haynes. To dodge this dilemma he had one of his writers concoct a story about an unnamed source who had matchless expertise in matters constitutional. This fictional genius, a "prominent Los Angeles lawyer...too modest to permit the use of his name," managed the neat trick of being both "prominent" and anonymous. "I do not desire to be quoted," he swore between quotation marks, "but *The Times* is welcome to my views." Then he let on that the California Supreme Court had recently found the initiative and referendum to be unconstitutional. Worse, the two reforms were politically reckless. "Direct legislation," the *Times'* spectral attorney declared,

> "is the 'open door' to every agitator and Socialist in the land. These individuals usually go far in their campaigns to foist their ideas on the body politic. It seems to me that under this system people of this character will be able to keep the city government in a constant state of turmoil....The average voter cannot be expected to pass upon the technical construction of an ordinance....Carefully considering the fundamental principles of direct legislation, I am impressed with the idea that they are inconsistent with our constitutional [i.e. representative] form of government." [118]

Whatever Haynes thought of the *Times*' journalistic methods--and in later years they made him grit his teeth--he lost no time rebutting the substance of the newspaper's charge that direct legislation undermined republican government. Three in-the-flesh attorneys and George Dunlop, secretary of the Direct Legislation League, joined him in drafting several responses that the *Times* published on November 17 and 23. Direct democracy, they said, was rooted in the U.S. constitution:

> "In a recent and widely-circulated attack by a 'modest' and nameless attorney, upon the principle of direct legislation, it was asserted that a decision of the Supreme Court, *ex parte Anderson*, delivered August 26, 1901, dealt the principle of direct legislation a staggering blow. Thereby intending to induce voters of Los Angeles to refrain from voting for the initiative and referendum Amendment No. 12....We are familiar with the Supreme Court decision *ex parte Anderson*...and find that not only is there no expression of the court doubting the constitutionality of the referendum proper, but, on the contrary, its constitutionality is assumed....Since then, State Constitutional Amendment No. 6 has been adopted by vote of the people, which does expressly authorize this kind of legislation by the people, independent of their legislative body..." [119]

At more than a century's distance we have no way of gauging the rebuttal's impact on voters, but it seems reasonable to assume that it blunted the *Times'* effort to turn them against the initiative and referendum. These reforms had been debated for a dozen years, and most Angelenos now felt they offered ordinary people a greater and more direct voice in public affairs. As the charter campaign neared its end, Union Labor alone of the political parties carried the issue of direct democracy into the city's streets. Quiet support for it had grown among Demipub voters, however. Haynes' Direct Legislation League propagandized the issue in select forums, and Willard's Municipal League distributed some pamphlets endorsing a short list of charter amendments. The initiative and referendum were on this list, the recall (amendment 13) was not. In the words of one Municipal League bulletin, "Number 13 is objected to as being."[120]

During its early years, notes Albert H. Clodius in his 1953 study of L.A.'s progressive

movement, the Municipal League took an "extremely cautious" approach to municipal reform. "The League was conservative even in its support of the charter amendments during the fall of 1902. It withheld an endorsement of the recall, and only cautiously endorsed the initiative and referendum. In the summer of 1904 it advised against the recall of Councilman [James P.] Davenport, and was really only an actively important influence toward charter reform during the campaign for the amendments in the fall of 1904." That year's reforms, unlike those of 1902, had nothing to do with popular democracy and everything to do with increasing the efficiency and centralized power of city government.[121]

Oddly, Willard telephoned Haynes two days before the election to tell him what he already knew--that the Municipal League was urging a no vote on the recall. Haynes' biographer, Tom Sitton, says "the physician immediately printed '30,000 little yellow cards' calling for passage of the direct legislation, recall, and civil service amendments. Because of his already close ties to organized labor, Union Labor party workers in the city's wards agreed to distribute the cards along with their own literature."[122]

A Lopsided Vote

Election Day, December 1, 1902, changed the power dynamics of Los Angeles municipal government for decades . Yoked together in a single charter amendment, the initiative and referendum drew 12,105 favorable votes out of 14,060 cast; the recall drew 9,779 votes out of 12,248 cast. A few weeks before the election, backers of direct democracy wondered whether a simple or three-fifths majority would be required to adopt it. They needn't have worried--all three measures passed by at least a four-fifths margin. Working-class and wealthier westside wards returned similar majorities for each of them.[123] Celebrating the outcome, the *Herald* couldn't resist a dig at its media rival:

> "The triumphant victory for Amendments Nos. 12 and 13, which will put the responsibility of our municipal government directly in the people's hands and will provide us with an honest and business-like system, is most gratifying to every loyal citizen, and to *The Herald*, which kept persistently

> on the firing line, fighting for these amendments.....The people's will triumphed, and that was the best day's work possible. The covert and blundering assaults on direct legislation and civil service reform, the eleventh-hour 'discoveries' which the gullible dictator readily swallowed, only had the effect of piling up splendid majorities for these two amendments" [124]

The "dictator," of course, was Otis.

Three years later Willard, having changed his mind about the recall, pointed out that it had carried by a majority second only to that of the initiative and referendum among the fifteen charter amendments. "The sentiment of citizens of Los Angeles, excluding those that make a business of politics, is now very nearly unanimous in its favor," he wrote. "If a vote were to be taken on its repeal, I believe the recall would be sustained by a majority of ten to one." [125]

Several developments confirmed the wisdom of L.A.'s voters before and after Willard penned the above comment. In January, 1903, despite haggling over direct democracy, especially the recall, the state legislature ratified all the successful charter amendments.[126] In August, 1904, a judge in the L.A. Superior Court upheld the constitutionality of the recall following the ouster of a sixth-ward councilmen by his constituents; the California Supreme Court accepted his decision.[127] Finally, in October, 1906, the state's highest court declared that the city's initiative and referendum measures were solidly grounded in the U.S. constitution. It rejected the argument, repeatedly voiced by Otis and others, that direct democracy undermined republican government. Four of the five jurists deciding *In re Pfahler* (88 Pac. 270) cited New England town meetings and other examples of legislating directly by the people as historic features of local government in this country.[128]

Direct Democracy in Los Angeles, 1904-1915

Either of two plausible developments would have doomed direct democracy in the years after it won a place in the L.A. city charter: a failure to exploit this new opportunity for self-government, or a flood of nuisance initiatives, referenda, and recalls that wasted taxpayers' money while contributing little of value to the community. Fortunately, neither

development happened.

Between 1904 and 1915 enough Angelenos signed petitions to place some 25 initiatives, referenda, and recalls on the ballot. Voters then rejected about twice as many of these measures as they adopted—the nays proving as salutary as the yeas. In a 1904 election they circumscribed the zone where slaughterhouses could operate;[129] in 1905 and 1911 they defeated initiatives to outlaw saloons;[130] in 1908 they forced the city council to schedule a charter election;[131] in 1909 they ousted Mayor Harper, set up a public utilities commission, and defeated the council's efforts to raise telephone rates, give away a railway franchise, and ban street gambling;[132] in 1910 they thwarted two attempts by companies to reverse city legislation through referenda--one against a license ordinance and the other against an electric lighting rate cut;[133] similarly, in 1911, they vetoed the Los Angeles. Railway's attempt to overturn a law barring the use of raised tracks on city streets;[134] in 1912 they created an aqueduct investigatory board, upheld the regulation of streetcar rates; and nullified plans to prohibit free lunches in saloons, test cattle for tuberculosis, and improve a boulevard to the harbor;[135] in 1913 they overturned an ordinance calling for police surveillance of dance halls;[136] in 1914 they blocked the recall of L.A. County Supervisor Richard H. Norton.[137]

The city's Progressive-era voters harvested a final bumper crop of direct democracy measures on June 1, 1915. While declining to make jitney buses more competitive against street railways, they created a two-shift system for firemen, instituted a vehicle tax, authorized an interchange telephone system, endorsed the hiring of public tuberculosis nurses, and accepted Col. G.J. Griffith's gift of the hilly 3,015-acre urban park that bears his name and was, at the time, the largest such park in the United States.[138]

From this account it can be seen that Angelenos took their new electoral powers seriously, using the initiative, referendum, and recall in ways that usually improved the life of

the city. "Most of the talk against direct legislation relates to its use by cranks for frivolous purposes," Willard wrote in 1913. "In the ten years it has been in existence not a single instance of that has occurred."[139]

Class Matters: The Recall of City Councilman Davenport

When the city's leading companies used direct democracy to advance their immediate interests over those of the city as a whole, they nearly always failed. Wholesale liquor dealers tried to extend the district where they were permitted to do business in 1909 but came up nearly 2,000 signatures shy of the number needed for an initiative election.[140] Banks and utilities fought the 1910 licensing ordinance because they objected its high fees; two-thirds of the voters found the fees equitable and welcomed the extra $12,000 they would add to the city's coffers. The defeat of the two railway-sponsored referenda in 1911 and 1912 forced Henry Huntington to accept fare regulation and install grade-level grooved tracks so trucks and automobiles could pass safely over city streets. Only in his campaign to keep jitney buses from siphoning away his streetcar passengers did Huntington prevail at the polls.

Class rivalries, both naked and subtle, drove most of the initiative, referendum, and recall elections held between 1904 and 1915. Some, like those just described, pitted Harrison Gray Otis and one or two powerful corporations against working-class Angelenos. A precedent-setting example of this type was the union-led recall of sixth-ward councilman James P. Davenport in September, 1904. The blue-collar sixth was a seedbed of agitation for the municipal takeover and management of electric railways, aqueduct power, and other public utilities and services. The Davenport recall was not only the first test of direct democracy in modern Los Angeles but, as it turned out, the first voter-led expulsion of a city council member in the United States.[141]

On May 23, 1904, six of eight L.A. councilmen agreed to award the city's annual printing contract to the *Times*. This happened even though Otis's paper had submitted a

bid $10,000 higher than that of the *Express* and $18,000 higher than that of the *Journal*. "It was alleged that the action of the majority of the council was biased by the political influence of the *Times,*" observed Willard, "a suspicion which was borne out in some degree by the active assistance which that paper subsequently gave its supporters in all their various political ambitions."[142] A protest against the award by Typographical Union No. 174, then in the fifteenth year of its epochal strike and boycott against the *Times*, had no effect on the council. While the *Times* and Employing Printing Trades Council celebrated what they called a "victory for good government," union members saw it as a sign of municipal corruption and Otis's baleful influence on the body politic. From the printers' anger, says Stimson, "arose a movement to eliminate graft from the city government, dealing at first with the immediate objective of removing city councilmen allegedly subservient to Otis, but later assuming much larger proportions."[143]

Typographical No. 174 (hereinafter LATU)[144] had 265 members in May, 1904. It was one of the largest and most disciplined unions in Los Angeles, but it lacked the resources for a recall campaign against six offending politicians in six separate wards. The Council of Labor was just then reorganizing itself and could offer little help besides the direct involvement of its president. Clearly the six potential targets would have to be pared down to a single councilman.

Knowing that Davenport had pushed the *Times* bid after first opposing it and that he had previously alienated many workingclass families in the sixth ward, the printers decided to gauge the depth of support for his recall.[145] They quickly tapped into a deep well of anger toward the whole city council, not just Davenport, on a broad spectrum of issues. Eastside residents who denounced the city printing award also condemned railway magnate Henry Huntington's sweetheart deals with the council and the influence other industries exerted on its deliberations. More than any of his capitalist friends, Huntington

aroused the ire of the city's workingclass wards by paying his linemen, conductors, and motormen less than their San Francisco counterparts, exposing them to needless safety hazards, and using city police to crush their strikes. When Huntington wanted the city council to kill a provision in his railway franchise that required universal transfers for sixth-ward passengers, Davenport and his colleagues obliged the great man. Davenport also colluded with cigarmakers and saloonkeepers in ways that dismayed his constituents, voting for nearly every favor the saloon industry asked of him.[146] Unionists and other rank-and-file voters, with some exceptions, did not want the city government to block their access to saloons and wholesale liquor stores, but they also did not want saloon interests to buy councilmen and exert a controlling influence over the granting of permits and the drafting of ordinances.

Slaughter on 29th Street

It was the slaughterhouse invasion of the sixth and other eastside wards, however, that stoked the hottest fires of workingclass resentment. From 1900 onward their residents had fought the encroachment of polluting gasworks, refineries, and meatpacking plants with virtually no help from their councilmen, including Davenport. Typographical No. 174 began its 1904 recall campaign because of the *Times* printing contract but soon realized that the slaughterhouse issue was a more potent rallying point.

That June, with the council's consent but no warning to the community, meatpacker Julius Hauser began erecting at least two odiferous plants including one in the sixth ward on East 29th Street near Lemon. "The sudden appearance of Hauser's construction crews shocked nearby residents, since all of the ward was officially outside of the designated slaughter-house district--or so they thought," states Dan Johnson, who has investigated these 1904 events more thoroughly than any other historian. Johnson continues:

> "In fact, in April of the same year an ordinance had been hurried through the council without discussion or notice to adjacent residents, extending the district to this new site. At the same time, the council's Board of Public Works abandoned several streets to the Hauser company. Outrage against the new plant spread out beyond the Sixth ward; its location ensured that it would also impact upon

neighborhoods in the Seventh and Ninth wards....A few weeks earlier two other slaughter-houses had also begun construction in the Eighth ward. The sections affected had long been within the proscribed district." [147]

When Hauser's men went to work on 29th street, consequently, they were not just excavating the site of a meatpacking plant, they were also slinging their picks and shovels into the political career of James P. Davenport. Activists from LATU had begun circulating petitions to recall him from office in May and on June 13 submitted 951 signatures to the city clerk. Protests against the slaughterhouses grew more heated. On June 26 an angry crowd accosted council members in a lobby near their meeting room. A reporter for the *L.A. Record* captured the emotions that had driven them there: "They knew that the smells of the slaughter houses, the dying cries of the animals, the stench and filth would drive them from [their] cottages which represented the work of years." Demonstrations against the council soon flared up in wards eight and nine. Alarmed by a recall movement that seemed to be spreading across the east side, the council warned Hauser and the Cudahy and Maier packing houses that any further construction would proceed at their own risk. Work immediately stopped, but it was too late to save Davenport. When the city clerk found that the June 13 petition held too few genuine signatures to force a recall election, a second canvass was quickly organized. It generated more than enough signatures but was ruled technically invalid in a lawsuit brought by Davenport. A third canvass began in earnest. The slaughterhouse issue outranked the *Times* printing contract in the new petition's bill of particulars.[148] One reason for this may have been the disclosure that Henry Huntington had urged the city council to renew its support for the packing houses.[149]

As the recall drive gained momentum in its second and third phases, it drew salvos from forces beyond the sixth ward. Willard, in a comment as classically "progressive" as it was absurd, claimed that while the Davenport recall had started with union workmen, it "presently spread to all classes."[150] It certainly did not spread to the class that yoked together the cigarmakers, saloon owners, meatpackers, gas and lighting companies, Hun-

tington, and *L.A. Times,* which called the dump-Davenport campaign "an attempt on the part of the hoodlum element to gain possession of the ward."[151] Huntington bankrolled the Davenport Fair Play Club, a group fronting for oil and electric companies, railways, other businesses and large property owners who tried with no discernible effect to block the recall. The class lines in the sixth ward were starkly drawn.[152]

Otis, who seemed to inhabit a nightmare landscape of his own imagining, claimed that "socialists and anarchists" had rushed into the ward to assist the printers. "Tagging along like camp followers in the trail of the Typographical Union gang," his newspaper fumed, is a "coterie of illusionists and theorists who imagine that men like Tom Fennessy and Sam Mitchell are the advance agents of a political millennium."[153] Fennessy and Mitchell were known entities--the one being LATU's most recent past president and the other its chief liaison to the recall movement as well as the current president of the Council of Labor.[154] They were two of a dozen or so union members who directed the campaign's hard work in the precincts. It is true that a few socialists, most doubling as union activists, individually joined the campaign, but their party and their local clubs were nowhere in evidence. Neither were anarchists nor other Otis straw men.

From Progressives, a Mixed Response

Reformers rooted in small capital and the professions played the most ambiguous hand of any organized force. According to historian Tom Sitton, "Haynes, a friend of labor who wished to protect the recall on its maiden voyage, joined the laborites early on."[155] But Haynes stayed in the background. He let it be known that he favored the recall, he raised money for the petition drive, and he encouraged some members of his Direct Legislation League to assist Typographical No. 174, but he mostly stayed aloof from the inflamed public debate over Davenport. Nor did the League itself seek to remove the beleaguered councilman. Late that June, in one of those news-slash-editorial disclosures that made progressive-era journalism anything but, the *Express* declared: "It has been ex-

plained more than once in [our pages] that the Direct Legislation League, as a league, is not behind this popular Sixth ward attempt to put Councilman Davenport out of office. There are reasons why the identity of the members of the League who contributed support to the movement could not safely be divulged. The *Times-Herald's* championship of the councilman is one of the reasons." At this point in time Otis not only ran the *Times* but called the shots at the *Herald* as well. He and Edwin T. Earl, reform publisher of the *Express*, gave free rein to their visceral hatred for one another. In the statement just quoted Earl insinuated that Otis had somehow bullied the Direct Legislation League's volunteers into anonymity--hardly a ringing endorsement of his fellow progressives' moral fiber.[156]

A month or so after the printers launched the petition campaign, one of Haynes' associates, Richard H. Norton, emerged as its chief spokesman.[157] Norton and outriders from the printers, painters, and other unions founded a Good Government Organization and made it the recall's command center. In short order he became its most quoted agitator, more than making up for the reticence of the other Haynes recruits. [158]

Who *was* the energetic Mr. Norton? He appears to have been a dogged, combative and at times off-putting character. (The same traits were often displayed by his LATU ally, Tom Fennessy; both men made the most of them.) Historians of the recall have identified Norton as a key Haynes lieutenant in the Direct Legislation League--its vice-president, in fact. But there was a good deal more to him than that. According to Stimson and Sitton, by 1904 he had already put his business career behind him. If so he must have retired at a tender age for a turn-of-the-century entrepreneur because a decade later, as a quarrelsome Los Angeles County supervisor, he survived his own recall election thanks in part to the support he received from organized labor. He remained in office until October, 1917 and ran a trucking company thereafter.[159]

Union workers' loyalty to Norton stemmed not only from his role in the Davenport recall but from his active membership in Federal Labor Union No. 9614. This was a union of unskilled workers whose recruitment into the L.A. labor movement Norton had promoted, apparently with little encouragement from the Council of Labor. Drafted by socialists, its constitution called for the abolition of the competitive wage system. Local 9614 elected Norton its delegate to two California Labor Federation conventions in 1903 and 1904. At both meetings he spoke in favor of resolutions, first adopted in January, 1901, that committed the labor body to fight for the initiative and referendum statewide. He shouldered much of the liaison work between the federation and Haynes' Direct Legislation League of California at the outset of that ten-year campaign.[160]

Haynes and Norton were atypical progressives, sharing many of the L.A. movement's views but not its anti-democratic tendencies and hostility toward the organized working class. It's no surprise to discover that most mainstream progressive organizations sat on their hands during the recall campaign. The belwether Municipal League, in particular, "shied away" from the noisy protest movement in the streets and roused itself only to defend the recall *principle* in a venue it preferred--the courts.[161] Norton claimed that when he asked the Municipal League to assist the petition drive itself, he got turned down.[162] The meticulous block-by-block canvass was carried out by the union rank-and-file led by the printers' Tom Fennessy and Sam Mitchell. Most of the petition-signers were also working men,

Davenport did not go quietly into his second career as an historical asterisk. Three times before and after his recall he asked the courts to uphold his right to remain in office. On July 12 his attorneys assailed the petition drive in L.A. Superior Court, arguing that the signatures against him had not been correctly validated by the city clerk, the 1902 recall provision in the city charter didn't apply to city councilmen, and it was unconstitutional in

the first place because it denied public officials equal protection under the law. Judge Frank F. Oster agreed with Davenport on the faulty petition validation and on July 16 barred a recall vote. The constitutional issue, which he skirted, had drawn the Municipal League into the case. Its lawyer, Charles Cassat Davis, explained why:

> "The Municipal League is in no wise associated with this movement for the recall of councilman Davenport. With this Sixth Ward petition we have nothing to do. The League took no part in the circulation of the petition and has no interest in the disposition to be made of it further than to see that the validity of the recall provision of the charter is not in any way impaired." [163]

Davenport had no time to savor his reprieve--the next day canvassers were back on the streets, collecting signatures on an amended recall petition.[164] Moreover he was still wrestling with the implications of a subtle but ominous shift in attitude among his city council colleagues, including those who had voted with him as the "solid six" for the *Times* contract. On June 27 council president W.M. Bowen had appointed three of their number--Edward Kern, O.E. Nofziger, and Owen McAleer--to take charge of street oiling. Davenport had long sat with Nofziger and McAleer on the council's public works committee which supervised street oiling, among other things. Why had he been stripped of this responsibility? His displacement by Kern, the *L.A. Express* implied in its needling way, signaled that the other council members believed his goose was cooked. It was small comfort when McAleer told reporters the day after Oster's verdict that "Davenport has had my sympathy all through this controversy." Sympathy was easy. Everybody knew McAleer coveted the mayor's office and, having thoroughly alienated the city's unions, needed to ingratiate himself with as many other sectors of the electorate as he could. (He went on to win the mayoralty over labor opposition in December.)[165]

Davenport Courts Disaster

When the new flood of petitions forced the city council to schedule a recall election, Davenport backtracked to Superior Court on August 15 with essentially the same arguments, i.e. the petition was defective, he held a "vested" or "property" right to his council

seat, and the recall amendment to the city charter was unconstitutional. Municipal League Attorney Davis once again supported the city attorney's office in rebutting these claims. Angelenos followed the proceedings through the daily newspapers, all of which covered them minutely. On August 18 the *Express* pointed out that the councilman's "general charge of unconstitutionality" lacked "any specific statement as to why the recall proceeding is unconstitutional." This observation proved decisive.[166]

After ten days of argument and deliberation Judge Oster came to grips with issues he knew were novel and precedent-setting. His ruling had an enormous political impact on Los Angeles and, in tandem with the *Pfahler* case cited above, cleared the legal deck for the spread of the recall and its direct democracy siblings across the state of California. Oster swept aside Davenport's technical complaints. On the two substantive issues of constitutionality and an official's alleged "ownership" of his office, he said that the first proposition confronting him was

> "the suggestion made by plaintiff's counsel that section 198 [the recall provision] of the charter is unconstitutional; but here is the one respect wherein counsel has not been helpful to the court. To say that an act is unconstitutional without pointing out the particular section of the constitution which is violated is practically an admission that there is nothing in the suggestion....I can find no constitutional objection to the recall scheme. "[167]

As for Davenport's assertion of a vested right to hold his office for its full term once elected or appointed to it, Oster was equally unimpressed:

> "Counsel fail to specify the nature or character of this property right, and I am at a loss to understand just what it is claimed to be unless, as had been facetiously suggested, the recall is a kind of condemnation proceeding, and, therefore, an action affecting the property rights of plaintiff. The authorities are practically without conflict to the effect that a public office is not property, but a mere agency, which may be terminated at any time by the principal, the sovereign people, that the incumbent holds office by no contract or grant, and that he has no vested right therein....and, therefore, none can be impaired....

--whereupon the judge denied Davenport's demand for an injunction halting the September 16 recall election scheduled under duress by the city council.[168] The councilman, his foes, and his allies now faced the outcome of their contest on a date certain.

The powerful impact of Oster's decision on the political life of Los Angeles over the

next dozen years will be assessed some pages on. Here we might ponder the contradictory nature of officeholder rights in the nineteenth century. "American officeholding," political scientist Karen Orren wrote in an incisive 1995 essay, "proceeded upon a conception of rights and duties, privileges and liabilities, that from time out of mind had applied to property." By century's end a highly articulated and robust system of national, state, and local governments had emerged from the ramshackle "state of courts and parties" described by Stephen Skowronek in *Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877-1920.* With this development came a slow strengthening of government's coercive powers and the rights of state actors, especially officeholders. The old common law distinction between judicial and ministerial actions of officeholders also grew sharper in some instances and fuzzier in others. "Judicial" acts undertaken at the officeholder's discretion were theoretically not subject to any higher discipline but one imposed by law or charter, while "ministerial" acts were compelled by a specific duty or obligation against which they could be measured and, as the case might be, overturned.[169]

"In the democratic United States," said Orren, this distinction "took on special meaning, because the system of liability it imposed contemplated responsibility not only to superior authority but to the ultimate sovereign, the people." But she also gave considerable weight to a countervailing trend--the growing insistence "on the officeholder's presence in all branches and locales *as a party with rights and interests of his or her own*..." Skowronek went further: in his view state actors had achieved a semi-autonomous status.[170] The unfortunate Davenport found himself at a point where both trends collided. To twenty-first century ears his assertion of a vested right to his city council seat sounds farfetched, but it was not really farfetched at the time. His council membership would normally have been treated as a "judicial" office in which he enjoyed a wide latitude to act without rebuke. But Davenport's circumstances in 1904 were far from normal. The recall amendment voters placed in the city charter two years earlier had transformed his office

into a partly ministerial one. It saddled him with a duty to his constituents which they, not he, had wide discretion to interpret. Only Oster could have countermanded their judgment that Davenport had failed his duty, and on August 28 the judge chose not to do so.

A Flawed Choice

Two days earlier, at a hot-tempered meeting of ward residents and recall activists, progressives had clashed with organized workers over the choice of a candidate to run against Davenport. (They clearly were betting on Judge Oster to rule the way he did.) *Express* publisher Edwin T. Earl urged the crowd to name John H. Foley, a progressive fellow-traveler whom Davenport had defeated for a council seat in 1902 and who would later help launch the successful Non-Partisan revolt of 1906. Unionists in the room brushed aside Earl's choice. Council of Labor president Sam Mitchell, backed by LATU's Francis Drake and Tom Fennessy, told the publisher that they, not the *Express,* had launched the recall movement and now "held the cards" to name its candidate. Their man, Arthur D. Houghton, was a sometimes physician, gifted speaker, slightly unhinged personality, and member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers who had arrived from Chicago three years earlier. In that city he had thrown in with the IBEW and the labor-Democratic "push," as machine political operations around the country were nicknamed at that time.[171]

"Earl threatened to bolt the ticket in case Foley was not nominated," reported the *Times*, but LATU outflanked him. On the morning after the contentious ward meeting Sam Mitchell handed city clerk Harry J. Lelande a petition signed by ninety-seven sixth ward residents who wanted Houghton's name to be placed on the September 16 ballot. Lelande validated eighty-six of their signatures--the number needed for a nomination--whereupon Earl conceded defeat and announced his support for labor's candidate. The recall battle was thereby joined.[172]

Over the next two and a half weeks labor unions campaigned hard for Houghton with

varying degrees of support from reform and temperance groups. In a chiaroscuro rendering of a contest whose opposites were already harshly drawn, the *Union Labor News* said it pitted a "true and tried fighter for municipal reform" against a "man who has foisted nuisances upon us." Most of the city's daily papers called for Houghton's election. His detractors were, naturally, the *Times*, on occasion the *Herald*, the railways and public utilities, the Huntington-backed Davenport Fair Play Club, and the Republican Party. Huntington sent his top lieutenant Billy Dunn (popularly referred to as "Boss Billy") into the sixth ward to run the councilman's campaign. Around the same time his foremen began warning his railway workers to vote for Davenport or lose their jobs.[173]

Otis may have thought he'd pulled a rabbit out of a hat on September 14 when the *Times* ran an open letter to sixth warders from five members of the 1902 charter revision committee. Frank Finlayson, Joseph Scott, H.W. Frank, Walter Haas, and Fred Smith argued that the recall measure which they had all voted to place in the charter was itself on trial. "It is a fact," they wrote, "that when a councilman in the exercise of judicial discretion does his duty as he sees it, the disappointed and defeated contestants are to find the recall a ready, convenient and potent means of procuring personal revenge." (Note how their emphasis on judicial discretion and duty anticipated the language of "judicial acts" quoted above in Karen Orren's analysis of officeholders' rights. The five authors were trying to reassert journalistically what Judge Oster had denied juridically.) "If the latter is true," they continued, "then the law itself has legalized the use of a remarkable weapon of intimidation, before the threatened use of which councilmen and other officials must cringe and lose all sense of independence. This is more destructive to political purity than is secret bribery."

All of which the *Express* and *Record* rebutted that same day as a "desperate measure". Of the three dozen men who had served on freeholder and charter revision committees in 1898, 1900, and 1902, the two dailies pointed out, the *Times* had found only five willing

to oppose Davenport's recall. Smith, moreover, was a politician notoriously short-tethered to the railways, Haas was a recent addition to Davenport's legal staff, and Finlayson was editor of the *Herald*, a supposedly rival paper which was then under Otis's thumb.[174]

In the final days of the campaign Otis and his writers mercilessly thumped Houghton. A September 15 article called him a "spook doctor," alleging he had shown up in Los Angeles ten years earlier, held séances, and been exposed as a charlatan. One of the witnesses it quoted against him, a member of the Christian Spiritualist Society, was less than convincing. The other was a former police officer. He said he had attended a séance during which he shouted "fraud!" and unmasked Houghton. His detailed account raised doubts about the candidate's credentials, as did talk of the latter's involvement with an Electro-Hypnotic Institute back in Chicago. The photograph accompanying the September 15 article did not help. It showed Houghton in thick eyeglasses, unkempt hair rising bouffant-style from his head, looking for all the world like he had just stumbled away from one of his electro-hypnotic machines. Nonetheless he had one thoroughly respectable defender. "I have known Dr. A.D. Houghton for a year," John R. Haynes told the *Express*. "He is an able and scientific physician who passed a severe examination by the California State Board of Medical Examiners with the highest average save one of the seventy-five candidates. He is pronounced by the attorney of the San Gabriel Electric Power Company to be one of the best-informed and most scientific of electrical experts west of the Mississippi."[175]

Whatever embarrassment the *Times'* mud-slinging caused Houghton was trifling compared with the impact on Davenport of last-minute revelations of his dalliance with the liquor lobby. Between Sept. 11 and Sept. 16 the *Examiner, Express,* and *Record* published letters he had written as a 1902 council candidate to a Pennsylvania company, offering to sell its cigars to L.A.'s saloons after his election. Particularly damning was a letter that stated:

"At Los Angeles there are 200 saloons. I know nearly all of them; but they all know me through my connection with the Liquor Dealers' Association, of which I am a member of the executive board; I am also a member of the Knights of the Royal Arch, a secret organization of the liquor interests throughout the United States. City elections will take place this fall and I am likely to be elected as councilman from this ward. If so, every saloon man will be only too glad to purchase [cigars] of me. I know this, as the brewers are quietly working to the end that I may secure the nomination and election....What do you think of the proposition? " [176]

The evidence that Davenport had been bought and paid for by the city's saloons was too potent and surfaced too late for him to effectively refute. Other council members saw his spirits sag. On election day, however, his backers did everything they could for him. City department heads shaken by this early onslaught of direct democracy sent hundreds of their employees into the sixth ward, where, in clear violation of civil service rules, they drove voters to the polls, buttonholed residents on the streets, and handed out leaflets praising Davenport. Boss Billy went a seven-league step further. Stationing his railway "watchers, barkers, and bruisers" at every polling place, he planned to drive off likely Houghton voters but often found himself out-muscled by Good Government League precinct teams whose election-day captains included LATU's John Murray, John Welch, Drake, and Fennessy, IBEW's Marshal S. Culver and C.L. Lofthouse, Laundry Workers' H.J.L. Atwood, Teamsters' William S. Smith, Cement Workers' Robert A. Hayden, and Lorenzo D. Jackson of an unknown union. The whole rough-and-tumble scene was captured by the September 16 *Record:*

"The Sixth ward had the appearance of a city street and engineering department holiday. [Street] Superintendent Werdin had sent his entire force into the ward and the streets were receiving such a cleaning as no streets ever had before...Engineer Stafford's men had business in the ward also--work that had been long delayed--and so for street railway employes....It is a fact that the street railway and gas companies have taken 350 illegal voters into the ward, to defeat the recall..." [177]

All these efforts came to naught. On September 16 Houghton won 1,837 votes to Davenport's 1,083, for a plurality of 754 votes and a decisive 63 percent of the total. His victory was as broad as it was deep. Of the ward's sixteen precincts he lost only one, the 77th, where, the *Record* observed, "members of the election board did missionary work for Davenport." The *Express* was less poetic. Reminding readers that the 77th held the Los

Angeles Railway barns, it reported that Huntington's political operatives had led motormen and conductors to the polls "and watched to see them vote right."[178]

After his defeat Davenport surfaced in court for the third time, like an all-but-drowned man grasping for anything that might save him. The state's top justices found some merit in his writ of mandamus. In April, 1905, they ruled that he had been wrongfully evicted from office because the city clerk, once again, had inadequately checked the petition signatures against the names of voters in the *Great Register* of Los Angeles. The justices ordered the city to pay Davenport his salary for the last four months of 1904. They did not find the recall election invalid, however. Nor did they return Davenport to his council seat or dispute Oster's finding that the recall was constitutional. Credit for this enduring legal triumph belongs mainly to the L.A. labor movement, Haynes and the Direct Legislation League, and the city attorneys who argued the case, but the Municipal League also played a valuable backup role. Its court appearances took some of the edge off that influential organization's unwillingness to defend direct democracy down in the trenches.[179]

Davenport Recall: Postscript 1

Houghton retained his council seat in the regular city elections three months after the recall. For a year and a half he championed public ownership, the eight-hour day, and other labor issues on the council. Many of his speeches there had a moralistic ring. "'Prominent men' often means thieves to me," he said, "because our prominent citizens are sometimes the ones who come here to corrupt legislators." In February, 1906, he presided over a gathering of over 6,000 unionists and helped them launch the Anti-Citizens' Alliance, precursor to that fall's Public Ownership Party. Unionists called him "The Peoples' Councilman." He was a much sought-after speaker at their meetings.[180]

And then, overnight, everything changed. Without visible provocation Houghton did an about-face and threw his lot in with Henry Huntington. The occasion was the city council's decision on the afternoon of March 26, 1906 to grant one of Huntington's agents

a free and exclusive 21-year lease to run trains along a three-mile stretch of the L.A. river-bed. Over the previous two weeks the agent, E.W. Gilmore, had quietly shown councilmen the route Huntington wanted his trains to follow. They thought so much of the plan that only one of them voted against it--and the holdout was not Houghton. The mayor had left the city, Willard recalled some years later, and the idea was to run the lease through the council and get the acting mayor--"a pliant tool of the corporate interests"--to approve it. Two city attorneys at the council meeting protested that the award of a free franchise was illegal. Ignoring their warning a day later, the council reaffirmed its giveaway of the franchise. The city clerk, who later testified under oath that he had been offered a bribe to sign the ordinance, refused. When these semi-secret events were exposed by the *Record* and the *Examiner*, an explosive scandal engulfed Houghton and his confreres. The *Examiner* flayed the "seven sordid wretches" who had handed Huntington a franchise worth "millions of dollars or more."[181]

Anger, threats, and bitter vituperation marked Houghton's new relationship to organized labor. The profound betrayal felt by most of L.A.'s unions ran like acid through this indictment by the *Union Labor News*:

> "'When H.E. Huntington wanted to get possession of the Los Angeles river-bed, Councilman Houghton voted to give this million-dollar franchise to Huntington's representative without one penny of remuneration to the city. At that time Houghton was a member of the Board of Directors of the Public Ownership League, and upon the Board's demanding that Houghton reconsider his action and change his vote, the Sixth Ward councilman stated that he would vote as he pleased and thereupon offered his resignation to the board of directors, which was accepted.
>
> "At a later date Houghton appeared before the board of directors and told that body that if it did not support him in his candidacy for Mayor of the city, he would split the organization.
>
> "Following this, the Sixth Ward Councilman threatened to have a certain club--whose membership is mostly among union men--raided by the police, on the false charge that liquor was being sold to other than club members. In the latter part of June, Houghton was expelled from this same workingman's club, after having boasted that he had employed as his attorneys, to fight his case in court, Earl Rogers, Bob Todd and Luther Brown, three of the most notorious union-hating lawyers in Los Angeles.
>
> "Every reader of the daily papers will remember how Houghton hired a gang of ward-heelers and attempted to break up a meeting of the Sixth Ward Public Ownership League, and how, after being defeated in his attempt, he rode away in an automobile with a *Times* reporter.
>
> "In short, Councilman Houghton, like a rat in a corner, fighting for his political life, has turned to the enemies of organized labor for support and has met the fate he deserves." 182

That fate was the demise of Houghton's political career. His 1906 re-election bid was a spectacular failure. Neither he nor any other riverbed councilman ever won a city election again.[183] Under pressure from outraged unionists and progressives, and facing recall movements in several wards, the council rescinded its March 27 riverbed vote but could not erase the widespread belief that graft had inspired the giveaway. The scandal had several broader political consequences. One was the Public Ownership Party's autumn, 1906 campaign on a platform calling for a city takeover of rail, water, and other utilities as the best way to fight municipal corruption. Another was that year's defeat of the old city council and its replacement by one in which four seats were held by Non-Partisans--a bold stride toward the progressive sweep of 1909. Finally, an invaluable feature of direct democracy asserted itself, namely, its power to discipline politicians through the mere *threat* of a recall or referendum, with no need to proceed to an election. This political fact had a long life in Los Angeles.[184]

Houghton's defeat for re-election in 1906 struck his contemporaries as a fitting coda to his career. But like Lady Macbeth's "damned spot" that would not out, Houghton did not fade away. He seems, after a decade or so, to have reingratiated himself with one or two unions. In 1915 the Central Labor Council of San Pedro and Wilmington endorsed his candidacy for the L.A. city council.[185] He lost.

Davenport Recall: Postscript 2

The recall cost the *L.A. Times* dearly. Two other councilmen who had voted with Davenport to give Otis' fulminating newspaper the city printing contract failed in their bids for re-election. The lesson was not lost on succeeding councils. "In 1905 the Council, with little discussion, simply awarded the contract to the lowest bidder," says Stimson, "and through the rest of the decade the *Times* was unable to influence the Council in its behalf."[186]

Given Otis' glorification of free-market capitalism and Haynes' socialist leanings, it is

a wonder that they ever got along. But get along they did, and quite amiably at that. Sitton says Otis "was Haynes's patient, tried to interest the doctor in his business ventures, and even gave him a souvenir cane made from the wood of a Spanish flagship destroyed in 1898 during the Spanish-American War, in which Otis served." Though at Haynes' request Otis gave grudging support to the referendum and recall in 1902, he had turned resolutely against them by the end of that year's charter campaign. It was a chafing experience for him to watch Haynes and the California Labor Federation lead the early charge for a statewide direct democracy amendment. The Davenport recall ended their friendship. "...[B]oth Chandler and Otis broke off personal relations with the physician," Sitton records. "From that moment on, the *Times'* policy regarding Haynes was consistently negative--for the next three decades it ridiculed the physician at every opportunity."[187] A *Times* editorial writer surely had Haynes and his labor allies in mind when he wrote the following on October 2, 1908:

> "The initiative, the recall and the referendum are devices for the especial satisfaction of mischievous and vicious agitators, who never have hesitated to resort to any trick or crime to accomplish their purposes....Not the level-headed and the pure-hearted, but the unclean are the first to utilize these un-American and unsafe contrivances." [188]

Davenport Recall: Postscript 3

In early December 1905, a dozen passengers riding an L.A. Railway car were knocked about during a collision. One of them was the unfortunate Davenport, who died in the wreckage. He ranked 492nd on the list of persons killed or maimed by his patron's streetcars in less than two years. Huntington, recently returned from a transatlantic voyage, had boasted that "our fenders are equal in efficiency to any I saw in Europe." The *Union Labor News* was not impressed. "Huntington would be sorry to kill one of his councilmen while in office, for they are useful to him," it opined. Apparently such scruples no longer held after a councilman lost his seat.[189]

Nobody Knows for Whom They Toil...

Hindsight identifies Davenport's comeuppance, with its stunning vindication of the recall amendment, as the first shot in a decade-long battle to reshape city government between progressives and organized labor. "We have met the push and they are ours," boasted the writer of a letter to the *Examiner* two days after the recall. "The time is now ripe for the Good Government League and other honest citizens to combine and place a ticket in the field that will command the suffrages of the people." But during the recall campaign the "we" had been mostly tactical and the combination did not last. Los Angeles was no turn-of-the-century Chicago, with its cross-class coalitions of workers and progressives that accomplished many good things but no radical ones.[190] Having cobbled together a strained and fragmentary alliance in 1904, each of these L.A. movements soon saw the other as its arch-rival. And each displayed a different degree of enthusiasm for the initiative, referendum, and recall.

Why were progressives conflicted about direct democracy while workers were resolute? The answer involves the power of public office--who expected to wield it and who did not. From the turn of the century onward, Willard and the Municipal League fully expected progressives to preside over city government; they did not breathe a breath or take a step without that in mind. So while many of them supported direct democracy in principle and many others used it to claw their way into office, nearly all of them understood that it might someday threaten their own tenure. Organized workers had no such expectations. During the ten years following the Davenport recall, partisans from the Municipal League, City Club, and a reconstituted Good Government League, wrested control of the mayoralty, council, and school board from the Huntington-led Old Guard. Union members elected only one of their own to office, and not until 1913. Given their strong sense of entitlement, the bad blood between organized workers and most progressives, and the latters' ambivalence toward the new electoral weapons, it was inevitable that workers

would deploy them more often. Organized labor led or aggressively backed four referendum campaigns, for example; the progressives only one. The struggle between these two forces grew especially hot in the arena of moral reform. Reformers in and out of city government closed ranks with the Protestant clergy to impose time-discipline on workers via anti-saloon, anti-gambling, and anti-dancing laws and initiatives [see chapter 2]. Most of these laws were cancelled by referenda, and the initiatives were invariably defeated. Direct democracy provided a sturdy defense against attacks on workingclass culture during the progressive era.[191]

More generally, as political outsiders, organized workers knew that direct democracy was a weapon they needed more than any other class. "Every labor union in the United States is interested in securing the referendum system," declared the building trades columnist for the *Union Labor News* in 1906, "because workingmen have discovered to their cost that to obtain legislation that will give them a square deal or to repeal laws that have been found to work to their injury they must have a direct voice in lawmaking." (The writer here uses "referendum" to mean at least two of the direct democracy reforms, and possibly all three.)[192] The initiative, referendum, and recall figured prominently in the platform of labor's Public Ownership Party in 1906,[193] as it had in the platforms of previous union labor parties and their sometimes ally, the Socialist Party. That same year San Pedro unions, then closely affiliated with the L.A. Central Labor Council, formed a Good Government League all of whose candidates won their elections as town trustees by campaigning for a direct democracy amendment to the local charter.[194] This was a one-of-a-kind case of outsiders using direct democracy to become insiders.

It is not true, however, that the reformers who called themselves progressives hesitated to use direct democracy. Though wary of it, they pursued it with telling effect on a few occasions to advance their own political agenda.

The South American proverb *nadie sabe para quién trabaja* comes to mind -- "nobody knows for whom they toil." Five years after Davenport's fall, in a nesting of ironies within ironies, the Municipal League used an initiative to force the city council to hold a charter election. In this election Angelenos replaced party nominating conventions and ward-based voting for council members with direct primaries and an at-large, or city-wide, electoral system. Most labor activists saw these reforms as threats to their political base on the eastside and opposed them in the February, 1909 election.[195] If the new scheme had been adopted five years earlier, obliging Davenport's foes to run and finance a recall campaign against him in all nine wards, he would almost certainly have retained his council seat.

Progressives were able to restructure the electoral apparatus because a 1902 state constitutional amendment had given voters the power to compel charter elections by initiative. Why did a highly conservative California legislature ask the state's voters to approve so drastic an extension of home rule? There was no great affection for the measure in the Senate or Assembly, but it turned out to be the more palatable of two electoral reforms then being demanded by progressives and unions. The other amendment, sponsored by the California Labor Federation, would have empowered voters to adopt *state* laws by initiative and overturn them by referenda.[196] Faced with this direct attack on their prerogatives, the legislators in Sacramento buried the union measure and adopted the one that exposed only *city* charters to the initiative process. Five years later L.A.'s progressives used this provision to win their direct primary and at-large voting reforms. Organized workers had inadvertently handed them an invaluable gift.

The Municipal League and Good Government League next used the recall, which they had previously viewed as a live hand-grenade bouncing around on the deck, to oust Mayor Harper in 1909. Exploiting the new at-large voting system that sapped labor's strength in the wards, they elected a regime of stubborn hostility to unions. *Nadie sabe para quién trabaja* indeed! Had not organized labor's long campaign for the initiative and recall

cleared the path for a progressive hegemony that lasted with full force from 1909 to 1913, held residual power for two years more, and hounded the city's unions from start to finish? There was no mistaking the transformative impact of the League's 1908 charter initiative. In a letter read at a post-election victory celebration he could not attend on Dec. 17, 1909, Haynes reminded his fellow progressives exactly how they had achieved their triumph:

> "Without the recall and referendum we would have been minus a riverbed and probably hundreds of other things that we do not know anything of. Without the initiative we would not have the direct primary and without the direct primary we would most surely have been defeated. Without the initiative, likewise, you would not have your public utility commission today." [197]

But of course the greater, overriding irony was this: while progressives would use control of city government to overhaul its regulatory system, organized labor in those same years would leverage a far more profound change in the nature and function of city government--and do so from the outside. The next two chapters of this dissertation deal with this little-noted but powerful transformation.

The core municipal program offered to voters by the organized working class was public ownership of gas, water, and electric utilities, railways, and the harbor. The core municipal program of the progressives was regulation of those same enterprises in the name of efficiency. Once in office, they seized the opportunity to bolster the regulatory reach of local government. Mostly they did this through legislative control of ratemaking, but in 1909--a year that formed the key arch of the progressive enterprise--they relied on the initiative. Willard emphasized its value, noting that two propositions had been presented by initiative in the regular city elections that December. One was the measure that banned dice-shaking.

> "The other initiative proposition was one of such importance that many people believe it alone more than justifies the existence of the law. It had been impossible to secure from the Council any adequate law that would provide for a Public Utilities Commission to carry out charter provisions with respect to fixing of rates and to check the proper regulation of utilities. The Municipal League prepared a desirable ordinance, and when its passage was refused by a city council--the majority of members were under the control of the local railway boss--an initiative petition was signed up and the measure placed upon the ballot. It carried by a majority of nearly 2 to 1, and drew a vote three-

fourths as large as that cast for Mayor. This Utilities Commission afterwards proved itself of great value to the city." 198

The story of direct democracy in Los Angeles holds two examples of gifts that traveled in an unexpected direction, from the Municipal League to organized workers. The first, already discussed, was the League's *amicus* role in the August, 1904 court case brought by Davenport. Its second legal intervention was more consequential. At the high tide of progressivism in Los Angeles, the referendum served as labor's Maginot Line. It would have become a useless weapon, however, if the League had not stepped in to rescue it in 1906. That December the city council passed two ordinances exempting the liquor industry from the need to obtain the approval of residents of neighborhoods where it intended to locate saloons. To block any referendum against these unpopular laws, the council characterized them as emergency measures taken to protect the "public peace, health and safety".

The council had used this ploy so often that no referendum had ever been filed against city legislation since the charter reforms of 1902. On this occasion, however, the Municipal League sued to halt the flagrant misuse of the emergency clause, insisting that the siting of a saloon hardly qualified as an emergency. Superior Court Judge Walter Bordwell agreed. Though he had publicly condemned direct democracy as a treat to republican government, Bordwell ruled on January 5, 1907 that the city council's habitual use of emergency legislation was without merit. He ordered the mayor not to enforce the two liquor laws.[199] A flood of referenda ensued over the next five years, many of them benefiting organized labor.

Between 1906 and 1916 Haynes and the labor movement not only made frequent use of direct democracy but ably defended it as well. Repeated attacks on this epochal reform came from the Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association, public utilities, banks, Otis, and, not surprisingly, progressive officeholders. The *L.A. Times* kept up a barrage of in-

vective throughout the decade, calling direct democracy "visionary and vicious" and arguing that "it is not wise that laws should be made and unmade, and officials elected or deposed, at the mere whiff of popular approval or disapproval." That was a minor salvo for Otis, who leaned more to caustic ad hominems. One of his favorites was depicting direct democracy advocates as "fatuous charter freaks."[200] In February, 1913 Martin Betkouski, Josias J. Andrews, and George Williams, progressive city council members, tried to raise the petition signature requirement for initiatives and referenda to 25 percent of the votes cast for the sitting mayor--a threshold that would effectively spike both weapons. They did not succeed.[201] And in 1916 the Farmers & Merchants National Bank of Los Angeles demanded their repeal: "We changed our government in the twinkling of an eye to a mob democracy," it complained. "Two of the most frightful sources of public expense are the initiative and the referendum. Wipe these off the slate...!"[202] They remained in the charter.

Haynes constantly kept his eye on these and other threats, responding when necessary. At the February 17, 1913 council meeting he showed up with his long-time Direct Legislation League ally George H. Dunlop to rebut Betkouski's contention that direct democracy elections were costing taxpayers too much money. Only two recall elections had been held in eleven years, Haynes and Dunlop pointed out, and voting on all but two initiative and referendum ballot measures had added nothing to the city's expenses because they occurred on days when elections had to be held for other purposes. Haynes also insisted, more prophetically than he could know, that the 25-percent signature requirement would make petitioning so costly that only big corporations would be able to run successful direct democracy campaigns. Hearing these arguments, the council voted down Betkouski's attempt to nullify the initiative and referendum.[203]

The city's unions were no less vigilant than Haynes in defending the three electoral re-

forms which they believed would make up a large part of their legacy to future generations of Angelenos. In late September, 1906, labor activists organizing the Public Ownership Party got wind of a move by the city council to repeal the charter's direct democracy amendments, and they made "rigid adherence to the principles of direct legislation, the initiative, referendum, and recall" a cornerstone of the party's platform. Rank-and-file unionists ratified this plank on October 13. In that fall's election campaign the party's candidates were the only ones who stumped against any and all attempts to weaken direct democracy.[204]

The labor press habitually reminded its readers that the 1902 charter amendments were vital to their wellbeing. As an article in the November 7, 1913 *Citizen* put it, "The need for the use of the initiative and referendum as a means of securing relief from oppressive conditions is constantly being borne home by the developments in the every day life of the city."[205] This reality explains why direct democracy's staunchest defenders were ordinary and exceptional people in the eastside wards who voted for or against two dozen initiatives, referenda, and recalls between 1904 and 1915. In doing so with sustained care and discernment, they forced direct democracy's foes to keep hands off the three reforms.

Direct Democracy Goes Statewide

Nearly two years before L.A.'s voters installed direct democracy in their city charter, the California labor movement began a marathon battle to write the initiative, referendum, and recall into the state constitution. Organized workers broadened their partnership with John R. Haynes in this tenacious endeavor.

It started on January 8, 1901, at the first convention of the California State Federation of Labor in San Francisco. The founding delegates included three from Los Angeles: Jonathan C. Netz of the Council of Labor, E.W. Crowell of Plumbers No. 78, and E.H. Lloyd of Cigar Makers No. 225. With all the other assembled unionists they issued the following call to action:

> "*Resolved*, That the Executive Committee of this State Federation be and is hereby instructed to prepare as soon as possible after its organization, a bill or bills to provide for direct legislation through the Initiative and Referendum, the same to be submitted to the Legislature for enactment into laws during the present session." [206]

This call was repeated the following year and expanded in 1903 to set the number of petition signatures needed for referendum and initiative elections at five percent of the votes last cast for governor. Little came of it, however, since the Labor Federation was too short of cash to send a full-time lobbyist to Sacramento. Cajoling senators and assemblymen to enact the 1903 proposal was therefore left to a hodgepodge of San Francisco Labor Council representatives, local union activists, and federation legislative agent P.B. Preble, all of whom darted in and out of Sacramento with little coordination when they found the time. The Los Angeles printers wrote letters urging their representatives to vote for the direct legislation amendment but could not follow up with more persuasive face-to-face visits.

The result was a cool reception for the reform in the state senate. Surprisingly, however, it fared well in the assembly. Preble took this to be a sign that California would eventually adopt direct legislation "to benefit the working people" and not, for a change, to shower more favors on "the privileged classes and their paid apologists, spokesmen, and defenders in the legislature."[207]

The successful recall of Los Angeles councilman Davenport in 1904 put Los Angeles on the map as a leader of municipal reform and galvanized the statewide campaign. "Within several years a number of communities in California [wrote] the initiative, referendum, and recall into their charters," says Stimson, "and cities in other states were beginning to take note of these democratic processes."[208] The rumbling from below was not lost on the Labor Federation. Between 1904 and 1907 it intensified its efforts to push an initiative and referendum amendment through the legislature and bring it before the state's voters. It gave its legislative agent enough expense money to stay in Sacramento and syn-

chronize his lobbying efforts with those of the state's local unions, central labor bodies, and the Direct Legislation League of California.

Year by year, vote by vote, assemblymen and senators slowly warmed to labor's top two electoral issues--direct democracy and women's suffrage. By 1907, after prodding from its Los Angeles affiliates, the Federation felt sufficiently emboldened to add the recall to its demands. It also made direct democracy a political acid test, advising local unions to grill political candidates, support those who favored the reform, and oppose those who did not.[209] Though the Federation's Sacramento lobbying campaign lagged in 1907-09 because of confrontations with the legislature and Gov. James N. Gillett over workplace issues, Japanese exclusion, and the direct primary, it came sharply back into focus for a final effort in 1910-11.

Haynes, meanwhile, had been pursuing statewide direct legislation with a bulldog tenacity of his own, at times independently, at other times in tandem with organized labor. He founded the Direct Legislation League of California for that purpose in 1902, not long after the Labor Federation had launched its own campaign. The League quickly sent the legislature a petition bearing 22,000 voter signatures, but it produced no discernible results.[210] According to Sitton, Haynes persuaded Walter F.X. Parker, the Southern Pacific Railroad's political agent in Los Angeles, to support the initiative and referendum during the 1903 assembly session. Parker refused to follow through in the senate, however, where they were defeated. Quitting Sacramento "dejected but still optimistic," Haynes realized that he and organized labor needed to "stir up public sentiment and to bring this public sentiment to bear upon the members elect of the legislature." He viewed northern and central California as the campaign's major challenges and worked with Labor Federation Secretary Guy Lathrop to mobilize rank-and-file support for direct legislation there. He also paid an anti-saloon lobbyist to spend half his time drumming up direct legislation votes in

Sacramento. With some exaggeration, as later events would show, Haynes believed that "very little needs to be done with our Southern Assemblymen and Senators as they are almost unanimous in their support of this proposition."[211] This was prescient except in the case of the recall of judges.

Haynes was competent at what we would now call public relations and truly gifted at coaxing support, often in convivial settings, from the business and political members of his own class. On Dec. 7, 1904, he hosted a sumptuous dinner at the state's oldest elite watering hole, the male-only California Club in Los Angeles. Among the invitees he regaled were four state senators, nine assemblymen, a judge, a lawyer, one or two other progressives, George Dunlop, and Richard Norton, the latter only days away from victory in the Davenport recall. The *L.A. Examiner* said Haynes gave a "brilliant" speech for direct legislation, and Judge N.P. Conrey, who would soon issue one of the harshest anti-strike injunctions ever seen at the harbor, assured the guests that "there was no danger in trusting the people." By dinner's mellow end all the elected politicians had declared their sympathy with direct legislation--a notable but unreliable development given the fact that some of them had voted against it during the recent legislative session.[212]

Winston Crouch, who wrote about these events three decades later, captured the essence of Haynes' lobbying tactics in the following passage. Haynes, he wrote,

> "maintained a certain standing even with such 'bosses' as Abraham Ruef and Walter Herrin....He was willing to hobnob with the bosses and work through the existing political machinery to get an opening wedge for his proposals. He regularly waited upon the steering groups of district political conventions in an attempt to have a direct government plank installed in the party platforms. Friends were recruited in both parties." [213]

This method of "hobnobbing" among the often seamy top echelons of politics and government was effective up to the point where it required the leverage of a grassroots base, which Haynes did not have. He was wise to ally himself with labor leaders who could mobilize their rank and file members when a crisis or opportunity arose. Haynes also tried, and failed, to tap into the popular constituency he hoped would be created for

direct democracy by a new quasi-party, the Lincoln-Roosevelt League.

Progressives "Shy Away" from Direct Democracy--Again

Three developments gave rise to the League in the summer of 1907. One was the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt, whose trust-busting, distrust of unions, regulation of the railroads, promotion of efficiency in government, and attacks on corruption helped stir a strong counter-current among Republicans. Roosevelt did not break with the Republican Party until 1912, but his subverting influence prodded California's progressives to create their own independent organization five years earlier.

The League's second impetus came from an eruption of multiple scandals involving machine politicians in San Francisco and the 1906 state convention of the Republican Party. Convicted of grafting and sentenced to prison, San Francisco political boss Abraham Ruef confessed that he had delivered the city's convention votes to a reactionary candidate for governor in exchange for a $14,000 bribe tendered by Walter Herrin, the Southern Pacific Railroad's top lobbyist.[214] Furious at these disclosures, many reform Republicans and some reform Democrats decided to create a statewide political entity of their own. They were heartened by the third development--the growing electoral success of L.A.'s non-partisans; in 1904 they won every seat on the city school board and in 1906 they elected four of their candidates to the city council.[215] Voters clearly were willing to abandon the Demipubs if the right vehicle came along.

In search of that vehicle, fifteen reform-minded Republicans gathered at Levy's Café in Los Angeles on May 21, 1907. Lawyers, journalists, and businessmen predominated. Haynes attended, and so did Meyer Lissner, a leader of L.A.'s 1906 non-partisan movement whose antipathy to organized workers has been noted in Part 1 of this study. All fifteen participants agreed that the time had come to open a campaign headquarters dedicated to breaking the Southern Pacific's grip on state and local government. They set August 1 as the date and Oakland's Metropole Hotel as the site for the founding of the

Lincoln-Roosevelt League. Discussing what its platform might contain, Haynes gave top priority to writing the initiative, referendum, and recall into the California constitution. Lissner tentatively supported him. Most of the northern Californians disagreed, saying it was wrong to saddle their embryonic campaign organization with such a radical idea. Chester H. Rowell, the *Fresno Republican's* legislative writer and instigator of the meeting at Levy's, was among those opposing Haynes. He relented, however. Rather than chance a schism so early in their new movement, all fifteen participants finally backed Haynes' proposal.[216]

Ten weeks later it died aborning. At its August 1 inception in Oakland the Lincoln-Roosevelt League condemned the political hegemony of the Southern Pacific Railroad, urged Californians to elect a "free, honest and capable legislature," endorsed the re-election of President Roosevelt, and demanded the enactment of a direct primary law. What it did *not* endorse was a direct democracy plank in the state constitution.[217]

Haynes' defeat was the outcome of an often bitter internecine fight among progressives over the relative merits of direct democracy and the direct primary. In the winter 1972 issue of the *Southern California Quarterly*, Eric Falk Petersen explained this clash:

> "A comparison of the Direct Primary and the Direct Legislation leagues reveals the variegation of early Progressive reform movements. Despite a close similarity in goals and tactics...their executive and advisory committees contained only one common member. The narrow focus of the primary reformers along with their willingness to compromise when expedient, irked the more doctrinaire members of the Direct Legislation League. While the proponents of direct legislation occasionally championed the direct primary, the initiative and referendum were never mentioned in the *[San Francisco] Call's* campaign for primary reform. This, together with the exclusion of the initiative and referendum from the platform of the Lincoln-Roosevelt League and the lengths to which the Direct Legislation League went in convincing people it was not an organization of cranks, suggests that direct legislation was still too radical for many reformers. Legislators were sometimes caught in the middle. Leroy Wright, champion of the direct primary, incurred the ire of members of the Direct Legislation League for his failure to respond favorably to the initiative and referendum."[218]

Haynes realized that the hopes he had invested in the new campaign organization were misguided, however much he sympathized with its overall aims. Now, more than ever, he would have to rely on the labor movement to generate popular support for the three direct

democracy reforms. During the campaign's middle years it isn't clear who succeeded Norton as the bridge between the Direct Legislation League and the state's unions. That role eventually fell to Haynes associate Milton G. U'Ren, who worked closely with Federation secretary Paul Scharrenberg and San Francisco Labor Council secretary Andrew J. Gallagher in the campaign's late stages.[219]

Through U'Ren, a new People's Legislative Bureau, his labor allies, and his own direct contacts with government leaders, Haynes continued to stir up support for the initiative, referendum, and recall. His patient courting of Democratic leaders, coupled with the trade unions' "reward friends, punish enemies" pressure from below, led to this plank in the 1910 Democratic Party platform: "We stand for...the Initiative, Referendum and Recall in state and local governments." The Lincoln-Roosevelt League remained cool to all three reforms, however, omitting them from its 1907-08 and 1909-10 platforms. At the legislature's 1909 session, progressives including Haynes took one step forward and two cautious steps to the side. Franklin Hichborn, California's ablest chronicler of the political shenanigans in Sacramento, reported that progressive lobbyists lacked the confidence to push for the referendum and recall. They asked "for the initiative only, and then made a further compromise by increasing the percentage of voters necessary to get a law before the people from 8 to 12 per cent." Organized labor was considerably bolder: it had been urging the legislature to adopt all three reforms for two years. Even in 1910, after the Lincoln-Roosevelt League hijacked the Republican Party's statewide nominating process and gained control of the Republican caucus in both houses of the legislature, it shied off the recall and sought only the initiative and referendum for the state as a whole.[220]

The breakthrough moment for Haynes and the state's politically active unions arrived in November, 1910 with the election of Hiram Johnson as governor. A powerful orator and master of invective, Johnson campaigned with the enthusiastic backing of organized labor and the Lincoln-Roosevelt League. His victory swept nearly all the League's state-

wide candidates into office and broke the back of the railroads' lobbying operation.[221] Exactly when Haynes and the labor movement persuaded Johnson to champion direct democracy is not clear, but he campaigned winningly on the issue and gave it a clarion endorsement in his inaugural speech to the legislature on January 3, 1911. Acknowledging only one sovereign and master--the people--the new governor declared

> "I do not by any means believe the initiative, the referendum, and the recall are the panacea for all our political ills, yet they do give to the electorate the power of action when desired, and they do place in the hands of the people the means by which they may protect themselves. I recommend to you, therefore, and I most strongly urge, that the first step in our design to preserve and perpetuate popular government shall be the adoption of the initiative, the referendum, and the recall" [222]

Johnson asked Haynes and Edward A. Dickson, associate editor of the *L.A. Express*, to draft two proposed amendments, one for the initiative and referendum, the other for the recall. These were presented to the Senate by Lee C. Gates of Los Angeles, one of the southern California legislators allied with Haynes on this issue.[223] Their terms were fairly liberal but, as we shall see in a postscript below, flawed. To compel initiative or referendum elections, petitions would have to carry voters' signatures equal in number to 5 percent of the ballots cast during the last election in the relevant jurisdiction; for recalls the signature threshold would rise to between 12 percent and 25 percent, depending on the office. An incumbent facing a recall would automatically became a candidate. As the Labor Federation's legislative committee remarked, "The judiciary is included in the [recall] measure notwithstanding the most strenuous opposition of every reactionary element in the State."[224]

Capitalists looked upon California's courts, like those of the country's as a whole, as their staunchest allies against a rising labor movement. The courts' frequent use of police-backed injunctions to break strikes and boycotts, their many rulings in favor of the Southern Pacific Railroad and other corporations, and their relative isolation from the voters made them the least democratic branch of state government. "Any attempt to democratize this mighty barrier to evolutionary politics was bound to produce an instant reaction

among the propertied classes...," George Mowry remarks in *The California Progressives.* "The recall of judges, therefore, was branded as a 'spewing of intoxicated radicalism' by 'reckless and desperate revolutionary leaders.' "[225]

While the initiative and referendum tacked easily through the legislature on the tail-wind from ten years' agitation and Johnson's election, the recall faced choppy seas. Winston Crouch called it "one of the bitterest battles ever waged over a state measure." Many progressive reformers believed the recall of judges would leave government rudderless. Lissner and Rowell endorsed this "reform run mad" only because Johnson insisted on it. U.S. Senator John D. Works, formerly a Los Angeles judge, despised the idea and so informed Leslie R. Hewitt, his colleague in the state senate. Hewitt was one of two senators from Los Angeles who voted against the judicial recall. [226]

On February 20, 1911, U'Ren wrote Andrew Gallagher that the recall amendment was in trouble, "especially, it is claimed, because it applies to the Judiciary." Without heavy support from San Francisco's delegation, U'Ren said, the measure might fall short of the two-thirds majority it needed in both houses of the legislature. Four days later Gallagher secured the San Francisco Labor Council's unanimous agreement to contact all the city's senators and assemblymen on behalf of the recall. The argument it made to them was that "a judge, elected as all other officers are elected by the people," should be no more insulated from a recall than a city council member, mayor, state assemblyman, or senator. Reinforcing this verbal argument was an implicit but much more powerful one: Gallagher's ability to mobilize thousands of the city's workers against the re-election of politicians who voted the wrong way on direct democracy. This was also the threat, unstated and far broader, behind the Labor Federation's campaign. In the waning days of February it dispatched a swarm of union members to Sacramento to swing a "very acrimonious" senate debate in the recall's favor.[227]

Progressives were so divided over the ousting of judges that the "Reactionaries," as Hichborn called the legislature's dwindling corporate faction, wisely decided to let them fight it out. "With "fine tact" the Old Guard stepped back from the debate. The main combatants in the senate judiciary committee were Charles S. Wheeler and Francis J. Heney, both progressives, both advocates of direct democracy, both at loggerheads over what to do about judges. The few judges who abused their position, said Wheeler, could be impeached by a two-thirds vote of the senate with no need for a popular recall. Heney reminded him that the Southern Pacific had long controlled a two-thirds majority in the legislature. "Just think of that," he said, mocking the hollow threat of impeachment. "Think how those judges must have wobbled in their seats." In the end the debate turned on the question of trust. Wheeler trusted legislators to do the right thing, Heney and most of his colleagues trusted the people. The recall of judges survived the emotional committee debate and went on to win the legislature's approval by 88 votes out of the 119 cast.[228]

This was a fierce struggle, as state legislative contests go, but it was soon over. The passions and anxieties raised by the Wheeler-Heney set-to evaporated during final arguments over the recall itself. Within a week of the San Francisco Labor Council's intervention this reform won 88 percent of the votes in both houses.[229]

"Never before has organized labor of our state and its representatives at the capitol worked as harmoniously and never was as much interest manifested and assistance rendered by our organizations and the reform movement generally," declared the Labor Federations' legislative committee in celebration of the assembly and senate votes. But it noted losses, too, most consequentially in the fight for a law limiting anti-strike injunctions and legalizing primary and secondary boycotts. "Right here," the committee said, "it may be well to state that the so-called progressives and reformers who came from the southern portion of the state, with just one or possibly two exceptions, were 'political reformers' only. They voted solidly against the most meritorious economic reform mea-

sures, so long as the same originated from Labor."[230] On March 23 Lissner had written Johnson to veto the anti-injunction bill if it reached his desk. He said he'd sooner jettison the whole progressive program than support a bill that would subvert the L.A. reform movement and make that city an odiferous labor stronghold like San Francisco.[231]

Hiram Johnson signed the direct democracy measures and sent them on their way to an October 10 ratification vote by the people of California. The entreaties and vituperation that had marked the judicial recall debate in Sacramento now buzzed throughout the state. Conservative newspapers denounced the reforms, echoing Otis's charge that they were a blot on republican government. Haynes and U'Ren stumped for them energetically. In August, the Labor Federation sent a circular to all the local unions in the state, whether affiliated or not. Signed by its secretary, Paul Scharrenberg, and president, D.D. Sullivan, it urged them to rally voters behind the recall, initiative, referendum, women's suffrage, and three other amendments.. Governor Johnson, meanwhile, pilloried the foes of direct democracy at campaign events up and down the state.[232]

The upshot of this concerted activity was a lopsided statewide victory for the labor and progressive movements. Senator Leroy Wright of San Diego, who had cast the legislature's sole vote against the initiative and referendum, continued sniping at them through the summer and into the fall with little but the state's conservative press to cheer him on. What he said about the electorate--that it would decide direct democracy elections based on "hearsay statements, vociferous mouthings of demagogues, colored and selfish interests and the half-baked opinions of sensational newspapers"--didn't help his cause on election day. Three times as many Californians voted for the initiative, referendum, and recall as cast their ballots against these reforms. Women's suffrage also narrowly won their support. Unions across the state greeted the October 10, 1911 vote tally with profound elation. "On that day was written into the organic law of the State principles and

policies of government for which organized labor of California had contended...as far back as those now within the ranks can remember," Scharrenberg told delegates at a celebratory meeting of the Labor Federation he led. "For certain, it was a day of triumph for Labor."[233]

Going Statewide: Postscript 1.

A year after the historic election Scharrenberg took great satisfaction from the fact that "California has now acquired a reputation for 'progressiveness,'" but he had already spotted a devil in the details of the direct legislation amendment. Organized labor and other groups had petitioned more than a dozen initiatives and referenda during 1912, yet only half of them made it onto the November ballot. The problem was too little time and too few signatures. "In order to invoke the initiative this year," Scharrenberg said,

> "it was necessary to secure 31,000 signatures of bona fide registered electors of the State. And it was necessary that these signatures be of persons registered since January 1st of the current year. Further, these petitions had to be filed with the various County Clerks on or before July 19 last. As many County Clerks and Registrars made little or no effort to secure, and, in come instances discouraged voters from registering until after July 1, it follows that, in several counties, but eighteen days were available in which to prosecute the work....Depending upon volunteer work alone has proven to be very unsatisfactory, and the lack of funds to pay persons for soliciting signatures, precincting and filing same, printing, postage and correspondence, cuts a very important figure." [234]

So, back to that 39th session of the California legislature:

Senator Lee C. Gates of Los Angeles had faced a conundrum in 1911 as he led a committee that helped draft the initiative/referendum bill--namely, where to peg its petition signature requirements, and how to do it. "The general opinion was that 30,000 signatures should be required for initiative and 20,000 for referendum," Spencer C. Olin found when researching his history of California politics. "Because eight percent of the vote for governor in 1910 (385,713) was 30,858 and five percent of that vote was 18,286, it was decided to use the number of votes for governor as the basis of computation and to retain those percentages."

The key word here is *percentages*. By expressing each signature threshold as a percentage, what was a barely tolerable petitioning task in 1911 was bound to become bur-

densome in time and expense as the electorate grew. Gates warned the committee about this, and it promptly set an absolute 50,000-signature limit for initiatives and a 35,000-limit for referenda. Hichborn, then the *Sacramento Bee's* legislative correspondent, read the bill after it passed the senate. "To my astonishment," he wrote, "I found that the 50,000 signature limitation for Initiative and 35,000 for Referendum had been omitted." He urged the assembly to rectify this error, but it never did. By the fall of 1914 the number of bona fide voters' signatures needed to qualify an initiative for the ballot had soared to 75,000. "Most of the evils that have developed in the use of direct legislation in California can be traced to the failure of progressives to meet the signature issue squarely when the question was before them at the 1911 session," Hichborn later concluded. He did not live to see how successfully large corporations and well-funded single-interest groups in the late 20th and early 21st centuries would co-opt what was intended to be legislating by the people. The fact that direct democracy still serves a remnant of its original purpose in California is no small miracle.[235]

Going Statewide: Postscript 2.

Paul Scharrenberg was one of the state's ablest and most progressive labor leaders in the first half of the 20th century. Born to a seafaring family in Germany, he worked as a young able seaman in New York and California, joined the west coast American Seamen's Union, edited its *Seamen's Journal*, and won election every year from 1910 to 1936 as secretary of the California Labor Federation. He then spent seven years lobbying Congress for the American Federation of Labor in Washington, DC. In 1943 he returned to California under Gov. Earl Warren and ran the State Department of Industrial Relations until his retirement in 1955.

The year before he retired Scharrenberg sat down for a series of tape-recorded interviews conducted by the University of California's Bancroft Library in Berkeley. What he said offers a much-needed corrective to most histories of the state's reform movement

written since 1950. The following excerpt begins with a discussion of Mowry's *The California Progressives*:

> **SCHARRENBERG:** "Mowry speaks about the campaign here for the initiative, referendum and recall. He says, 'Hiram Johnson and his friends chose to meet this attack head-on.' He never mentions us. We were a very substantial part of that battle, the labor movement. He never mentions that. All he has to do is look up the records, you know. It's in there. We battled for it. We didn't have much money; we didn't have many members; but we put on a terrific campaign of our own. We were for it as much as he [Johnson] ever was, but according to this book here you'd think there wasn't anybody else...."
> **GILB (interviewer):** "Mowry makes the statement that the Progressives were in essence anti-labor..."
> **SCHARRENBERG:** "How could we have put the Johnson program over, with all our labor bills, if they were anti-labor?"
> **GILB:** "And he refers specifically to the southern Progressives."
> **SCHARRENBERG:** "It's true that in some respects the southern Progressives were of a different type from the boys in the North." [236]

The Impact of Direct Democracy on Los Angeles

Americans living east of the San Gabriel Valley in the last quarter of the 20th century and early years of the 21st have learned from Hollywood, television, newspapers, and word of mouth to view Los Angeles as a babel of tongues and uncentered streets, a cultural freakdom, green-haired kids roaming Melrose Avenue, tattooed teenagers outgunning the police, helicopters darting whop-whop-whop through the night air, backyards and skidrow bums reeling in their searchlights, a *Blade Runner* dystopia of sunshine and *noir,* amalgam of Asia, Mexico, mudslides, drought, and pop psychoanalysis--in short, a complete and total aberration. The point isn't whether the stereotype is true--most of the city is hardworkingclass, so of course it's not true--but whether it's believed, which it is.

It was not always so.

A City on the Hill

For a few generations after Los Angeles adopted its 1902 charter reforms it became what the Puritans tried to make Massachusetts, a "city on the hill" and a beacon to all others. Here's what the *Citizen* reported in 1907:

> "The present city charter of Los Angeles is known all over the United States for its famous 'recall' provision, which was framed and inserted into the city's law by the active work of the com-

bined labor and socialist bodies. "[237]

Under the headline "An Object Lesson for Every City in the United States," the *Christian Science Monitor* had this to say in 1910:

> "Los Angeles--This is the only one of the large cities of the country where democracy rules...the only city of the 300,000 class that has genuine democratic institutions such as the initiative, referendum, recall, non-partizan ballot, non-partizan direct primary, councilmen-at-large, civil service...[and] a citizenship that lives up to them. Great things are destined to happen in Los Angeles during the administration that is just entering office." [238]

--and this from Winston W. Crouch in 1938:

> "With the adoption of this charter of 1903, Los Angeles became the first city in the United States to establish the recall as a means for controlling elected officials. The recall of an erring councilman, together with two successful threats of recall that defeated corrupt franchise 'grabs,' advertised the advantages of direct government to other cities in California."[239]

-- Francis M. Carney in 1964:

> "Los Angeles is at present unbossed, is in the grip of no political machine, and behind its formal government there lurks no covert or semi-covert 'power elite'....Los Angeles now enjoys 'good government,' both in the sense of the traditional formal arrangements implied by that term and in practice as well....[It] has nonpartisan municipal offices, a strong city council, a widespread civil service, and the three familiar vehicles of direct democracy." [240]

--and finally Tom Sitton in 1992:

> "Approval of the recall moved Los Angeles into the forefront of national civic reform, for the city was the first municipality in the United States to adopt this device of [full] 'direct democracy.' " [241]

It must be said that the tribute by the *Christian Science Monitor* needlessly idealized its subject. Within a year the newspaper's hosannas were overtaken by a wave of angrily-fought strikes, a harsh anti-labor injunction enacted and signed by the very regime the *Monitor* had praised, the surprising (and to the *Monitor* doubtlessly alarming) rise of the local Socialist Party, the bombing of the *Times* building, and--distilled from all this--a pall of recriminations and class hatred that would hang over Los Angeles during the remaining years of "industrial freedom". Even so, the democratic vigor that caught the attention of the *Monitor* survived for decades and is still vestigially evident today. The initiative, referendum, and recall changed L.A.'s standing in the world.

A Check on Autonomy

The three reforms worked an even more substantive change: they opened city govern-

ment to the electorate, exposed it to sorties and sallies from below, made it less of an institution for itself and a little more of an institution for the dangerous classes.

This tendency flew in the face of what political scientists and to a lesser extent historians believe they have learned about American government in the late 19th and early 20th centuries--namely that at both the national and state levels it was growing more autonomous. Neo-marxist and non-marxist scholars alike have identified state "actors" who acted increasingly in their own bureaucratic interest and somewhat less in the interest of various lobbies pressing them for favors. Stephen Skowronek, Fred Block, Theda Skocpol, Christopher Tomlins, and others have related these trends to the state's rising administrative capacity--though Tomlins cautions that in its relative independence it still reproduced and served the capitalist mode of production.[242]

After 1890 L.A.'s progressives pursued an agenda which, once they *became* the city government, would immunize them against the street and the virus of too much democracy. (How self-consciously they did so cannot be gauged, but what matters is the direct and collateral effect.) An early step in this process was the 1902 charter campaign which enlarged the mayor's powers and ended the spoils system in favor of a civil service. The second step was a strengthening of the civil service in 1904 to give it more autonomy. The third was the 1909 charter coup which substituted citywide voting for the ward-based election of council members and direct primaries for party nominating conventions. Taken together, these reforms weakened the political parties and the voting power of neighborhood associations, ward clubs, and unions while boosting the electoral influence of banks, commercial groups, newspapers, and other citywide organizations that tended to support a semi-autonomous city government so long as it promoted capitalism.[243]

Into this well-integrated scenario, which actually materialized, marched the L.A. labor movement and Haynes, beating their drums for direct democracy. It, too, came to pass. Direct democracy acted on the progressives' semi-autonomous state like a battering-ram.

And the thing about a battering-ram is that even when it isn't actually smashing through your wall but is idling just outside while its crew eats lunch, well, it makes you lose your confidence in the wall.

"The Angelenos, as they are called, have been prodigious legislators," Carney observed in 1964. "This increment of power to the voters has been a further hedge against Caesar, without doubt. Questions must be asked about the ultimate utility of this almost promiscuous use of direct democracy. But here let it be noted that it is one more evidence of decentralization of power in Los Angeles..." [244]

Bitten Lips

The hedge against Caesar worked brazenly through recall and referendum campaigns that were carried all the way to elections, but also more subtly and systematically by the threat they posed, like the battering ram outside the wall. We will never know how many times a city council member bit his or her lip rather than move an ordinance because of a feared recall or referendum, but the contemporary literature is full of nods to their chilling effect. "Judging by [the] actual record of events," wrote Willard, "it would seem that a large part of the value of direct legislation lies in its potential force, that is to say its influence on law-making through its mere existence as a source of appeal."[245]

Silence is an awkward topic for historians, for it can easily slip into essentialism. More than one labor historian has lost all perspective by lamenting the revolutionary silence of the American working class, as if frontal attacks on capitalism must everywhere and always be the duty of organized workers. Even more modest might-have-beens may seem presumptuous unless we can show why they were *plausible* non-events or suppressed agendas--i.e., historical contenders that might easily have prevailed.

Political scientists are more at ease with historical silence. Many of them see it as a category of suppression. This approach, which legitimizes "non-decisions" and "agenda-control,"[246] hits exactly the right note regarding all the *non-elections* in progressive era

Los Angeles that no one can possibly catalog. Direct democracy helped the city build an imposing growth infrastructure, but we must also credit it with forestalling a broad array of economic and political activities--including at times its own use. We can surmise their existence from a telltale instance Haynes described just after the Davenport recall. Over heated protests from the public in the fall of 1902, he wrote, the city council sold Huntington a franchise to run freight cars on downtown streets. Somewhat later the elected city attorney found technical errors in the advertising and sale of the franchise which led to its cancellation. "By this time," Haynes said,

> "Los Angeles had adopted the Initiative and Referendum, and notwithstanding the tremendous efforts and expense put forth by the street railroad corporation to secure the franchise from the old council, no effort has since been made to have it reissued, for the railroad well knows that though in a second effort it might conform to all the technicalities of the state law, yet on such a franchise the people can now demand a referendum and veto it absolutely. In this case the moral influence of the Referendum has been sufficient to protect the public without the necessity of an election. "[247]

In other words, the agendas direct democracy silenced were not the people's but those of the Huntingtons who sought gifts from indulgent city councils, the slaughter-house owners who tried to locate in workingclass wards and learned the offal truth that they were not welcome there, the gas companies that wanted to follow them, the prohibitionists, and beyond a shadow of a doubt the *Los Angeles Times,* whose publisher inevitably took the interlopers' side. Citybuilders who hoped to shape Los Angeles into a weak instrumental state--short on regulation, hostile to municipal ownership, long on direct and infrastructural subsidies to capital--lost the most when the city embraced the initiative, referendum, and recall.

Priming the Pump

How direct democracy came to Los Angeles, and the way it was used in its first years, conditioned city residents to exercise an abnormal degree of power through the ballot box. For two decades, from the mid-1880s to the mid-1900s, organized workers agitated for this reform, pursued it through one charter election after another, recalled a councilman, and defeated a prohibition initiative. At every turn the city's voters ruled the outcome.

This was a twenty-year school in electoral democracy. No longer willing merely to elect a candidate and decide a minor bond issue, Angelenos now expected to reshape their local government and create major public policies with their votes.

Above all direct democracy primed the electorate for the explosion of aqueduct, hydroelectric power, and harbor bond issues and the pell-mell citybuilding that serve as gist for the next chapter. Direct democracy, in fact, is what made that chapter possible. Consider the construction of a 240-mile aqueduct from the Owens Valley to a basin just north of the city, which would be watered by its flow. A mammoth bond issue for the project was placed on the ballot in 1907. "By this time," said the *Christian Science Monitor,* "the people had come to have such confidence in a city government so largely in their own hands that they did not hesitate to vote $25,000,000 for this great improvement."[248] The paper's emphasis was slightly off and needs a friendly amendment. What gave voters confidence was not so much the government, rather venal at the time, but their own ability to bend it to their wishes. This self-assurance was a gift from direct democracy.

Technically speaking, bond elections after 1904 did not qualify as direct democracy, but they functioned much as referenda and benefited enormously from the idea labor activists had implanted in voters' minds that the ballot box could be used to remake Los Angeles. "The West's early embrace of political reform, particularly direct democracy, made voters key actors in early-twentieth-century urban development policy," states political scientist Steven P. Erie. "Los Angeles' statist growth regime differed sharply from the previous business-led caretaker regime in the sheer numbers of local elections and in the role of voters in development policymaking."[249]

Next we consider the consequences.

Notes

[1] W.A. Engle, quoted in the Los Angeles *Citizen*, April 12, 1912, p. 13.

[2] American popular song of the 1940s.

[3] Stimson, Grace Heilman, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,* University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1955, p. 26.

[4] "Council Opposes Sunday Park Concerts," *Los Angeles Express,* July 10, 1906.

[5] Los Angeles City Council *Minutes*, Vol. 68, Oct. 26, 1903, p. 332; "Council Opposes Sunday Park Concerts," *L.A. Express*, July 10, 1906; "A Man Who Would Be Mayor," *Union Labor News*, Oct. 12, 1906; "Judge M'Nutt's Recall Speech Stirs City Club," *L.A. Express*, Jan. 23, 1909; "Is Vice Protected in Los Angeles?," parts II, III, V, VI, VII, IX and X," *L.A. Herald*, Jan. 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 1909; Willard, C.D., "Reform Measures in Los Angeles," undated typescript, probably July, 1910, found in Haynes Papers, Box 43, folder "Direct Legislation–Los Angeles (16)"; "Ex-Chief of Police Ends His Life in El Paso, Tex," *Citizen*, April 26, 1912, p. 8.

[6] "Why We Are Betrayed," *Union Labor News*, July 13, 1906, p. 4.

[7] "Why We Are Betrayed," *Union Labor News*, July [13], 1906, p. 4.

[8] Kazin, Michael, "The Great Exception Revisited: Organized Labor and Politics in San Francisco and Los Angeles, 1870-1940," *Pacific Historical Review,* v. LV, no. 3 (August, 1986), p. 395.

[9] *The Graphic*, June 30, 1906.

[10] "Public Works Man," *Union Labor News* Dec. 15, 1905; "Grand Jury to Investigate," *Union Labor News*, June 22, 1906. For McAleer's antipathy to unions, see Johnson, Daniel J., "'And Never the Twain Shall Meet': Working Class Politics in Los Angeles, 1903–1909," unpublished paper presented at the 19th Annual Conference of the Southwest Labor Studies Association, April 17, 1993, pp. 10-13.

[11] "Building Trades Council," *Union Labor News*, Nov. 24, 1905; "Carpenters 426," *Union Labor News*, Dec. 8, 1905; "Central Labor Council," Jan. 26, 1906; Johnson, Daniel J. "Down in 'De Bloody Ate': Ward Politicians and Working-Class Voters in Progressive-Era Los Angeles," unpublished paper presented at a UCLA History Department colloquium, April 3, 1997, pp. 23-24; Willard, Charles D. "Municipal Progress in Los Angeles," Proceedings of the New York Conference for Good City Government and the Eleventh Annual Meeting of the National Municipal League, National Municipal League, April 25-28, 1905, p. 101; Clodius, Albert Howard, "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles, 1890-1910," dissertation, Claremont Graduate School, Claremont, CA, 1953, p. 38.

[12] "Board of Public Works: Will One Practical Mechanic Be Appointed...?", *Union Labor News*, Dec. 8, 1905. [By agreement with the Central Labor and Building Trades councils in

March, 1907, a new management took over the *Union Labor News* and changed its name to the *Citizen*.]

[13] Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles* [p. 137] notes that journeymen plumbers persuaded the city council to make one of their members a plumbing inspector in 1893, but that was the last such appointment of any significance during the progressive era. *Union Labor News:* "Building Trades Council," Nov. 23, 1905; "Board of Public Works: Will One Practical Mechanic Be Appointed...?" Dec. 8, 1905; "Slap in the Face," March 2, 1906; Stimson, p. 305; "Is Vice Protected in Los Angeles? Part X, *L.A. Herald*, Jan. 17, 1909.

[14] Labor activist W.A. Engle, quoted in the Los Angeles *Citizen*, April 12, 1912, p. 13.

[15] Kazin, Michael, "The Great Exception Revisited: Organized Labor and Politics in San Francisco and Los Angeles, 1870-1940," *Pacific Historical Review*, v. LV, no. 3 (August, 1986), p. 395.

[16] Kazin, Michael, "The Great Exception Revisited: Organized Labor and Politics in San Francisco and Los Angeles, 1870-1940," *Pacific Historical Review*, v. LV, no. 3 (August, 1986), p. 395.

[17] Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, p. 281.

[18] Upon collecting the required number of valid petition signatures, proponents of a new law, or *initiative*, could place it on the ballot of a general or special election even if the city council opposed it; L.A.'s voters would then decide its fate. Through a very similar *referendum* process, voters could repeal or uphold a statute the council had adopted. Likewise, again by petition, they could force a popular vote to *recall* a councilman or an elected city officer without having to wait for the next regular election to unseat him. "Direct democracy" was and is the term used for all three reforms as a group. "Direct legislation" usually referred to the initiative and referendum without the recall.. At the start of the 20th century progressives were more likely to support direct legislation than direct democracy. The reverse was true of union activists. San Francisco adopted the initiative and referendum in 1899, three years before Los Angeles, but it omitted the recall. Moreover its requirement for initiative petition signatures was prohibitively high. [Crouch, Winston W. "John Randolph Haynes and His Work for Direct Government," *National Municipal Review*, v. 27, no. 9 (Sept. 1938), p. 2.]

[19] Kazin, Michael. *Barons of Labor: The San Francisco Building Trades and Union Power in the Progressive Era,* University of Illinois Press, Urbana & Chicago, 1987, pp. 56-58, 152, and throughout.

[20] Los Angeles Typographical Union No. 174. Minute Books, 1886-1916, June 5, 1892, p. 269 (hereinafter LATU), See chapter 8's discussion of business versus radical unionism in progressive-era Los Angeles.

[21] "Central Labor Council/Building Trades Resolution," Los Angeles County Central Labor Council Minute Books, 1909-1916 (hereinafter LACLC), housed at the Urban Archives Center, California State University, Northridge, July 2, 1911.

[22] John R. Haynes and other L.A. citizens who engaged in the struggle for direct democracy often traced its roots back to the New England town meeting, unaware it had an antecedent much closer to home. In 1911 the *Los Angeles Express* quoted historian J.M. Guinn on the 1834 recall of a Los Angeles councilman (*regidor*) under California's then territorial government: "There was a rule or law in force that no *regidor* could serve in two successive terms in the *ayuntamiento* or town council. The intention of the law was to prevent politicians from organizing a political machine to control the council. José Antonio Corrillo, one of the ablest politicians of the old regime, secured his election for a second term, hoping by his influence to evade the law; but the people would have none of that. They promptly recalled him and elected another man." (*Los Angeles Express*, March 18, 1911)

[23] Los Angeles was the first city to place all three measures of direct democracy—the initiative, referendum, and recall—in its charter..

[24] "Council Names Committee to Draft New City Charter'," *Citizen*, March 1, 1912, p. 3.

[25] "Labor Will Draft City Charter," *Citizen*, April 12, 1912, p. 13.

[26] Although the 1879 California Constitution granted home rule only to cities of 100,000 residents or more, popular agitation secured an 1887 amendment lowering the threshhold to 10,000. Los Angeles quickly took advantage of its first opportunity to draft a home-rule charter. The threshhold was later dropped to a mere 3,000 inhabitants. [Town Hall Report Committee, *A Study of the Los Angeles City Charter: A Report of the Municipal and County Government Section of Town Hall,* Los Angeles, 1963, pp. 44-45.]

[27] Los Angeles Typographical Union No. 174. Minute Books, 1886-1916, Nov. 4, 1888, pp. 56-57 (hereinafter LATU); *Los Angeles Times,* June 11, 1888, p. 2, June 16, 1888, p. 2; Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, pp. 92-93; Hunter, Burton L. *The Evolution of Municipal Organization and Administrative Practice in the City of Los Angeles,* Parker, Stone & Baird, Co., Los Angeles, 1933, pp. 52, 65-70. Ostrom, Vincent. *Water & Politics: A Study of Water Policies and Administration in the Development of Los Angeles,* The Haynes Foundation, Los Angeles, 1953, pp. 46-47.

[28] Displaying his lifelong condescension toward the dangerous classes, Charles Dwight Willard commented on the 1888 charter as follows: "[T]he document was faulty in providing too many elective offices and in failing to definitely locate responsibility. The city government...is by no means up to the standard that the city is entitled to enjoy, considering the unusual character of its population. There is no such percentage of foreign element as is to be found in most American cities, neither is there an illiterate or impoverished element. On the other hand, the exceptionally large proportion of people of comfortable means who have the time that they might devote to the duties of citizenship, gives an opportunity such as few cities enjoy for a high quality of local government." Willard, Charles D. *The Herald's History of Los Angeles City,* Kingsley-Barnes & Neuner Co., Publishers, Los Angeles, 1901, p. 353; Los Angeles City Council *Minutes,* Vol. 28, Dec. 31, 1888; Hunter, *The Evolution of Municipal Organization and Administrative Practice in the City of Los Angeles,* p. 69.

[29] *Los Angeles Herald*, May 6, 1900, quoted in Clodius, "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles, 1890-1910," p. 18; Hunter, pp. 71-77; Mayor Henry T. Hazard, speech, Los Angeles City Council *Minutes,* Vol. 33, Jan. 12, 1891.

[30] Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, p. 281.

[31] Willard, Charles Dwight, "Reform Measures in Los Angeles," a 13-page typescript found in Box 43, folder "Direct Legislation–Los Angeles (16)" of the papers of John Randolph Haynes, Special Collections, University Research Library, University of California at Los Angeles (hereinafter Haynes Papers). The reference to the 1906 constitutional amendment occurs two-thirds of the way through the typescript, which lacks a date. One of Willard's comments on the fourth page indicates that it was written in July, 1910.

[32] "Freeholder" was synonymous with property-owner, and in the 1880s and early 1890s when the city council appointed most freeholder boards and committees, their members typically came from the city's elites.

[33] Craig, Z.W., "The Foremost Question," Citizen, Jan. 19, 1906, p. 4 [my italics]. See also Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement,* p. 23, where, speaking of the Workingmen's approach to politics, she noted that civic reform "seemed more vital, and more likely to bring success at the polls, than solutions for exclusively working-class problems,"

[34] "Our Labor Laws," *Union Labor News,* Nov. 17, 1905; "To the Voters of Los Angeles County, California," *California Election Law,* Election, Nov. 8, 1892, p. 2 (pamphlet found in Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, call number F868.L8.P6); Petersen, Eric Falk, "The Adoption of the Direct Primary in California," *Southern California Quarterly,* v. 54, no. 4 (Winter, 1972), pp. 363-64,

[35] Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, pp. 127-28, 292; *Citizen*, Jan. 26, 1912, p. 1, Oct, 23, 1914, p. 9; LACLC April 1 and May 17, 1912. See also "The Fight for Proportional Representation," this dissertation pp. 391-97. Union agitation for longer polling hours and abolition of the poll tax stretched well into the 20th century. "Los Angeles labor felt so strongly the importance of voting in school bond elections," says Stimson, "that it pushed legislation aimed at extending voting hours so that working people could more easily get to the polls. A state law of 1907, proposed by representatives of the Los Angeles Central Labor Council through the State Federation of Labor, extended voting time by one hour, but complaints in 1909 indicated that labor's objective had still to be reached." The poll tax survived until 1914, when voters abolished it by amending the state constitution.

[36] See especially Schneirov, Richard, "Rethinking the Relation of Labor to the Politics of Urban Social Reform in Late Nineteenth-Century America: The Case of Chicago," *International Labor & Working Class History* 46 (Fall, 1994); Schneirov's *Labor and Urban Politics: Class Conflict and the Origins of Modern Liberalism in Chicago, 1864-97.* Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1998; and his "Thoughts on Periodizing the Gilded Age: Capital Accumulation, Society, and Politics, 1873-1898, *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era,* v. 5, no. 3 (July 2006), pp. 221-23.

[37] Griffiths, David B., "Anti-Monopoly Movement in California, 1873–1898," *Southern California Quarterly,* v. 54, no. 1 (Spring, 1972), pp. 96-97.

[38] Griffiths, "Anti-Monopoly Movement in California," pp. 96, 98-99; Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, pp. 144-45.

[39] Griffiths, "Anti-Monopoly Movement in California," pp. 97

[40] Griffiths, "Anti-Monopoly Movement in California," pp. 97, 99; Stimson, p. 145.

[41] Clodius, Albert Howard. "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles, 1890-1910," pp. 50-51; Stimson, pp. 147-48.

[42] Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, pp. 147-48.

[43] Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, p. 128.

[44] Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, pp. 149-51.

[45] Z.W. Craig, "Labor in Politics," *Union Labor News*, April 13, 1906, p. 4.

[46] Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, pp. 151-53.

[47] LATU, Minute Books, 1893-98, Sunday, March 29, 1896, pp. 197-200; Stimson, p. 178.

[48] Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, pp. 149, 178.

[49] Quoted in J. Martin Klotsche, "The 'United Front' Populists," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* XX (June, 1937), p. 389,

[50] Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, pp. 148-50, 155, 190.

[51] Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, pp. 190-91. Other unions remained active but did not return as members of the central body for months and in some cases years,

[52] *L.A. Times*: "Elections Called," May 10, 1898, p. 10, "Named the Price," June 15, 1898, p. 7, "To Name Its Price," June 17, 1898, p. 7, "Municipal Ownership," July 19, 1898, p. 14, "Hearing Begins Monday," Nov. 19, 1898, p. 10, "The Water Plant and the New Charter," Nov. 23, 1898, p. 8.

[53] Lothrop, Gloria Ricci. "The Boom of the '80s Revisited," *Southern California Quarterly* v. 75, nos. 3–4 (Fall/Winter, 1993), p. 295.

[54] Dumke, Glenn S. "Early Interurban Transportation in the Los Angeles Area," *The Quarterly,* Historical Society of Southern California, v. 22, no. 4 (Dec., 1940), pp. 131-34, 136-40, 143-45.

[55] "A New Charter," *L.A. Times,* March 11, 1898; Sitton, Tom. *John Randolph Haynes: California Progressive,* Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 1992, pp. 21-22.

[56] "Labor Agitators I Have Known" by Joseph Phillis, *Citizen* Feb. 3, 1911, p. 1; LATU, Minute Books, 1893-98, Sunday, Feb. 25, 1894, p. 49, Dec. 29, 1895, p. 170, March 29, 1896, pp. 197-200, April 26, 1896, p. 207, Sept. 27, 1896, pp. 49-52 (new page numbering), Dec. 27, 1896, p. 94, June 30, 1897, p. 149, Sept. 26, 1897, pp. 178-79, Minute Books, 1898-1902, March 26, 1899, p. 79; "A New Charter," *L.A. Times*, March 11, 1898, p. 7.

[57] "To Draft a New Charter," *L.A. Times*, March 18, 1898, p. 8. Hunsaker was a lawyer who would later play a key role in the emergence of the 1906 Non-Partisan Party while acting as the private attorney of Harrison Gray Otis, who detested that party. He helped launch the Lincoln-Roosevelt League in 1907. Wright was a judge. O'Melveny, a lawyer whose father

founded L.A.'s most prestigious law firm, made the *Times* list of "reputable" citizens in 1898. With Otis he served as an advisor to the women's Civic League, formed in 1899, and sat on the L.A. Library Board of Directors from 1907 to 1911. Frank, a well-known merchant, was a partner in the London Clothing Company. He led the Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association from 1896 to 1899. Later he helped the Municipal League recruit George Alexander to run against Mayor Harper in the 1909 recall election, and he presided over the Board of Education from 1911 to 1915. Little is known about Humphreys. [Layne, J. Gregg. "The Lincoln-Roosevelt League: Its Origin and Accomplishments," *The Quarterly,* Historical Society of Southern California, v. 25, no. 3 (Sept., 1943, p. 89); "Business Government of City is Keynote," *L.A. Express,* July 10, 1906; "Hunsaker to Quit," *L.A. Evening News,* Sept. 26, 1906; "Elections Called," *L.A. Times*, May 10, 1898; "The Election for Freeholders," *L.A. Times,* July 1, 1898; Williamson, Mrs. M. Burton. "The Civic Association as a Factor of Greater Los Angeles," *Annual Publication of the Historical Society of Southern California,* v. 8, Part 3 (1911, p. 183); "Municipal Officers, City of Los Angeles, Cal..1907-1908" and "Municipal Officers, City of Los Angeles, Cal..1910-1911," Haynes Papers, Box 133, "Los Angeles Police Department–Haynes–Los Angeles Railways–Franchises," Folder "Los Angeles–Politics and Government, 1900–1910" 1-(9), *Small booklets: "Los Angeles City Government, 1907–1908 and 1910-11.*

[58] "A Wrong Beginning," *L.A. Times,* March 20, 1898.

[59] "Freeholder Nominees," *L.A. Times*, June 16, 1898.

[60] The council initially set July 6 as the election date, then moved it back two days. "Elections Called," *L.A. Times*, May 10, 1898; "Adopted Too Late" and "To Choose Good Men," *L.A. Times*, June 8, 1898; "Selecting the Freeholders," *L.A. Herald*, June 9, 1898; "The City Charter," *L.A. Times*, June 15, 1898.

[61] "Filling Vacancies," *L.A. Times*, June 16, 1898.

[62] "People's Party Meets....Delay in Calling the Charter Convention Causes Wrath and Suspicion. City Council Scored, *L.A. Herald*, June 9, 1898; "The City Charter," *L.A. Times*, June 15, 1898; "Filling Vacancies," *L.A. Times*, June 16, 1898.

[63] "Charter-Making Freeholders," *L.A. Times*, June 16, 1898.

[64] "Charter Building. Two New Freeholders' Tickets in the Field," *L.A. Times*, June 17. 1898; "The Board of Freeholders," *L.A. Times*, June 18, 1898; "Municipal Ticket," *L.A. Times*, July 7, 1898.

[65] "The Board of Freeholders," *L.A. Times*, June 18, 1898; "The Freeholders' Ticket," *L.A. Times*, June 21, 1090;

[66] "Freeholders Chosen," *L.A. Times*, July 9, 1898.

[67] Rev. W.D.P. Bliss, "What To Do. A Programme of Christian Socialism," undated, Haynes Papers, Box 189, Folder "Socialism XXVIII"; Stimson, p. 223..

[68] LATU Minute Books, 1890-93: April 3, 1892, p.184 and March 26, 1893, p. 267; 1893-98: March 25, 1894; Phillis, Joseph, "Labor Agitators I Have Known, III.–Cyren E. Fisk," *Citizen,* Feb. 3, 1911, p. 1; Stimson, pp. 147, 223. "Religious Socialism," undated 1898

newspaper clipping with list of URL executive board members in Haynes Papers, Box 189, folder "Socialism XXII. One source indicates that George H. Hewes was also a minister. The labor movement had and still has its share of wage workers who wore workshoes on weekdays and the cloth on Sundays.

[69] "Freeholders Meet," *L.A. Times*, July 19, 1898; "For Referendum," *L.A. Times*, Aug. 17, 1898; "The Freeholders: Franchises for Public Utilities Considered at Length," *L.A. Times*, Aug. 19, 1898; *"A Memorial to the Board of Freeholders for the Drafting of a new charter,"* typescript, Haynes Papers, Box 102, folder "Los Angeles Charter–Miscellaneous (10); Sitton, Tom, *John Randolph Haynes: California Progressive*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 1992, p. 29.

[70] Kazin, Michael, "The Great Exception Revisited: Organized Labor and Politics in San Francisco and Los Angeles, 1870-1940," *Pacific Historical Review*, v. LV, no. 3 (August, 1986), p. 395.

[71] Pomeroy, Eltwood, "How Los Angeles Got Direct Legislation," *L.A. Herald*, April 19, 1903.

[72] "For Referendum," *L.A. Times*, Aug. 17, 1898; "Board of Freeholders," *L.A. Times*, Aug. 31, 1898; "Board of Freeholders," *L.A. Times*, Sept. 2, 1898; "Board of Freeholders," *L.A. Times*, Sept. 17, 1898; "Imperative Mandate. A Socialistic Device Barred from the Proposed Charter," *L.A. Times*, Sept. 28, 1898; "Charter Completed," *L.A. Times*, Oct. 6, 1898; "The New Charter," *L.A. Times*, Oct. 31, 1898; "Judge Variel Talks," *L.A. Times*, Nov. 15, 1898.

[73] Sitton, Tom, *John Randolph Haynes: California Progressive*, p. 29.

[74] "To the Working Men: Freeholders Reply to Criticisms of New Charter," *L.A. Times*, Nov. 23, 1898.

[75] "Gone to Join Cervera," *L.A. Times*, Dec. 6, 1898; "How It Happened," *L.A. Times*, Dec. 7, 1898; Town Hall Report Committee, *A Study of the Los Angeles City Charter: A Report of the Municipal and County Government Section of Town Hall.* Los Angeles, 1963, p. 45.

[76] "The City Election," *L.A. Times*, Dec. 6, 1898.

[77] Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, p. 224.

[78] Kazin, Michael, "The Great Exception Revisited: Organized Labor and Politics in San Francisco and Los Angeles, 1870-1940," *Pacific Historical Review*, v. LV, no. 3 (August, 1986), p. 395.

[79] Joining Haynes on the committee was Caroline M. Severance, the most forceful advocate for organized labor in the L.A. women's movement. *The Social Economist*, v. II, no. 118 (Los Angeles, March 19, 1898) in Haynes Papers, Box 189, folder "Socialism XXVIII". Sitton, Tom, *John Randolph Haynes: California Progressive*, pp. 28-29.

[80] "Initially," says Sitton, Haynes "rather passively supported the idea as a cardinal tenet of the URL...In a letter to Bliss outlining his reform priorities in June 1898, Haynes did not mention direct democracy." Sitton, Tom, *John Randolph Haynes: California Progressive*, p. 37 including ff 8."

[81] In the late 1890s, says Sitton, Haynes "had established ties with local labor leaders that made him one of the few progressive reformers over the next three decades to enjoy the confidence of the local and state labor movement. In 1898, he and several union leaders had served on the executive board of the Union Reform League. His socialistic sympathies and egalitarian outlook enabled him to cooperate even with radical laborites, though his concern for workers belied a strong paternalism. Advocating direct legislation and other immediate goals sought by labor gained him the respect of working-class leaders..." Sitton, *John Randolph Haynes*, pp. 46-47.

[82] "To Name Freeholders," *L.A. Times*, May 25, 1900; "Charter Convention Meets Tomorrow Night," *L.A. Times*, June 3, 1900; "Charter Builders," *L.A. Times*, June 9, 1900.

[83] "Charter Builders," *L.A. Times*, June 9, 1900; Clodius, "The Quest for Good Government," p. 31.

[84] "Freeholders and Freak Methods," *L.A. Times*, June 15, 1900.

[85] "Charter Convention Meets Tomorrow Night," *L.A. Times*, June 3, 1900; "Charter Builders," *L.A. Times*, June 9, 1900; "More Candidates Wanted: Petitions for Nomination," *L.A. Times*, June 23, 1900; "Freeholders' Election Today," *L.A. Herald*, July 27, 1900; Untitled manuscript summarizing the 1900 charter convention and later developments, possibly by Charles D. Willard, in Haynes Papers, Box 48-B, folder "Direct Legislation–Recall-Los Angeles–Davenport Case, 1904."

[86] "The Freeholders' Election," *L.A. Herald*, July 28, 1900; "More Candidates Wanted: Petitions for Nomination," *L.A. Times*, June 23, 1900; Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, p. 191.

[87] "Freeholders Hear Many Suggestions," *L.A. Herald*, Sept. 22, 1900; "Concluded to Proceed," *L.A. Times*, Sept. 22, 1900;

[88] "Freeholders Organized," *L.A. Herald*, Aug. 8, 1900; "Spalding President," *L.A. Times*, Aug. 8, 1900; Typescript, "Students of the University of Southern California," a talk given by Haynes in February, 1910: Haynes Papers, Box 102, folder "Los Angeles Charter–Miscellaneous" (10); C.D. Willard, "Reform Measures in Los Angeles," 13-page typescript, undated but probably July, 1910, in Haynes Papers, Box 43, folder "Direct Legislation–Los Angeles" (16); Sitton, *John Randolph Haynes*, pp. 37-38.

[89] Kazin, Michael, "The Great Exception Revisited: Organized Labor and Politics in San Francisco and Los Angeles, 1870-1940," *Pacific Historical Review,* v. LV, no. 3 (August, 1986), p. 395.

[90] "Important Work of Freeholders," *L.A. Herald*, Sept. 22, 1900; Headline illegible, article on Haynes's speech to freeholders, *L.A. Times*, Sept. 29, 1900, p. 13; Untitled manuscript summarizing the 1900 charter convention and later developments, possibly by Charles D. Willard, in Haynes Papers, Box 48-B, folder "Direct Legislation–Recall-Los Angeles–Davenport Case, 1904;" Sitton, *John Randolph Haynes*, p. 39.

[91] "Initiative and Referendum," *L.A. Times*, Oct. 2, 1900.

[92] Sitton, *John Randolph Haynes*, pp. 39.

[93] "Concluded to Proceed," *L.A. Times*, Aug. 8, 1900; "Keeps Right On...Supreme Court's Ruling Not Fatal," *L.A. Times*, Oct. 18, 1900; "New Charter Duly Filed," *L.A. Times*, Oct. 26, 1900; "Charter Problem Discussed," *L.A. Times*, Nov. 2, 1900; "Freeholders Hear Many Suggestions," *L.A. Herald*, Sept. 22, 1900; "Freeholders Test Suit," *L.A. Herald*, Sept. 25, 1900; Untitled manuscript summarizing the 1900 charter convention and later developments, possibly by Charles D. Willard, in Haynes Papers, Box 48-B, folder "Direct Legislation–Recall-Los Angeles–Davenport Case, 1904;" Willard, Charles D., "Municipal Progress in Los Angeles," *Proceedings* of the New York Conference for Good City Government and the Eleventh Annual Meeting of the National Municipal League, National Municipal League, April 25-28, 1905,

[94] "New City Charter Delayed by a Bull," *L.A. Times*, Feb. 2, 1901; "The City Must Wait for Charter Changes," *L.A. Times*, Feb. 3, 1901.

[95] "Federation of Labor Adopts Resolutions. Initiative and Referendum Once More Indorsed," *L.A. Times*, Dec. 11, 1900. The new endorsement occurred at the AFL's annual convention in Denver.

[96] Clark, Thomas R. "The Limits of Liberty: Courts, Police, & Labor Unrest in California, 1890-1926, Ph.D. dissertation, UCLA, 1994, pp. 251-53; Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, p. 242.

[97] Clark, "The Limits of Liberty," pp. 253-56; Stimson, pp. 242-43.

[98] Clark, "The Limits of Liberty," p. 257; Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement,"* p. 243.

[99] Stimson, pp. 243-44; Clark, "The Limits of Liberty," pp. 258-61.

[100] Clark, "The Limits of Liberty," pp. 259-60.

[101] "Union Labor Party City Ticket," clipping, newspaper and date unidentified but most likely 1902, in Haynes Papers, Box 92, envelope "Labor Parties."

[102] Quoted in Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, p. 233.

[103] "Planning for Union Labor Vote," *L.A. Express*, Aug. 6, 1906 (clipping found in Haynes Papers, Box 55, folder "Elections–1906–Calif.–Public Ownership" (3-23); Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, pp. 229, 232-34.

[104] Haynes' private attorney, George Cochran, served on the charter committee, as did J.B. Millard of the Teachers Alliance. Millard was the only holdover from the 1900 charter reform effort. "The Mayor's Charter Plan," *L.A. Times*, Dec. 23, 1901; "Charter Revision. Eight Citizens Named," *L.A. Times*, Feb. 11, 1902; "To Amend the Charter" and "Charter Revision"; *L.A. Herald*, Feb. 11, 1902; Sitton, *John Randolph Haynes*, p. 40.

[105] *L.A. Times*, "Charter Committee Begins Its Work," March 14, 1902; 'First Blood Over Charter," *L.A. Times*, April 17, 1902; "Charter Revisers," April 25, 1902; "Charter Revisionists Fall Down," *L.A. Times*, May 18, 1902.

[106] Sitton, *John Randolph Haynes*, p. 40; "City Charter Framers Dine," *L.A. Times*, April 4, 1902.

[107] "Charter Revisers." *L.A. Herald,* April 25, 1902; "Charter Revision," *L.A. Times*, April 25, 1902; Sitton, *John Randolph Haynes,* p. 40.

[108] Five city councilmen who were also members of the charter committee attended its July 3 meeting; all voted for the direct democracy measures. "An Important Step," *L.A. Herald*, July 5, 1902; Direct Legislation Wins," *L.A. Times*, July 4, 1902; Sitton, *John Randolph Haynes,* pp. 40-41.

[109] "For Direct Legislation," *L.A. Times*, June 3, 1902; "Getting Near to the People," *L.A. Times*, June 10, 1902.

[110] "An Important Step," *L.A. Herald*, July 5, 1902; "Direct Legislation Wins," *L.A. Times*, July 4, 1902.

[111] At a citywide labor conference held on July 19, most union delegates called on the city to adopt the AFL program for direct democracy, which included all three electoral measures. A minority report submitted by socialist and other anti-capitalist militants did not mention them, but both the Socialist Labor Party and the Socialist Party had already demanded their insertion in the city charter. Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, p. 230; *Pacific Outlook*, Dec. 29, 1906; Willard, C.D., "Reform Measures in Los Angeles," undated typescript, probably July, 1910, found in Haynes Papers, Box 43, folder "Direct Legislation–Los Angeles (16)"; Willard, C. D., "Municipal Progress in Los Angeles," Proceedings of the New York Conference for Good City Government and the Eleventh Annual Meeting of the National Municipal League, National Municipal League, April 25-28, 1905, Sitton, *John Randolph Haynes,* p. 42;

[112] Kazin, Michael, "The Great Exception Revisited: Organized Labor and Politics in San Francisco and Los Angeles, 1870-1940," *Pacific Historical Review,* v. LV, no. 3 (August, 1986), p. 395.

[113] For one-sided encomiums to Haynes echoing Willard's see Eltwood Pomeroy, "How Los Angeles Got Direct Legislation," *L.A. Herald*, April 19, 1903; Clodius, "The Quest for Good Government," pp. 32-33; Sitton, *John Randolph Haynes,* p. 42; James W. Ingram III, "Building the Municipal State: Coalitions and Infrastructure Development in Los Angeles, 1889–1939," paper prepared for delivery at 1994 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, New York City. (Typscript), p. 4; Crouch, Winston W., "John Randolph Haynes and His Work for Direct Government," *National Municipal Review,* v. 27, no. 9 (Sept., 1938), p. 1; and Matea Gold, "The Recall Idea Got Its Start in L.A. in 1898," *L.A. Times*, July 14, 2003.

[114] "Willard, Charles D. "Municipal Progress in Los Angeles," *Proceedings* of the New York Conference for Good City Government and the Eleventh Annual Meeting of the National Municipal League, National Municipal League, April 25-28, 1905.

[115] Letter from Haynes to L.E. Meacham, Dec. 27, 1904, Haynes Papers, Box 43, folder "Direct Legislation–Calif.-1904".

[116] "The Republican City Convention," *L.A. Herald*, undated clipping found in Haynes Papers, Box 102, folder "L.A. Charter–1902-1903"; "Another City Ticket," *L.A. Times*, Oct. 15, 1902; "Ince and Foley Up with Snyder," *L.A. Times*, Oct. 29, 1902; "How to Vote on Charter Amendments Today," *L.A. Herald*, Dec. 1, 1902, p. 6; "Initiative-Referendum-Recall," *L.A.*

Times, July 9, 1902; Willard, C.D., "Reform Measures in Los Angeles," undated typescript, probably July, 1910, found in Haynes Papers, Box 43, folder "Direct Legislation–Los Angeles (16)"; Sitton, *John Randolph Haynes,* p. 41; Typescript, untitled, undated, in Willard's style and possibly his, Haynes Papers, Box 48-B, folder "Direct Legislation–Recall–Los Angeles–Davenport Case, 1904". The latter document states: "The campaign was a lively one. The three amendments were heartily supported by the *Herald, Express,* and *Record* of the daily press; the *Times* was lukewarm."

[117] "Criticism for Charter Revision Committee," *L.A. Times,* August 27. 1902; "New Charter Will Slump," *L.A. Times,* Sept. 18, 1902.

[118] Kazin, Michael, "The Great Exception Revisited: Organized Labor and Politics in San Francisco and Los Angeles, 1870-1940," *Pacific Historical Review,* v. LV, no. 3 (August, 1986), p. 395.

[119] Kazin, Michael, "The Great Exception Revisited: Organized Labor and Politics in San Francisco and Los Angeles, 1870-1940," *Pacific Historical Review,* v. LV, no. 3 (August, 1986), p. 395.

[120] "City Charter Amendments. Election Monday, December 1, 1902," Municipal League pamphlet found in Haynes Papers, Box 102, folder "L.A. Charter–1902-1903."

[121] Clodius, Albert Howard, "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles, 1890-1910," dissertation, Claremont Graduate School, Claremont, CA, 1953, p. 40.

[122] Sitton, *John Randolph Haynes,* pp. 41-42.

[123] "Majority Vote May Carry Amendments," *L.A. Times,* Oct. 12, 1902; Canvass of Dec. 1, 1902 vote for 15 charter amendments, Los Angeles City Council Minutes, Vol. 65, pp. 444-45.

[124] Kazin, Michael, "The Great Exception Revisited: Organized Labor and Politics in San Francisco and Los Angeles, 1870-1940," *Pacific Historical Review,* v. LV, no. 3 (August, 1986), p. 395.

[125] Willard, Charles D. "Municipal Progress in Los Angeles," *Proceedings* of the New York Conference for Good City Government and the Eleventh Annual Meeting of the National Municipal League, National Municipal League, April 25-28, 1905.

[126] *L.A. Herald,* "Amendments Pass Senate," Jan. 23, 1903 and "Amendments Almost Law," Jan. 24, 1903; Willard, C.D., "Reform Measures in Los Angeles," undated typescript, probably July, 1910, found in Haynes Papers, Box 43, folder "Direct Legislation–Los Angeles (16)", also "Municipal Progress in Los Angeles," *Proceedings* of the New York Conference for Good City Government and the Eleventh Annual Meeting of the National Municipal League, National Municipal League, April 25-28, 1905, pp. 100-01; Sitton, *John Randolph Haynes,* p. 41;

[127] Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,* p. 284; Clodius, "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles," p. 36; Willard, "Municipal Progress in Los Angeles," pp. 104, 106.

[128] R.W.A., "The Validity of the Initiative and Referendum," *Michigan Law Review* v. 5, no. 7 (May, 1907), pp. 562-66; *L.A. Express,* "City Is Free to Make Laws," Oct. 16, 1906, "The

Power of the People Recognized by the Court," Oct. 16, 1906, and "Judge E.W. Britt Expounds Decision," Oct. 20, 1906.

[129] Letter from Haynes to L.E. Meacham, Dec. 27, 1904, Haynes Papers, Box 43, folder "Direct Legislation–Calif.–1904"; Willard, C.D., "Reform Measures in Los Angeles," undated typescript, probably July, 1910, found in Haynes Papers, Box 43, folder "Direct Legislation–Los Angeles (16);" Willard, Charles D., "Municipal Progress in Los Angeles," *Proceedings* of the New York Conference for Good City Government and the Eleventh Annual Meeting of the National Municipal League, National Municipal League, April 25-28, 1905, pp. 102-03; "New Elections Due to Direct Legislation," unattributed, undated 1912 or 1913 article lists all the initiative, referendum, and Recall elections since the 1902 charter amendments, Haynes Papers, folder "Direct Legislation–Los Angeles–1913 (2);

[130] Willard, C.D., "Reform Measures in Los Angeles," undated typescript, probably July, 1910, found in Haynes Papers, Box 43, folder "Direct Legislation–Los Angeles (16);" C.D. Willard, "What's On in the City of Los Angeles," *California Outlook* Vol. 15, No. 1 (July 5, 1913), p. 5; "Direct Legislation," *L.A. Graphic*, July 8, 1905; "Week's Aciivities Among Clubwomen," *L.A. Sunday Tribune*, Dec. 28, 1913; LACLC Minute Books, Executive Board, Dec. 4, 1911; Rose, Kenneth D., "'Dry' Los Angeles and Its Liquor Problems in 1924," *Southern California Quarterly* v. 69, no. 1 (Spring, 1987), p. 55; "Complete Victory" (editorial), April 28, 1911, p. 4; "Lest We Forget: The Forty-Year War for a Free City, A History of the Open Shop in Los Angeles," *L.A. Times*, Oct. 1, 1929, p.8. "New Elections Due to Direct Legislation," unattributed, undated 1912 or 1913 article lists all the initiative, referendum, and Recall elections since the 1902 charter amendments, Haynes Papers, folder "Direct Legislation–Los Angeles–1913 (2);

[131] "Lissner Makes Strong Address to City Club," *L.A. Herald*, April 11, 1909; "Municipal League Asks...That Cities Shall Make Their Own Charters...," *L.A. Times*, Oct. 12, 1902; "Good Government Leaders Celebrate Victory...," *L.A. Herald*, Dec. 18, 1909 (Haynes quote); C.D. Willard, "What's On in the City of Los Angeles," *California Outlook*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (July 5, 1913), p. 4; Willard, Charles D., "Municipal Progress in Los Angeles," *Proceedings* of the New York Conference for Good City Government and the Eleventh Annual Meeting of the National Municipal League, National Municipal League, April 25-28, 1905, p. 100; Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, , p. 323.

[132] "City Club Heartily Indorses Recall of Mayor A.C. Harper," *L.A. Herald*, Jan. 25, 1909; "For Whom Will You Vote?", *Common Sense*, March 6, 1909; "Good Government Leaders Celebrate Victory...," *L.A. Herald*, Dec. 18, 1909 (Haynes quote); Willard, C.D., "Reform Measures in Los Angeles," undated typescript, probably July, 1910, found in Haynes Papers, Box 43, folder "Direct Legislation–Los Angeles (16);" "Aims Blow at Referendum," *L.A. Times*, May 9, 1909; "Referendum Lacks Sufficient Names," *L.A. Herald*, May 15, 1909; "The *Record* Congratulates the People," *L.A. Record*, June 2, 1909; "Referendum Fight Started to Save Franchise," *L.A. Examiner*, April 17, 1908; "League's Fight On for South Park Referendum," *L.A. Examiner*, April 18, 1908; "The South Park Avenue Referendum--More Than Enough Signatures...," *L.A. Examiner*, May 4, 1908; "South Park Franchise Will Go To Voters," *L.A. Express*, May 12, 1908; "Referendum Vote Forced on South Park Grant," *L.A. Examiner*, May 26, 1908; "Checking Petition Against Gambling," *L.A. Express*, Oct. 28, 1909; "File Initiative on Gambling. Ordinance Aims to Destroy Cigar Dice Shaking," *L.A. Times*, Oct. 29, 1909; "Dice Shaking Initiative Is Declared Sufficient," *L.A. Herald*, Nov. 11, 1909; "New Elections Due to Direct Legislation," unattributed, undated 1912 or 1913 article lists

every initiative, referendum, and recall election since the 1902 charter amendments, Haynes Papers, folder "Direct Legislation–Los Angeles–1913 (2).

[133] "Deceit Used to Win Referendum," *L.A. Herald*, April 12, 1910; "Petition Sufficient To Call An Election," *L.A. Herald*, May 8, 1910; Willard, C.D., "Reform Measures in Los Angeles," undated typescript, probably July, 1910, found in Haynes Papers, Box 43, folder "Direct Legislation–Los Angeles (16);" "New Elections Due to Direct Legislation," unattributed, undated 1912 or 1913 article lists all the initiative, referendum, and Recall elections since the 1902 charter amendments, Haynes Papers, folder "Direct Legislation–Los Angeles–1913 (2).

[134] L.A. City Council Minutes, Vol. 82, pp. 133-34; "That Trilby Rail Referendum" (editorial), *L.A. Herald*, Jan. 20, 1911; "New Elections Due to Direct Legislation," unattributed, undated 1912 or 1913 article lists all the initiative, referendum, and Recall elections since the 1902 charter amendments, Haynes Papers, folder "Direct Legislation–Los Angeles–1913 (2).

[135] "Alembic Club Will Institute Petition on Harbor Outlet," *Citizen*, March 1, 1912; "Alembic Club ...Introduces Initiative Petition Calling Upon City Officials to Begin Active Construction of Outlet to Los Angeles Harbor Shipping," *Citizen*, March 29, 1912; "Reed Explains Proposed Franchise...," *Citizen*, April 12, 1912; "Labor Will Support the Tuberculin Test Ordinance," *Citizen*, May 3, 1912; "Why You Should Vote for San Pedro Harbor Boulevard...," *Citizen*, May 10, 1912; "Socialists' Aqueduct Ordinance Is Adopted," May 31, 1912; "20,000 Petition for Carfare Referendum," *L.A. Examiner*, Feb. 23, 1912; *L.A. Express*, March 12, 1912; "Barmaids Must Go!" and "No Referendum on Saloon Free Lunch," *L.A. Examiner*, Oct. 17, 1909 and July 31, 1912; LACLC Minute Books, April 26, Executive Board April 29, May 10, Executive Board June 24, and November 22, 1912; "New Elections Due to Direct Legislation," unattributed, undated 1912 or 1913 article lists all the initiative, referendum, and Recall elections since the 1902 charter amendments, Haynes Papers, folder "Direct Legislation–Los Angeles–1913 (2).

[136] "Dance Ordinance Petitions Are Now Being Circulated," *Citizen*, Dec. 20, 1912, p. 5; "Mark Your Ballot This Way!" *Citizen*, March 21. 1913, p. 7; "Old Guard Is Routed," *Citizen*, March 28, 1913, p. 1.

[137] "Norton's Enemies Are Labor's Enemies," *Citizen*, April 10, 1914, p. 4; "Kellogg Quits Race; Unions Favor Norton," "Norton at Labor Temple," and "Map of Supervisor Norton's District,' *Citizen*, April 17, 1914, pp. 2 and 3; "Supervisor R.H. Norton in Great Speech at Labor Temple," *Citizen*, April 24, 1914, p. 5; "Otis and Crowd Fail to Recall Sup. R.H. Norton," *Citizen*, May 8, 1914, p. 1; "Unfair Recall Provision," *California Outlook*, Vol. 16, No. 14 (April 4, 1914), p. 18; "The Norton Recall in Los Angeles," *California Outlook*, Vol. 16, No. 16 (April 18, 1914), p. 12.

[138] "Owners' 'Poor People's Pullmans' Determined to Get Square Deal," *Citizen*, Oct. 8. 1915, p. 1; "Labor Council Doings," *Citizen*, Oct. 15, 1915, p. 10 (renewed campaign for jitney bus ordinance after initial defeat on June 1); "A Great Movement in Behalf of Labor–The Two-Platoon," *Citizen*, May 21, 1915, p. 10; "Griffith Park Project Great Benefit to City," *Citizen*, Sept. 4, 1914, p. 10; "Fred C. Wheeler and Mrs. Lindsey Are Successful" (continuation head), *Citizen*, June 4, 1915, p.3; "Argument Against Adoption of Jitney Bus Initiative Ordinance," undated, unattributed statement in Haynes Papers, Box 43, folder "Direct Legislation–Los Angeles (1902-12) (34)." LACLC Minute Books, March 5, 1915; Newmark, Harris. *Sixty Years in Southern California, 1853-1913,* Maurice H. & Marco R. Newmark, eds., Dawson's Book

Shop, Los Angeles, 1984, p. 614; Guinn, J.M. "How the Area of Los Angeles City Was Enlarged," *Annual Publication of the Historical Society of Southern California,* v. 9, Part 3 (1914), p. 178.

[139] C.D. Willard, "What's On in the City of Los Angeles," *California Outlook* Vol. 15, No. 1 (July 5, 1913), p. 5;

[140] "Cannot Stop Initiative" and "Booze Petition Collapses," *L.A. Times,* April 18 and June 13, 1909.

[141] This was the first appearance of direct democracy in the modern era, but not its first instance in California. Commenting on the 1904 Davenport recall, historian J.M. Guinn pointed out that under the territorial government "a *regidor* or councilman was recalled 70 years before the unfortunate Davenport. There was a rule or law in force that no *regidor* could serve in two successive terms in the *ayuntamiento* or town council. The intention of the law was to prevent politicians from organizing a political machine to control the council. José Antonio Corrillo, one of the ablest politicians of the old regime, secured his election for a second term, hoping by his influence to evade the law; but the people would have none of that. They promptly recalled him and elected another man." *Los Angeles Express,* March 18, 1911.

[142] The *Times* argued that since it had a larger circulation than its rivals, its bid to print the city's announcements would cost less per reader. Nevertheless, the other papers' circulations more than met the legal requirement. L.A. City Council Minutes, Vol. 69, pp. 80, 100, 126. 181, 188, 204-05, 212, 221; Willard, Charles D., "Municipal Progress in Los Angeles," Proceedings of the New York Conference for Good City Government and the Eleventh Annual Meeting of the National Municipal League, National Municipal League, April 25-28, 1905, p. 104,

[143] Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,* p. 279.

[144] LATU initializes the printers' formal name, Los Angeles Typographical Union.

[145] LATU Minute Books, 1902-1905: May 29, 1904, p. 229; Sitton, *John Randolph Haynes,* pp. 48-49;

[146] *Los Angeles Record,* Jan. 13, 1904; *Los Angeles Express,* Jan. 13, 1904; "Davenport Aids Saloons," *L.A. Express,* July 22, 1904; "Davenport's Self-Convicting Letters," *L.A. Express,* Sept. 13, 1904; Johnson, Daniel J., "'And Never the Twain Shall Meet': Working Class Politics in Los Angeles, 1903–1909," unpublished paper presented at the 19th Annual Conference of the Southwest Labor Studies Association, April 17, 1993, pp. 8-10; Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,* p. 282; Willard, Charles D. "Municipal Progress in Los Angeles," Proceedings of the New York Conference for Good City Government and the Eleventh Annual Meeting of the National Municipal League, National Municipal League, April 25-28, 1905, p. 105; Sitton, *John Randolph Haynes,* p. 49.

[147] Kazin, Michael, "The Great Exception Revisited: Organized Labor and Politics in San Francisco and Los Angeles, 1870-1940," *Pacific Historical Review,* v. LV, no. 3 (August, 1986), p. 395.

[148] *Los Angeles Record,* July 26, 1904; L.A. City Council Minutes, Vol. 69, pp. 290; Johnson, "Down in 'De Bloody Ate'," pp. 17-18; Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,"* pp. 283-84.

[149] L.A. City Council Minutes, Vol. 69, p. 351.

[150] Willard, Charles D. "Municipal Progress in Los Angeles," pp. 104-05.

[151] "'Insufficient' Says Report," *L.A. Times,* June 18, 1904.

[152] "Will Support Davenport," *L.A. Times,* Sept. 6, 1904; "Dav's Friends Bring Him Help," *L.A. Record,* Sept. 6, 1904; Johnson, Daniel J., "And Never the Twain Shall Meet'," pp. 9-10.

[153] *L.A. Times,* June 18, 1904.

[154] Mitchell helped organize the 1902 Union Labor Party, mentioned above in connection with that year's campaign to insert direct democracy into the city charter. LATU Minute Books, 1902-1905: March 30, 1902, p. 342; "Labor Unions Name Houghton," *L.A. Times,* Aug. 28, 1904; [Title missing], *L.A. Record,* Sept. 5, 1904; "Municipal League Fears Trickery in Sixth," *L.A. Examiner,* Sept. 5, 1904

[155] Sitton, *John Randolph Haynes,* pp. 48-49.

[156] "Signers for Recall," *L.A. Express,* June 28-29, 1904. Haynes' relations with his erstwhile patient Otis were at a tipping point in the summer of 1904. After learning of Haynes' encouragement of the recall, Otis, Harry Chandler and the rest of the *Times* leadership turned irrevocably against him. Sitton states that "All of the city's other newspapers backed the recall, which was aimed at a defender of the adversarial *Times,*" but this clearly was not true of the *Herald.* [Sitton, *John Randolph Haynes,* pp. 49-50.

[157] Norton may have been responsible for the Express's demurrer in the preceding paragraph, "The League has had nothing whatever to do with the petition," he said when questioned about his affiliations. "I have repeatedly told Record and Express reporters so. I have tried to get that before the public, but they have insisted on dragging the League into this affair." ["Gives the Lie to Union Sheets," *L.A. Times,* 6/28/04]

[158] Serving with Mitchell and Fennessy as Good Government League precinct captains were Robert A. Hayden of Cement Workers No. 3, Howard Marshall and E. Gardner of Painters' No. 267, and John Clifford of Boot and Shoe Repairers No. 299. Sitton says the chief financial backers of the petition campaign were Haynes, Norton, attorney Thomas E. Gibbon, and *L.A. Express* publisher Earl, all associated in greater or lesser degree with the Los Angeles progressive movement. "Davenport Was Easy," *L.A. News,* June 24, 1904; "Principle Is at Stake," *L.A. Express,* Sept. 2, 1904; "Municipal League Fears Trickery in Sixth," *L.A. Examiner,* Sept. 5, 1904; Sitton, *John Randolph Haynes,* p. 49; Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,* pp. 282-83.

[159] "Norton's Enemies Are Labor's Enemies," *Citizen,* April 10. 1914, p. 4; "Kellogg Quits Race; Unions Favor Norton," *Citizen,* April 17, 1914, p. 2; "Supervisor R.H. Norton in Great Speech at Labor Temple," *Citizen,* April 24, 1914, p. 5; "Otis and Crowd Fail to Recall Sup. R.H. Norton," *Citizen,* May 8, 1914, p. 1; Meyer Lissner, "The Norton Recall in Los Angeles," *California Outlook,* Vol. 16, No. 16 (April 18, 1914); "Must Disgorge His Mileage," *L.A.*

Times, Sept. 10, 1919. Norton was forced out of office in October 1917 after after a jury convicted him of malfeasance. No moral turpitude was found in his case, and he was convicted largely for exercising lax oversight of county finances and his own expenses. Many supervisors had shown similar laxity. Norton may have been targeted because of his liberal leanings and abrasive personality.

[160] *Proceedings, California State Federation of Labor*, Third Annual Convention, Los Angeles, Jan. 5-9, 1903, pp.7, 59 and Fourth Annual Convention, Fresno, Jan. 4-9, 1904, pp. 5, 8, 43, 58-59; "Federal Union No. 9614," *Union Labor News*, Dec. 25, 1903; Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, pp. 226-27.

[161] "Life of Recall Is at Stake," *L.A. Express*, Sept. 13, 1904; "Municipal League Fears Trickery in Sixth," *L.A. Examiner*, Sept. 5, 1904;

[162] "Gives the Lie to Union Sheets," *L.A. Times*, 6/28/04; Clodius, "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles," p. 35;

[163] Kazin, Michael, "The Great Exception Revisited: Organized Labor and Politics in San Francisco and Los Angeles, 1870-1940," *Pacific Historical Review*, v. LV, no. 3 (August, 1986), p. 395.

[164] "Davenport Recall Petition Is 300 Names Strong," *L.A. Examiner*, July 19, 1904.

[165] "Davenport Recall Petition Comes Up Today," *L.A. Express*, June 29, 1904. Johnson, "And Never the Twain Shall Meet," pp. 10-13. (McAleer voted against the *Times* printing contract but his opposition to unions cost him most labor votes.)

[166] "Sues for Injunction," *L.A. Herald*, Aug. 16, 1904; "Election to Unseat Davenport Is Ordered," *L.A. Examiner*, Aug. 16, 1904; "Davenport's Same Dodge," *L.A. Express*, Aug. 16, 1904; "Davenport Seeks Delay," *L.A. Express*, Aug. 18, 1904; "Arguing the Recall," *L.A. Express*, Aug. 24, 1904; "Names on Recall Are More Than Sufficient," *L.A. Record*, Aug. 26, 1904; "Crooked Work Must Stand...For Municipal League," *L.A. Times*, Aug. 26, 1904; Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, p. 284.

[167] Kazin, Michael, "The Great Exception Revisited: Organized Labor and Politics in San Francisco and Los Angeles, 1870-1940," *Pacific Historical Review*, v. LV, no. 3 (August, 1986), p. 395.

[168] "Upholds the Recall, *L.A. Express*, August 28, 1904; "Court Upholds the Charter Recall," *L.A. Examiner*, Aug. 30, 1904; "Court Holds Call for Election Valid," *L.A. Herald*, Aug. 25, 1904; Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, p. 284.

[169] Orren, Karen. "Officeholders' Rights," typescript paper presented at the annual meeting of the Western Political Science Association, Portland, OR, March 16–19, 1995, pp. 4-5; Skowronek, Stephen. *Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877-1920,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge & New York, 1982, passim.

[170] Orren, Karen. "Officeholders' Rights," p. 5; Skowronek, *Building a New American State*, passim.

[171] "Norton thought that the machine was responsible for packing the meeting with Houghton supporters," says Clodius. While this seems unlikely, given Davenport's close ties to the railways, saloons, and other "machine" interests, it's possible they backed Houston's nomination thinking Davenport would easily defeat him. "Labor Unions Name Houghton," *L.A. Times*, Aug. 28, 1904; "Officers Elected. Plans Are Formed....Signers of the Declaration of Principles," *L.A. Express*, July 10, 1906; "Chairman Hunsaker Names Prominent Business and Professional Men to Direct Campaign for Better City Government," *Los Angeles Express,* July 28, 1906; Clodius, "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles," pp. 34-35; Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, pp. 284-85; Willard, "Municipal Progress in Los Angeles," p. 105.

[172] "Labor Unions Name Houghton," *L.A. Times*, Aug. 28, 1904.

[173] "For Honest Government," *Union Labor News*, Sept. 9, 1904; "Sixth Warders Will Fight at Close Race," *L.A. Record*, Sept. 9, 1904; Clodius, "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles," p. 34; Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, pp. 284-85; "Street Railway Employes Must Work for Unfaithful Councilman or Lose Their Jobs," *L.A. Record*, Sept. 15, 1904.

[174] "Antis Discredited," *L.A. Times*, Sept. 14, 1904; "Corruption and Boodle Working for Davenport," *L.A. Record*, Sept. 14, 1904; "How They 'Knock' the Recall," *L.A. Express*, Sept. 14, 1904. The *Times* photo may have been doctored. Compare with what appears to be the same photo, undoctored, in the Haynes Papers, Box 48, among Q-cards for mid-September, 1904.

[175] "'Spook Doctor.' Say the Spiritualists," *L.A. Times*, Sept. 15, 1904; "Indignant Sixth Warders to Oust Recreant Davenport...Physicians Praise Houghton," *L.A. Express*, Sept. 14, 1904.

[176] Kazin, Michael, "The Great Exception Revisited: Organized Labor and Politics in San Francisco and Los Angeles, 1870-1940," *Pacific Historical Review,* v. LV, no. 3 (August, 1986), p. 395.

[177] Kazin, Michael, "The Great Exception Revisited: Organized Labor and Politics in San Francisco and Los Angeles, 1870-1940," *Pacific Historical Review,* v. LV, no. 3 (August, 1986), p. 395.

[178] Notably, Davenport lost his own precinct by a vote of 89 to 122. L.A. City Council Minutes, Vol. 69, p. 465; "Houghton's Victory Is Complete," *L.A. Record*, Sept. 17, 1904; "Recall Law Triumphs. Houghton's Victory Over Davenport," *L.A. Express*, Sept. 17, 1904.

[179] "Davenport Begins Suit to Oust Houghton," *L.A. Times*, Oct. 4, 1904; Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, p. 285; Sitton, *John Randolph Haynes*, pp. 49-50; Willard, Charles D. "Municipal Progress in Los Angeles," Proceedings of the New York Conference for Good City Government and the Eleventh Annual Meeting of the National Municipal League, National Municipal League, April 25-28, 1905, p. 106.

[180] LATU Minute Books, 1902-1905: Feb. 26, 1905, p. 283; *Union Labor News*: "Proceedings of Wednesday Night's Meeting," Jan. 26, 1906, p. 3; "It Was an Outpouring of the People," Feb. 1, 1906, p. 1; "Carpenters 769," Feb. 2, 1906; "Houghton's All Right," Feb. 2, 1906; "The

Peoples' Councilman," March 2, 1906; "Why We Are Betrayed," July 13, 1906, p. 4; L.A. City Council Minutes, Vol. 69, p. 483; Johnson, "Down in 'De Bloody Ate'," pp. 20-21 and ff. 22.

[181] President E.P. Ripley of the Santa Fe Railroad estimated that the lease was worth one million dollars. The *Express*, of course, spoke for progressives, who never forgave the politicians who voted for the riverbed franchise. Ten years later Meyer Lissner remembered Houghton as a "councImanic mountebank." "Million Dollar Railroad Franchise Steal," *L.A. Record*, March 28, 1906; "Turn the Rascals Out," *L.A. Examiner*, March 28, 1906; "Councilman Smith," *Union Labor News*, April 13, 1906; Meyer Lissner, "The Norton Recall in Los Angeles," *California Outlook*, Vol. 16, No. 16 (April 18, 1914); Willard, C.D., "Reform Measures in Los Angeles," undated typescript, probably July, 1910, found in Haynes Papers, Box 43, folder "Direct Legislation–Los Angeles (16)",

[182] "Why We Are Betrayed," *Union Labor News*, July 13, 1906. Rogers, lead attorney for the Merchant's and Manufacturer's Association, would later draft the draconian anti-picketing law of 1910. For a wildly biased account of the Sixth Ward Municipal League brouhaha, see "Police Quell Rd-Eyed Riot, *L.A. Times*, July 30, 1905. In this rant disguised as a news story, the writer calls Haynes (who was not present) a "disciple of unrest" and LATU's Arthur Hay and Tom Fennessy "walking delegate vampires of the labor unions."

[183] Of the disgraced councilman's unsuccessful 1906 run for re-election, the *Union Labor News* had this to say: "Houghton's record is so notorious that it seems strange that the man has the hardihood to face the public--his vote to present Huntington with the Los Angeles river bed is a matter of official record--but as he is in the field, it is reasonable to suppose that Huntington's interests have use for him as a vote-divider." H.H. Yonkin, a candidate representing the same moneyed interests as Davenport did in 1904, won the 6th ward.

[184] *Union Labor News*; "Huntington Needs Ford," April 13, 1906; "The Recall," June 15, 1906; "Public Ownership Convention," Sept. 21, 1906; "The Battle in the Sixth," Nov. 16, 1906; Johnson, "Down in 'De Bloody Ate'," pp. 20-21 and ff 182.

[185] "Resolution Passed by San Pedro Labor Council...," *Cvitizen*, May 28, 1915, p. 5.

[186] Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, pp. 285-86.

[187] Sitton, *John Randolph Haynes*, p. 50.

[188] Kazin, Michael, "The Great Exception Revisited: Organized Labor and Politics in San Francisco and Los Angeles, 1870-1940," *Pacific Historical Review,* v. LV, no. 3 (August, 1986), p. 395.

[189] "Death of Davenport," *Union Labor News*, Dec. 8, 1905.

[190] "Sixth Ward Thanks *'Examiner'* for Victory," *L.A. Examiner*, Sept. 18, 1904. For Chicago's cross-class reform movements in the Mugwump and Progressive years, see Schneirov, Richard. "Rethinking the Relation of Labor to the Politics of Urban Social Reform in Late Nineteenth-Century America: The Case of Chicago," passim.

[191] This is not to say that workingclass culture was uncontested by workers themselves, some of whom opposed Demon Rum and gambling. In 1914 the socialist carpenter Fred C. Wheeler, then labor's lone representative on the city council, told his council colleagues that

he was "opposed to gambling of any kind, whether it be for pennants, stud poker, in stocks, or if it be a millionaire who gambles in the necessities of life by cornering wheat, cotton, potatoes or other things the people must have in order to live. The only difference in shaking dice for pennants and cornering the wheat market is the magnitude of the gamble. The gambler is not a necessity. He is a non-producer and as such he must live off the product of some other man's toil. A non-producer is a moral barnacle and has no right to be supported by those who toil through the long hours at useful labor." Other wage workers shared Wheeler's view, but they were not a majority, ("Wheeler Against All Gambling," *Citizen*, Feb. 12, 1915, p. 2.

[192] "Labor and Politics," *Union Labor News*, Jan. 26, 1906.

[193] "Public Ownership Party Platform," *Union Labor News*, Oct. 19. 1906, p. 1.

[194] "Union Men Elected San Pedro Trustees," "Now for a New Charter," and "The Usual Wail of Woe," *Union Labor News*, April 13, July 13, and July 20, 1906.

[195] These events are covered in chapter 3.

[196] Willard implies that voters adopted the state constitutional amendment in 1903, but the year was 1902. Willard, Charles D. "Municipal Progress in Los Angeles," Proceedings of the New York Conference for Good City Government and the Eleventh Annual Meeting of the National Municipal League, National Municipal League, April 25-28, 1905, p. 100; Resolution No. 30, adopted Jan. 8, 1902 by the California Labor Federation. *Proceedings, Second Annual Convention of the California State Federation of Labor,* Vallejo, Jan. 6-8, 1902, p. 64.

[197] Kazin, Michael, "The Great Exception Revisited: Organized Labor and Politics in San Francisco and Los Angeles, 1870-1940," *Pacific Historical Review,* v. LV, no. 3 (August, 1986), p. 395.

[198] Willard, C.D., "Reform Measures in Los Angeles," undated typescript, probably July, 1910, found in Haynes Papers, Box 43, folder "Direct Legislation–Los Angeles (16)." Willard erred in saying "the existence of the law." He meant the existence of the 1902 amendment that placed the initiative and referendum in the city charter.

[199] "Royal Arch Defeated," *L.A. Herald*, Jan. 6, 1907; "Court Blocks Rush Liquor Ordinance," *L.A. Examiner*, Jan. 6, 1907; "Judge Bordwell Sustains Municipal League Injunction," *L.A. Express*, Jan. 5, 1907; Willard, C.D., "Reform Measures in Los Angeles," undated typescript, probably July, 1910, found in Haynes Papers, Box 43, folder "Direct Legislation–Los Angeles (16);" Clodius, "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles," p. 37.

[200] *L.A. Times*: "The 'Initiative,' 'Referendum,' and 'Recall'," Feb. 6, 1906; Initiative in All Its Glory, Freak Legislation Enters Gas Fight," Aug. 23, 1907; "Tricking the People. Twin Freaks Pitted Toward Queer Ends," Oct. 23, 1909.

[201] *Municipal News*: "Direct Legislation on the Defensive" and "Few Elections Due to Direct Legislation," Feb. 19, 1913. All three councilmen won their seats in the progressive sweep of 1909 and were re-elected in 1911. Betkouski led their effort to muzzle the initiative and referendum. For his place in the progressive pantheon, see "Good Government Leaders Celebrate Victory...," *L.A. Herald*, Dec. 18, 1909.

[202] Extract from *Monthly Financial Letters* of the Farmers & Merchants National Bank of Los Angeles, June 15, 1916, Haynes Papers, Box 43, folder "Direct Legislation-Los Angeles-1913".

[203] *Municipal News*: "Direct Legislation on the Defensive" and "Few Elections Due to Direct Legislation," Feb. 19, 1913.

[204] *Union Labor News*: "City Charter Attacked," Sept. 28, 1906; "Ratification Meeting Tomorrow Night," Oct. 12, 1906; "City Campaign Commences," Oct. 19, 1906.

[205] "Now Is the Time to Swing into Line for a Great Campaign," *Citizen*, Nov. 7, 1913, p. 9.

[206] Kazin, Michael, "The Great Exception Revisited: Organized Labor and Politics in San Francisco and Los Angeles, 1870-1940," *Pacific Historical Review*, v. LV, no. 3 (August, 1986), p. 395.

[207] "Direct Legislation. Camp Scores for It," *L.A. Times*, Feb. 27, 1903; Proceedings, 4th Annual Convention, California State Federation of Labor, Fresno, Jan. 4-9, 1904, pp. 71-73; LATU Minute Books, 1902-1905, Jan. 25, 1903, pp. 31-32.

[208] Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, p. 285.

[209] California State Federation of Labor *Proceedings*: 6th Annual Convention, Oakland, Jan. 1-6, 1906, p. 26; 7th Annual Convention, Stockton, Jan. 7-11, 1907, pp. 21-22, 63; 8th Annual Convention, Vallejo, Jan. 6-11, 1908, pp. 28-29; 9th annual Convention, San José, Oct. 5-9, 1908, pp. 75-78; "Questions for Conference," *Union Labor News*, Dec. 28, 1906; 10th Annual Convention, San Rafael, Oct. 4-8, 1909, p. 65; 11th Annual Convention, Los Angeles, Oct. 3-7, 1910, p. 64.

[210] Historians of the statewide campaign for direct democracy often have conflated two or three separate Direct Legislation Leagues and thus misstated the date when Haynes launched this one. A People's Power League, organized in New Jersey in 1892, became the National Direct Action League a year later. Haynes created the Direct Legislation League of Los Angeles in 1900 to work with organized labor in the final push for that city's direct democracy charter amendments. He did not found the Direct Legislation League of California until 1902. Notably, the names of Haynes' leagues refer only to the initiative and referendum. He was wary about championing the more radical recall reform until political circumstances favored it. So was organized labor. [Petersen, Eric Falk, "The Adoption of the Direct Primary in California," *Southern California Quarterly*, v. 54, no. 4 (Winter, 1972), pp. 369; Sitton, *John Randolph Haynes*, p. 42.]

[211] The Direct Legislation League of California's letterhead was top-heavy with the names of banking, insurance, and progressive leaders whose attitudes toward unionism ranged from cool to hostile. This was part of the strategic arrangement between the League and the state and Los Angeles labor movements, each mining support from constituencies where it had the most influence. [Letter to Haynes from J.H. Scott of the State Anti-Saloon League, April 6, 1903, letter from Haynes to Frank E. Kellogg of Goleta, CA, Nov. 17, 1904, and letter to Haynes from Rev. Ervin S. Chapman, Superintendent of the State Anti-Saloon League, Aug. 22, 1904 all in Haynes Papers, Box 43, Folders "Direct Legislation–Los Angeles (1901-12) and "Direct Legislation–Calif–1904"; Sitton, *John Randolph Haynes*, pp. 42-44.]

[212] *L.A. Examiner*, Dec. 8, 1904.

[213] Herrin was the Southern Pacific Railroad's political chief and purchaser of politicians during the first decade of the 20th century. Ruef, a "wily, shrewd little grafter," was San Francisco's political boss at the same time. He gained control of the fledgling Union Labor party there, and together they elected Eugene E. Schmitz mayor in 1901 and 1903. The Ruef-Schmitz regime was thoroughly corrupt. In 1907 Ruef was imprisoned for graft. He admitted that Herrin had paid him $14,000 to deliver the San Francisco delegation to Herrin's gubernatorial candidate, James N. Gillet, at the 1906 Republican convention. Crouch, Winston W., "John Randolph Haynes and His Work for Direct Government," *National Municipal Review,* v. 27, no. 9 (Sept., 1938), pp. 3-4; J. Gregg Layne, "The Lincoln-Roosevelt League: Its Origin and Accomplishments," *The Quarterly*, Historical Society of Southern California, v. 25, no. 3 (Sept., 1943), p. 81; Enyeart, John, "'Boring Within': Evolutionary Socialists and the AFL," paper read at 22nd Annual Southwest Labor Studies Conference, San Francisco State University, Feb. 22-24, 1996, pp. 11-12; Petersen, Eric Falk, "The Adoption of the Direct Primary in California," *Southern California Quarterly,* v. 54, no. 4 (Winter, 1972), p. 365.

[214] See previous footnote.

[215] Crouch, Winston W. "John Randolph Haynes and His Work for Direct Government," *National Municipal Review,* v. 27, No. 9 (Sept., 1938), p. 4.

[216] J. Gregg Layne, "The Lincoln-Roosevelt League: Its Origin and Accomplishments," *The Quarterly*, Historical Society of Southern California, v. 25, no. 3 (Sept., 1943), pp. 87-89; Crouch, Winston W. "John Randolph Haynes and His Work for Direct Government," *National Municipal Review,* v. 27, No. 9 (Sept., 1938), pp. 4-5.

[217] J. Gregg Layne, "The Lincoln-Roosevelt League: Its Origin and Accomplishments," *The Quarterly*, Historical Society of Southern California, v. 25, no. 3 (Sept., 1943), p. 90; Mowry, George E., *The California Progressives,* University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1951, p. 72.

[218] Kazin, Michael, "The Great Exception Revisited: Organized Labor and Politics in San Francisco and Los Angeles, 1870-1940," *Pacific Historical Review,* v. LV, no. 3 (August, 1986), p. 395.

[219] During the period under discussion U'Ren was secretary of the California Direct Legislation League.

[220] Hichborn, Franklin, *Story of the California Legislature of 1911*, Press of The James H. Barry Company, San Francisco, 1911, pp. 27, 94, ff 116, and appendix pages xxv-xxix; J. Gregg Layne, "The Lincoln-Roosevelt League: Its Origin and Accomplishments," *The Quarterly*, Historical Society of Southern California, v. 25, no. 3 (Sept., 1943), pp. 93-97.

[221] More than a fifth of Johnson's vote came from Los Angeles. [Grassman, Curtis, "The Los Angeles Free Harbor Controversy and the Creation of a Progressive Coalition," *Southern California Quarterly,* v. 55, no. 4 (Winter, 1973), p. 463; Kazin, Michael, "The Great Exception Revisited: Organized Labor and Politics in San Francisco and Los Angeles, 1870-1940," *Pacific Historical Review,* v. LV, no. 3 (August, 1986), pp. 393-94; Rogin, Michael. "Progressivism and the California Electorate," *Journal of American History* v. 55, no. 2 (September, 1968), p. 298; J. Gregg Layne, "The Lincoln-Roosevelt League: Its Origin and Accomplish-

ments," *The Quarterly*, Historical Society of Southern California, v. 25, no. 3 (Sept., 1943), pp. 96-99.[

[222] Kazin, Michael, "The Great Exception Revisited: Organized Labor and Politics in San Francisco and Los Angeles, 1870-1940," *Pacific Historical Review,* v. LV, no. 3 (August, 1986), p. 395.

[223] Mowry asserts that "[o]n Johnson's request, Dr. John R. Haynes and Dickson had prepared the necessary amendments." But in his detailed account of the 39th legislative session Franklin Hichborn states otherwise: "Following out the provisions of the Republican State platform, Chairman Meyer Lissner appointed a committee with Senator Lee Gates as chairman, to draft an Initiative and Referendum amendment, and a Recall amendment, to be submitted to the consideration of the Legislature." Senator Gates of Los Angeles is the common denominator in both accounts. Most likely Lissner, Haynes, and Dickson were all involved in drafting the two direct democracy amendments submitted to the legislature. They closely resembled what the Labor Federation had been demanding since 1907.

[224] Notably, the Republican platform called only for statewide direct *legislation*—i.e. the initiative and referendum but not the recall—while proposing all three direct democracy measures for cities and counties, [Mowry, George E., *The California Progressives,* University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1951, p. 140; Hichborn, Franklin, *Story of the Session of the California Legislature of 1911*, Press of The James H. Barry Company, San Francisco, 1911, p. 94, ff 116; "Final Report of the Committee on Law and Legislation," California State Federation of Labor *Proceedings*: 12th Annual Convention, Bakersfield, Oct. 6-6, 1911, pp. 83-84; Olin, Spencer C., Jr. *California Politics 1846-1920: The Emerging Corporate State,* Boyd & Fraser Publishing Co., San Francisco, 1981, pp. 65-66.

[225] Mowry, George E., *The California Progressives,* University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1951, pp. 140-41.

[226] "Reform run mad" was Sen. Work's epithet for the recall of judges. [Hichborn, Franklin, *Story of the Session of the California Legislature of 1911*, Press of The James H. Barry Company, San Francisco, 1911, pp. 115-16 and ff 142; Crouch, Winston W., "John Randolph Haynes and His Work for Direct Government," *National Municipal Review,* v. 27, no. 9 (Sept., 1938), p. 5; Mowry, George E., *The California Progressives,* University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1951, pp. 140-41;.

[227] California State Federation of Labor, *Proceedings*, Twelfth Annual Convention, Bakersfield, October 2-6, 1911, Final Report of Committee on Law and Legislation, pp. 94-95; Letter from Direct Legislation League of California secretary Milton G. U'Ren to Andrew Gallagher, Feb. 20, 1911, San Francisco Labor Council Records, 1906-39, Box 8; *Labor Clarion*: "Synopsis of Minutes of the Regular Meeting held February 24, 1911," March 3, 1911, p. 10, and "Legislative Agent's Report," April 7, 1911, p. 3;

[228] Heney was the San Francisco graft prosecutor who tried Abraham Ruef and sent him to the penitentiary. [Hichborn, Franklin, *Story of the Session of the California Legislature of 1911*, Press of The James H. Barry Company, San Francisco, 1911, pp. 102-110 and appendices "Table I–Record of Senators" and "Table II–Record of Assemblymen."]

[229] Hichborn, Franklin, *Story of the Session of the California Legislature of 1911*, Press of The James H. Barry Company, San Francisco, 1911, pp. 125-37 and appendices "Table I–Record of Senators" and "Table II–Record of Assemblymen."

[230] Among the many "loyal and unselfish supporters" of the 1911 direct democracy amendments cited by the legislative committee was the *Citizen*, official newspaper of the Los Angeles labor movement. [California State Federation of Labor, *Proceedings*, Twelfth Annual Convention, Bakersfield, October 2-6, 1911, Final Report of Committee on Law and Legislation, p. 95.]

[231] Letter from Meyer Lissner to Hiram Johnson, March 23, 1911, Hiram Johnson Papers, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley; Mowry, George E., *The California Progressives,* University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1951, pp. 146-47.

[232] Olin, Spencer C., Jr. *California Politics 1846-1920: The Emerging Corporate State,* Boyd & Fraser Publishing Co., San Francisco, 1981, p. 67; California State Federation of Labor, *Proceedings*, Twelfth Annual Convention, Bakersfield, October 2-6, 1911, Final Report of Committee on Law and Legislation, pp. 75-76; Mowry, George E., *The California Progressives,* University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1951, pp. 148-49.

[233] The initiative-referendum amendment was adopted by 168,744–52,093 votes, the recall by a slightly larger majority. [California Legislature: *Journal of the Senate*, 1911, p. 74748 and *Journal of the Assembly*, 1911, p. 83438; Eu, March Fong, Secretary of State, *A History of the California Initiative Process,* Secretary of State Elections Division, Sacramento, November, 1992; Sen. Leroy Wright, "Argument Against Initiative and Referendum, 1911," document submitted to Secretary of State Frank Jordan for inclusion in a voters' information manual, currently filed in the California State Archives' Secretary of State Election Papers, 1911 Special Election.]

[234] Kazin, Michael, "The Great Exception Revisited: Organized Labor and Politics in San Francisco and Los Angeles, 1870-1940," *Pacific Historical Review,* v. LV, no. 3 (August, 1986), p. 395.

[235] For this and the preceding paragraph: Olin, Spencer C., Jr. *California Politics 1846-1920: The Emerging Corporate State,* Boyd & Fraser Publishing Co., San Francisco, 1981, pp. 65-68.

[236] Kazin, Michael, "The Great Exception Revisited: Organized Labor and Politics in San Francisco and Los Angeles, 1870-1940," *Pacific Historical Review,* v. LV, no. 3 (August, 1986), p. 395.

[237] Kazin, Michael, "The Great Exception Revisited: Organized Labor and Politics in San Francisco and Los Angeles, 1870-1940," *Pacific Historical Review,* v. LV, no. 3 (August, 1986), p. 395.

[238] "An Object Lesson for Every City in the United States," *Christian Science Monitor*, Jan. 12, 1910.

[239] Crouch, Winston W. "John Randolph Haynes and His Work for Direct Government," *National Municipal Review,* v. 27, No. 9 (Sept., 1938), p. 3.

[240] Carney, Francis M. "The Decentralized Politics of Los Angeles," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 353, City Bosses and Political Machines (May, 1964), pp. 109-110.

[241] Sitton, Tom. *John Randolph Haynes*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 1992, p. 42.

[242] See the following, passim: Block, Fred, "The Ruling Class Does Not Rule: Notes on the Marxist Theory of the State," *Socialist Revolution* n. 33 (May-June, 1977): Skocpol, Theda, "Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research," introduction to *Bringing the State Back In*, Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, eds., Cambridge University Press, New York, 1985; Skocpol, "Political Responses to Capitalist Crises: Neo-Marxist Theories of the State and the New Deal," *Politics and Society* 10 (1980); Skowronek, Stephen, *Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877-1920*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge & New York, 1982; Orren, Karen, "Liberalism, Money, and the Situation of Organized Labor" in *Public Values and Private Power in American Politics*, J. David Greenstone, ed., University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1982; Tomlins, Christopher L., *The State and the Unions: Labor Relations, Law, and the Organized Labor Movement in America, 1880-1960* (Cambridge, 1985); Forbath, William. *Law and the Shaping of the American Labor Movement* (Cambridge, 1991);

[243] See Fogelson, Robert M., *The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930*, Harvard Univ. Press, Cambridge, MA, 1967, p. 218.

[244] Carney, Francis M., "The Decentralized Politics of Los Angeles," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 353, City Bosses and Political Machines (May, 1964), p. 113.

[245] Willard, C.D., "What's On in the City of Los Angeles," *California Outlook*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (July 5, 1913), p. 5.

[246] "Many of the most important political questions involve the failure of policy alternatives to receive serious discussion, the failure of political movements to emerge, and the failure of political systems to perform as expected," writes David Brian Robertson. "Evidence that these suppressed features exist can be culled from the historical record of counterfactuals, cross-national social movements, and unsuccessful alternatives." Robertson, "Politics and the Past: History, Behavioralism and the Return to Institutionalism in American Political Science," *History and the Other Social Sciences*, Eric Monkkonen, ed., Duke University Press. The book was on press when I read Robertson's typescript: see the latter, pp. 7, 22, and 28. While political scientists take suppressed agendas seriously, historians as a rule tend to view "might have beens" as interesting speculations and thought experiments that carry little weight in the actual development of events.

[247] Kazin, Michael, "The Great Exception Revisited: Organized Labor and Politics in San Francisco and Los Angeles, 1870-1940," *Pacific Historical Review*, v. LV, no. 3 (August, 1986), p. 395.

[248] "An Object Lesson for Every City in the United States," *Christian Science Monitor*, Jan. 12, 1910.

249 This is one of the most interesting scholarly essays about municipal government in the progressive era. Erie, Steven P., "How the Urban West Was Won: The Local State and Economic Growth in Los Angeles, 1880-1932," *Urban Affairs Quarterly* v. 27, no. 4 (June, 1992), p. 524.

11.
The Struggle for Water & Kilowatt Socialism

A. Water and the Aqueduct

Of all the resources that fed the explosive growth of Los Angeles a century ago, none were fought over more vehemently than water and hydroelectric power. Each struggle had a distinct trajectory. In the case of water the hottest battles came early. By 1900 one of progressive-era L.A.'s few effective cross-class alliances had emerged in favor of a municipally owned and operated system. In the case of power the hottest battles came late, mostly after a 1911 straw ballot placed the city's voters squarely on the side of publicly distributed electricity. Until that tipping point a broad political consensus favored the city's construction of generating stations along its Owens Valley aqueduct. After the voters showed their hand in 1911 the consensus broke into two hostile camps--one seeking private and the other public distribution of aqueduct power.

Historians often refer to the municipal ownership of public utilities, especially the contested forms it took between 1890 and 1915, as "gas and water socialism." In Los Angeles the labor movement launched sporadic attempts to bring gas, telephone, and railway services under the aegis of local government, but the truly contentious issues involved the supply and control of water and water-generated electricity. These resources were absolutely critical to the city's growth, which is to say that their short supply in the early 1900s constituted the single strongest brake on that growth. Water and kilowatt socialism left capitalist relations of production fully in place. During the progressive era, none of the city's labor activists or socialists seems to have deluded him/herself into believing that the public ownership of public utilities put the working class in charge of

anything. Time and time again, in fact, socialists and workers voted to vest these utilities in city regimes that were moderately to harshly anti-labor. They viewed their political work as a token of what might be more endemically achieved if and when socialism ever came to this country.

Pueblo Rights Lost

The early 20th-century agitation for municipal ownership echoed the communal ethos of L.A.'s water overseers during the Spanish and Mexican periods dating back to 1781. In that year Felipe de Neve, governor of Spanish California, instructed the first residents to dig a large ditch from the seasonally flowing Rio Porciúncula (now the Los Angeles River) to a reservoir in the settlement. From this channel, known as the *Zanja Madre*, and its smaller tributaries, the growing town drew its water for irrigation and home consumption. The town council paid a *zanjero* to manage the network of ditches, waterwheels, and dams and enacted laws regulating their use. Residents were forbidden to dump human and animal wastes into the zanjas, for example.

Nothing distinguished this Spanish/Mexican system so much as its collective purpose--to serve the town as a whole. It was municipally owned and managed, and the statutes governing it assigned no special water rights to residents whose land bordered a stream or *zanja*. "The guiding principle behind this body of law was that the pueblo itself held the right to the water, and the use of it was granted in common to all inhabitants," historian David S. Torres-Rouff has noted. Private trafficking was limited to a few draymen and Indian women who peddled fresh water to households in carts and head-held jugs. Torres-Rouff comments:

> "No individual *poblador* could use water from the Porciúncula in any way that restricted or infringed upon usage by other citizens or the municipality. The belief in communal, or pueblo, water rights endured the transition from Spanish to Mexican rule....Only after considering reports from the *zanjero*, his committee, and any interested petitioners would the *ayuntamiento* approve irrigation projects, and it demanded, when possible, that such projects be a community endeavor." 1

After Mexico's defeat in its 1846-48 war with the United States, followed by California's anti-slavery statehood in 1850, European-Americans gradually edged out Mexicans in a sometimes acrimonious contest for political control of the Los Angeles basin. The result was a shift in water policy from *pueblo* rights to private property rights. This shift produced two innovations. The first was a doctrine of riparian privilege that limited the use of water from the L.A. River to those who owned land along its banks. "[B]y making the law of waters a part of the rights of private property ownership," William L. Kahrl has written in his influential *Water and Power*, "the riparian doctrine denied any role for the concept of a common public interest....Water, under the laws of California in the nineteenth century, was a private resource for private exploitation." The second, competing, innovation was a doctrine of prior appropriation, reserving to the first "beneficial" user of a water source the right to keep on using it. Both juridical reforms relaxed the English common law's strict defense of private property. The doctrine of prior appropriation did so, moreover, in a way that appealed to the notions of progress and social uplift then stirring among L.A.'s anglo population. To the extent that Mexicans still wielded some influence over local affairs, these innovations were resisted. For several decades pueblo rights exerted a vestigial force in the town's development of its scarce water resource, though they were increasingly embedded in the new capitalist ethos.[2]

No more telling example of this hybrid modus operandi can be found than the local council's 1868 contract with three capitalists--John S. Griffen, Solomon Lazard, and Prudent Beaudry. Hoping to spur the sleepy town to faster growth, the council sold the trio's Los Angeles City Water Company a 30-year lease to control and use the *zanja* network. The lease ordered the company to improve the system enough to keep Angelenos well-supplied with healthy water as their numbers grew. It also gave Los Angeles the right to buy back the waterworks when the contract expired.[3] In one and the same transaction,

therefore, the city reasserted its claim to river and artesian well water on behalf of all its people while inviting a private entity to pocket whatever profits it could wring from the system.

This contradiction would pose a thorny problem for the generation of Angelenos that followed. Three decades later the city's associate counsel, Henry T. Lee, addressed the issue thusly:

> "In the twenty-three years that I have lived in Los Angeles, I have been impressed with the persistence and vehemence of the contention of the citizens of the old pueblo that they owned the water supplied to the city....The proposition that the citizens of Los Angeles [now] have to face is entirely different from the general question of municipal ownership of private utilities. Here we already own the water; the only point is, who shall control the supply?" [4]

Soon after relinquishing control of its fresh waterworks, Los Angeles--not the water company--set about building a European system of trunk, lateral, and outfall sewers that would eventually discharge the city's waterborne wastes into Santa Monica and San Pedro harbors. Underground brick pipes replaced the first three zanjas in 1873. More pipes were laid as the years passed and more zanjas dried up. In 1890 buried sewers criss-crossed Los Angeles for a lateral distance of 146 miles. The system that decisively, though not fully, emerged by century's end featured three separate networks carrying potable water, salable irrigation water, and sewage. From the viewpoint of most white Angelenos, especially those who were reform-minded, these changes were all to the good. They improved public health and represented progress with a capital P. Others saw the new system differently. "Mexican Californians, accustomed to water laws that mandated equal access, conservation, and communal rights, objected to underground pipes containing sewage and irrigation waters," says Torres-Rouff. "Such channels removed water from the public domain, failed to maximize water's life-giving potential, and did so in ways that favored individual needs over those of the community as a whole." [5]

Once again this clash of cultures, ethnicities, and classes resulted, for a few decades

at least, in a hybrid system. The city council decided not to run the new sewers into Sonoratown, a large workingclass area on the L.A. river's west bank where most of the city's Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, and Chinese lived. There the zanja network withered away much more slowly, accommodating local preference while deepening anglo stereotypes of Mexicans and Chinese as unhygienic people. Sonoratown lagged the rest of L.A. in modern sanitation as late as 1904. Buoyed by the voters' approval and subsequent sale of a new bond issue for sewer construction, Mayor M.P. "Pinky" Snyder urged city council members to start work on the project. "The necessity for a new outfall sewer as well as for a perfected internal sewer system is recognized by all," he wrote them on January 4. "The cesspool, now the only possible method of sewage disposal for a large portion of our residents, is undesirable in every way, and entirely out of keeping with the progressiveness of this city." [6]

Pueblo Rights Regained--Slowly

The City Water Company's contract with Los Angeles inflamed public opinion before and long after its ink had dried. For the rest of the century residential customers, anti-monopoly groups like the Knights of Labor, and the fledgling union movement condemned the company's privileged status and high rates almost as vehemently as they damned the privately-run railways. In 1890, three Nationalist Clubs and the Chamber of Commerce petitioned the city council to restore municipal control of the fresh water system and grant no more water franchises to private enterprises. (Two more were in fact granted, to the West Side and West Los Angeles Water Companies.) In 1892 the L.A. People's Party made willingness to demand city and county ownership of public utilities, including the provision of water, a litmus test for all the candidates it nominated. Business organizations swung around to the same point of view. Much of the rising hostility to private management of the domestic water supply stemmed from ideological convic-

tion--namely, the belief that river and artesian well waters belonged to all Angelenos and no subgroup of the population should be permitted to gain disproportionate benefits from them. But there were also specific grievances against the City Water Company. Though it had expanded the distribution network, it shunted its profits into stockholder dividends rather than aggressive maintenance of the system's dams, wells, cisterns, waterwheels, and gravity-flow conduits. Angelenos also discovered to their dismay that the company had surreptitiously tunneled under the L.A. River and drawn off more water than its lease allowed. This disclosure deepened popular resentment of the City Water Company, uniting forces as disparate as the labor movement, West End Board of Trade, and Voters League in a steadily-building campaign to prevent a renewal of its lease in 1898.[7]

Support for the campaign came from an unexpected source. Fred Eaton, who had planned the company's construction and maintenance work for nine years, left in 1886 after voters elected him City Engineer. In his new role he suddenly found religion. Eaton told anyone who would listen that if Los Angeles took back its river rights it would provide better freshwater service at lower rates than his former company since it would not have to pay off any stockholders.[8] This point proved influential with business and residential customers alike.

Organized workers, meanwhile, had acquired their zeal for public ownership the same way they had gained their faith in direct democracy--from the more heterogeneous but worker-oriented groups that preceded them in the search for a cooperative commonwealth. Knights, Nationalists, Populists, and socialists of the 1880s and 1890s all agitated for a municipal takeover of utilities, and many of their activists were influential members of the early L.A. unions. Men who carried two or three sets of bylaws around in their pockets--Arthur Vinette, Jonathan Bailey, Lemuel Biddle, John Murray, Fred Wheeler, and Sam Chappel come to mind--brought the demand for water and kilowatt socialism

from their anti-monopoly organizations into their union halls and the Los Angeles Council of Labor.[9]

In an unintended pincers movement, organized workers outside city government and Fred Eaton inside kept pressure on the city council to take back control of the freshwater system. The *Times* supported them, but its enthusiasm waned when it realized that Los Angeles could not meet the $2.5 million price demanded by the City Water Company's president, W.H. Perry. For a while the newspaper and the council hoped to find a private buyer who would operate all the city's waterworks for up to fifty years before relinquishing ownership, but this remedy satisfied no one. "It could not be accomplished without imposing unequal burdens upon the taxpayers," the *Times* conceded, glumly asking, "What other course is open to the city and the people? The water companies have rights which cannot be arbitrarily abrogated."[10]

Only two solutions offered themselves to the beleaguered council: do nothing until the City Water Company's lease expired in 1898, or build a small headworks in the hill district and run it as a test case for municipal ownership. In early October 1892, the council chose the latter course. It scheduled a November 2 election in which voters would decide whether to support a $520,000 bond issue for the project. During the campaign that followed, opponents denounced the measure largely on tax grounds, arguing that the entire city would have to pay off the bond debt on a project undertaken primarily for the benefit of hill residents. Not so, said Eaton's successor, City Engineer J.H. Dockweiler: construction of a new headworks would bolster gravity flow throughout the system after the city reclaimed its river rights in 1898. Pointing out that hill residents often had to get their dirty water by the jugful and watch their homes burn down for lack of an adequate supply, the *Times* reluctantly backed the bonds despite its preference for a private takeover of all the city's waterworks.[11]

Workingclass Leadership at a Pivotal Moment

Populists, socialists, unionized workers, and the Council of Labor led the grassroots charge for a city-owned freshwater subsystem in the month leading up to the bond election. At its October 3 convention in the opera house, the L.A. Populist Party unanimously endorsed municipal ownership of water and power supplies as its top platform plank and sent a delegation to urge city council members to place the bond issue before the voters--which they did that same day. "[F]urther delay is dangerous to the health and welfare of the city," a convention resolution warned. At its closing session the party nominated Dockweiler for re-election as City Engineer.[12]

A more boisterous crowd of bond supporters, seven-hundred strong and made up mostly of union members, filled Turverein Hall on October 24. Called to order by Typographical No. 174's Sam J. Chappel, they cheered Dockweiler and other speakers who explained the engineering and legal aspects of the proposed new headworks while praising its long-term value to the city. Dockweiler, who had designed the project, said it would supply enough water for 194,000 people. He ended his speech with a barrage of poetry which, the *Times* said, "completely won his hearers and imparted to them the enthusiasm which he himself felt, and which they manifested by uproarious applause." Moments later Homer C. Katz, a member of the Clerks' Association, spoke for the city's unions and promised a strong labor turnout for the bonds. He and the other unionists in the room were fully aware, as Grace Stimson has noted, that construction of a hill district headworks would be the start of a plan "whereby the community would eventually control the whole water supply system."[13]

Soon after the Turverein Hall event the local Democratic and Republican parties joined the rising wave of pro-bond opinion. On November 2 it swamped the opposition. Voters backed the bond issue by a four-to-one majority. "While the interest was at fever

heat in all the wards, it boiled over in the [workingclass] Seventh and Eighth Wards," reported the *Times*. "Livery rigs and family carriages were out in numbers and were used to the limit in bringing voters to the polls." Stimson reports that the Friends of the Water Bonds campaign organization "publicly thanked the Council of Labor for getting the bonds through and turning 'a seeming defeat into a victory.' "[14]

From that day forward the city's unions never wavered in their agitation for a public water supply publicly managed. Their decisive role in the campaign for a hill district project helped make municipal ownership the default policy of L.A.'s voters, to be set aside only under extraordinary circumstances. The 1892 bond vote served as the wellhead for all the water developments of the next quarter century, from the construction of the 240-mile-long Owens Valley aqueduct to the triumph of public hydropower. Yet among the many historians of these events only Grace Stimson has given organized labor its due.

The 1892 bond measure left most of L.A.'s residential water supply in entrepreneurial hands. Political scientist Steven P. Erie has found that in turn-of-the-century Los Angeles a constricted supply of water and power "was a more fundamental barrier than an undeveloped port" to population growth and industrialization. More and more Demipubs, though not ideologically committed to municipal ownership, came to see that the high rates and unreliable supply of water under private management were hobbling the city's growth. One historian has surmised that the Republicans' 1896 mayoral candidate, Meredith "Pinky" Snyder, outpolled his Democratic rival largely "on the strength of his more vindictive remarks about the water company." The party platform he ran on proclaimed that a municipal agency would liberate the city's growth potential by delivering water at one-tenth the rate the City Water Company had been charging. Under Fred Eaton, the party's central committee went even further, declaring that public water could be supplied gratis to customers with the cost of operating and maintaining the system borne by

property taxes alone. Henry Hazard, a former mayor, made a similar proposal two years later during a special water bond election campaign, but neither his recommendation nor Eaton's was adopted. Low rates, not higher taxes, ultimately became the financing method of choice for the city's water supply system.[15]

In the dozen years that followed the hill district bond issue, unions, populists, and socialists kept up their drumbeat for municipal ownership of the waterworks and all other municipal utilities. Typical was a June 8, 1898 People's Party meeting which "roundly scored" the city council for its inability to reach a settlement with the City Water Company. The council had not even secured a list of the company's physical assets, much less a sale-price agreement. It was still bogged down in lawsuits and sterile negotiations only a month short of the expiration of the 30-year lease. At the June 8 meeting three People's Party members agreed to show up at council meetings and "fight to the finish all alleged schemes to sidetrack the real issue."[16]

Mounting pressure from the street as well as from its peers forced the city council to seek a takeover of the water company that summer. The company did not agree to sell out, however, at least not on the council's terms. Ever since 1892 it had valued its assets at $3 million, and now that its lease was up it refused to settle for less. This did not sit well with professionals like J.B. Lippincott, a U.S. Geological Survey topographer and engineer who knew as much as the company did about the hydrology of Los Angeles and the workings of the local water distribution system. Lippincott claimed that the typical L.A. family had been paying $5 a year to maintain the waterworks and $10 a year to run up the company's profits. He urged the city to complete its buyout as quickly as possible and end its relationship with a "grasping" lessee.[17]

Determined to buy the waterworks at a reasonable price, the council scheduled an August, 1899 bond election. It earmarked over a quarter of the proposed $2,090,000 issue

for improvements in the distribution system, signaling its intent to spend only $1.5 million on the buyout itself. Organized labor and virtually every other civic institution in Los Angeles supported the bond sale. The People's Party resolved to do all in its power "to avert the calamity which the defeat of the said bonds would entail upon this progressive city." A Citizens' Committee of One Hundred set up teams in every ward to campaign for the bonds. The Demipubs called for their passage. On August 23 Angelenos voted for the $2,090,000 issue by a 7,189 to 973 margin.[18]

All to no avail. The litigation between the parties grew embittered, and arbitration failed to resolve their differences. "A whole series of suits, involving technicalities of the bond election, water rights to the Los Angeles River, the reduction of water rates, stockholders and taxpayer interests, plagued every step of the negotiations," says Vincent Ostrom, an oft-quoted historian of water and power developments in progressive-era Los Angeles. "The bond issue was invalidated." City elections came and went. Voters had given up on Mayor Snyder in 1898, electing Eaton to replace him. Eaton could not resolve the issue, either, and in 1900 voters once again placed their bets on Snyder.[19] But the crisis would not be solved in the mayor's office: instead it would dissolve in a flood of ballots from the city's wards and precincts.

At Last, the Buyout

The long, rocky trek toward municipal ownership of the Los Angeles water supply finally ended in 1901 when the City Water Company and the city council both relented on the sale price. They agreed to a $2 million buyout, and the council called for an August 28 bond election to finance that amount.[20] It was the third such election on the water supply issue in nine years. Many Angelenos thought $2 million was an outrageous sum to pay for a waterworks that had never measured up to their expectations. Nevertheless the *Union Labor News* urged them to take a long view of the buyout:

"[T]he present service is as bad as the prices are high. The southwest portion of the city is now without water enough to keep the lawns and trees alive. The company will not put in the pipes....On general principles, municipal ownership is a good thing....No private corporation should be permitted to control any city's water supply. It is unfortunate that one now has Los Angeles by the throat and proposes to feather its nest before it lets go. But when the possibilities of the future are considered, the two million dollars demanded is cheap--dirt cheap." [21]

Labor Council business agent James A. Gray agreed. "[T]he price is too high," he told the *L.A. Herald*, "but I think good judgment dictates the purchase of the plant and the termination of the litigation." Foes of the bond issue included progressives who later played prominent roles in the non-partisan movement of 1906 and Harper recall of 1909; their opposition stemmed mainly from a belief, correct as far as it went, that the City Water Company was getting far more for its holdings than they were worth. At the end of the campaign bond opponents sent a swarm of agents into the blue-collar wards where they leafleted homes, threatened local breweries with a boycott unless they instructed their employees to vote no, and stirred up a rumor that large numbers of workers had turned against the bonds because *Times* publisher Harrison B. Otis favored them. His newspaper reacted sharply: "The attempt of a coterie of cheap politicians to make it appear there is a dividing line on...the union question in today's voting is a fraud and a failure." For once the paper got it right. That day the bonds carried citywide by a 5 to 1 majority and in the eastern workingclass precincts by nearly 8 to 1. "Supporters of the bond proposition declared that the laboring classes voted for the bonds almost solidly," reported the *L.A. Herald.* "[T]hey give them much credit for the victory in favor of municipal ownership." [22]

Six months later a Board of Water Commissioners took charge of the new Domestic Water Works System (later the Water Department). A 1902 ordinance and two 1903 charter amendments set the Water Department on a decade-long course toward building and operating one of the world's longest aqueducts and managing the largest

municipal power system anywhere on the planet. These early directives

- barred the city from selling, leasing, or otherwise conveying its rights to L.A. River waters or its control over their distribution unless so instructed by a two-thirds vote of the people;
- channeled all water revenues into a special fund for the sole purpose of operating, maintaining, improving, and extending the municipal waterworks;
- authorized the mayor to appoint the five water commissioners to four-year terms subject to confirmation by the city council;
- authorized the Board of Water Commissioners to set rates subject to approval by the council;
- gave the Superintendent of the Water Department operational charge of the entire water system;
- permitted all employees with at least five years' continuous service in the bought-out City Water Company to work for the Water Department with civil service protections but without having to meet civil service criteria; and
- required all future hires except for the superintendent, auditor, and laborers to pass civil service exams.[23]

Drying the Owens Valley to Water Los Angeles

One of many sticking points in the final tense negotiations between the city and the water company involved the transfer of the latter's operating staff to the new Water Department. Plant and *zanja* workers were not the problem--William Mulholland was. A former *zanjero* and protégé of Eaton who replaced Dockweiler as the company's superintendent, the 46-year-old engineer had irritated city council members by failing to hand over documents they requested. It turned out, however, that Mulholland rarely kept writ-

ten records because he had memorized "the size of every inch of pipe and the age and location of every valve" in the system. Once apprised of this trait, the council greeted him with open arms. He and his staff joined the Water Department on February 13, 1902, Mulholland as superintendent of water works and his staff as public employees working, for the most part, under civil service protections.[24]

Eaton respected Mulholland and did everything he politically could to lodge him in a position of authority over the Water Department. For some time the former mayor had nurtured ambitions for the development of L.A.'s water supply that ranged far beyond the purchase of his old company. These did not take final shape until the summer of 1904, however, when his friend J.B. Lippincott, by then a U.S. Reclamation Service engineer, invited him on a camping trip in the California Sierras above the Owens River. In 1904 and 1905 Mulholland quietly surveyed the river's potential as a water source and found it to be both adequate and necessary for L.A.'s growth. Eaton quickly bought riparian rights and options for land along 50 miles of the river; with Lippincott's help he led local farmers to believe these purchases were for a Reclamation Service project. Valley residents erupted in anger when they learned this was not the case, and the ensuing controversy, punctuated by occasional dynamitings, has dragged on to this day. Eaton intended to bring Owens Valley water to Los Angeles as a private entrepreneur, but when Mulholland told him that the Reclamation Service would approve only a public project he reluctantly sold his rights and options to the Los Angeles Board of Water Commissioners. Mulholland had greased the skids for this sale by telling the Board that the Owens Valley would be the city's sole viable source of water once it outgrew its reliance on the L.A. River. He estimated that a 240-mile aqueduct could be built from the valley to the city for $25 million. Meanwhile, an angry Owens Valley farmer had protested Eaton's land transactions to President Roosevelt. A federal investigation found that Lippincott had failed

his duty to the Reclamation Service while Los Angeles had failed to disclose its aims until the land transfers were *faites accomplis*. Nevertheless the Reclamation Service approved the aqueduct. When its first flows reached the San Fernando Valley in February, 1913, the city had little need for them. Mostly they watered San Fernando Valley lands secretly bought for that purpose by Otis, Henry Huntington, Eaton, and other acquaintances of Mulholland, several of whom quickly realized windfall profits. Mulholland himself had purchased some 160 acres there, but his motives for doing so were not clear enough to warrant a charge against him. It wasn't long, furthermore, before Mulholland's warning about L.A.'s water needs proved prescient, and the aqueduct became the single most compelling growth catalyst in the progressive-era city.[25]

There, in a nutshell, lies the entire conventional history of the fabled Owens Valley/Los Angeles aqueduct, a history of privileged, influential men acting masterfully and deceitfully to endow their city with water. How William Mulholland, former mayor Fred Eaton, J.B. Lippincott, the L.A. city council, the Board of Water Commissioners, and a few bankers schemed to purloin the waters of the Owens Valley is a tale oft-told. But it needs at least an appendix: the role of the working class.

At the turn of the century, when the Socialist Party replaced the populists as a radicalizing force in Los Angeles, anti-monopoly sentiment swiftly gained ground among organized workers and the lower classes generally.[26] Rank-and-file union members found support for this sentiment in American Federation of Labor policy, which called for the municipalization of water, gas, and other public services. Coincidentally, working class contempt deepened for the entrepreneurial likes of Eaton, ironmaker Fred Baker, and Huntington, elite Angelenos who took a draconian approach to organized labor and whose wealth gave them a controlling influence at city hall. William Mulholland, too, had a low regard for the rights of wage workers, and it showed. The labor regimen he

presided over on the aqueduct was harsher even than Huntington's, and more openly championed. Which is to say that for all their plotting, technical skills, deceptions, and centennial dreams, Fred Eaton, William Mulholland, and J.B. Lippincott could not have persuaded the great body of Angelenos to tax themselves $25 million for an aqueduct. It was largely the persistent clamor of workingclass demands, first heard in the early 1890s and crescendoing after 1900, that accomplished that feat.

Unions and Socialists: An Edgy Partnership

A signal but little-noticed step toward the public's willingness to fund large municipal enterprises occurred in 1902 when the city's unions sent their own party into the fall/winter election campaign. Against stiff opposition from the "impossibilist" left fringe of the Socialist Party (SP), Job Harriman, Lemuel Biddle, Fred Wheeler, Arthur Vinette, John Murray, and other evolutionary socialists routinely promoted independent labor formations in Los Angeles even though they competed with their own party for votes. Harriman, the SP's local leader, defended his work for the new labor party by arguing that socialists would become an irrelevant sect unless they grounded themselves in the organized working class. He faced a left-wing core in his party that remained tenaciously hostile to craft unions. The result was an often stormy marriage between labor and socialism in Los Angeles--though a marriage nonetheless.

Wheeler and Murray attended a September 6 meeting called by the San Francisco union movement to map out a statewide electoral strategy. When their proposal for a California labor party drew a tepid response they returned to Los Angeles and helped other local unionists found a Union Labor Party (ULP). Biddle, who had just polled 1,294 votes as the socialist candidate for county clerk, joined Murray, E.J. Mack, and John Walker on the new party's executive committee.[27] In short order it named a full slate of union candidates to compete in the December 1 election.

The Union Labor Party's immediate antecedents were two conferences organized by the city's unions in July. These were designed to settle a long-running argument between opposed tendencies in the local movement. James Gray, a Carpenters No. 426 activist and Labor Council president who would soon become a statewide organizer for the California Federation of Labor, led a conservative faction that dismissed independent labor politics as a waste of time and energy. Gray favored the AFL policy of rewarding labor's friends and punishing its enemies among Demipub politicians. Murray, Biddle, and Wheeler viewed loyalty to the Demipubs as a snare and delusion. They urged the July 18 conference to work shoulder to shoulder with the city's Debsian socialists on political and electoral issues. At first most delegates sided with Gray, evoking AFL policy and calling for the municipalization of the city's remaining private waterworks and other utilities. The socialist faction won converts during the debate, however, so Gray's group adjourned the meeting for ten days. In the interim AFL president Samuel Gompers threatened to revoke the Labor Council's charter if it moved toward an independent politics.[28]

The result of these conflicting pressures was a clever compromise. At a second conference on July 18, union delegates decided to put the question of an independent party to a referendum vote of all the city's unions. The vote, which took place on September 20, solidly backed the launching of a Union Labor Party. The new entity was instructed to campaign for reforms long sought by the AFL--municipal ownership of utilities prominent among them--but to act independently of the Los Angeles Labor Council. "In deference to Gompers' warning," says Stimson,

> "the Los Angeles Union Labor Party was completely separate from the Council of Labor. Because of this, it was free to promise support to the socialist state and county tickets in return for full socialist backing of labor's municipal ticket. The decision of Los Angeles socialists not to enter their own ticket in the city elections flouted national party policy and brought a storm of criticism from party members throughout the country. Job Harriman ably defended the fusion by arguing that a socialist party, to be powerful and effective, must have its roots in the working-class movement,

must encourage political activity by organized labor, and must save itself from becoming an impotent expression of middle-class aims by recognizing its identity with the workers." [29]

Two weeks later supporters of the new party met to select its city nominees. Retail Clerks president George McGahan headed an all-union ticket in his run for mayor. Other candidates, most of them socialists, represented the city's typographical, carpenters', woodworkers', bricklayers', shinglers', switchmen's, electrical workers', and pipe and tank makers' unions. In what seems to have been a sectarian error, the founders and supporters of the party asked their fellow unionists not to vote for any union members running for state or county office on a Demipub ticket, even if they were socialists. This stand must have alienated those who wanted to support the ULP in the city and at the same time feel free to vote for any and all union candidates in the county and state elections. Nevertheless the *L.A. Times* erred when it predicted that unions would rescind their endorsement of the ULP because of its deal with the local Socialist Party. Union members as a whole were shifting leftward.[30] Murray made this fact the linchpin of his argument with the impossibilists:

"The platform of the Union Labor Party in Los Angeles embodies all that the Socialist platform contains. Comrades, what more do you want? Do you still insist that we should stand aloof from the trade unions until such time as their vision is so broadened as to enable them to grasp, theoretically, the Socialist movement as a whole?...The political must supplement the economic organization. The economic organization must be the base upon which the Socialist party rests." [31]

Earlier that year Murray had organized Federal Labor Union No. 9614 for unskilled workers. The new union, made up largely of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans, proposed the eventual abolition of the competitive wage system and called for a nearer-term "collective ownership by the people of all means of production, distribution, transportation, and communication." Murray worked these ideas into the ULP's platform. The ULP championed the municipal ownership of railway, water, and other franchises, which was not in itself novel, but it gave these reforms a new context. McGahan and his fellow can-

didates identified their main target as the systematic corruption of Demipub regimes. "The city council, whether Republican or Democratic, had regularly turned a deaf ear to the petitions of humble citizens," they said, "and had managed city affairs with complete disregard for the people's wishes. Contracts had been awarded to employers who paid substandard wages and violated state laws."[32] This new note was sounded quietly in 1902, but four years later the corruption long associated with the granting of private utility franchises would become the leitmotif of labor's campaign for the Owens Valley aqueduct. Anger at municipal corruption ran wide and deep in turn-of-the-century Los Angeles, and by 1906 organized workers would learn to tap it on behalf of public ownership.

On December 1, 1902, though, their high hopes for an independent labor politics ran aground. McGahan collected just over one-third the votes of his winning Democratic rival. He fared considerably better in workingclass wards, as did his city council running mates and the party's school board candidates. But in every race the ULP came up short--a rather dreary fact of life for labor candidates during most of the progressive era. The chief reason for the party's poor showing was obvious: because its long incubation in conferences, conventions, and a referendum, its nominees didn't start campaigning until two weeks before the election. That was far too little time for what the city's unions were good at--grassroots organizing. Like its predecessors and successors, the ULP also lacked money. More conjecturally, by putting all its programmatic eggs in the basket of government reform, it offered no solutions for workers whose grievances stemmed principally from the workplace. Finally, in the ULP's own analysis, many workingclass voters feared that if they supported McGahan they would elect a Republican mayor, so they voted for the Democrat, "Pinky" Snyder.[33]

The election results shocked Harriman and earned him the wrath not only of the SP's local "revolutionary" or "impossibilist" wing but of the national Debsian party. In Janu-

ary, 1903, says Stimson, "the local comrades officially declared that the encouragement of union labor parties was a 'menace' to the Socialist Party." A month later the party's national executive committee met in St. Louis to condemn fusion with any reform, radical, or labor party. The wounds did not quickly heal. Harriman was forced to resign from the local SP.[34] Though he remained close to the labor movement, it took five years for him to regain the leadership of his party and eight years for L.A.'s unions and socialists to revive their political alliance.

Private Water Management Trickles to an End

Municipal operation of a large share of the city's waterworks, meanwhile, had won the approval of virtually all Angelenos. The transfer of the City Water Company's staff to the new public entity had promoted a highly economical management of the water delivery system. In his January 4, 1904 message to the city council, Mayor Snyder declared:

> ""It has been demonstrated that the city took a wise step when it purchased the various properties now combined in the Domestic Waterworks System. The revenue from the plant has been sufficient for the maintenance and operating expense; has defrayed the cost of permanent extensions and improvements in keeping with the expansion and development of the city; and has benefited by a reduction of ten per cent in the flat rate and or fifty per cent in the meter rate--all without one cent added taxation." [35]

Three weeks later, just before councilman James P. Davenport committed political suicide by voting to hand the city's printing contract to the *L.A. Times*, he introduced a motion instructing the city to buy the two remaining private water companies within its boundaries for the sum of $337,500, more or less. What made this motion exceptional was the financial crunch Los Angeles found itself in. Unable to sell a pending $1 million sewer bond issue on the East Coast, the city had cajoled local banks into buying the issue in return for a promise not to hold another bond election until they marketed it. The banks exempted water bonds from this constraint, however, and the council scheduled an April 15 election to acquire the distribution properties of the West Side Water Company and West Los Angeles Water Company for the aforesaid $337,500. On election day voters

approved the bonds by a better-than five-to-one ratio.[36] When they were sold Los Angeles took ownership of all the water entering its distribution system from catchment basins, reservoirs, wells, and the L.A. River.

It was about this time that John Randolph Haynes joined the movement for a city-managed water supply. For a year or two he had privately believed that L.A.'s utilities should be municipalized, but Tom Sitton notes that he did not publicly express this view until late 1904, twelve years after the labor movement and its allies had laid the groundwork for a municipally-owned water system. Haynes quickly emerged as a forceful and consistent champion of city-run enterprises. In 1905 he helped create the Voters' League to agitate for them, and the following February he attended the founding convention of a statewide Public Ownership Party in Fresno with nine L.A. labor activists and thirty delegates from the city's Public Ownership Clubs. Haynes gave the keynote address and was named the short-lived party's candidate for governor.[37]

Haynes' financial independence enabled him to fight for his favorite reforms in ways that no union activist could afford. In 1906, for example, he visited city-owned utilities in Norway, Finland, Russia, Poland, Hungary, Austria, Germany, Belgium, and England, interviewing their managers and political backers. "I did not meet a single official...who did not view with amazement the idea of a city's deliberately permitting any public utility to fall into private hands," Haynes reported. "When informed that at the present time there is a movement in Los Angeles to extend the term of streetcar franchises beyond twenty-one years,... one gentlemanly mayor so far forgot his usual politeness that he exclaimed: 'Why your people must be crazy!' "[38] Bringing home news from abroad may have been Haynes' greatest contribution to municipal ownership in Los Angeles, for when it came to the political management of waterworks and sewerage and the control of corruption normally attendant on private control of these enterprises, Europe was years

ahead of the United States. The weekly *Union Labor News* and its successor, the *Citizen*, carried full accounts of his travels and tried to keep their union readership informed about the overseas advance of gas, water, and kilowatt socialism.

There was a more profound sense in which Haynes' reform work differed from that of the city's unions. His privileged status exempted him from the kind of contradictory impulses and agonizing decisions that working people faced. The Alexander regimes (1909-13) came down hard on unions and their members, and the Rose administration that followed (1913-15) was less severe but still not friendly. It was during those years, however, that L.A.'s unions took their most enduring steps toward municipally distributed electric power, overcoming splits in their own ranks to do so and, in effect, rewarding the very mayors, councilmen, and commissioners who had made life difficult for them. Haynes' navigation through the choppy waters of municipal ownership was serene by comparison. In their continuing encomiums to Haynes as the father of direct democracy and godfather of municipal ownership, virtually all of the city's historians have ignored this fact.

Four years after the *Union Labor News* urged the electorate to heed "the possibilities of the future" by buying out the City Water Company, those possibilities seemed more bountiful than the labor weekly could have imagined. On July 29, 1905, Eaton, Mulholland, and the Water Board finally unveiled their plan to build the world's longest and most expensive aqueduct, and the city council set September 7 as the date for a $1.5 million bond election to conduct engineering studies and buy land and water rights in the Owens Valley.[39]

Hindsight makes it clear that the acquisition of the three private water companies, coupled with the labor's continuing advocacy of municipal ownership, had primed the pump for the flow of Owens River water and electric power to Los Angeles. The 1892-1901 buyouts predisposed Angelenos to undertake the hugely expensive Owens River

aqueduct for three reasons. First, they reaffirmed the pueblo rights that had been set aside in 1868 but never forgotten by most residents. Second, municipalized water turned out to be even cheaper than Mayor Snyder had claimed in his 1904 message to the council. The L.A. Water Department charged rates only a little over one-third as high as those of privately-run systems in San Francisco and Oakland.[40] And of course most Angelenos who doubted Mulholland's warnings about an immediate water crisis nevertheless agreed with his view that the city could not keep growing without the aqueduct. For all these reasons the Council of Labor, *Union Labor News,* and most other newspapers and civic groups in Los Angeles endorsed the exploratory 1905 bond issue. Voters overwhelmingly approved it that September.[41]

Municipalization Has a Party

Five months later a new workers' organization, the Public Ownership Party, entered the public arena, stumped for office, made support for the aqueduct its burning issue, and stiffened voters' willingness to float a $23 million bond issue in 1907 for construction of the big ditch.

The new party took advantage of the American Federation of Labor's change of heart toward independent politicking by local unions and central labor bodies. Without abandoning its admonition to "reward friends, punish enemies", the AFL now approved the mobilization of straight labor parties when Demipubs ignored labor's demands. It was Lemuel Biddle, a veteran of the city's radical movements, who pushed his Machinists' Lodge No. 311 in December, 2005 to seek the cooperation of other unions in forging a new political vehicle for the 1906 elections. Its first incarnation was a shortlived but pivotal Anti-Citizens' Alliance (ACA) composed of union members and their relatives, a sprinkling of professionals and entrepreneurs, and a few left-wing progressives including Richard H. Norton, whom we have met as a leader of the Davenport recall. The ACA's

rather unfortunate name reflected its political mission to take on the Citizens' Alliance, Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association (M&M), and other units of Otis's open-shop army.[42]

A month or so in the planning, the ACA did not immediately draw unanimous support from the city's unions. The *Union Labor News* sniped that some "effervescent" labor activists "would like to see us rush into politics, but the unions are industrial and not political."[43] Proponents of business unionism within LATU (Typographical No. 174) tacked in the same direction, withholding financial support from the ACA and aggravating a two-year-old split in that union.[44] Negative attitudes toward the new formation soon vanished, however, and they were never widely held. The planning went forward, and Biddle was elected president of the Central Labor Council.[45] Soon he and his allies were ready to launch their new fighting organization.

"At a great mass meeting on January 27, 1906," Stimson records, "the unions of Los Angeles...organized the Anti-Citizens' Alliance with nearly four thousand members and pledged it to a dual policy: no patronage of merchants favoring the Citizens' Alliance, and no votes for political candidates refusing to abjure the Alliance." Union members overflowed the pit and galleries of Simpson Auditorium, the city's largest hall. The *Examiner* estimated their number at more than 6,000, counting those who had to organize a huge sidebar meeting outside on the sidewalk. The mammoth crowd was exuberant but disciplined. Only a few participants looked worried. They were the city's elected politicians, invited to sit on the podium but choosing instead the relative anonymity of the great hall.

What they heard was a scathing attack on the M&M, Citizen's Alliance, and the capitalists these two organizations defended. Speaker after speaker declared that the Citizen's Alliance had fomented "strife in the community with a view to delivering the city gov-

ernment to Huntington, Otis, the gas, electric, and telephone monopolies and other combinations and persons seeking to place unjust burdens upon the citizens and taxpayers of Los Angeles." The most eloquent broadside was fired at the open-shop fraternity by LATU president Stanley B. Wilson, who blamed the strength of the Citizens' Alliance on the economism and aversion to politics of his own and several other unions. Evidence of the shifting ground within labor's conservative wing can be seen in the fact that LATU members Arthur Hay, James Roche, Francis Drake, and John Murray joined Wilson on ACA's steering committee. When the printers met on January 28, Drake called for, and got, a rising vote of thanks for Wilson's "magnificent speech at Simpson Auditorium."[46]

Five days later the *Union Labor News* reported that "the unions are wide-awake and stirring."[47] Organizers had fanned out into the wards where they were hard at work handing out lists of unfair merchants, training precinct captains, and recruiting union members and other residents into ward branches of a Public Ownership League. The ACA soon doubled its initial 4,000 membership. Its activities had all the looks of a political party in the making. Guided by Vinette of the carpenters, Biddle of the machinists and Central Labor Council, and Wilson, Roche, Drake, Gray, M.S. Culver, and Murray of the printers, with encouragement from Job Harriman and horrified protests from other SP leaders, the Anti-Citizens' Alliance reinvented itself as the Public Ownership Party on February 21, 1906.[48] Its 1902 forerunner had hatched at a discreet distance from the official labor movement, but the new party campaigned with the open endorsement of the Central Labor Council and its affiliates.[49] James Gray's founding role showed that the rift between the two wings of unionism was healing. Life in Los Angeles had radicalized the conservatives, and radicalism would drive the movement forward for the next nine years.

On September 14 the *Union Labor News* published John Murray's call for a nominating convention to be held two weeks later. Mindful of the riverbed scandal that had

shocked the city in March and April, Murray echoed the 1902 party's assertion that the sale of utility franchises inevitably led to corruption. Now, however, he brought this argument front and center. His call asserted the following:

> "WHEREAS, the fact has been demonstrated to every thinking person that both the Democrat and Republican parties are completely dominated by corporations...; and
> "WHEREAS, these monopolies charge extortionate rates for service, shirk the payment of legitimate rate of taxation, pack political caucuses, dominate primary elections and nominating conventions, and name candidates who will be willing tools of these corporations;
> "THEREFORE....*as the private ownership of public utilities is the cause of all political corruption, the Public Ownership Party has been formed for the purpose of promoting and establishing public ownership,* and...[a] complete city ticket will be nominated." [50]

One Angeleno answering the call for a new party was Fred J. Spring, who earned his first money as a day laborer, then worked the carpenter's trade for a dozen years while studying law at night, and ended up as one of the city's most respected labor attorneys. He had already represented union members in a number of cases and would later assist Job Harriman in defense of hundreds of workers arrested during the citywide strikes of 1910. Spring was particularly drawn to the anti-corruption aspect of Murray's call. In a September 20 speech before the teamsters union, he insisted that the bribing of public officials by corporations seeking franchises caused most of the corruption in city government. "There is not a voter in Los Angeles who would contend that the water supply of the city should again be placed in the hands of a private corporation," he said.[51] A week later Spring was voted the new party's sixth-ward council candidate.[52]

His opinions of malfeasance in public office collided sharply with those expressed by Lee C. Gates, a lawyer whom the progressives (a.k.a. "nonpartisans") chose in typical closed-door fashion to be their mayoral candidate. On October 4, six months after a pliant city council had voted to hand Henry Huntington a railway right of way through the L.A. riverbed for a pittance so small it was virtually a steal, Gates told the *L.A. News*, "There is no great evil that needs correction, as I see the situation. There is no graft, no scandal,

and no need for reform." Gates keynoted a large banquet held in Huntington's honor at Pasadena's Hotel Maryland six days later. "In flowery phrases and well-turned sentences," the *Union Labor News* reported, "Mr. Gates praised Huntington to the skies. Huntington's 'system' was beyond and above all other systems a business model that produced results and dividends. Upon Huntington's system, concluded Attorney Gates, might well be patterned the businesslike administration of a great city like Los Angeles."[53] There you have, without the usual cloaking rhetoric, the actual economic, moral, and political rubric of most Los Angeles progressives, a century ago.

Local Public Ownership Leagues elected five delegates per precinct to the September 28 convention of the Public Ownership party, which then unanimously elected Stanley Wilson as its mayoral candidate. Of the twenty-two men and women nominated for the city council, city executive, and school board seats, sixteen were union members, three were labor lawyers, and one was a leader of the women's movement. (Occupations of the remaining two could not be identified.)[54] The Public Ownership ticket ran on the strongest, broadest municipal ownership platform ever seen in Los Angeles before or since. "Having entrenched their creatures in public office," it declared, "the gas, electric, street railway, telephone, and other local monopolies pay such taxes as they please, and give the least possible service for the greatest possible cost....The Public Ownership Party enters municipal politics committed to the fullest possible measure of public ownership..."[55]

From their campaign headquarters in the Metropolitan Club at 535 S. Broadway, the party's candidates fanned out to speak at street corners, civic clubs, and tent meetings across the city, seeking popular support these and other demands of their platform:

- "The acquisition of all necessary rights of way and the construction, ownership and operation by the City of Los Angeles of a steam or electric railway to Owens River, and the bringing of Owens River water to Los Angeles.

- " The utilization of Owens River water to generate power for a municipal electric plant, to furnish the people with light and power at cost.
- "The construction, ownership, and operation by the city of an electric railroad to San Pedro Harbor.
- "The construction, ownership and operation by the city of a gas plant....
- "The retention of the river bed by the city, rights of way to be granted in such manner that the city shall at all times have complete control of this valuable property." [56]

Several of these planks went beyond anything that Eaton, Mulholland, and the city council had publicly proposed. Eaton, a capitalist at heart, was content to let the Southern Pacific lay tracks along the aqueduct and turn a profit on them. "If it will pay the S.P.," one reader wrote the *Union Labor News*, "it will pay the city to build the road, own it and operate it, and save money by hauling [its] own freight, passengers, &c." Mulholland and city officials did all they could to quiet any talk about distributing public power from aqueduct generating stations. "Now the power part of it we have not given any thought," Mulholland acknowledged in August, 1905. "What we have been looking for is water to drink."[57]

When Mulholland made that statement the Edison Electric Corporation had been stirring up opposition to the aqueduct, and he hoped to placate its president, John B. Miller. Edison and the other electric companies knew the aqueduct's gravity flow might lead to publicly-owned generating stations at the points of greatest fall, and these would undercut the market for their own more costly power. At first they tried to warn voters off the bonds. This effort wilted as public support for the aqueduct grew, and the companies ended the campaign by giving the bonds a nominal endorsement. Progressives in the Non-Partisan Party rarely mentioned public ownership of water or electric power during their campaign. Most of them had been lifelong Republicans and preferred regulation to expropriation. Others were allies of railway magnate Henry Huntington, who owned a power company, and they all feared a labor victory at the polls. Democratic support for municipal ownership was late in coming and borrowed heavily from labor's platform.[58]

Thus, by default or influence, the Public Ownership Party bore a disproportionate burden of educating the public about the benefits of city ownership of the aqueduct and its generating stations during 1906 and 1907 aqueduct bond campaigns. In this effort it was joined by an Owens River Campaign Committee (made up of businesses and business-oriented civic groups) and most of the city's newspapers, though only the *Record* and *Tribune* recognized the Public Ownership Party's role. The *Tribune* called its platform "altogether the most progressive of any that has been placed before the people in this part of the State."[59]

Actually, that was not quite true. The Socialist Party's platform was almost equally ambitious, calling for municipalization "of everything that is publicly used, with the highest degree of democratic management, and the complete elimination of social parasitism." It failed to mention the aqueduct, however--an oversight which foreshadowed its rather bizarre approach to the great ditch over the next six years. Still in evidence at the party's October 27 convention was the trauma of the socialist-labor and socialist-socialist splits four years earlier. While Job Harriman bounded onstage at an eighth-ward Public Ownership Party meeting to nominate carpenter T.J. Barnes for city assessor, his former colleagues rebuked the new labor formation:

> "WHEREAS, the Public Ownership party has put up a ticket in this city, and
> "WHEREAS, the Socialist party has from the beginning of its existence never wavered in its uncompromising fight for the rights of the working class, therefore
> "RESOLVED, that we deplore the formation of the Public Ownership party and the consequent division of the working class at the ballot box, which division can only result in benefit to the capitalist class and the detriment of the working class." [60]

The criticism was not without merit. Just as Otis lost sleep over Republicans and Nonpartisans spoiling each other's chances, so did unions and socialists have good reason to worry that each would steal votes from the other, throwing the election to a Demipub. This was a highly interesting, and unpredictable, election campaign!

Wilson's five challengers for the mayor's office were the Nonpartisan Gates, the Republican Walter Lindley, the Democrat Arthur C. Harper, the Socialist Party's Frank A. Marek, and the Prohibitionists' Wiley J. Phillips. Only the *Record* and the *Union Labor News* backed Wilson. The *Times* treated him with utter contempt as a "tousle-headed young man" who didn't belong on the hustings with his more seasoned rivals. Otis, in fact, was rattled by organized labor's brazen assault on politics as usual. Worried that the split between regular Republicans and Nonpartisans would install Wilson in city hall, he abandoned all pretense at fair journalism. A graft scandal had disgraced the labor-backed administration of Mayor Eugene Schmitz in San Francisco, and Otis had his editors tar the Public Ownership Party with the same brush. On October 10 Wilson spoke at one of the packed tent meetings that energized his campaign. It so happened that State Building Trades Council president P.H. McCarthy was visiting another part of town from San Francisco that same night. Reminding readers that McCarthy had backed Schmitz's election, the *Times* allowed as how "the union labor boss... failed to appear at the meeting, but he is pulling the strings of the public ownership campaign here." (Genghis Khan likewise failed to appear at the meeting, but Otis pointed no finger at him.) While the *Times'* reporters were falsely accusing Wilson of public drunkenness, its editorial writers warned that

> "[t]he elements of disorder are already holding nightly conclaves at the Metropolitan Club, preparing to take advantage of such an opening. If the forces of law and order and right are divided between Mr. Gates and Dr. Lindley, so that neither may hope for a plurality of all the votes cast, what an excellent opportunity for the labor unionists, the municipal ownershipites and the Hearstites to round up with all the opponents of organized society of all breeds and colors and elect as Mayor such a cad as Stanley 'Seagram' Wilson! " [61]

The chief effect of the *Times*' diatribes and a series of backstage efforts to get Gates, Lindley, and/or Harper to withdraw from the race[62] was this: Democrats, Republicans, and Nonpartisans ceded the campaign's ideological ground largely to the labor party. Un-

ionists made good use of this opportunity, galvanizing public support for the Owens River aqueduct, municipal hydropower, and other aspects of "gas and water socialism." Organized labor's key issues dominated the election, but, once again and not for the last time, its candidates did not.

Wilson lost his race for mayor, drawing considerable support from the eastside wards but lagging well behind his Nonpartisan and Republican rivals and the Democrat Harper, who won. The rest of the Public Ownership ticket fared no better. A peculiar fate of Los Angeles labor parties during the last decade of the 19th century and first decade of the 20th was to see their nominees founder without exception in inverse proportion to the success of their vision for the city. This is one reason why historians, even those from or sympathetic to the working class, have ignored what L.A.'s workers accomplished while overcrediting the lesser accomplishments of progressives who managed to get themselves elected. So it was in the fall and winter of 1906-07. The Nonpartisans elected four men to the city council, the Public Ownership Party none. Nonpartisan candidates said little or nothing about the aqueduct, Public Ownership candidates proclaimed its value to the city day in and day out, and Harper rode into the mayoralty on what was, almost literally, the crest of the Public Ownership Party's demand for municipally-distributed aqueduct water and power. The losers, it turned out, called the most important shots.[63]

Six months after the Public Ownership Party's defeat, on a day when L.A.'s voters turned out in greater numbers than for any previous election, they agreed to float a $23 million bond issue authorizing the city to build "a certain revenue-producing municipal improvement, namely, water works to supply the city with water from the Owens River Valley, including...construction of aqueducts, ditches, canals, tunnels, reservoirs and other works necessary therefore."[64] Over the next few years this decision would give rise to the Department of Water & Power (DWP), largest municipal agency of its kind in the

world. The DWP would bring Los Angeles enough aqueduct water and power for two million people, dramatically raise taxes,[65] survive the noisy opposition of the city's power companies and *L.A. Times* publisher Harrison Gray Otis, weather a capital strike by the New York banks that bought municipal bonds, and spur the phenomenal growth of Los Angeles.[66] In other words the same Public Ownership Party campaign that failed to elect a single candidate in December, 1906 gave the city an impetus that still guides its water and power decisions today.

A Lowball Estimate's High Cost to Workers

William Mulholland's singleminded pursuit of the Owens River aqueduct has won the praise of generations of historians. A scenic ridgeline drive has been named for him. A circular fountain plops solemnly in his honor at the corner of Los Feliz Boulevard and Riverside Drive in northern Los Angeles. No one, however, has memorialized the workers who built the aqueduct or the unions that campaigned to municipalize the city's private water supply and then fought as tenaciously as Mulholland for the aqueduct. Yet the careers of the celebrated chief engineer and the all-but-forgotten L.A. labor movement were fatefully intertwined. Without the union-backed buyouts of the private water companies between 1892 and 1904, Mulholland, an employee of the largest, would never have been hired by the city or enjoyed his long hour in the historical sun. He was named chief engineer of the Aqueduct Bureau in 1906, and from that moment on his relationship with organized labor turned dark, deceptive, and bitter.

While politicking for the Owens River aqueduct Mulholland made two errors of judgment, each based on the same strategic miscalculation.

The strategic miscalculation was his failure to understand how thoroughly two decades of agitprop by Knights of Labor, Nationalists, Populists, Socialists, and organized workers had radicalized the city's electorate into a willingness, or more accurately, an

eagerness, to shoulder the tax burden of a municipalized system importing a huge flow of water from the Owens Valley. Why would a highly intelligent man, whose experience of life was unusually broad, misjudge the mentality of so many workaday Angelenos? It is not an easy question to answer.

Mulholland liked to think of himself as a commoner. He grew up in Dublin, started his independent life as a seaman, shipped out to New York, worked the lumber camps of Michigan and the mines of Arizona, and in 1878 entered our story as a lowly *zanja*-cleaner for the Los Angeles City Water Company. Here is what he told the *L.A. Examiner* in 1913:

> "My sympathy is alive for these men [who built the aqueduct], and most of the time raw and bleeding, to think that they do so much to so little purpose. I know this type of man; in my early life as a sailor I worked with them and slept with them, and I would rather be with them, to sit around camp with them, than to be in a circle of lawyers and doctors and bankers. Professional men are trained to conceal their thoughts, but these men are frank, blunt and human, and a man gets more real insight into human life and affairs with them than with the other type." [67]

Nevertheless, in his mid-fifties, at a stage in his life where he was compulsively driving the aqueduct to completion, Mulholland moved almost exclusively among the city's professional, financial, and political elites. He had come to think like them, especially in the matter of labor relations. His praise for the "roving, happy-go-lucky lot" who toiled on the aqueduct was all well and good, but from 1908 to 1913 he subjected them to as iron a law of wages as he could get away with. To maintain a semblance of his usual composure while carrying out this ruthless policy meant that he simply could not afford to stay in emotional contact with the street. If Mulholland had fully appreciated the electorate's mood in 1904-05 he would have felt no need to exaggerate the city's thirst or to lowball his estimate of the aqueduct's cost. The first of those errors of judgment led him to propose an oversized construction project whose 140 miles of conduit, three reservoirs, 60 miles of canals, nearly 150 tunnels, and many miles of steel siphons would convey

and store up to 58 million gallons a day for a future population of 390,000 people. The second error led him to promise Angelenos that he would complete this massive undertaking for $23 million. This was the sop the Aqueduct Bureau's chief engineer threw to voters who did not need it--over 90 percent of them, after all, would soon endorse the construction bond issue. He lowballed the aqueduct's true cost by a stunning amount. The Reclamation Service pegged it at $36 million and consultants engaged by the *L.A. Examiner* said Angelenos would pay $50 million to drain the Owens Valley of most of its water.[68]

Mulholland's low estimate drew a strong response from Job Harriman, erstwhile leader of the local Socialist Party. Seeking with little immediate success to regain his influence over the party's direction, Harriman pored through the hydrological tables for the San Fernando Valley in 1904 after word leaked out about the Owens River scheme. He decided that all the water Los Angeles would need for many years could be drawn from a point in the valley known as the narrows. Harriman took aim at Mulholland's 1905-07 warnings of a water famine and his $23 million promise, arguing that the latter ruse would make a fully municipal aqueduct impossible. Recalling this fervent critique during a 1911 debate over public hydropower with corporate attorney and *Herald* editor Thomas E. Gibbon, Harriman declared:

> "It has been said that I have opposed the construction of the water enterprise. That is untrue: I never opposed the enterprise. The position that I took in 1904 and which I still hold is this:
>
> "I believe that all of the water in the narrows should have been developed before we bonded the city for millions of dollars. I said at that time, and I still say, that twenty-three millions was not sufficient to construct the aqueduct, build the railway to parallel the aqueduct, construct a power plant, and bring the aqueduct to Los Angeles.
>
> "What have you now? The railway is owned by the Southern Pacific, there is a nine million additional bond issue for the power plant, and the aqueduct is still 27 miles away."[69]

The law of unforeseen consequences soon played a trick on both Harriman and, as he slowly reasserted his leadership over it, the Socialist Party. Convinced that Mulholland

had lied about the drought and the aqueduct's cost in order to enrich his San Fernando Valley friends, Harriman began pursuing fraud and malfeasance more energetically than he pursued the party's holy grail of municipal ownership. He and the party opposed the 1907 bond issue, leaving them politically alienated from the vast majority of Angelenos. Over the next five years, as organized labor entered a protracted debate with Otis, the real estate lobby, and the three private electric utilities over the municipalization of aqueduct power, the Socialist Party remained transfixed by its pursuit of scandal. In 1912 it used an initiative election to force a public investigation of its charges (then numbering about 15) against the managers of the aqueduct. The results turned up some notable problems, but none that justified the party's decision to wander off into a five-year ideological cul-de-sac.[70]

In his probing *Water and Power* study William Kahrl observes that Los Angeles was being asked to take "a terrific gamble on the assurances of one man, William Mulholland, who [despite his title] had no training as an engineer and no experience in the management of construction projects of any significant size." Doubts about the accuracy of his accounting forced the city to ask a panel of consulting engineers for a second opinion. They agreed that his estimate was woefully understated. To bring the aqueduct's cost under the state-imposed bonding limit of $24.5 million ($23 million for construction plus the $1.5 million water and land rights issue voted in 1905), they proposed, and the city accepted, a drastic scaling-down of Mulholland's plan. Out went the three reservoirs, many of the steel siphons, and the aqueduct's wayward trek through Lancaster, Palmdale, and the San Gabriel Mountains. The final blueprint deleted 20 miles of conduit and 7 miles of tunnels, considerably shortening the project. Even as redesigned, however, the aqueduct would bring Owens Valley water only as far as the San Fernando Valley, with no provision for carrying it the rest of the way to Los Angeles. And the cost-shaving did

not end there. To keep his $23 million promise, Mulholland would soon have to forego a 127-mile city-built railroad he'd proposed to carry supplies to his construction crews.

Kahrl sums up the predicament Los Angeles found itself in as 1906 faded into 1907:

> "It later became part of the personal legend of William Mulholland that he completed the aqueduct within the budget set for him, a remarkable achievement for any engineering enterprise of such magnitude. The project Mulholland built for $25.4 million, however, lacked storage reservoirs, power plants, and a distribution system--in short, all the components of the aqueduct that would actually make it useful to the people of Los Angeles. These parts of the project had instead to be funded from other sources." [71]

What other sources, exactly? Annexed towns and future bond sales would help the city pay the extra costs Mulholland had imposed on it, but these would not be nearly enough. Aqueduct workers would have to do their unwilling part, forfeiting wages, proper nutrition, and in some cases life and limb to build the downsized aqueduct for the lowballed $23 million. The price they paid in lost income and proper care was enormous. Indignantly protested by the Los Angeles labor movement a century ago, it has been overlooked by most of the aqueduct's recent chroniclers. One of them, political scientist Steven P. Erie, has written that the 1905 and 1907 aqueduct bond issues brought the city to the limit of its legal indebtedness. "As a result," he says, "Los Angeles was forced to use lower-cost municipal labor to construct the aqueduct. A city work force, ranging in size up to 3,900, toiled on the project for six years; Los Angeles' new civil service system largely eliminated opportunities for graft and corruption."[72] What Erie utterly misses is the human implication of "lower-cost municipal labor" and the fact that most of the aqueduct laborers and mechanics were denied the usual civil service protections.

Ditching the Civil Service

One of the many ironies of progressive reform was a message Mayor Meredith "Pinky" Snyder sent the city council on Jan. 4, 1904. "In no city department," he announced, "has the operation of civil service rules been more advantageous than in the Water Department where the corps of employees, trained under the exacting management

of the old [private] water company, have almost all been retained under civil service; and where new employees have been obtained of high efficiency because of the careful examinations conducted by the Civil Service Commission...."[73] Yet just three years later, when voters approved the most ambitious water project in L.A.'s history, they also authorized the city council to *exempt* most of its huge workforce from the selfsame, eminently laudable, highly effective, progressively-designed civil service.

How and why did this remarkable turnabout happen?

The central figure in our explanatory tale remains, of course, the man who was both superintendent of the L.A. Water Department and chief engineer of the Bureau of the Los Angeles Aqueduct.

When voters overwhelmingly approved the $23 million construction bond issue on June 12, 1907, Mulholland found himself in a tight spot. Material costs were more or less fixed, even with the city running its own cement plant at Monolith. Labor costs, on the other hand, could be suppressed to bring the aqueduct in at the requisite $23 million. Mulholland was well aware that sub-par wages, speedup incentives, and other measures to extract savings would be hard to impose on a relatively stable, partially unionized workforce recruited in Los Angeles. So what to do? How could he hold labor costs below the standard wage then being paid in communities along the aqueduct's route?

The solution, worked out by Mulholland, City Attorney William B. Mathews, and Gen. Adna Romanza Chaffee, was to exempt transient and preferably immigrant workers from all civil service protections and them at sites far from Los Angeles.[74] Mathews had joined Mulholland in some of the earliest meetings to plot the diversion of Owens River water. The two men had sold the plan to the Municipal League and other civic groups, and together had filed an application for a right of way across federal lands.[75] Chaffee was a lieutenant-general who had retired to Los Angeles after leading victorious troops

against the Philippines during the Spanish-American war--an exploit that earned him the unshakeable admiration of Harrison B. Otis. In early 1908 Mayor Harper named Chaffee to the Board of Public Works, charged with supervising the mammoth aqueduct construction project. There he and Mulholland sat on an aqueduct advisory committee that originated most of the board's labor and engineering policies.[76] All three men shared the conviction that labor was not only the most critical cost in the aqueduct budget but the most elastic. Everything depended on where it was hired and how it was managed.

The Mulholland strategy required a drastic retreat from the six-year-old civil service provisions of the city charter. While the civil service was first and foremost a management tool reflecting the new interest in time-discipline and the "scientific" division of labor, it also offered workers compensatory safeguards in hiring, firing, promotions, and to some extent wages. Both the disciplinary and protective aspects of the system had come under fire in 1906 from the same progressive reformers who earlier sang its praises. Among them was Charles Dwight Willard.

That fall the city council named Willard, Mathews, and other allies of Mulholland and Henry Huntington to a charter revision committee. Willard's gift of a 33-year franchise to the electric railway magnate has been noted above (pp. 29-30). His favor to Mulholland was substantially greater. On the charter committee he and Mathews waged a gentlemen's debate over the best way to deny civil service coverage to the thousands of workers the city would hire if and when voters endorsed the sale of aqueduct construction bonds. Political considerations led both men to bury the aqueduct issue in a more general easing of civil service regulations, but they differed over the best way to win voters' consent for jettisoning such a ballyhooed reform. Mathews proposed a flat-out exemption for construction workers, without further ado. Willard, sensing that such a step might prove too controversial, thought it wiser to set up a scheme in which any department head could

request an exemption for a specific group of employees, the Civil Service Commission could approve it, and the city council could confirm it by a two-thirds vote.[77] The charter committee chose Willard's broader but more carefully hedged amendment. It was sent to the voters and, because it was carefully hedged, they approved it in 1907.

Insiders knew that the sole purpose of the amendment was to give the Public Works Department a free hand in hiring, firing, underpaying, and disciplining the aqueduct workforce. The *Los Angeles Herald*, which closely monitored the charter committee's proceedings, bared this motive and noted the argumentative smokescreen that Mulholland, Mathews, and Willard had thrown up around it:

> "This exemption from civil service is only for the work in constructing the Owens River aqueduct, and is advised for the reason that many workers, skilled and unskilled, are to be employed in the construction of the conduit, and as it is expected labor will be at a premium, those employed on the aqueduct will not care to take the civil service examinations for the same wages they would receive on private work without being subjected to an examination.
>
> "Common laborers also would have to come to Los Angeles to register with the Civil Service Commission, and it is expected to draw labor from as near the line of construction as possible....
>
> "[I]t would be extremely inconvenient and a detriment to the service to compel all employes to come to Los Angeles from the desert and valley to receive their monthly wages. If this were necessary, half the month would be consumed in coming and going." [78]

Notable in these arguments is their disingenuousness. Simplified exams, registration sites, and wage payments could easily have been provided both at the aqueduct work camps (through negotiations with surrounding counties) and at the Civil Service Commission in downtown L.A. Since Mulholland's plan to hire transients on the high desert would have enraged many Angelenos--doubly so because he had promised to employ local workers at favorable wages[79]--the case for the charter amendment had to be fudged. Only after the bond vote did *Municipal Affairs*, published by Willard's Municipal League, confirm that it was drafted "to provide a working basis for the aqueduct and to adjust the civil service to changing conditions."[80]

The Central Labor Council and its member unions apparently took Mulholland's ear-

lier promise to pay prevailing wages at face value. They awoke from this sweet dream in the spring of 1907 after digesting the import of a gutted civil service. At the time, John Murray, an outspoken socialist, was editing labor's weekly newspaper, the *Citizen*. Since he had helped draft municipal ownership planks for the Union Labor Party's platform in 1902 and the Public Ownership Party's platform in 1906, it was as a champion, not a foe, of the aqueduct that he wrote the following in May, 1907:

> "[N]either money nor labor should be spared in an undertaking such as is contemplated in the Owens River scheme. Water we need and water we will have--but it does not follow that we should be compelled to swallow, along with the life-giving fluid, a scheme, a plot, whereby we are to be robbed of our daily bread....
>
> "At the last municipal election a charter amendment was carried providing that certain city officials should be exempt from the rules and regulations of the Civil Service Commission....Seizing upon this opening, made ready for them by those who framed this charter amendment, the Board of Public Works has removed from the hands of the Civil Service Commission all jurisdiction over those 'persons employed on the construction of public works' in connection with the Owens River scheme.
>
> "What is the result? It is this--where in the past a laborer, who was physically fit, might register with the Civil Service Commission and be sure of work in the order of 'first come first served,' now this same laborer is placed wholly at the mercy of the superintendents, or straw-bosses, on the construction work, to hire or discharge at their personal pleasure. It [is] within the power of these superintendents to refuse work to every union man....
>
> "There is but one way for the working people of Los Angeles to escape the trap set for them....This way is to compel the Civil Service Commission to resume their jurisdiction over all labor employed by or for the city....See to it--you members of the Civil Service Commission--that the working people of this city receive the protection which the law allows and resume your jurisdiction over the labor which is to be employed on the Owens River waterworks."[81]

In the same week that this editorial appeared, the Central Labor Council named Murray, Fred C. Wheeler, Lemuel D. Biddle, Stanley Wilson, W.A. Engle, and five other unionists to a "committee of ten" charged with orchestrating organized labor's campaign for the aqueduct. They immediately approached the Civil Service commissioners and urged them *not* to exempt the aqueduct workforce. Wheeler, the committee's chair, argued that the 5,000 or so men to be employed on the project needed the same wage, hour, and workrule safeguards as all other public workers. Shortly afterward the committee met with Mulholland, former Mayor Snyder, and the co-chairs of the Owens River Campaign Committee, Perry W. Weidner and Meyer Lissner. Wheeler again opposed the civil serv-

ice exemption and was taken aback to hear Mulholland claim that laborers wouldn't toil long in the desert heat and to keep 5,000 at work would mean actually hiring up to 10,000. He therefore favored the exemption. The *Citizen* assailed his implication that laborers would be driven hard enough to quit in droves and that a large reserve army of labor would be recruited to supply their replacements. "In fact," the weekly newspaper said, "it is evidently the purpose of the men who now have the project in hand to not only secure a surplus of water for this city but a surplus of labor likewise--such a surplus as will guarantee the cheapest going price that the market affords."[82]

What happened after these meetings is a matter of some historical dispute. According to the *Citizen*, "The chairman of the committee, F.C. Wheeler of Carpenters No. 158, was listened to with close attention by the members of the Board, but only a single member of that body responded unequivocally in favor of this request from organized labor and that man was Dr. John R. Haynes."[83]

Haynes was the Civil Service Board's president when he heard Wheeler oppose the aqueduct exemption. Though he agreed with labor activists on most public issues, his respect for Mulholland's management of the Owens River project must have made him think twice on this one. Political scientist James W. Ingram contends that L.A.'s progressives often set aside their commitment to social, moral, and structural reforms when these might slow the city's economic growth, and he offers Haynes as his prime example. The physician's credentials in structural reform were "beyond question," he says, yet in 1906 he "supported a charter amendment exempting city employees from civil service in order to allow the construction of the Owens Valley Aqueduct." As evidence Ingram submits this passage from a letter Haynes wrote that year:

> "The proposed amendment...is designed mainly to meet special exigencies in the construction of the Owens Valley Aqueduct and the completion of the outfall sewer by the city. It is urged (and very correctly) that ordinary labor is now scarce and hard to secure. In the Owens Valley work it

> will be necessary to employ men wherever they can be found--men already inured to the heat and hardships of the desert....To oblige all of these men to come to Los Angeles and register in accordance with civil service law, before they could begin work, would be a foolish adherence to red tape, which would seriously cripple the service."84

Haynes' rationale seems facile, given the abuse of the aqueduct's workforce that such an exemption would clearly invite. The Civil Service Commission had a greater obligation to protect vulnerable, non-union workers out on the desert than Haynes acknowledges in the above letter. It could have set up three or four registration and monitoring centers along the aqueduct, but this it refused to do. In 1906 Haynes clearly supported the exemption. Did he change his mind after hearing Wheeler's protest in the spring of 1907? Was he outvoted by his fellow civil service commissioners? The *Citizen* report implies that he did, and he was, but the emphatic nature of his 1906 letter, which offers not a hint of sympathy for labor's point of view, argues otherwise. Even if Haynes did change his mind, he failed to carry the other commissioners with him. The civil service exemption stuck. As a consequence only a relative handful of unionized skilled tradesmen and miners worked on the aqueduct. It was gouged out of the southern California desert mostly by laborers who were carefully selected, defenseless, and therefore exploited to the hilt.

Bindle Stiffs, Low Wages, Bad Food

At distant stations the Board of Public Works hired somewhere between 5,000 and 10,000 men to build the big ditch. Skilled native-born mechanics and miners toiled among them, especially in the tunnels and on the siphons, but most jobs were done by itinerant laborers--an army of "bindle stiffs" (named for the bedding they carried on their backs) drawn from Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, Montenegro, Switzerland, Mexico, and elsewhere.[85] Construction accidents abetted by Mulholland's speedup incentives and the fast pace of work killed 43 men.[86] Machinists in aqueduct shops and miners in the tunnels earned at least 50 cents to a dollar and a half a day less than those privately employed nearby.[87] Laborers' wages were likewise depressed.

In December, 1908, at his own or his union's expense, the machinist C.N. Hughes traveled along the aqueduct comparing its wages and working conditions with those in nearby metal trades shops. His observations, meticulously written out in a February 24, 1909 letter to the Board of Public Works, runs counter to much historical scholarship and hagiography (for a melding of both see Catherine Mulholland's *William Mulholland and the Rise of Los Angeles*):

> "'Gentlemen:
>
> "'When the bond issue election was brought up some time since for the purpose of building the Los Angeles aqueduct, I among many others of my craft was asked by Messrs. Mulholland and Lippincott to support such bond issue at the election, which we did; both of these gentlemen promising that if such an election was carried our craft would get a square deal in the way of wages and conditions; meaning that such men would get equally as much as was paid for this class of work in the vicinity of where these men would be employed."

Hughes then reported that he found most aqueduct machinists were working for $2.50 to $3.00 in a standard day, this low rate of pay staying the same for overtime; their counterparts in the private metal trades shops of Bakersfield and Mojave were earning $3.52 to $4.00 for an eight-hour shift and 50 percent more for overtime. On his return to Los Angeles Hughes asked for and received a copy of the aqueduct wage resolution which the Board of Public Works had adopted on December 26, 1908. It read, in part:

> "Two machinists, 'Class A,' $4.50 per diem.
> "Forty machinists, 'Class B,' $3.50 per diem.

Hughes pointed out that the Board had consistently been violating its own wage policy. "In view of the above facts and information," he wrote,

> "I ask in behalf of my craftsmen that your Honorable Board at once see that your resolution and instructions are carried out, and that all machinists in the employ of the Los Angeles aqueduct will receive a minimum rate of $3.50 per day, and time and one-half for all overtime rendered over the eight-hour workday..."

Chaffee chose to set matters straight himself. He and his advisory committee took the extraordinary position that the resolution's rates were *maximums*, while the rate actually paid a machinist would depend on what his foreman thought of him. He wrote Hughes:

> "If a machinist is worth but $2.50 he is given it. If $3.00 he is given it, etc., and as this course re-

dounds to the benefit of the taxpayers, it seems best to this committee that the Board of Public Works adheres to it." [88]

End of discussion. It was pointless to tell an Otis ally like Chaffee that what a foreman thought of a good machinist who sometimes complained about working conditions was far less favorable than what he thought of a mediocre machinist who kept his mouth shut.

Needless to say real wages on the line did not improve. The city's unions had organized only a small minority of aqueduct workers and so held a weak hand in negotiating for them, but negotiate they did, through exposures in the *Record* and other newspapers. Three years after Hughes appealed to the Board of Public Works, the Central Labor and Metal Trades Councils sent this resolution to the daily press:

"Whereas, It was shown to Mr. Mulholland and the Aqueduct Commission that they were paying riveters, caulkers, and chippers 90¢ per day below the scale paid by the Lacey Manufacturing Company on the same class of work in that vicinity; and

"Whereas, Mr. Mulholland stated that he thought the men on the Aqueduct were receiving enough pay; Therefore, be it

"Resolved:...that we condemn the stand taken by Mr. Mulholland...[and deprecate the attitude assumed by the Mayor, City Council, and Aqueduct Board in delaying, unnecessarily, the increase in wages asked for by the committee of the Central Labor Council for all classes of labor on the Los Angeles Aqueduct." [89]

From 1909 to 1912 the Central Labor Council also protested the high cost and wretched condition of meals served at 55 work camps by the aqueduct's sole mess hall operator, Daniel Joseph Desmond. He had been awarded the food contract largely through his family's long association with Mulholland. Workers on the big ditch often found maggots and worse in their food, and in the summer and fall of 1909 many of them refused to eat it. Losing money, Desmond raised meal prices. He also persuaded the Board of Public Works to award him a $5 weekly deduction from all the men's wages whether they ate his delicacies or not. When miners and other workers in the Saugus area refused to sign wage-deduction slips, 500 were forced to quit. Scores more joined them in one of many strikes that plagued the aqueduct under the labor system created by Mulhol-

land, Chaffee, and progressive Mayor George Alexander. Alarmed by the protests, Chaffee toured some of the camps in 1909 and airily proclaimed that "one cannot expect to get things as good as at home." This remark did nothing to quiet the protests. "Aqueduct troubles are heaping up," the August 27, 1909 *Citizen* declared. "Several hundred more men have quit work, refusing to sign away their rights and a big lump of their wages for musty bread and tainted beef ...Many nasty rumors are in the air as to the favoritism shown Commissary Contractor Desmond.[90]

A year later, despite workers' appeals to the Board of Public Works and the city council, conditions at the Desmond kitchens continued to worsen. The journalist Robert Saxmar interviewed scores of men in camps along the aqueduct for an article he wrote in December, 1910:

> "The food these men were forced to accept was packed in buckets early in the afternoon and allowed to stand therein in the kitchen until the men carried it to the shop at five-thirty o'clock. Not upon one, two, or three occasions, but upon twelve or fifteen, have the night force been compelled to throw the food out because of the stench arising from the buckets when he covers were removed....[Y]ou will search the monthly reports in vain for any record of these defects. Why? Because the doctor's report was always an O.K. on sanitation. One of the doctors told the writer that he was instructed to always send in an O.K. report on the sanitary conditions of the camp."

Saxmar happened to spot a draft of one of these missives on a stenographer's desk. Its last sentence--"Many of the men are ill with diaorrhea caused from the food"--had been blue-penciled out before it was sent to the Board of Public Works. Exactly how Chaffee and Mulholland managed to suppress honest reports and discredit the few that reached city authorities is not clear, but Mayor Alexander and the city council gratefully accepted their assurances that Desmond's meals were all that could be desired, "the bad spots were few," and the matter should be dropped.[91]

After failing to win a weekly $5 pay increase to cover the hated food tax, workers up and down the ditch walked off the job again in 1910. This time their strike lasted some 13 months, drawing energetic support from the L.A. Central Labor Council, and its affiliated

unions. The council also managed to organize a few aqueduct laborers during these years. It pestered Chaffee and Mayor Alexander without success to raise aqueduct machinists' pay to the Mojave district scale, financially assisted a strike by 2,000 tunnel-digging members of the Western Federation of Miners, and aided smaller aqueduct walkouts of machinists and blacksmiths. During the miners' strike, L.A.'s union machinists, boilermakers, steam shovel and dredge workers, steam engineers, and two unions of electricians formally called the Los Angeles Aqueduct "unfair to organized labor." [92]

The Payoff

Walkouts notwithstanding, the labor regimen installed by Mulholland and Chaffee was an unqualified success when measured by its *raison d'être:* suppress construction costs! Mulholland met his $23 million target. In the bland and masking language of Vincent Ostrom's 1953 *Water & Politics: A Study of Water Policies and Administration in the Development of Los Angeles*, "[t]he cost of the work done by force account was estimated at 20 per cent less than the cost of contracting under comparable circumstances."[93]

A more revealing appraisal, written the same year as Ostrom's, came from the pen of a young doctoral candidate at the Claremont Graduate School. Albert Howard Clodius found that the chief engineer

> "had estimated the cost of the project so low that he felt compelled to insist on speed and economy, even at the expense of quality in construction and of rapport with the workers. Although Mulholland maintained his reputation for accuracy and foresight, eventually the city had to pay dearly in high costs of maintenance, in the destructive opposition to the project among the people of the Owens Valley, and in the discontent of the aqueduct workers....On one occasion Chaffee clearly stated the attitude of himself and Mulholland toward the complaints of the workers. The first duty of the aqueduct management, he said, was to protect the city, then the men working on the project. If the interests of the two were in conflict, the men must suffer." [94]

Before 1907 the workingclass eastside wards had led other sections of Los Angeles in voting for municipal control of the water supply. This was not true of the election that financed the aqueduct: eastside wards voted for the construction bond issue in approxi-

mately the same ten-to-one ratio as the rest of the city.[95] It is not hard to see why. By election day it had become clear that local workers would get few if any jobs on the big ditch, and that the itinerant bindle stiffs whom Mulholland hired would earn relatively little for their labor. Many eastside voters also knew that Wheeler's "committee of ten" had visited Mayor Harper eleven days before the election, reminded him of his failure to bring a single union man or woman into his administration, and asked him to name at least one to the Board of Water Commissioners--a plea which he rebuffed.[96]

The wonder is that the June 12, 1907 construction bonds attracted as much blue-collar support as they did. From 1907 on, however, as conditions on the aqueduct grew steadily worse, the anger stoked by the civil service exemption and the Board of Public Works' corvée-like labor policy widened the ideological gap between progressives and unions. As we shall soon see, it also complicated the L.A. labor movement's dogged campaign for municipal ownership, driving a wedge into its ranks over the prospect of handing control of hydropower distribution to a despised progressive regime.

A Capital Slowdown

Far removed from the gritty toil of the bindle stiffs, New York banks held Los Angeles hostage. "Our citizens gave a great vote for the Owens River bonds," the *Examiner* declared on June 25, 1907, "but these bonds are not sold. They are high-class, gilt-edged, but the difficulty of finding buyers is appalling." Arguing that the bond market had hit the doldrums, the banks and bonding syndicates jacked up the interest rate Los Angeles had to pay--a penalty for pursuing municipal ownership. A major culprit was the Kountze Brothers/Leach & Company syndicate. In mid-1908 it waved off the city's call for a standard 4.0 percent rate, insisted on 4.5 percent, and refused to accept even that unless it could market all the remaining bonds at once. The city, which owed its contractors $400,000 and was holding back aqueduct work to avoid further debt, accepted the

Kountze-Leach proposal. Only some of the bonds were disposed of, however, and the syndicate continued to make trouble for the aqueduct. Its evident purpose, Mayor George Alexander declared on July 5, 1910, was "to coerce the city."[97] Most of the problem arose from a fact noted by Erie, namely, that "banks and investment firms made greater profits from high-yield stocks than from the sale of lower-interest municipal bonds."[98] Evidence of the desperate straits Los Angeles found itself in was the city's early 1911 decision to buy back some of its own bonds.

A new form of coercion, the municipal bond moratorium, arose a year later when Los Angeles needed to sell harbor and power as well as aqueduct bonds. " 'Big Business,' the *Record* editorialized that February,

> "got a fresh grip on the city of Los Angeles when Mayor Alexander and the members of the city council, with the exception of Councilman Reed, betrayed the interests of the people to the power companies by promising that Los Angeles would not issue any more bonds this year in order, so the subservient officials claim, to sell the aqueduct, power development, and harbor bonds. The power companies want to tie up the city just as long as possible, so that bonds will not be issued for the constructing of a municipal distributing system for aqueduct power, thereby cutting off a source of much profit to the power companies, and they saw a chance...to frighten the administration into the belief that it could not dispose of the bonds already for sale unless a promise was given that no other bonds would be issued this year....'Big Business' got a pretty good hold on the city when it elected Alexander and the council last December." [99]

Mayor Alexander administration stifled whatever anger he may have felt toward the power companies and bond houses. To appease them he declared a moratorium, putting new infrastructural projects on hold for the rest of that year. "The bonds of Los Angeles have been sold at par," the Feb. 26, 1912 *Citizen* reported with unconcealed sarcasm. "The bonds of Milwaukee, under the Socialists, sell at a premium. The bonds of Philadelphia, one of the most corrupt, machine-ridden cities on earth, sell at a premium. Los Angeles bonds sell at par." [100]

Like all progressive-era issues, those marketed in 1912 were general obligation bonds drawn on the city's credit--i.e. to be repaid largely from taxes. Not until the Depression

gutted property values did Los Angeles follow the Port of New York Authority in issuing revenue bonds against the earnings expected from the bonded projects themselves. In 1912 the private Alembic Club urged just this innovation on the city but it ran counter to the prevailing ideology of progressives and old-guard capitalists alike and did not come to pass. The Alembic Club drew its members from the labor movement, the Socialist Party, and the small left wing of municipal reform.[101]

L.A.'s unions watched the slow-motion capital strike against municipal ownership unfold with mounting disdain for both the bond industry and the Alexander administration. In its editorials and letters column from early 1908 to 1914, the *Citizen* urged the mayor, council, Board of Public Works, and city bond agent William B. Mathews to tap more popular sources of funds than the New York banks whose strictures they meekly accepted. One reader, W.S. Reed of Carpenters No. 158, asked, "Why not vote to issue twenty-three millions of currency bonds and keep them at home [i.e. sell them to ordinary Angelenos] and let our citizens have the benefit of the thousands of dollars of interest that will be paid out on the bonds?" While $23 million would have been beyond the means of the city's residents, they could have put a large enough dent in the bond sale problem to worry the professional bond marketers. Several other cities with socialist or progressive governments had adopted the strategy. In St. Paul, Minnesota, any resident with $10 to invest could go to city hall, buy a municipal bond, and draw interest on it as long as he or she liked. John R. Haynes favored another version of popular fundraising through the postal savings banks of a century ago, recommending that their many small deposits be used to finance large city projects. On 1912 he wrote Meyer Lissner that "[t]he hostility of private financiers toward cities indulging in municipal ownership is natural and inevitable, since the control of banks and of utility corporations is largely to be found in the same hands. There is but one way, it would appear, in which cities may become free from

the insolent and the unfair treatment of bond syndicates; that is, through the extension of the usefulness of the Postal Savings Banks." [102]

Given the timidity of bond marketing under mayor Alexander, it was cynical of him--or let us say cynically effective--to base his successful 1911 re-election campaign against Job Harriman on the proposition that a socialist city government would frighten off bond buyers. [103] It mattered not a whit to the bond syndicates whether the likes of J.P. Morgan or Karl Marx sat in the mayor's chair: they would do everything they could to stall the development of a municipally owned water and hydropower system in either case. [104]

Mulholland partially made up for the many bond-related interruptions in the aqueduct's construction by hiring more bindle stiffs and intensifying the work of his miners and mechanics. Tunnels were carved out of the mountains north of Los Angeles in record time. By the late summer of 1913 the whole stupendous job was done.

Owens Valley Epilog

November 5, 1913 was a banner day for the residents of Los Angeles. Thirty thousand of them rode by car, wagon, buggy, and train to a San Fernando Valley site near Newhall where potable water from the Owens River Valley 240 miles distant was ready to gush down a steep slope into a distribution canal....

The crowd fell silent as Chief Engineer William Mulholland stepped forward on a stage erected for the occasion. He thanked his assistants and the city of Los Angeles for supporting his project. "This rude platform is an altar," he said, "and on it we are here consecrating this water supply and dedicating this Aqueduct to you and your children and your children's children--for all time." Sharing the stage with him was General Adna R. Chaffee, president of the Board of Public Works during the construction period, Mayor Henry H. Rose, and a host of other dignitaries. Chaffee signaled five men atop the concrete gate house. They strained to turn the great wheels that lifted the gates. As the spark-

ling water poured forth in a great stream, the onlookers rushed forward to dip their cups in it. "There it is Mr. Mayor," Mulholland memorably told Rose. "Take it."[105]

We cannot help but notice the absence of certain historical actors from the celebratory stage. Mulholland's vision, steadfastness, and promotional skills have secured him a durable place in the official iconography of Los Angeles and Hollywood, but the political battle for public water and the $25 million aqueduct was won mainly by others. Fred Eaton and a handful of leaders of the city's fifteen-year old progressive movement--among them John R. Haynes, Meyer Lissner, James A. Anderson, and J.P. Koepfli--had fought that battle. None of them was called forward to be recognized.[106] The city's unions had played the strongest, longest role of all. Earlier than Mulholland, Eaton, and the progressives, they had called for a municipally-owned and managed water supply, had agitated for it more consistently than any other social force, and had created a Public Ownership Party to lead this fight at a critical moment when progressive candidates had fallen mute on the issue. No labor activist, miner, or bindle stiff was invited to take the stage with Mulholland that November day. Nor was the word "union" mentioned, nor a single unionist thanked, during the ceremony that dedicated and opened the great aqueduct.

Lt. Gen. Chaffee, however, was plucked from his second retirement and given an honorific place on the stage. His role as labor scourge played to perfection, he had left the Board of Public Works at the end of 1912. Shortly thereafter he received a grateful sendoff from his peers at the Café Richelieu, formerly Levy's Café. The *Citizen* took note of the banquet, adding a sendoff of its own. Chaffee, it said, never protested the high salaries of those above him, but he

> "sat on the lid when it came to wages of the men who actually constructed the aqueduct. He said he would like to see wages go down to $1 a day and declared better men were to be had in the army at $13 a month. Under Chaffee and the 'good government' administration...[w]ages were screwed down to the subsistence point and the paltry dollars paid men for the dangerous work underground were taken away from them by the forced mess....The city is well rid of Chaffee."

B. Labor, Socialists, and the Campaign for Public Power

The machinist Fred Wheeler knew as early as 1906 that several sharp drops in the aqueduct's 240-mile journey between the Owens and San Fernando valleys would make it an ideal source of hydropower. At his instigation the Central Labor Council named him chair of its aqueduct oversight committee, and on May 28, 1907, two weeks before the $23 million aqueduct bond election, he led the committee into the previously noted meeting with aqueduct campaign committee chair Perry W. Weidner, Mulholland, and other luminaries.

Who, Wheeler asked them, would control the hydropower--the city or private corporations? Weidner replied that they had no opinion on the matter. Indeed, both Mulholland and the city council had refused to commit themselves to *any* aqueduct electric system, public or private, even though it made economic sense to build generating stations right along with the ditch. "It will be time enough to take up the power end of it when we get the water down here," Mulholland had said. In his first annual report as chief engineer, submitted in March, 1907, he made the remarkable statement that "[t]he installation of power has not been included in the Aqueduct estimates because the power situation is considered as *wholly independent* of the proposition of supplying water."[107]

Mulholland waffled on hydropower to placate the city's electric companies, which had raised the only significant opposition to the Owens River project. Wheeler and other union activists were far bolder. They prodded the Public Works Department, city council, and mayor to install electric generators on the aqueduct and prepare for municipal ownership and distribution of the resulting power. Lissner and the corporate wing of progressivism lobbied for the generating plants but argued that the city's three private electric companies should market the power. Other progressives, notably Haynes and Mayor Al-

exander, joined the Central Labor Council and *L.A. Record* in a demand for fully municipalized electric power. Their campaign gained momentum in 1909-10. With the aqueduct's completion date fast approaching, the city created a Bureau of the Los Angeles Aqueduct Power headed by Chief Electrical Engineer Ezra S. Scattergood. Mulholland retained oversight of the new bureau, and Scattergood joined him on the Public Works aqueduct advisory committee. Two years later a new Public Service Department absorbed both Mulholland's Water Bureau and Scattergood's Power Bureau, which operated autonomously but cooperatively. The Chief Electrical Engineer turned out to be a far more zealous champion of municipally-controlled power than his Water Bureau counterpart. Despite having served as an advisor to Henry Huntington's lighting interests, Scattergood impressed most of the city's unions as an honest man and together they created a formidable alliance for municipal ownership.[108]

The Public Service Department impaneled a board of engineers to study the aqueduct's hydroelectric potential and recommend how to tap it. In early 1910, noting that the local demand for electricity had grown tenfold in just 13 years, the engineers calculated that aqueduct power stations would generate nearly 90,000 kilowatts at peak demand and 47,800 kilowatts sustained over 24 hours--enough to power Los Angeles and its environs for six or seven years. They advised the Alexander administration to build the first generating plant at Francisquito Canyon as quickly as possible. At the mayor's request, the city council called for a bond election to finance the plant.[109]

Drawing the Lines For and Against Public Power

Virtually every political force in Los Angeles rallied behind the new $4.5 million bond issue, and on April 19, 1910 Angelenos voted for it by a nine to one majority. Relying on progressive support for the city's sponsorship--not to be confused with *ownership*--of aqueduct power, the *L.A. Times*, Realty Board, leading banks, and the city's three pri-

vate power firms all assumed that the hydroelectric stations would generate power which the three utilities would purchase and then sell to homes and businesses at a profit. They soon learned otherwise. As the controversy over privately vs. publicly delivered power grew more heated in 1910 and early 1911, the *Record*, a labor-backed daily newspaper, urged Alexander to place the issue before the voters. He reluctantly agreed, to the dismay of some of his progressive allies. In the resulting March 6, 1911 citywide straw poll, voters declared that they wanted the city itself, not private firms, to distribute the aqueduct's electricity. The tally was a remarkable 11,149 votes in favor of public power to 3,314 opposed. From that moment on the three utilities, key progressives, Otis, and other Old Guard leaders turned resolutely against municipal ownership.[110]

One of L.A.'s best-known reformers, Meyer Lissner, tried to prevent the straw poll, and when Alexander went through with it he and three other progressives quit the Board of Public Utilities. As the board's president Lissner had argued that if the city sold aqueduct power to the power companies at $25 per annual horse power, "there would be a profit to Los Angeles of several hundred thousand dollars per annum net...without the expense of putting in a [public] distributing system, building up a business and losing time and money while the business is being developed." Two years later, however, the Power Bureau calculated that Los Angeles would net hundreds of thousands of dollars more each year from a public distribution system than from a private one selling aqueduct power--and it would deliver electricity to consumers at rates up to 20% lower.[111] The quarrel of Lissner and other right-wing reformers with the Alexander regime over the 1911 straw poll would lead to an irrevocable split in the progressive movement three years later.

The staunchest fighters for public power in the two decades after 1911 were the Central Labor Council, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, most other un-

ions, and city employees who canvassed precincts and brought out voters on election day. Voters favoring new power bond issues tended to be workingclass, immigrant, and Democratic; those opposed were mainly middle-and upper-class, native-born, and Republican.[112] "Labor's interest in public power can be variously characterized as driven by municipal ownership or by the city's more liberal policy toward unions among its own employees," says Ingram.[113] The second impulse emerged during the 1930s, when many city workers joined unions and overcame the worst aspects of the progressive era's time-disciplining labor system. But in the critical years before World War I when organized labor insisted again and again on public control of Owens River power, it was clearly the state-building ideology implicit in public ownership that led the Central Labor Council and most of its member unions to campaign the way they did.

One might have expected the city's socialists to march shoulder to shoulder with L.A.'s unions in pursuit of public power, especially given the popularity of gas and water socialism in other cities where they enjoyed support during this period. But they did not. As the end of Chapter 7 makes clear, the citywide strikes, anti-picketing ordinance, and mass arrests of 1910 inspired a rapprochement between organized labor and the L.A. Socialist Party coincident with Harriman's re-emergence as the party's local leader. Their political alliance lasted through the next two regular elections. In 1912 the Union Labor Political Club ratified the party's national platform and urged every wage worker in California to vote for socialist candidates. The local party moved its headquarters into the Labor Temple that September. Even so, its support for public power was slow in coming. Most of its energies were shunted into the aqueduct investigation mentioned earlier. Harriman's stubborn search for fraud and deceit in the great construction effort may have been praiseworthy as an isolated gesture, but given the struggle for municipal ownership then roiling Los Angeles it was a strategic error. The party did not recover from it until

1914, when it rejoined the labor movement's public power campaign in agitation as well as rhetoric. Even then, the ideological jockeying between evolutionary socialists and impossibilists weakened he party's alliance with power bond advocates in the Central Labor Council (see below).[114]

The Decisive Years

The 1912-14 power bond agitation brought to a head all the resentments that had festered during labor's long exile from city government and pitted them against labor's vision of an urban polity immune to the predations of monopoly. The result was a municipally-run electric system that still exists today, buffering Los Angeles from the turbulence, shortages, and high prices of the private power market in California.

Here is how that history unfolded:

In August, 1912, Mayor Alexander proposed a series of new bond issues to meet the "immediate necessities" of the city's aqueduct, power, and harbor projects. Pressured by unions, development-minded progressives, and chief electrical engineer Scattergood, he earmarked $6.5 million to finish the first Francisquito Canyon power plant, start construction of a second generating station nearby, and provide for the distribution of aqueduct electricity through a publicly owned and operated power grid. The city council delayed the bond vote until April 15, 1913, partly at the insistence of the New York syndicates and partly because unions and the Socialist Party refused to support a new issue unless the city revised its charter to secure proportional representation in council elections. Their People's Charter campaign, which lasted through the spring of 1913 and overlapped the power bond fight, was yet another effort by socialists and organized labor to gain a foothold in city government. Under proportional representation, an outpolled party would not be excluded from the council but would capture a number of seats proportional to its share of the total vote. John R. Haynes was one of the few progressives who openly

supported the reform.[115]

"Do you want to vote for bonds under the present incompetent, inefficient administration *where you have no representation?"* labor's weekly newspaper, the *Citizen,* asked its workingclass readers in January, 1913. Seven weeks later the Central Labor Council, Building Trades Council, and Union Labor Political Club gave their answer in a joint communiqué:

> "Workers, realize your power!....Taxation without representation is abhorrent. Labor pays all the taxes but gets no representation under the present system....Redress this great grievance before you grant any further supplies to plutocracy. Bonds may be beneficial to both capital and labor, but labor can afford to wait, capital cannot. Let your watch word be 'No Representation, No Bonds.' " [116]

The city council deplored what it saw as the intransigent stand of unions and socialists against the 1913 bond election they had originally sought. Angered by its postponement, Seventh Ward progressive Martin F. Betkouski bitterly attacked the socialists. The *Citizen* recorded his "almost wild" tirade:

> 'They're holding a club over our heads and say they'll defeat the bond proposals if the charter amendments don't suit them. I say that we should never let the tail wag the dog; let the dog wag the tail. If the Socialists had their way they'd [foist] their own ideas of city government on us, and we'll never allow that." [117]

Progressives inside municipal government like Betkouski and outside it like Lissner fought proportional representation because it would open the city council to union and socialist candidates--which of course is why labor leaders supported it. The reform would strengthen their campaign for public power in two ways, increasing the number of favorable votes on the council while removing the reason a well-organized minority of union members refused to support any form of municipal ownership. "It has long been apparent to the most casual observer that much of the opposition on the part of the voters to the pending bond propositions [is] due to a lack of confidence in the existing municipal administration," stated the *Citizen.*[118]

In a citywide charter election on March 24, 1913, voters narrowly defeated propor-

tional representation. The turnout was low. Fred Wheeler and the *Citizen* berated non-voting socialists and union members in equal degree for the disappointing result. "Socialists are supposed to understand the importance of every immediate demand in their state and national platforms," declared the labor paper. "Had the socialists of Los Angeles voted on Monday, Amendment No. 8 [proportional representation] would now be a part of the organic law of the city." Wheeler was more succinct. Workingmen who failed to vote, he said, "made a monumental mistake."[119] Whatever the reasons for the poor turnout--and they varied from the length and complexity of the charter reform ballot to voter exhaustion amid a surfeit of elections--both organized labor and the Socialist party now faced the thorny question of whether to make good their "No Representation, No Bonds" threat. They did not retreat from it for two weeks. A few days before the April 15 power bond election, however, the Central Labor Council suddenly reversed its stand. Delegates from the city's unions had heard Chief Electrical Engineer Scattergood make an impassioned appeal for a municipal power distribution system and the $6.5 million bond issue. "The power derived will yield a profit to the city of $1,250,000 a year after the second year," he told a labor council meeting on April 7, "and the best proposition made by the power companies indicates a profit of less than $250,000 for the people." Both the labor council and Socialist Party did a last-minute about-face in favor of their longstanding demand for public ownership.[120]

Unfortunately it came too late to get the word out to voters. After proportional representation failed at the polls, many rank and file union members, especially those in the building trades, had decided not to support the bonds. Other union and socialist voters may have been confused by a bizarre series of developments in the Alembic Club. After speeches by Job Harriman and Haynes, it had belatedly voted to endorse the bonds over the objection of its president, Frederick C. Finkle. It was later disclosed that Finkle had

received $10,000 from the Southern California Edison Company to oppose the bonds, and that in doing so he had falsified Scattergood's figures, distributed 20,000 copies of an anti-bond screed, and accused the city's unions of engineering a secret political deal with the Socialist Party, *Express* publisher E.T. Earl, and the *Record.* Finkle was immediately fired after these disclosures.[121]

In the April 15 election, consequently, the power bonds went down to defeat. The vote was 60% for, 40% against them--well short of the two-thirds majority required in California bond elections.[122] Old Guard bond foes must have been astounded to find many organized workers voting the same way they did on a municipal ownership issue. Leaders of the campaign to block a public power distribution system included Arthur Letts of the anti-union Broadway department store, Fred L. Baker of the anti-union Baker Iron Works, Moses A. Hamburger of the long-boycotted People's Store, and Stoddard Jess, an anti-union banker.[123]

The labor movement's dedication to public ownership soon re-emerged, however, and it began to channel the tide of events. With a regular citywide election due in June, five unionists seeking council seats on the Socialist Party ticket revived labor's demand for city operation of all public utilities at cost. During a May 28 public forum sponsored by the somewhat chastened Alembic Club, Fred C. Wheeler and T.W. Williams of the Carpenters, Curly Grow of the Machinists, Ralph Criswell of the Typographers, and Frances Noel of the Women's Union Label League urged the city council to finance a wholly municipal power system with a bond issue at the earliest possible date. They warned the audience that the power companies were maneuvering skillfully behind the scenes to buy aqueduct power from the city so they could sell it to Angelenos at a generous markup; failing that, they would try to lease their power lines to the city to keep their hand in the business. An independent candidate, Haines W. Reed, expressed identical views.[124]

Fred Wheeler Settles a Dustup over a Ballot's Design

On June 3 an unprecedented event considerably brightened the odds for public power. Fred Wheeler won his race for a city council seat--the first union or socialist representative to do so in the 20th century. He ranked fifth among the nine winning candidates and outpolled the losing progressive mayoral candidate, John Shenk, after a campaign which saw a badly split progressive movement began its tumble from power. "If only two or three more socialists had been elected to the Council much more could be done for the masses," Wheeler said in the socialist parlance of his day. "However, being alone, I shall do my utmost. I shall make my stand in accordance with the declaration of principles and platform of the Socialist Party upon which I was elected."[125]

That platform, of course, reiterated the party's call for public power. Three days after the election the *Citizen* listed the "development of hydroelectric power owned by the city and establishment of a municipal distributing system" among Wheeler's greatest legislative challenges. It described his situation thusly: "A great many of his measures will be shelved at once and without ceremony, but the weight of the vote behind him will force many of his measures to an issue which will place every councilman on record."

Wheeler's council seat gave him the leverage he needed to oversee aqueduct developments and join Scattergood in prodding the council to hold what would prove to be the city's most decisive power bond election. Their efforts succeeded. Mayor Henry H. Rose, elected at the same time as Wheeler, revived his predecessor's $6.5 million power bond proposal and the council scheduled a May 8, 1914 election to settle the issue. Wheeler and another labor socialist, Curly Grow, reconnoitered the most likely aqueduct power sites in the fall of 1913. Two other Labor Council delegates accompanied Scattergood on a similar inspection. Reporting back to the council on October 24, the four union activists urged the city's unions to make an all-out fight for the power bonds. Soon most of the

unions paying per capita to the council were locked in a decisive struggle against the three private power companies.[126]

The new hydropower campaign began at an opportune time for the local labor movement. In September 1913, Secretary-Treasurer Paul Scharrenberg told the California Labor Federation's annual convention in Fresno that Los Angeles had affiliated 17 unions with the state body during the previous year--more than twice the number of any other city. The Building Trades Council had been adding new members at the rate of 1,000 per quarter, and Tailors No. 81 had signed up 28 recruits in a single meeting.[127] Far from hunkering down after the McNamara confessions and the shock of its unexpected failure in the 1911 city elections, the L.A. labor movement was feeling feisty, eager to take on a cause it believed would change the course of Los Angeles. Its vigor belied most conventional histories of that era.

All the city's unions with the exception of a determined minority in the building trades now favored the power bonds. So did a Citizens Power Bond Campaign Committee led by Chamber of Commerce president L.H. Valentine and made up of civic, business, and progressive organizations as well as the Central Labor Council--all of which had their counterparts in the anti-bonds camp. For the next six months the People's Campaign Committee and the Labor Council formed two cooperating but mutually wary command centers in a high-pressure movement for public power. The committee supplied prestige and the bartering of high-level influence; the council supplied the movement's ground troops and ideological force. Scattergood and his Power Bureau, as was their custom, provided the data.[128]

"The Power Bonds: Let's Have "Em," exhorted a banner headline in the *Citizen* on December 12. "You men in the unions, lift up your voices for this great public benefit." (Women workers, who now had the vote, presumably didn't need to be told how to use

it.) Shortly after the *Citizen* gave its journalistic pep talk, Scattergood used its pages to rebut an argument by Southern California Edison that it would cost Los Angeles a prohibitive $9 million to build its own power distribution system, that the city would be better off letting Edison and the other private utilities market the electricity, and--if the city insisted on controlling the wattage all the way from Francisquito Canyon to the customer--that it would save money for a few years by leasing the necessary lines from Edison. In the Dec. 26 *Citizen,* Scattergood replied. The Power Bureau's engineers, he said, had assured the city that a modern independent distributing network could be built for $5.75 million. Yearly operating costs, including interest, depreciation, and a sinking fund, would not exceed $1.9 million, and gross earnings from the sale of power at rates 20 percent below those of the private utilities would total $2.5 million for a net income to Los Angeles of $600,000. Moreover, in offering to lease its lines for a time certain and then let the city acquire them, Edison could no longer claim that its investors would block any sale of its capital equipment.[129]

Armed with the likelihood that a municipal power system would help redeem the aqueduct's construction costs, the Central Labor Council and a majority of its unions devoted most of their political energies after the turn of the year to a campaign for the power bonds. They looked for support from the Socialist Party and to a certain extent received it, but once again the "impossibilists" made the partnership difficult. At a citywide socialist assembly on January 25, 1914, they defeated a resolution requiring the party's nominees either to be members in good standing of unions or, if employers, to be fair to organized labor. The Labor Council retaliated by asking union members not to vote for any candidate of the Socialist Party "so long as it maintains this organized-labor-wrecking policy." That a more serious rupture did not occur during the power bond campaign was largely the achievement of Job Harriman, who continued to champion munici-

pal ownership in labor and civic forums as if no ill will had occurred.[130]

Despite the efforts of the city's unions and the coalition led by the Chamber of Commerce, both of which were vital to the outcome, a municipally-owned electric power system would not have materialized without Wheeler's forceful intervention on the city council.

Soon after his June 3, 1913 election, Mayor Henry H. Rose had reviewed his predecessor's $6.5 million bond election proposal and declared himself in favor of *separate* ballot items for the power plants and a municipal distribution system. Charles Dwight Willard took the same stand, arguing that voters ought not "to be clubbed into accepting" municipal ownership. The city council favored a unitary ballot at that time, but the issue remained in suspense. By March, 1914, however, Meyer Lissner, the banker Stoddard Jess, Harrison G. Otis, Fred Baker of the Baker Iron Works, F.J. Zeehandelaar of the Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association (M&M), William May Garland of the Realty Board, and other Old Guard and progressive leaders had persuaded a majority of the council members to split the bond election into two ballot items--one to complete the construction of the Francisquito Canyon generating station, the other to acquire and operate a city-owned electric distribution system. Scattergood and union activists opposed this scheme. They knew it would ensure the success of the first bond issue while seriously jeopardizing the second. When Wheeler rose to condemn it in the executive room of the council on March 2 only Haines Reed and two councilmen initially supported him, but his eloquence and logic and his growing constituency gradually forced the others to his side. "The whole opposition to municipal distribution," he told the council,

> "is lined up for segregation, which is the best reason why we should submit the bonds as one issue. There will be no opposition to the bonds as a unit except from the power companies and the kept press. It would be better to beat the whole proposition as a unit than to separate the bonds and have either defeated. If the distributing bonds were defeated, we would be at the mercy of the corporations, and if the bonds to complete the plant happened to be defeated, we could not turn a

> hand. Segregation means that the power companies would have the people finish their power plant, bring the electricity to Los Angeles for one-fourth to three-eighths of a cent a kilowatt, turn it over to the power companies, and let them charge the people five or six cents for it."

It was mainly this last argument, not ideological sympathy for public ownership, that swayed first a majority and then all seven of Wheeler's and Reed's colleagues to endorse a single ballot slot for the hydropower plants and the city distributing network. "[A]cting as balance wheel and peacemaker," said the *Citizen*, "the socialist councilman and those who stood with him battered the opposition completely to pieces, followed by a unanimous vote to instruct the city attorney to draft the necessary resolutions. It was one of the great victories of the year for the people."[131]

A Difference of Opinion Widens to a Split

Unionists who favored public power had little time to savor Wheeler's victory. While pressing the attack on the three electric companies, they had to deal with an acrimonious dispute in their own ranks. On one side of a widening political chasm stood the Central Labor Council and unions which had led the fight for municipal ownership. On the other side stood the Building Trades Council and a small core of its unions, including Wheeler's own Carpenters No. 158.

That core was well-organized, however, and some of its leaders commanded the respect of the movement as a whole. The first signs that the campaign for public power would strain and in a few cases break the bonds of comity within the labor movement had emerged in the fall of 1913. Willing to debate a cause that most of its affiliated unions already favored, the Labor Council invited Fred Finkle to address its delegates on November 1. The former Alembic Club president tried to discredit not only the idea of a municipal power system but the aqueduct itself; he passed around photographs of apparent leaks and breaks in the long conduit. Delegates Boshardt of Machinists No. 311 and Biggs of Tailors No. 81 defended the power bonds, and after a heated discussion the

council voted to invite Chief Electrical Engineer Scattergood to its next meeting. Scattergood spoke at length on November 14. Finkle was on hand to challenge his assertions about the power bonds, and the two men engaged in a short but lively argument. Afterwards the council established a standing aqueduct power committee made up of delegates Fred Williams (Railway Carmen), A.E. Danielson (Electrical Workers), F.C. Marsh (Steam Engineers), Eugene Staley (Printers), and George A. Wright (Carpenters). As we shall see, this committee yoked together strongly antagonistic views of municipal ownership that could not long remain in tandem.[132]

The nature of the dispute came into sharper focus over the next several months. In December an unnamed delegate offered a motion to withhold Labor Council support for any new bond issue until the Rose administration hired union members in all its departments. His motion was tabled, but it reminded unionists on both sides of the public power issue that Mayor Rose was as hostile to organized labor as Alexander had ever been. Just ten weeks earlier Curly Grow, a strong advocate of municipal ownership, had charged the Rose administration with being "labor-hating to the core." Unemployment was soaring to crisis levels in late 1913, and thousands of men who had been lured to Los Angeles by the open shop lobby's misleading ads were being "vagged," or arrested for vagrancy, locked into chain gangs, and forced to repair the city's streets and bridges, taking jobs that local residents would otherwise have held. As a stopgap measure the Labor Council began operating a soup kitchen in Blanchard Hall, but with an estimated 35,000 jobless men wandering the streets it barely made a dent in the epidemic of hunger. The city's unions urged Mayor Rose to hire many of the unemployed in a massive public works program, and when that plea fell on deaf ears they began a petition drive to persuade the city council to adopt a minimum "living wage" for all public workers. This initiative, too, met an icy reception from the city's leaders. Many union members felt a surge of frustration

and anger toward the Rose regime. For a significant, vociferous minority, it stifled whatever support they may have earlier given the principle of municipal ownership.[133]

As these resentments grew in the weeks before the May 8 power bond election, they inflamed the split in the ranks of labor between the majority who favored the bonds and those who could not bring themselves to vote for them. Speaking for the majority, the Labor Council's aqueduct power bond committee met with Scattergood, closely followed the city's unsuccessful efforts to negotiate a buyout of the three private utilities, and in early April began working more closely with the Citizens Power Bond Campaign Committee. Danielson, Grow, Charles Darwin Shields, J.E. Timmons, and J.W. Buzzell acted as liaisons between that civic coalition and the Labor Council's independent campaign for the power bonds. They represented a broad cross-section of the city's unions from the building and metal trades to the bakers. Danielson's union, Local 62 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), was the one most directly affected by the struggle for a municipal power system. Unlike most Labor Council affiliates, the IBEW defended municipal ownership in self-interest as well as principle. Its members would rather work for the city, bad as it was as an employer, than for the Southern California Edison, Pacific Light & Power, and Los Angeles Gas & Electric companies. The Electrical Workers are vitally concerned in this matter inasmuch as seventy-five[134] per cent of the labor will be electrical," Danielson explained. "As little as we are organized here it is a fact that no big electrical project can be successfully built without having to draw on the organized electrical workers of this county. Why? Because all the best men are with us for the reason that they can get better wages and protect their individual rights." The *Citizen* took this line of reasoning a step further. In a lead article-cum-editorial on April 24, it asserted that union members "would much prefer to work for a city-owned power plant intended to serve all the people than to lend their aid to private

power corporations...in existence only to pile up profits at the expense of the community."[135]

None of the Labor Council's public power activities that spring pleased the hard core of anti-bond unions in the building trades. At a standing-room-only meeting in the Labor Temple that "sizzled with excitement" on April 17, union activists debated two competing resolutions. One from the Building Trades Council called for a "no" vote at the May 8 bond election; the other, submitted by a larger number of unions, reaffirmed the Labor Council's stance on the bonds and asked union members not only to vote for them but to work hard for their passage.[136]

J.A. McAloon of Carpenters No. 4261, C.R. Gore of Carpenters No. 158, and two officers of the Building Trades Council, A. J. Mooney and F.L. Smith, presented its resolution. Mooney was an especially interesting figure in the power bond controversy. Sent by his San Francisco carpenters council to assist the 1910 strikes in Los Angeles, he learned not to trust progressive reformers and soon rose to an influential position in the local building trades. As a young man building caskets and camping out near the northern California redwoods, he had read Bellamy's *Looking Backward.* That utopian novel was a turning point in his life, and he eventually become a socialist. The L.A. Socialist Party ran him for city council on its 1911 ticket. Two years later he helped socialists and labor activists fight for proportional representation, which progressives helped kill. These political activities would normally mark him by association as an advocate of municipal ownership, but in 1913 another of his heartfelt causes--the petition campaign for a public living wage which both the mayor and city council rebuffed--utterly soured him on the Rose administration.[137] He recoiled from the idea of handing control of the aqueduct's power resources to politicians he detested, and so did all the others who stood with him against the bonds. The April 24 *Citizen* recorded their feelings:

> "The fact that the city council had turned Organized Labor down in its request for a wage scale ordinance was dwelt upon at length, and the prophesy was made that nonunion labor would be employed at inferior wages if the bonds carried." [138]

Grow, Danielson, J.T. Doran, D.W. Bechtol, and A.E. Handwright, all of the machinists' or electricians' unions, led the counterattack against Mooney and the Building Trades Council resolution during the debate. They argued that the power lobby was frantically fighting the bonds because it knew its "system of fat graft off the community was about to receive a death blow." Whatever good name organized labor possessed in Los Angeles, they insisted, had been won by denouncing monopoly and the corruption it inspired, and by campaigning nonstop for the municipal ownership of utilities. Their strongest point, said the *Citizen*,

> "was that the councils of Labor, in order to maintain the confidence of the rank and file and the respect of the public, must be consistent in all things. The delegates were warned that...if those who represented Labor lined up with the Otises, Zeehandelaars, the Realty Board and the M&M against the bonds, especially when it is well known that the Power Companies have a slush fund to spend, the solidarity that has been established would fritter away, the respect of the public and the confidence of the membership would be lost, and the power of Labor to demand either municipal bonds, a wage scale ordinance, or anything else, would be entirely gone." [139]

Polemically the reference to labor's enemies may have been an easy way to tar all bond opponents with an open-shop brush, but it had a fatal weakness: the Citizens Power Bond Campaign Committee was equally tainted. Its members included the Municipal League, Chamber of Commerce, and Builders Exchange, all hostile to organized labor and the last of the three a vehement foe of the building trades unions. The power bond campaign had split both capital and labor, so the battle over strange bedfellows ended in a draw. [140]

Mooney and his mates gave as good as they got during the April 17 debate at the Central Labor Council, but the vote tally at the end of the meeting defied that fact. Delegates, including several from the carpenters, plumbers, and allied unions, rejected the Building Trades resolution by a 62-8 vote. They adopted the following pro-bond resolu-

tion by an even wider margin, 60 votes to 4:

> "Whereas, The Private ownership of public utilities is not conducive to the best interests of the citizens of this community or to the Labor Movement; and
>
> "Whereas, The American Federation of Labor, in its economic platform, has declared for the public ownership of public utilities; and
>
> "Whereas, This declaration of principles on the part of the A. F. of L. has received the endorsement of many of the affiliated unions who recognize the danger to the general public and to the Organized Labor Movement of public utilities being privately owned and operated solely for profit; and
>
> "Whereas, It has been the policy of the Labor Movement of this city in the last decade to do everything within its power to further the ownership and control of all public utilities by the people, thereby lightening the burden of taxation upon the general public and insuring to the employes better working conditions; and
>
> "Whereas, It has been clearly demonstrated to the Labor Movement of this city that the treatment of employes by the public utility corporations, under private ownership and control, has been unjust and the benefits and service to the general public [have] been unsatisfactory and the rates exorbitant; and
>
> "Whereas, It is the general policy of the organized workers of this country, whenever and wherever possible, to exert every possible effort to bring about municipal ownership of public utilities for the benefit of the common people; now, therefore, be it
>
> "Resolved, By the officers and Delegates of the Central Labor Council of Los Angeles, Cal., in regular meeting assembled Friday evening, April 17, 1914, that we reaffirm our former action relative to the public ownership of public utilities and endorse the position of the A. F. of L. in its economic platform relative to the municipal ownership of public utilities; and, be it further
>
> "Resolved, That we do hereby endorse the proposed power bond issue of $6,500,000 for the completion of the city power plant and for a municipally owned and operated electrical distributing system, and that we urge the members of the organized Labor Movement and friends of the movement to work and vote for the said bonds." [141]

Because the disagreement over the bonds had been so intense, the *Citizen* held out an olive branch in an effort to prevent the losing side's rancor from growing. "That the powers that be have given no consideration to union labor in the past is true beyond dispute," it said, conceding that future events might justify the Building Trade Council's refusal to support public ownership under regimes of demonstrated antipathy to labor. But most union members thought otherwise, so the comradely thing to do was "fall in line with the majority, and work for the passage of the bonds."[142]

If only life were so simple, and adversaries so amenable! The *Citizen's* bid for reconciliation had no effect during the last two weeks of the campaign. Unchastened, the Building Trades Council temporarily withdrew from the Central Labor Council[143] and the dissenters continued to argue that labor's grievances against the Alexander and Rose

regimes of 1909-14 had set the argument for public power on its head. What good was municipal ownership in the hands of a city council only a hair more tolerable than the one that had ordered the arrest of hundreds of peaceful picketers in 1910 and had grossly underpaid aqueduct workers and fed them rotten food? Why reward the present Rose government with $6.5 million in bonds after it had refused to name unionists to a single influential city job, create a public works program for the unemployed, or adopt a living wage ordinance for city workers? Was it not folly to trust such an administration with control of the aqueduct's power?

In a ringing denunciation a week before the election, the Building Trades Council did not cede one inch of ground to the power bond enthusiasts in organized labor's leadership and rank and file:

> "The City Council is opposed to the payment of union wages upon work done under their supervision and are asking us to vote bonds in order that they might employ men at any wages that they see fit....To vote the bonds means to sanction the actions of the city in paying cheap wages. The Building Trades Council refuses to sanction any such scheme....We now propose to fight it out along these lines till such a time as all the city work will be done by union men and under union conditions." [144]

Sharpening this point, the Carpenters District Council insisted that the issue that mattered was not municipal ownership but "living wages, conditions, and justice for the working class of Los Angeles," none of which could be obtained from the present city government. [145]

Union activists who favored the bonds conceded that the two building trades councils were dead on the mark in their assessment of the Alexander and Rose regimes. But regimes came and went--and the progressive star was already waning. What counted in the long run was whether the Los Angeles working class and its allies could wrest the city's electric power system from the grasp of the private utilities. Job Harriman had put the issue succinctly after the 1913 bonds were voted down. The moment had come, he said, for

workers and socialists to set aside the "no representation, no bonds" idea. "We cannot play into the hands of the power companies by taking such a stand. It would be 'cutting off your nose to spite your face'."[146]

Final Strides Toward a Workingclass Legacy

The campaign's last week saw a whirlwind of electioneering by both sides. The Merchants' & Manufacturers' Association repeatedly accused Scattergood of deflating the cost of public power. Meyer Lissner and the *Times* warned that $6.5 million would not cover the entire generating and distributing system and that further bond issues would be required --a point most voters already understood. Otis had his writers decry the "unfairness" of melding both the construction and municipal operation of the electric system into a single ballot item, claiming it disenfranchised voters who favored aqueduct power but wanted it to be privately delivered. In a line of attack aimed at turning the women's vote against the power bonds, the newspaper claimed they would preempt any new bond issues for schools. (This claim notwithstanding, the city was *not* over-bonded at the time.) E.H. Rollins & Sons, a prominent bond house that had sold $40 million of the city's issues, called public power an "extravagance" and warned Angelenos that if they voted for the bonds it would refuse to market them. The power companies gave some of their employees half-days off to canvass and leaflet the precincts. All the "anti" forces hurled jeremiads through the urban airspace bewailing the intolerable tax burden they insisted the bonds would impose. The Citizens Power Bond Campaign Committee, alias the People's Power Bond Committee, ran full-page ads for the bonds during the week. Councilman Fred Wheeler, Job Harriman, Curly Grow, and Ezra Scattergood exhorted voters from a variety of public platforms. The members of IBEW No. 61 "laid aside all other matters" to agitate for the bonds throughout the city, and the Central Labor Council's power bond committee urged every other union member to do likewise.[147]

On its own as well as through the Citizens Power Bond Campaign Committee, the labor movement successfully mobilized its rank and file on election day. The pro-bond unions never did win the dissenting faction to their side; they simply overwhelmed it at the polls. On May 8, 1914, in a high turnout, 71 percent of L.A.'s voters backed the power bonds. They passed by an excess of nearly 3,300 votes over the required two-thirds majority. A telltale fact swiftly emerged from ward-by-ward and precinct-by-precinct breakdowns of the balloting. While the bonds barely squeaked by on the city's west side, their winning margin in workingclass wards was 50 percent greater.[148] The *L.A. Examiner's* analysis of the vote "in precincts where laboring people principally reside" revealed an 80 percent majority for public power. Last-ditch opposition to a city-run electric distribution system came much more from employers and professional people (including some progressives) than from the building trades. "In the Westlake district," said the *Examiner*, "there were few precincts which gave a two-thirds majority. One of the richest precincts in the city is No. 96, with the polling place at 3001 Wilshire Boulevard. Here the vote was 87 against the bonds to 81 for. The results indicate that, as a general rule, the wealthiest class gave the smallest majorities for the bonds." For a "fair sample" of the labor vote, the newspaper reported that in the precinct which polled at the Labor Temple, the vote was 128 for and 37 against.[149]

A week after the vote IBEW's Danielson was still in a buoyant mood:

> "It was a grand victory, the carrying of the power bonds last Friday....We are jubilant over the fact that labor has helped win such a victory in this city where labor has been ridiculed for years. We, the Electrical Workers, were vitally interested in this fight and made a hard, clean campaign. It means much for us and we desire to thank all the members of Organized Labor who answered our appeal to help win. I say Organized Labor won three victories last Friday: One for municipal ownership, one over Otis and the M&M, and one in the repudiation of those who tried to sell us out."[150]

Within a year of the election, Los Angeles sold its bonds and began buying out the three investor-owned utilities. The first public power flowed into local homes and busi-

nesses in 1916. Under relentless attack by the power trust, even in its residual stages, the Department of Water & Power (DWP) and its predecessors managed to win 88 percent of their water bond elections and 45 percent of their power bond elections between 1904 and 1932. Unwavering support for the DWP during these years came from the IBEW, the labor movement as a whole, and coalitions organized by Haynes and other municipal ownership partisans. Even Meyer Lissner became a convert to the cause! In the mid-1930s the DWP eliminated the last of its significant private competition,[151] finally consolidating the workingclass legacy of kilowatt and water socialism that has served the city well to this day.

Power Bond Epilog 1

What did Danielson mean by "repudiation of those who tried to sell us out"? The rift over the bond campaign proved to be deeper and angrier than most unionists had imagined, and it caused human as well as political casualties. Three high-ranking officers of the Central Labor Council were expelled from that body. One was its president, George Wright of Carpenters No. 1763, another was executive board member F.C. Marsh of Steam & Operating Engineers No. 72, and the third was trustee G.W. McDonald of Waiters No. 17. All three had been elected on January 24, 1913 and re-elected the following July, and as officers of the Central Labor Council they were sworn to carry out its policies, including those dealing with the power bonds.[152]

The first hint of trouble broached on April 28 at a meeting of the council's executive board. Minutes of the session recorded the fact that the names of certain of its members "had appeared in an advertisement against the power bonds, in certain newspapers. These members state they had not used their official titles in connection with the same and that they would have the matter corrected in the papers." Over the next nine days the full dimensions of the betrayal came into focus. Executive Board members Wright and Marsh

and trustee McDonald had publicly condemned the bonds in newspaper advertisement shortly after the council voted 60-4 to endorse them. Their names appeared on an anti-bonds list that included dozens of open-shop employers who had long fought the city's unions by firing and blacklisting their organizers, making employees sign yellow-dog contracts, and hiring police deputies to break strikes. Wright, Marsh, and McDonald did not honor their promise to have the *Times* and other dailies remove their titles from the ads. The ads identified them as officers of the Central Labor Council, leading many Angelenos and not a few union members to believe that the labor leadership had withdrawn its support for a municipal power system.[153]

Council secretary Lonnie W. Butler tried to set the record straight in a May 7 letter to the city's newspapers. "The question of the bonds has been thrashed out thoroughly," he wrote, referring to the April 17 debate, "and all delegates, including those who are now using their official titles to oppose the bonds,...refused to endorse a resolution opposing the bonds and by a vote of 60 to 4 supported a resolution to indorse the bonds... Organized labor of this city is *for* the power bonds."[154] It is hard to see how Butler's cumbersome twelfth-hour clarification could have undone the damage wrought by the newspaper ads.

Wright, in particular, must have felt enormous pressure from the Building Trades Council to undermine labor's advocacy of the bonds, for he and his two accomplices continued to act in ways they knew might destroy their reputations in the union movement. The day before the election their names and opinions appeared in another publication denouncing the bonds.. This time it was the short-lived *Union Labor Bulletin*, founded and edited by A.J. Mooney and ostensibly sponsored by the Building Trades Council. A *Bulletin* article against public power written by Wright made it look as if he, Marsh, and McDonald were speaking for the Labor Council and by inference the majority of orga-

nized workers in Los Angeles. Twenty thousand copies were printed, wrapped, and mailed to residents of the workingclass wards. "No one seemed to know who paid all the expenses," the *Citizen* reported, "nor how the addresses were secured," With building-trades unions wracked by internal strife and lagging in dues income during 1912-14, speculation was rife that the power utilities and/or their corporate and civic supporters had funded the *Union Labor Bulletin.* "In an effort to defeat the proposed power bonds," the *L.A. Record* contended, "the 'big business' interests have reached down to the Building Trades Council of Los Angeles County and, under the name of that union organization, a so-called 'Union labor Bulletin' has been brought out." [155]

This bit of last-minute deception profoundly shocked most of the Labor Council's unions, especially those in the building trades who favored the $6.4 million bond issue. The IBEW's Danielson voiced their disgust when he called the *Bulletin* "an organ of the Power Trust" and Wright's article, headlined "Organized Labor Is Absolutely Against the Bonds," "an outrageous lie."[156]

At a climactic May 15 labor council meeting Wright faced a barrage of accusations that he had undermined years of work to build solidarity among the city's unions. A resolution introduced by Machinists No. 311 and signed by many other unions demanded his ouster and the expulsion of Marsh and McDonald. It was heatedly discussed for two hours. Before the vote was taken, Wright told the hushed room that he had resigned. He admitted having written the *Bulletin* article but said he did so as a Building Trades Council representative and "could not account for the mad desire on the part of the *Bulletin's* publisher to use Central Labor Council titles." The outcome of the debate was sealed when a delegate pointed out that the three officers had appeared at a mass meeting on May 7, had been asked to disavow the anti-bond statements made in their names, and had refused. With that the council, only one voice dissenting, voted to vacate their positions.

"The removal of the officers was asked on the ground that the solidarity of labor must be maintained at any cost," reported the May 22, 1914 *Citizen*.

> "One delegate perhaps covered the whole ground when he stated that the utmost care must be taken to carry out the expressed wish of the rank and file of the organization, and to prevent the suspicion from gaining a foothold in the minds of the members that any outside influences or any machine within the ranks, either from a distance or at home, should try to 'put one over' without regard for their wishes or their welfare." [157]

While Marsh and McDonald eventually regained their labor council bona fides, the disgraced president did not. Wright never again played a useful role in the Los Angeles labor wars. May 8, 1914 turned out to be the high tide of L.A.'s pre-war labor movement and the local Socialist Party. Thereafter both of them underwent a terminal decline; it was almost as if the city's unions had fallen on their sword for public power. Their good work, however, has silently but impressively outlived them and remains, along with direct democracy, their greatest legacy to the people of Los Angeles.

Power Bond Epilog 2

On May 11, 1914, public power partisans gathered in the city council's chambers to celebrate their victory over the private utilities three days earlier--a feat that would propel Los Angeles decisively down the road to full ownership of its own electric generating and distributing system.

The meeting was called by the People's Power Bond Campaign Committee, whose members including the Central Labor Council have been identified above. The coalition's president, L.H. Valentine, presided. At the suggestion of Karl Halm, delegate of several local German societies, the celebrants set up a watchdog committee to oversee the city's expenditure of the $6.5 million in hydropower construction and distribution bonds which the city had voted.

Of all the speakers that afternoon, only one laced the congratulatory toasts with a dash of bitters--an accumulated grievance that everyone in the room understood but few

wanted to hear. His name was Curly Grow. Long active on the Central Labor Council's aqueduct and charter revision committees, a Socialist Party stalwart, a strike leader jailed under the 1910 anti-picketing law, a failed city council candidate, and a member of the Anti-Prohibition League, Grow reported that 75 percent of the voters in L.A.'s workingclass precincts had endorsed the power bonds, well above the citywide average. The opposition, he said, was made up of financiers, contractors, and other employers who had profited from the city's generosity while denying workers decent wages. The city council, from whom labor had often sought help that did not materialize, had just recently refused to enact a living wage law. This and other rebuffs had made it difficult for working people to vote for the bonds, said Grow, because they knew municipal ownership would strengthen the grip of an anti-labor regime.

Despite all this, Grow concluded, organized labor had rallied its troops for public power. "Remember this," he said, "that labor, which had been turned down by the council, stood for the power bonds....And now we feel that we have a right to request that the true friends of the city be given at least as much consideration as those who have proven her enemies in the time of her need, and we will expect this committee to insist on the passage of the proposed wage ordinance."[158]

The last line was heartily applauded but not taken seriously. Grow's request died aborning, as he probably figured it would.

Tables

1. Ward Votes in Two Key Bond Elections

• $23,000,000 bond election to build the Los Angeles aqueduct, June 12, 1907

• $6,500,000 bond election to complete an aqueduct power plant and create a public power distribution system, May 8, 1914

Ward	1908 % Workers	1907 % in favor	1914 % in favor
1	62	87	77
2	62	90	70
3	42	95	67
4	34	94	67
5	32	93	68
6	72	90	75
7	75	91	80
8	73	86	72
9	71	90	73

Wards 1, 6, 7, 8, and 9 lying east of Main Street during the Progressive Era have been identified by contemporary observers and historians as Los Angeles' "blue collar" area. My random sample of registrants and their occupations in the city's 1908 Great Register indicates that Ward 2 was also somewhat workingclass. Below I have correlated the 1907 and 1914 bond votes with the 1908 ward composition--a stretch necessitated by the fact that the biannual registers listing occupations during the 1910-16 period covered by my dissertation have been lost. City and county maps showing election day precincts during that period have likewise been lost, with the sole exception of the 1914 power bond election. While the number of precincts changed radically from election to election, ward boundaries remained almost the same between 1907 and 1914 (discounting a few annexed areas with small populations). (Sources: L.A. City Archives, *Records of Election Returns, City of Los Angeles, Dec. 5, 1904–Dec. 9, 1920,* pp. 40 and 254-255; City of Los Angeles *Great Register* for 1908, Seaver Center Archive, Los Angeles Museum of Natural History; Los Angeles County precinct maps for 1914, Office of the County Registrar & Recorder, Norwalk, CA)

2. Impact of Workingclass Share (WS) of Ward Population on the 1907 Aqueduct and 1914 Power Bond Elections

(Coefficients derived by Eric Monkkonen)

	WS	1907	1914
1907 vote	−0.7420	1.0000	
1914 vote	+0.7931	−0.5864	1.0000

The above coefficients reveal (1) a *negative* correlation between the working class share of ward population and the size of the vote for the aqueduct bonds, and (2) a stronger *positive* correlation between the workingclass share of ward population and the size of the vote for the power bonds. These coefficients must be read in the light of Table 1, however, which shows that the workingclass wards voted overwhelmingly (89% & 75%) for both bond issues. All the 1907 negative coefficient really tells us is that workers were a bit less likely to vote for the aqueduct than the non-workingclass population. To the very low degree that there was voter resistance to spending $23 million on this huge public works project, it was workingclass resistance. The reasons for this fact are explained under a subheading, "The Payoff," above. The 1914 positive coefficient tells us the reverse: even though some building trades locals opposed the power bonds, most of the opposition to them came

from the silk-stocking wards.

Three trendlines are at work here: (1) L.A. workers' abiding commitment to municipal ownership, (2) growing hostility to municipal ownership on the part of progressives and other non-workingclass groups, and (3) an increasing willingness among workers to support municipal ownership even if it meant placing L.A.'s massive urban infrastructure in the hands of the anti-labor regimes that held power from 1900 to 1914. In 1906-07 organized labor led the educational campaign and agitation that produced an overwhelming citywide vote for the aqueduct construction bonds, but individual wage workers did not universally agree to invest municipal ownership in a city administration hostile to their interests. By the 1914 power bond election, however, every 10% marginal gain in the workingclass share of a ward's population meant a 2% increase in its vote for municipal ownership.

Notes

[1] Torres-Rouff, David S., "Water Use, Ethnic Conflict, and Infrastructure in Nineteenth-Century Los Angeles," *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 75, No. 1 (February 2006), p. 123.

[2] Kahrl, William L. *Water and Power: The Conflict over Los Angeles' Water Supply in the Owens Valley*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1982, pp. 3-4; Torres-Rouff, "Water Use, Ethnic Conflict, and Infrastructure in Nineteenth-Century Los Angeles," pp. 124-26, esp. ff. 10.

[3] The population of Los Angeles was approximately 5,500 in 1868, having grown slowly from 1,610 at mid-century. Van Valen, Nelson, "A Neglected Aspect of the Owens River Aqueduct Story: The Inception of the Los Angeles Municipal Electric System," *Southern California Quarterly*, Vol. 59, No. 1 (Spring, 1977), p. 103.

[4] "Municipal Ownership," *L.A. Times*, Aug. 19, 1899.

[5] Torres-Rouff, "Water Use, Ethnic Conflict, and Infrastructure in Nineteenth-Century Los Angeles," pp. 121-22, 127; Lothrop, Gloria Ricci. "The Boom of the '80s Revisited," *Southern California Quarterly* v. 75, nos. 3–4 (Fall/Winter, 1993), p. 295

[6] City Council Minutes, Vol. 68, pp. 556-60; Torres-Rouff, "Water Use, Ethnic Conflict, and Infrastructure in Nineteenth-Century Los Angeles," pp. 120, 122, 127-29.

[7] This was an early version of the Voters' League. It was revived in 1905 by John Randolph Haynes and other progressives. [City Council Minutes, Vol. 32, pp. 17-18, 24, 41; Stimson, Grace Heilman. *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,* University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1955, p. 146; Kahrl, *Water and Power*, pp. 12-13; "Petitions and Communications," *L.A. Times*, Aug. 13, 1889, p. 2.]

[8] Kahrl, *Water and Power*, pp. 12-13;

[9] See biographical sketches and accounts of the activities of these activists in chapters 7 and 8; Chappel appears on pages 487-88 and 489. Clodius states: "Populist support for the principle of municipal ownership undoubtedly contributed to the growing sentiment among labor and middle classes for this principle, even though the Populists did not attract enough members from these groups to sustain the party beyond the defeats of 1892 and 1894." [Clodius, Albert Howard. "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles, 1890-1910," dissertation, Claremont Graduate School, Claremont, CA, 1953, pp. 50-51.]

[10] *L.A. Times*, all 1892: "The Water Question," Feb. 2; "The Water Question," Feb. 11; "The Water Question," Feb. 28; and "No Purchase of the Hill System," Nov. 30.

[11] "Against the Bonds" and "The Water Bonds--Something Must Be Done", *L.A. Times*, Oct. 29, 1892;

[12] "People's Party," *L.A. Times*, Oct. 4, 1892.

[13] "Favor the Bonds," *L.A. Times*, Oct. 25, 1892; Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, p. 128. [On page 147 Stimson identifies Katz as a member of the Clerks' Association

but does not specify whether it represented retail, railway, postal, or other clerks, or all clerks generally.]

[14] City Council Minutes, Vol. 36, p. 480; "A Popular Victory," *L.A. Times*, Nov. 3, 1892; Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, p. 128.

[15] Hazard was mayor from 1889 to 1892. Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, pp. 149-50, 178-79; Erie, Steven P. "How the Urban West Was Won: The Local State and Economic Growth in Los Angeles, 1880-1932," *Urban Affairs Quarterly* v. 27, no. 4 (June, 1992), p. 539; Ostrom, Vincent, *Water & Politics: A Study of Water Policies and Administration in the Development of Los Angeles*, The Haynes Foundation, Los Angeles, 1953, pp. 53-54.

[16] "People's Party Meets," *L.A. Herald*, June 9, 1898; "Elections Called" and "Description Demanded," *L.A. Times*, May 10, 1898, p. 10; "To Name Its Price" and "Will Force an Issue," *L.A. Times*, June 17, 1898.

[17] The $3 million figure included $2 million for assets the City Water Company owned directly and $1 million for the Crystal Springs Land and Water Company, which it had spun off to place create a separate entity for the headworks. ["Municipal Ownership," *L.A. Times*, Aug. 19, 1899; Ostrom, *Water & Politics*, pp. 45-47.]

[18] Both Ostrom and Erie say the Citizen's Committee of One Hundred was the first-ever L.A. coalition to campaign for water bonds, but it was preceded by the Friends of the Water Bonds seven years earlier. ["People's Party Resolutions," *L.A. Times*, Aug. 19, 1899; "For the Water Bonds," *L.A. Times*, Aug. 17, 1899; "Municipal Ownership," *L.A. Times*, Aug. 19, 1899; "For Water Bonds," *L.A. Times*, Aug. 22, 1899; "Water Bonds Carry," *L.A. Times*, Aug. 24, 1899; Ostrom, *Water & Politics*, pp. 47, 54.]

[19] Ostrom, *Water & Politics*, pp. 47-48, 53, 54.

[20] Ostrom, *Water & Politics*, p. 48.

[21] *Union Labor News*, ca. Aug, 23, 1901, quoted in *L.A. Times*, Aug. 28, 1901, p. 5.

[22] The *L.A. Herald* published a precinct map for the election on page 1 of its August 28, 1901 issue. The largely workingclass precincts lay east of Main Street and Sunset Blvd. and south of Aliso Street, Mission Road, and Griffin Avenue. [City Council Minutes, Vol. 61, p. 424; "To Bond Or Not to Bond," "Anti-Bondites Question Powers," and "Labor Organ Favors Bonds," *L.A. Herald*, Aug. 28, 1901, pp. 1, 4; "Water Bonds Carry by Large Majority," *L.A. Herald*, Aug. 29, 1901, p. 1; "Today Will Decide Water Campaign" and "For the Bonds," *L.A. Times*, Aug. 28, 1901, p. 5; "The Water Bonds Carried," *L.A.* Times, Aug. 29, 1901, p. 8; Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, p. 216; Ostrom, *Water & Politics*, p. 48.]

[23] The Domestic Water Works System included all the city's distribution property except for that of the two small private companies still operating on the west side. ["Waterworks Section of New Charter," *L.A. Times*, Sept. 21, 1902, p. 10; "Proposed Charter Amendment Number Two," *L.A. Times*, Nov. 16, 1902; Ostrom, *Water & Politics*, pp. 48, 90-92; "Civil Service" section, Mayor Meredith Snyder's Annual Message, Jan. 4, 1904, City Council Minutes, Vol. 68, p. 560.]

[24] Kahrl, *Water and Power*, p. 23; Ostrom, *Water & Politics*, p. 91.

[25] "If you will go to the office of the County Clerk and look up articles of incorporation Number 5746, Book 2, Page 240," Hazard Park Improvement Association president W.E. Powelson stated in the April 15, 1910 *Citizen*, "you will see who incorporated the San Fernando Mission Land Company. Among the names are the following: H.G. Otis (editor of the *Times),* E.T. Earl (editor of the *Express),* W.G. Kerckhoff (president of the Pacific Light & Power Co.), H.E. Huntington and others. You will notice these are the men who control the power companies. These articles were dated Nov. 28, 1904, or before the aqueduct was sprung on this city. This company bought up the mesa land between Fernando and Chatsworth Park, many thousand acres. The only thing lacking to make this land valuable was water. So the scheme was worked up of having the city bring the Owens River to the Fernando Valley." [Los Angeles Department of Water & Power, "The Los Angeles Aqueduct, 1913–1988: A 75th Anniversary Tribute," *Southern California Quarterly* v. 70, no. 3 (Fall, 1988), pp. 330-37; Kahrl. *Water and Power*, pp, 45-52, 80-88. Van Valen, "A Neglected Aspect of the Owens River Aqueduct Story", pp. 85-87, 90-91; "More Bonds! Higher Taxes!", *Citizen*, April 15, 1910; "Job Harriman Makes a Statement," *Citizen*, Oct. 27, 1911, p. 4.

[26] "Public Ownership" (two editorials with same heading), *Union Labor News*, Dec. 26, 1903, p. 4.

[27] Mack, a veteran of the American Railway Union and the Pullman strike, later joined the brewery workers and served the Council of Labor as an organizer. Walker joined the L.A. shinglers' union and later became a vice-president of the L.A. Central Labor Council. [Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,* pp. 228, 232-33.]

[28] Stimson records an incident showing the ideological abyss that had opened between Gray and Murray, After organizing a federal union of unskilled workers on socialist principles, Murray was elected their delegate to the Labor Council. Gray, as the council's president, refused to seat him on the grounds that he would use his position to agitate for socialism. Only through staunch support from Fred Wheeler was Murray finally allowed to join the central body. [Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,* pp. 226-32.]

[29] Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,* pp. 226-27.

[30] "Socialists in Control," *L.A. Times*, Sept. 21, 1902, p. 6; "Labor Ticket Completed," *L.A. Times*, Oct. 7, 1902, p. 1; Stimson, pp. 232-33.

[31] L.A. *Socialist*, Nov. 8, 1902, quoted in Stimson p. 232. Murray was the *Socialist's* editor.

[32] Luis Leobardo Arroyo, "Mexican Workers and American Unions: The Los Angeles AFL, 1890-1933," Chicano Political Economy Collective Working Paper #107 (typescript), Department of History, University of California at Davis, 1981 (available from Chicano Studies Library Publications, UC Berkeley); *L.A. Express*, Oct. 22, 1902, quoted in Stimson, p. 233. See also "Labor Politics in Los Angeles," *Labor Clarion* (weekly published by the San Francisco Labor Council), May 30, 1902 for an emphasis on municipal corruption early in the effort to form an independent labor party in Los Angeles.

[33] Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,* pp. 233-34.

[34] Greenstein, Paul, Nigey Lennon, and Lionel Rolfe, *Bread & Hyacinths: The Rise and Fall of Utopian Los Angeles,* California Classics Books, Los Angeles, 1992, p. 38; Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,* p. 235.

[35] Mayor's Annual Message, January 4, 1904, City Council Minutes, Vol. 68, pp. 556-60.

[36] City Council Minutes, Vol. 68, pp. 637. 735, 763, 786; Vol. 69, pp. 89-90.

[37] "Public Ownership Party," *Union Labor News,* Feb. 23, 1906; "New Party Launched," *Union Labor News,* March 2, 1906; Sitton, Tom, "John Randolph Haynes and the Left Wing of California Progressivism" in *California Progressivism Revisited,* William Deverell & Tom Sitton, eds., University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1994, p. 20; Clodius, "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles," pp. 121-23.

[38] "European Cities Buy Back Franchises," *L.A. Examiner,* Oct. 17, 1906, reprinted in the *Union Labor News,* Oct. 19, 1906; Z.W. Craig, "Foreigners on Public Ownership," *Union Labor News,* Oct. 26, 1906, p. 4.

[39] Van Valen. "A Neglected Aspect of the Owens River Aqueduct Story," pp. 85-88; Kahrl, *Water and Power,* pp. 80-83; Los Angeles Department of Water & Power, "The Los Angeles Aqueduct, 1913–1988," pp. 337-38.

[40] Even so, the Department would earn $840,629 net income in 1907, most of which would flow into the aqueduct. [*L.A. Herald,* Jan. 17, 1909]

[41] The vote was 10,787 to 755. In a 1911 report to the city council, engineers John Henry Quinton, W.H. Code, and Homer Hamlin predicted that the aqueduct would deliver eight times as much water in 1913 as Los Angeles needed. This estimate and the actual huge surplus led directly to the city's annexation of neighboring towns, a policy favored by Mulholland. By 1920 Los Angeles had quintupled its 1900 population. [*L.A. Examiner,* Sept. 8, 1905, pp. 1, 4; Kahrl, *Water and Power,* pp. 83-84, 180-186, 230; Van Valen "A Neglected Aspect of the Owens River Aqueduct Story), p. 88; "The Los Angeles Aqueduct, 1913–1988, pp. 337-38.

[42] Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,* pp. 305-06; "The Printing Trades," *Union Labor News,* Jan. 12, 1906; "Printers Able Talk," *Union Labor News,* Jan. 19, 1906; "The Unions Are Awakened," *Union Labor* News, Jan. 26, 1906, p. 1; "It Was an Outpouring of the People," Union *Labor News,* Feb. 2, 1906, p. 1.

[43] "Labor Union Party (?)", *Union Labor News,* Dec. 22, 1905.

[44] L.A. Typographical Union No. 174 Minute Books, 1886-1916, Vol. 1905-08 (hereinafter LATU Minutes), Feb. 25, 1906, pp. 64-65 and March 25, 1906, p. 72.

[45] Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,* p. 306.

[46] "It Was an Outpouring of the People," Union *Labor News,* Feb. 2, 1906, p. 1; Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,* p. 300.

[47] It Was an Outpouring of the People," Union *Labor News,* Feb. 2, 1906, p. 1.

[48] LATU Minutes, Jan. 28, 1906, p. 57; "Public Ownership Party Formed at Eagle's Hall on February 21," *Union Labor News*, Feb. 23, 1906; Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, pp. 305-066.

[49] Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*, p. 306.

[50] "Call for Municipal Convention of Public Ownership Party," *Union Labor News*, September 14, 1906, p. 1 (my italics).

[51] "The Battle in the Sixth," *Union Labor News*, Nov. 16, 1906, p. 1; "Teamsters Are Urged to Vote with Care," *L.A. Examiner*, Sept. 21, 1906; "City Campaign Commences," *Union Labor News*, Oct. 19, 1906, p. 1.

[52] "The Battle in the Sixth," *Union Labor News*, Nov. 16, 1906, p. 1;

[53] "A Man Who Would Be Mayor," *Union Labor News*, Oct. 12, 1906, p. 4. The *Daily News* quote appears in this story.

[54] Unions represented on the ticket were the blacksmiths, bookbinders, bricklayers, carpenters, electricians, laundry workers, musicians, painters, plumbers, and teamsters, One candidate, the wife of a carpenter, represented the Women's Label League. ["Call for Municipal Convention of Public Ownership Party," *Union Labor News*, September 14, 1906, p. 1; "Public Ownership Party Names City Ticket," *Union Labor News*, Oct. 5, 1906, p. 1.]

[55] "Public Ownership Party Names City Ticket," *Union Labor News*, Oct. 5, 1906, p. 1.

[56] "Modern Club Enjoyed By City's Working Men." *L.A. Record*, July 28, 1906; "The Mayoralty Question," *L.A. Times*, Oct. 11, 1906; "Public Ownership Party Names City Ticket," *Union Labor News*, Oct. 5, 1906, p. 1.

[57] Letter signed "The Old War-Horse of Labor," *Union Labor News* Sept. 14, 1906 p. 3; Ostrom, *Water & Politics*, p. 54; Van Valen, "A Neglected Aspect of the Owens River Aqueduct Story, pp. 87, 92;

[58] "It is true that the Democratic party has stolen our public-ownership platform," Wilson declared at a tent meeting, "but if you wait for [Democratic mayoral candidate] Arthur Harper to give you public ownership you will wait a long time. The Democratic party of Los Angeles is the flunky that does the cheap chores of the Republican boss." [Van Valen, "A Neglected Aspect of the Owens River Aqueduct Story," pp. 96-97; "Democratic Platform Opening for Municipal Owners," *L.A. Examiner*, Nov. 3, 1906; "Wilson's Campaign. Union Laborites Holding Largely Attended Tent Meetings," *L.A. Times*, Nov. 11, 1906.]

[59] "It was significant that every newspaper in this city, excepting *The Record* and one other evening paper, ignored and made no mention of the official call for the [Public Ownership] party convention, and *The Record* alone gave any prominence to the call," the *Record* rued on Sept. 11, 1906. "It was a matter of news, and every newspaper should consider its duty is to give the news first, no matter what prejudice for or against the men concerned, their aims or purposes." [Van Valen, "A Neglected Aspect of the Owens River Aqueduct Story," p. 97.]

[60] "Views of Socialist Candidate for Mayor," *L.A. Record*, Nov. 10. 1906; *Common Sense*: "Socialist City Platform and Resolutions," "Political Candidates Tell Where They Stand," and

"Socialist City Convention," all Nov. 10, 1906; Socialists Name City Candidates," *L.A. Herald*, Oct. 28, 1906; "Hip! Hip! Hooray! for 'El Hutch'!," *L.A. Times*, Sept. 29, 1906.

[61] Some Democrats joined the nonpartisan movement in 1906, but most of its recruits had been progressive Republicans. Anticipating Otis's line of attack against the Public Ownership Party, the *L.A. Graphic* alerted its readers that "[p]olitical developments of the week reveal the existence of a well-matured and somewhat dangerous plan on the part of the labor unions to capture the machinery of the city government. It goes without saying that it is the duty of all citizens who do not want to see Los Angeles reduced to the subjection that prevails in San Francisco, to head off this union movement with a most decisive beating at the polls." ["Union Menace," *L.A. Graphic*, June 30, 1906; "Hip! Hip! Hooray! for 'El Hutch'!," *L.A. Times*, Sept. 29, 1906; "Contemptible Tactics," *L.A. Record*, Oct. 1, 1906; "Police Politics," *Union Labor News*, Nov. 16, 1906; "The Mayoralty Question," *L.A. Times*, Oct. 11, 1906; "The *Times* in a Cold Sweat," *Union Labor News*, Oct. 19, 1906; "Candidates Refuse to Withdraw from Mayoralty Race," *L.A. Herald*, Oct. 30, 1906; "Democrats Say No to Proposition of Arbitration," *L.A. Herald*, Nov. 16, 1906; "Attempted Fusion Falls Flat," *L.A. Examiner*, Nov. 16, 1906; "Wilson's Campaign--McCarthy Down from San Francisco," *L.A. Times*, Nov. 11, 1906].

[62] This effort, led by Otis and others, sought to persuade *any two* of the three named candidates to withdraw in favor of the third.

[63] The official mayoralty results were Harper, 10,604 votes; Gates, 8,465; Lindley, 6,926; Wilson, 3,877; Marek, 868. "Although the union-backed Wilson did quite well in some of the working class wards, his candidacy had been badly hurt by its lack of funds, the beginning of the graft prosecutions against the Union Labor Party in San Francisco, and the reluctance of workingclass voters to abandon the established parties," states Daniel J. Johnson in an unpublished paper on L.A.'s labor politics. "The real winner [Arthur C. Harper] was a more traditional candidate, able to draw upon the political power of the Southern Pacific railroad." Harper's platform, Johnson adds, "had been adopted wholesale from the Public Ownership Party." Clodius notes that "Gates went no further in his campaign pronouncements than a cautious advocacy of an experiment with a municipal power plant to determine the feasibility of extending the principle to any other utility." [Los Angeles City, *Records of Election Returns*, Vol. 1 (Dec. 5, 1904–Dec. 9, 1920), No. 14, pp. 37-38; *L.A. Times*, March 27, 1909; *Los Angeles Examiner*, Dec. 5-6, 1906; Johnson, Daniel J, "'And Never the Twain Shall Meet': Working Class Politics in Los Angeles, 1903–1909," unpublished paper presented at the 19th Annual Conference of the Southwest Labor Studies Association, April 17, 1993; Clodius, "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles," pp. 134-35.]

[64] The $23 million bond election was held on June 12, 1907. [City Council *Minutes*, Vol. 76, June 2, 1908, pp. 73-74; Erie, "How the Urban West Was Won," pp. 520-21, 539. Erie notes that when the Owens Valley water system pushed Los Angeles to the legal limit of its bonded indebtedness, the city council imposed a draconian low-wage, cheap-food policy on the 3,900 laborers who built the aqueduct over a six-year period.]

[65] "By 1913 debt redemption (three-quarters for harbor, water and power bonds) consumed over one-third of the city's budget," says Erie. "In response, the city began shifting portions of its debt burden to special districts....By 1929 the city's special assessments were the highest per capita in the country." [p. 548]

[66] City Council *Minutes*, Vol. 81, pp. 544-47, "Mayor's Annual Report for FY 1909-10," July 12, 1910; Ingram, James W. III. "Building the Municipal State: Coalitions and Infrastructure Development in Los Angeles, 1889–1939," paper prepared for delivery at 1994 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, New York City (typescript), pp. 15-16; Erie, "How the Urban West Was Won," p. 539-40.

[67] "William Mulholland (1855-1935)," Public Broadcasting System Perspectives on the West webpage, June 18, 2007; *L.A. Examiner*, Nov. 5, 1913, quoted in Mulholland, Catherine, *William Mulholland and the Rise of Los Angeles*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2000, p. 233.

[68] Mulholland predicted that Los Angeles would need to support 390,000 people by 1925 but in actuality its population reached 485,000 in 1913, the year the aqueduct opened. Though Mulholland's 390,000 guesstimate was meant to bolster his inflated claim of water scarcity in Los Angeles, demographic trends soon made an honest man of him. The $23 million figure did not include the $1.5 million already spent for land and water rights. Overall, Mulholland claimed the aqueduct would cost Angelenos less than $25 million. ["The Los Angeles Aqueduct, 1913–1988," pp. 331, 337, 352; Kahrl. *Water and Power*, pp. 83-84, 149 .]

[69] Over the Central Labor Council's protests a few weeks after Harriman made these remarks, the Board of Public Works decided to sell its Monolith cement plant to a private buyer. The council viewed the sale as a betrayal of the city's commitment to municipal ownership. Notably, during the debate, ["Harriman Is Victor in Titanic Debate," *Citizen*, Dec. 1, 1911, p. 2; "Labor Council Protests Sale of Cement Plant," *Citizen*, Jan. 26, 1912, p. 8.]

[70] For a detailed account and critique of the socialist-inspired aqueduct investigation, see Hoffman, Abraham, "The Los Angeles Aqueduct Investigation Board of 1912: A Reappraisal," *Southern California Quarterly*, v. 62, no. 4 (Winter, 1980), pp. 336-57. [*Citizen*, Dec. 22, 1911, p. 1 and all 1912: Feb 16, p. 1; March 22, p. 1; March 29, p. 1; May 3, pp. 1, 5; May 31, p. 1; June 17, p. 13; Oct. 4, p. 6.]

[71] Kahrl. *Water and Power*, pp. 148-52.

[72] Erie gives a figure for the size of the aqueduct workforce's that is lower than Mulholland's and doesn't reflect the total number of hirees over time. A rare exception to the historiographical lack of interest in labor conditions on the aqueduct can be found in Clodius, "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles." [Erie, "How the Urban West Was Won," p. 539.]

[73] City Council *Minutes*, Vol. 68, pp. 556-60.

[74] Mulholland spoke freely about this aspect of his low-wage policy while opposing a 1913 state bill that would have barred aliens from California public works projects. That March, in a telegram to a Los Angeles assemblyman, Meyer Lissner wrote: "Mulholland says ninety per cent of laborers on aqueduct were foreign born unnaturalized. Could not have been built otherwise....Seems to me and others bad legislation." [Telegram from Lissner to the Hon. Stanley Benedict, Los Angeles, March 12, 1913, Meyer Lissner Papers, Borel Collection, Stanford University Library, Stanford University, CA. Quoted in Clodius, "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles." ff 78, p. 386.]

[75] "The Los Angeles Aqueduct, 1913-1988," pp. 335, 338; Ostrom, *Water & Politics*, p. 54.

[76] Ostrom, *Water & Politics*, pp. 93-94; Mulholland (Catherine), *William Mulholland and the Rise of Los Angeles*, pp. 159-60.

[77] "Tackles Freight Charter Clause," *L.A. Herald*, Sept. 30, 1906; *L.A. Examiner* editorial page, Oct. 1, 1906.

[78] "Tackles Freight Charter Clause," *L.A. Herald*, Sept. 30, 1906.

[79] Clodius, "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles." p. 373; *L.A. Record,* February 4, 1909.

[80] "The New Charter Amendments," *Municipal Affairs*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (January 1909), p. 1.

[81] "Shall We Vote to Blacklist Ourselves?" *Citizen*, May 22, pp. 1-2. (Normally this issue would have appeared on Friday May 24; either the *Citizen's* weekly publication schedule was altered or the date printed on page 1 was mistaken.)

[82] *Citizen:* "Central Labor Council," May 22, 1907, p. 7 and "Ten Thousand Wage-Workers Coming to Los Angeles," May 31, 1907, p. 1, (See footnote 81 for note on May 22 date.)

[83] "Ten Thousand Wage-Workers Coming to Los Angeles," *Citizen*, May 31, 1907, p. 1.

[84] Ingram, "Building the Municipal State," p. 5.

[85] Los Angeles Department of Water & Power, "The Los Angeles Aqueduct, 1913-1988," p. 339.

[86] In its 1988 history of the aqueduct, the Department of Water & Power conceded the 43 deaths but claimed that only one worker suffered a permanent injury. This claim is simply not credible. Since California had no worker's compensation law at the time, many serious injuries probably went unreported. In all likelihood they greatly exceeded the number of deaths. [Los Angeles Department of Water & Power, "The Los Angeles Aqueduct," 1913-1988," p. 340.]

[87] Letter from C.N. Hughes, Machinists' Union No. 311, to the Board of Public Works, Feb. 3, 1909, published in "Aqueduct Board Stints Laborers," *Citizen*, Feb. 19, 1909, pp. 1, 8; "The Aqueduct and Wages," *Citizen*, Feb. 24, 1911, p. 11.

[88] Letter from C.N. Hughes, Machinists' Union No. 311, to the Board of Public Works, Feb. 3, 1909, published in "Aqueduct Board Stints Laborers," *Citizen*, Feb. 19, 1909, pp. 1, 8;

[89] Los Angeles County Central Labor Council, *Minute Books for Executive Board and Council Meetings, 1909-1916*, Urban Archives Center, Olviatt Library, California State University Northridge, Feb. 2, 1912 (hereinafter LACLC)

[90] A more contemptuous dismissal of workers' complaints than Chaffee's is hard to imagine, but one was expressed in March 1910 by engineer S.T. Henry, associate editor of *The Engineering Record of New York*. Tunnel diggers, he said, were "highly paid, high class workmen who expected to be served banquets." ["450 Men Discharged," *Citizen*, Aug. 20, 1909, p. 8 and "Aqueduct," *Citizen*, Aug. 27, 1909, p. 9; Mulholland (Catherine), *William Mulholland and the Rise of Los Angeles*, pp. 180-81.]

[91] Saxmar, Robert, "Is the Aqueduct in the Hands of a Graft System?, *Citizen*, Dec. 9, 1910; Mulholland (Catherine), *William Mulholland and the Rise of Los Angeles*, pp. 181.

[92] "Aqueduct Workers on Strike," *Citizen*, Nov. 11, 1910, p. 8; "Semi-Annual Report of the Secretary-Treasurer of the Central Labor Council of Los Angeles," *Citizen*, Feb. 3, 1911, p. 1; "The Aqueduct and Wages," *Citizen*, Feb. 24, 1911, p. 11; "Report of Sec'y-Treas.," *Citizen*, Aug. 4, 1911, p. 15; LACLC, April 15, Nov. 11, 1910; LACLC Executive Board, April 18, 1910; Stimson, pp. 351-52.

[93] Ostrom, *Water & Politics*, p. 94; Mulholland (Catherine), *William Mulholland and the Rise of Los Angeles*, p. 238. Note: The aqueduct's total cost was $24.6 million. Subtracting $1.5 million for land and water rights gives a construction cost figure of $23.1 million.

[94] Clodius, "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles." pp. 372-74.

[95] L.A. City Archives, *Records of Election Returns, City of Los Angeles, Dec. 5, 1904–Dec. 9, 1920*, p. 40.

[96] "Union Man Will Become Water Commissioner," *Citizen*, June 7, 1907, p. 1.

[97] "Rejects Elliott and Mead," *L.A. Examiner*, June 25, 1907; City Council *Minutes*, Vol. 76, pp. 187-90, 192-95, 200-09, 228-30, 259-60, 263, 335, 409; Vol. 81, pp. 544-47.

[98] Erie, "How the Urban West Was Won," p. 540.

[99] Editorial, *L.A. Record*, Feb. 13, 1912.

[100] "Los Angeles Sells Its Bonds but at a Tremendous Sacrifice," *Citizen*, Feb. 16, 1912.

[101] Erie, "How the Urban West Was Won," pp. 549--50; "Will Amend the City Charter by Referendum Proceedings," *Citizen*, Jan. 26, 1912, p. 3.

[102] "Owens River Bonds," *Citizen*, Jan. 10, 1908, p. 6; "Bonds Find Little Sale Notwithstanding Late Defeat of the Socialists." *Citizen*, Jan. 26, 1912; "Small Sum Investors," *Citizen*, March 13, 1914, p. 4; John R. Haynes letter to Meyer Lissner, March 16, 1912, copy found in Haynes Papers, Box 133, pp. 35-36; see also Box 189, p. 42.

[103] "Bonds Find Little Sale Notwithstanding Late Defeat of the Socialists." *Citizen*, Jan. 26, 1912.

[104] "We do not care who runs the city--Democrats, Republicans, Socialists, or women," a spokesman for the Henry Clews & Co. bonding house told the *New York Call* in November, 1911. Quoted in the *Citizen*, Dec. 1, 1911, p. 1.

[105] Los Angeles Department of Water & Power, "The Los Angeles Aqueduct, 1913–1988," p. 354.

[106] Despite his hard work on behalf of the 1907 aqueduct bonds, Lissner was not a reliable advocate of municipal ownership. In September, 1913, he led a narrowly successful fight to keep a policy statement favoring municipal ownership out of some proposed charter amendments, saying it might someday work a hardship on the city. Eaton, who opposed many of Mulholland's aqueduct policies by 1913, skipped the ceremony; Nevertheless Mulholland

publicly praised his contributions. ["Free Holders Against City Owning Utilities, *Citizen*, Sept. 13, 1912, p. 7; C.D. Willard, "What's On in the City of Los Angeles," *California Outlook* vol. 15, No. 20 (Nov. 15, 1913), p. 6; Mulholland (Catherine), *William Mulholland and the Rise of Los Angeles*, pp. 243-46.

[107] My italics. The Chief Engineer's statement was remarkable because it would clearly cost less to build the generating plants as part of the aqueduct, with aqueduct work crews, than to come back and build them later. Moreover, income from kilowattage sold to the power companies or consumers would help pay off the aqueduct bonds. [*Citizen* May 31, 1907, p. 1; Van Valen, "A Neglected Aspect of the Owens River Aqueduct Story," pp. 95-96, 99-100. The Mulholland quotes taken from Van Valen first appeared in the *L.A. Examiner*, Aug. 15, 1905, and in Los Angeles Department of Public Works, *First Annual Report of the Chief Engineer of the Los Angeles Aqueduct to the Board of Public Works,* Los Angeles, March 15, 1907, pp. 56-58.[

[108] Haynes' role in the 1905-14 public power debates was modest compared with organized labor's, but he and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers No. 61 became the strongest defenders of L.A.'s municipal power system after it was irrevocably established in May, 1914. [Ostrom, *Water & Politics*, pp. 95-97; Mulholland (Catherine), *William Mulholland and the Rise of Los Angeles*, pp. 196-97, 199; Van Valen, "A Neglected Aspect of the Owens River Aqueduct Story," p. 98; Sitton, Tom. *John Randolph Haynes: California Progressive,* Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 1992, p. 53.]

[109] Van Valen, "A Neglected Aspect of the Owens River Aqueduct Story," pp. 98-99 and ff. 42.

[110] Ingram, "Building the Municipal State," pp. 15-16; Erie, "How the Urban West Was Won," p. 540; Van Valen, "A Neglected Aspect of the Owens River Aqueduct Story," pp. 98-99; Mulholland (Catherine), *William Mulholland and the Rise of Los Angeles*, pp. 196-97.

[111] Lissner response to "Shall Los Angeles Lease or Distribute the Aqueduct Power?" *Pacific Outlook,* Feb. 4, 1911, p. 12; "Scattergood Has Pointed Reply to Statements of Power Company Man," Citizen Dec. 26, 1913, p. 6; Mulholland (Catherine), *William Mulholland and the Rise of Los Angeles*, p. 364, ff. 1.

[112] Ingram, "Building the Municipal State," p. 17. Ingram points out that before the straw poll, mid- to upper-class, native-born, Republican voters strongly backed the power bonds. Not so afterwards.

[113] Ingram, "Building the Municipal State," p. 37.

[114] "To the Members of Organized Labor," *Citizen*, Sept. 20, 1912, p. 8; "Socialist Party Offices Moved to Labor Temple," *Citizen*, Sept. 13, 1912, p. 11.

[115] See Chapter 8 for a full account of the campaign for proportional representation and other 1913 charter amendments. [*Calendar Year Message of George Alexander, Mayor of the City of Los Angeles, California to the Honorable City Council,* Jan. 6, 1913, pp. 1-2; *Municipal News*: "Mayor Urges Bond Issue of $12,000,000," Aug. 7, 1912, p. 1; "Mayor's Message Indicates Growth...," and "Council Submits All Propositions to Bond Elections," Jan. 8, 1913, p. 1; "Wheeler Discusses Proportional Representation at Men's Club, *Citizen*, Aug. 2, 1912, p. 1; *Citizen* (all 1913): "Signers Are Eager to Affix Signatures...,", Jan. 17, p. 1; "The Great Issue-

-What It Is," and "Charter Amendments Endorsed by Socialist General Assembly," Jan. 24, pp. 4 and 5; Fred C. Wheeler, "The Booster Man," March 7, p. 11; R.A. Maynard, "Amendment 8 Is Vital Issue on March 24," March 14, p. 1; John R. Haynes, "Here Are Reasons Why First Eight Amendments Should Win," March 14, p. 3; "Workers of Los Angeles Unite," March 14, p. 7; Sitton, *John Randolph Haynes: California Progressive,* pp. 115-17.]

[116] "How About Bond Issues? Big Question for Voters," *Citizen,* Jan. 24, 1913, p. 13; "Workers of Los Angeles Unite," *Citizen,* March 14, 1913, p. 7.

[117] "Bond Election Is Put Over by City Council," *Citizen* Feb. 7, 1913, p. 1.

[118] "At the Eleventh Hour," *Citizen,* Feb. 7, 1913, p. 4.

[119] *Citizen,* all March 28, 1913: "Old Guard Is Routed; Ward Plan Killed," p. 1; "The City Charter Election," p. 4; "The Booster Man," p. 15.

[120] "Organized Labor Will Support Bond No. 1 at Election April 15," *Citizen,* April 11, 1913, p. 2.

[121] The Edison Company hired Finkle as its chief hydraulic engineer in 1897, and after 1906 he served as a consultant to several other western hydroelectric utilities. How he became president of the public-power-advocating Alembic Club with that track record is indeed a mystery. ["Alembic Club Will Support Few Bond Propositions," *Citizen,* April 11, 1913, p. 6; "Alembic Club Denounces and Expels President Finkle," *Citizen,* April 18, 1913, p. 15; Mulholland (Catherine), *William Mulholland and the Rise of Los Angeles,* pp. 351-52, ff. 16.]

[122] "Official Count of Bond Votes," *L.A. Times,* April 17, 1913.

[123] "$10,000,000 of Bonds Named for Defeat," *Municipal News,* Jan. 29, 1913.

[124] Alembic Club members grilled the candidates--and warmly applauded them--on their public power stand. They were not "heckled." ["Council Candidates Heckled at Alembic Club Meeting," *Citizen,* May 30, 1913, p. 6; "Now Is the Time to Swing into Line for a Great Campaign," Nov. 7, 1913, p. 9.]

[125] Workers Clamoring to Begin California's Greatest Campaign...," *Citizen,* June 6, 1913, p. 1; "What the Returns Show," *Citizen,* June 6, 1913, p. 2.

[126] Wright, Chester M., "Wheeler to Face Vast Amount of Work in New Job," *Citizen,* June 6, 1913, p. 1; LACLC, Oct. 17 and 24, 1913.

[127] *Proceedings, Fourteenth Annual Convention of the California State Federation of Labor,* Fresno, October 6-11, 1913, p. 42 (Scharrenberg report dated Sept. 27, 1913); "Los Angeles Labor Is Making a Great Record," *Citizen,* Sept. 26, 1913, p. 4.

[128] The Campaign Committee's members included the Chamber of Commerce, Municipal League, City Club, Friday Morning Club, German-American Alliance, Builders Exchange, Central Labor Council, and several other organizations. Not long after its founding it substituted the word "People's" for "Citizens" in its title. [Ostrom, *Water & Politics,* pp. 59-60.]

[129] "*Citizen,* Dec. 12, 1913, p. 4; "Scattergood Has Pointed Reply to Statements of Power Company Man," *Citizen,* Dec. 26, 1913, p. 6.

[130] LACLC Executive Board, March 24, 1914; "Harriman Meets All Comers in Free for All Debate on Power Bond Issues, Winning Easily," *Citizen* Dec. 5, 1913, p. 6; "Bonds Discussed at Labor Temple," *Citizen*, May 15, 1914.

[131] "Some Plain Talk About Mayor Rose," *Citizen*, Oct. 31, 1913, p. 7; "Wheeler Defeats Power Companies, Bond Issue Will Be Voted on by the People as One Proposition," *Citizen*, March 6, 1914, p. 1; "Report of Labor Council's Power Bond Committee," *Citizen*, May 8, 1914, p. 7; Ostrom, *Water & Politics*, pp. 59-60; Willard, C.D., "What's On in the City of Los Angeles" and Scattergood, E.F., "The Status of Los Angeles' Power Project," *California Outlook*, v. 15 (October 25, 1913), pp. 5, 7-8.

[132] LACLC, Nov. 1 and 14, 1913; "At Work With the Workers," *Citizen*, Nov. 7, 1913.

[133] "Police 'Vag' Penniless Workers for Money Saving Scheme of Rose Administration; Grow Makes Charge," *Citizen*, Sept. 26, 1913, p. 1; LACLC, Dec. 12, 19, 26, 1913; Jan. 5, 16, 30, Feb. 7, 13, April 25, May 1, 1914.

[134] LACLC, March 28, April 3, 17, 25; LACLC Executive Board April 21, 1914; Ostrom, *Water & Politics*, p. 60.

[135] "Electrical Workers for Power Bonds, *Citizen*, April 17, 1914; "Labor Is Going to Vote for the Power Bonds," *Citizen*, April 24, 1914.

[136] LACLC, April 17, 1914; The Power Bond Debate" and "Bonds Endorsed at Big C.L.C. Meeting, *Citizen*, April 24, 1914, pp. 1, 4.

[137] LACLC, June 23, 1911; Building Trades/Central Labor Council resolution (July 2, 1911) inserted before the July 7, 1911 minutes; April 17, 1914; Political Club Recommends Ticket," *Citizen*, April 28, 1911, p. 9; "Our Candidates: Fearless Champions of the Rights of the People," *Citizen*, June 30, 1911, p. 6; "Vote on all the Candidates," *Citizen*, Dec. 8, 1911, p. 1; "Labor's Welfare Committee Calls Rousing Saturday Night Meeting; Great Demand for Wage Ordinance," *Citizen*, Feb. 13, 1914; "Bonds Endorsed at Big C.L.C. Meeting, *Citizen*, April 24, 1914, p. 1; Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*," pp. 333, 362.

[138] "Bonds Endorsed at Big C.L.C. Meeting, *Citizen*, April 24, 1914, p. 1.

[139] "Bonds Endorsed at Big C.L.C. Meeting, *Citizen*, April 24, 1914, p. 1.

[140] "Organized Labor and the Power Bonds," *Citizen*, April 24, 1914, p. 7.

[141] LACLC, April 17, 1914; "Bonds Endorsed at Big C.L.C. Meeting, *Citizen*, April 24, 1914, p. 1.

[142] "Organized Labor and the Power Bonds," *Citizen*, April 24, 1914, p. 7.

[143] "Central Labor Council Splits in Civil War," *L.A. Times*, May 9, 1914, Part II, p. 1.

[144] "Building Trades Council States Its Position on Proposed Bond Issue," *Citizen*, May 1, 1914, p. 1.

[145] "Some Proceedings of the Carpenters' District Council," *Citizen*, April 24, 1914, p. 2.

[146] "Harriman Meets All Comers in Free for All Debate on Power Bond Issues, Winning Easily," *Citizen*, Dec. 5, 1913, p. 6.

[147] "Scattergood Should Quit and "Fastened on Scattergood," *L.A. Times*, May 1, 1914; "Cooperation, Not Condemnation," *L.A. Times*, May 2, 1914; "Bond Boosters Are Staggered," "Again the Unfairness of It," and "A Vote Against the Power Bonds Is a Vote for Money for the Schools," *L.A. Times*, May 3, 1914; Great Bond House Will Refuse Power Issue" and "Scattergood's Unreliable Power Plant Estimates," *L.A. Times*, May 4, 1914; "We Should Vote Down the Power Bonds," *L.A. Times*, May 6, 1914; LACLC, May 1, 1914; *Citizen*, all 1914: "Carry The Bonds," May 1, p. 1; Fred Wheeler, "Why I Will Support the Bonds," May 1, p. 4; A.E. Danielson, "Electrical Men Get Together in Open Meeting," May 8, p. 5; "Report of Labor Council's Power Bond Committee," May 8, p. 7; "Bonds Discussed at Labor Temple," May 15, p. 8.

[148] Correlating the power bond vote with social class in L.A.'s nine wards shows that each 10% increment in the workingclass share of population increased the vote for the bonds by 2%. (Class was determined through a random sample of 1,194 registered voters in L.A.'s *Great Register* for 1908, which lists wards and occupations. For a further explanation see the tables at the end of this chapter.) ["Power Bonds Triumph by Smashing Majority. Voters Approve by Big Excess Over the Required Two-Thirds," *L.A. Examiner*, May 9. 1914, p. 1; "Power Bonds Carry by Three Thousand," *L.A. Times*, May 9. 1914, Part II, p. 1.]

[149] "State Railway Board Will Be Asked to Act: Labor Strong for Bonds" and "Rich Precincts Anti-Bonds," *L.A. Examiner*, May 9, 1914, p. 2.

[150] "I.B.E.W. No. 61 on Roundup," *Citizen*, May 15, 1814, p. 2.

[151] The DWP's predecessors were the Water Bureau, Power Bureau, and Department of Public Service. [Erie, "How the Urban West Was Won," pp. 540-41, 546; Ingram, "Building the Municipal State," pp. 16-17.]

[152] "Newly Elected Secretary and President of the Labor Council," *Citizen*, Feb. 7, 1913, p. 1; "At Work with the Workers," *Citizen*, Aug. 1, 1913, p. 3.

[153] LACLC all 1914: April 28 (Executive Board), May 1, May 8; "Report of Labor Council's Power Bond Committee," *Citizen*, May 8, 1914 p. 7.

[154] "Union Labor Is for the Bonds. Sec. Butler Settles Canard," *L.A. Examiner*, May 7, 1914,

[155] LACLC May 15, 1914; "Electrical Men Get Together in Open Meeting," *Citizen*, May 8, 1914, p. 5; "Central Labor Council Drops the Officers Who Used Their Titles in Fight Against Power Bonds," *Citizen*, May 22, 1914; *L.A. Record*, May 6, 1914; Perry, Louis B. and Richard S. Perry, *A History of the Los Angeles Labor Movement, 1911-1941*, University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1963, pp. 27-34, 51.

[156] "Electrical Men Get Together in Open Meeting," *Citizen*, May 8, 1914, p. 5.

[157] "Central Labor Council Drops the Officers...," *Citizen*, May 22, 1914, p. 1.

[158] "Power Bonds Committee To Be Kept Alive," *L.A. Examiner*, May 12, 1914, p. 10. "Power Bond Committee Reviews Its Great Work...," *Citizen* May 15, 1914, p. 10.

Part 3

Workers as statebuilders.

12.
The State and Organized Labor: An Historical Reconsideration

The preoccupation of most American critical legal and labor historians with the State That Oppresses Labor is ahistorical in the same sense that scholars of workplace relations who dwell only on the oppressive, deskilling aspects of electro-mechanical machines fail to see the liberating potential of the new computer-driven technology. Both sets of scholars are mired in Political Economy, as my late dear friend Norman Weinstein pointed out in a March 9, 1987 letter to the *Monthly Review*. "Himmelstein's stand," he wrote of an editor who had rejected one of his manuscripts about the forward-looking aspects of information technology for workers, "is still fashionable with most of the left today. According to the model of scientific development he embraces, technology is a means of social control and a hopelessly capitalist creation which offers no benefits to the masses of people. This one-sided stand calls to mind Marx's comments in *The Poverty of Philosophy*. Aptly, Marx points out how the 'theoreticians of the proletarian class...so long as they are at the beginning of the struggle...see in misery nothing but misery, without seeing in it the revolutionary subversive side, which will overthrow the old society."[1]

Precisely the same thing can be charged to those chroniclers of the wage-earning class who today see in the bourgeois state nothing but misery, without noticing the seeds of subversion planted within it by workers and their unions. The wave of historical and political science scholarship that "brought the state back in" during the 1980s and early 1990s has long since crested, leaving its subject half-examined in the shoals. What workers accomplished against enormous odds in progressive-era Los Angeles gives us an opportunity to reconsider that scholarship, to hazard an attempt at completing its worthy mission, and to rescue if not the urban working class generally at least the Los Angeles

working class of 1890-1915 from "the enormous condescension of posterity."[2]

This dissertation has studied the crossfire between three encampments on the city's political field of battle: (1) progressives, (2) politicians popularly known as "the Old Guard" with ties to railway, lighting, liquor, real estate, and other interests, and (3) organized workers. Progressives and the Old Guard often sniped at each other but joined forces against the political ambitions of organized labor; each represented a somewhat different but overlapping subclass of capitalists.

This a much different picture of organized labor's connection to progressivism than the ones painted by Shelton Stromquist in his recent study, *Reinventing "The People": The Progressive Movement, the Class Problem, and the Origins of Modern Liberalism* and by Richard Schneirov in his influential 1994 essay, "Rethinking the Relation of Labor to the Politics of Urban Social Reform in Late Nineteenth-Century America: The Case of Chicago."

In Chicago, says Schneirov, a period of elitist mugwumpery was followed during the 1890s by a progressive alliance in which a relatively strong labor movement and middle-class progressives not only backed the same workplace and social reforms but worked shoulder to shoulder for them. It is one thing for union members and self-styled progressives to vote occasionally for the same measures and quite another for them to join what Schneirov calls "a cross-class *coalition* of reformers" (my italics). The former occurred at fitful intervals in Los Angeles, the latter almost never unless one shrinks the idea of a coalition to the labor movement's several collaborations with John R. Haynes. In Los Angeles, labor activists were the most thorough-going reformers while the professionals and small entrepreneurs who dubbed themselves "progressives" behaved like mugwumps. Chicago's progressives supported a streetcar strike; L.A.'s progressives supported railway magnate Henry Huntington. Chicago's progressives supported collective bargaining and helped rein in the use of police as strikebreakers; L.A.'s progressives

banned peaceful picketing and allowed police deputies' to pull double-duty as strike-breakers. Equivalencies between the two cities did exist. Both their labor movements spurned voluntarism, engaged in radical politics, launched independent labor parties, and embraced unskilled workers in proto-industrial printing trades, metal trades, and other councils. But the similarities end there. Concluding his essay, Schneirov asks whether the Chicago events he describes "can provide the basis for a reinterpretation of the origins of urban progressivism in the United States." Perhaps, but it would be one reinterpretation among many. That's probably true of 1890-1915 Los Angeles as well.[3]

Stromquist's ambit is the national progressive movement of a century ago. Probing behind its widely-noted rhetorical effort to invent, and speak for, a seamless American "people," he finds not a masking discourse but a heartfelt manifesto. The progressives, he says, meant what they said. They truly believed they could coax a homogenized society from the Gilded Age's warring elements. This Panglossian worldview was passed on to the political liberalism of our own day and is a major cause of its failures. "In their programmatic efforts to constitute an imagined people," Stromquist asserts, "they failed to come to terms with the structures of class power and domination that shaped 'public' interest and over time undermined their quest for democratic community."[4] Little in the foregoing analysis is apt for the Los Angeles progressives. They used the same meta-physical discourse to win votes, but most of them did not for one minute act on it before, during, or after holding office. Willard, Lissner, Gates, Gibbon, Pridham, and their col-leagues keenly appraised the structure of class power in their adopted city and defended their privileged place in it. The quest for democratic community was low on their agenda. Keeping the organized working class at bay ranked near the top. To be fair, Stromquist had to wield a broad brush in his portrait of nationally known progressives. When we meet him again a few pages on, he will make a signal contribution by calling our atten-

tion to the heterogeneous "local laboratories" of labor, socialist, and progressive politics.

The three political encampments noted above had one big thing in common: a desire to grow the city. At one time or another they all championed the harbor, aqueduct, and aqueduct power. Where they differed, passionately, was over how growth was to be achieved, and for whose primary benefit.

Behind their struggles over the bricked, mortared, siphoned, cemented, paved, railed, electrified, watered, and dredged world of material infrastructure, an intimately related struggle played out over the form and function of municipal government. This government was the one that mattered most to Angelenos a century ago, long before Sacramento and Washington D.C. became intrusive forces in people's lives.

The city regime that the three political forces inherited from California's 1879 home-rule constitution and L.A.'s 1889 charter had few regulatory or growth-promoting powers. Adopted by a citywide vote of 2,642 to 1,890 in October, 1888 and ratified by the legislature three months later, the charter failed to equip Los Angeles for the population and commercial tsunami that had suddenly engulfed it or for the steadier growth that followed.[5] Its one strong point was the discretion it gave the city to control its water supply and developments along its streets. The charter's greatest weakness was its fragmentation of authority and responsibility. It made the mayor a figurehead and handed most administrative duties to a nine-member city council splintered by partisan quarrels. The council oversaw six departmental executives (police, fire, libraries, education, health, and parks) and a Board of Public Works. It also named the members of four voluntary boards and commissions who shared authority with eight elected town officers. If the Southern Pacific railroad occasionally played Democratic and Republican politicians against one another over the next 15 years, it was the 1889 charter that made this possible. William H. Workman, who chaired the 1888-89 freeholders, complained that by 1900 city govern-

ment had become "a political bureau for the reward of men who control votes."[6]

Such a regime could not hope to rally its citizens behind the high-debt sacrifices its successors would soon ask them to make. Taxes under the 1889 charter stayed low, city budgets minimal. During the 1890s the city held only six small water and sewer bond elections. "Private development strategies--especially an aggressive national promotional campaign and a speculative local real estate market--completely overshadowed public efforts," says Steven P. Erie. "The result was Los Angeles' version of the night-watchman state. In 1905 the city's debt stood at $5.5 million--negligible for a rapidly growing city of 200,000." [7]

The incompetence of city government for the tasks at hand impressed itself with equal force on labor, progressive, and Old Guard leaders a century ago. Except for the case of aqueduct power, there was little disagreement among them over the debt explosion that followed. Municipal debt rose sevenfold between 1905 and mid-1914 to $37.6 million. Because the 1879 California constitution obliged cities to win the approval of two-thirds of their voting electorates for bond issues, the extraordinary transformation of Los Angeles from a weak caretaker state to a robust managerial state could not have occurred without the enthusiastic participation of its citizens. "Those who wanted to do more than clean up the corruption in the local state--who desired the local state to become an agent of a positive goal like economic growth--needed to build a mass coalition behind their goals," states James W. Ingram.[8] The impetus from below was an indispensable feature of both economic and municipal growth in Los Angeles during the reform era. More than willing to spend their way to West Coast preeminence, L.A.'s voters accepted a per capita tax burden that rose to fourth-highest in the nation by 1913 and highest of any U.S. city by 1929. Debt reduction consumed a third of the municipal budget in the former year, most of it for aqueduct, power, and harbor bonds.[9]

Soaring debt for municipal enterprises tracked the vigorous expansion of city government in size, function, and administrative capacity. Previous regimes had built roads, *zanjas,* sewers, bridges, and other public works, and they had launched sporadic forays against vice. After 1904 they had regulated railway and telephone rates. Much of this earlier municipal activity had been undertaken reluctantly, however, by petition from property holders, through voluntary organizations or private enterprise, or during crises of one kind or another.[10] By contrast the city's post-1905 regimes engaged in a marathon of state-building with the zeal of missionaries. They greatly enlarged the local state's penetration into both the market and the lives of its citizens.

"Local governmental officialdom has been assigned an unusually complex array of functions in Los Angeles," Winston and Beatrice Dinerman pointed out four decades ago in *Southern California Metropolis*. "Numerous functions that in many sections of the United States are placed in the sphere of private responsibility are here performed by public bodies."[11] Still observable today, this fact was a legacy of progressive-era reforms.

The Dinermans, Erie, and Ingram and others have noted the following marker for the growth of L.A. municipal government during the progressive years. Between 1903 and 1912 the number of city workers soared from 1,123 to 17,646, nearly a 16-fold increase stemming largely from construction of the aqueduct. After that project ended, public employment fell to 6,170 in 1916--still an impressive 5.5-fold growth over just 13 years.[12] This latter workforce, stabilized and disciplined by one of the nation's most thorough civil service regimes, was hired to oversee the city's many franchises, regulate the rates and services of its public utilities, run its massive public works at the aqueduct and harbor, and police the health and behavior of its residents. After 1900 the Los Angeles police force grew much faster than the local population, from about 95 officers, patrolmen, detectives, and staff to some 250 in 1910 and 550 in 1914. Most of this increase was pro-

voked by strikes, the 1910 L.A. Times bombing, and other signs of workingclass unrest.[13]

The hyperactive state the Dinermans observed in 1964 owed much to the expansive role the city's progressive-era voters gave their government and repeatedly supported through charter reforms, bond issues, and high taxes. According to Erie, "One of the signal features of early Los Angeles' state-based growth regime--unlike its entrepreneurial predecessor--was its heavy reliance upon the municipal bond market for capital formation. Between 1905 and 1932 the city of Los Angeles and the Metropolitan Water District (MWD) marketed $412 million in water, power, and harbor bonds alone--the equivalent of $3.9 billion in 1991 dollars--with a considerably smaller and poorer population."[14]

Contested Territory

Erie and Amy Bridges attribute most western urban growth a century ago to the leadership of an enlightened business class backed by the compliant support of voters. Stressing "the salience of growth issues and the role of elites in negotiating resources for growth," Bridges asserts the following:

> "The cities of the Southwest were latecomers to both economic development and national politics, and this had dramatic consequences for local politics. First, the economic well-being of these communities was quite precarious. Any newspaper reader knew that prosperous futures depended on securing resources from outside investors and higher governments....In 1900...[b]oth the capital and authority needed to secure urban growth were for the most part at distant locales, in the great cities of the East and in the nation's capital. Citizens of southwestern towns had no illusions of living in Adam Smith's universe; here, the conscientious pursuit of individual self-interest would not be assisted by the unseen hand. Rather, collective action was required for individual and collective well-being. The early, persistent, and aggressive organization of business leaders gave local politics much of its distinctive character not only in the Progressive Era but also for decades to come." [15]

The trouble with this view of growth lies not in its claim of "strategic location" but in its monolithic treatment of the growth consensus. There were leaders (business elites) and followers (citizens) who supposedly marched in lockstep when it came to more bond issues, more capital improvements, more people, more jobs. Bridges examines the ancillaries of growth far more subtly, noting heated differences over ward vs. citywide voting,

the distribution of spoils, the demands of ethnic minorities, but on growth itself she has her subjects speak with one voice: "Let's have more of it!" Erie is no more supple. He attributes the L.A. city government's initial transformation into a growth machine to a "downtown business community" and after 1906 to "public bureaucrats" (mostly progressives) who used the municipal bond market to collude with entrepreneurial capital at the harbor while subduing it over public water and power.[16]

There was, in fact, *no consensus* in progressive-era Los Angeles over what social forces--public or private--were to secure and manage growth and harvest its bounty. The disagreements were raw and profound. Who should buy the growth bonds--New York banks or small citizen investors? Should harbor income flow into the city's general fund and harbor improvements or into lower rates for shippers? Should the city manage its own power system or let Southern California Edison, Pacific Light & Power, and Los Angeles Gas & Electric sell hydropower at a profit? Should the municipal state that controlled growth operate semi-autonomously or at the beck and recall of an electorate armed with direct democracy? And who, politically, should lead the growth parade? All these questions impinged on the nature of the local state.

If we could have asked those holding majoritarian views in each of L.A.'s three main growth constituencies a century ago what kind of city government they wanted, their candid answers might have gone something like this:

Otis and the Old Guard: The least government necessary to support rapid growth in the private sector through bond issues and infrastructural development; favorable ordinances; regressive taxes; a welfare policy of least relief; judges appointed for life and dedicated to "master and servant" principles of the common law; juries selected from freeholder lists; out-of-state advertising for workers to maintain a reserve army of the unemployed; minimal enforcement of state child labor and wage laws; male-only freeholders' suffrage; party nominating conventions followed by ward-based partisan elections; a

weak mayor; and regulatory non-interference in the free market other than aggressive policing to protect private property and suppress market aberrations such as boycotts and strikes. Examples of favorable legislation: generous industrial siting in the eastside wards, prohibition of picketing and oratory on city streets, and 30- to 50-year utility franchises with no city buyout provisions. "Freak legislation" (Otis's term) to be avoided: the initiative, referendum, and recall. No bones about it--an instrumental state.

Progressives: An expansive, efficient, business-like city government dedicated to the muting of class hostilities and rapid private sector/ modest public sector growth through limited municipal ownership of growth resources; bond issues and infrastructural development; favorable ordinances; equitable taxes on property; a civil service suspendable when and where public wages must be held down; a welfare policy of least relief; judges elected to provide injunctive relief against strikes and boycotts; juries selected from freeholder lists; enforcement of state child labor, mothers' pension, and women's wage laws; acceptance of women's suffrage if most voters choose it; nonpartisan primaries followed by at-large voting in city council and other elections; scrupulously limited use of the initiative, referendum, and recall; a strong mayor or, preferably, a commission form of government; vigorous regulation of utilities by appointed commissions to assure equitable rates and efficient delivery of services, and, when class harmony cannot be maintained, aggressive policing to protect private property and suppress market aberrations such as boycotts and strikes. Examples of favorable legislation: modest industrial siting in the eastside wards, laws prohibiting saloons, gambling, other moral hazards, and picketing on city streets, 21-year utility franchises with city buyout provisions, ordinances limiting the franchise and reducing turnouts in elections. Legislation to be avoided: proportional representation. Without doubt--a semi-autonomous state.

Organized labor: An expansive city government, dedicated to spreading the benefits of rapid public sector/private sector growth to the working and middle classes through the

ownership and management of large infrastructural resources and utilities; both large- and small-domination bond sales; proportional representation, direct democracy including the recall of judges, women's suffrage, and the widest possible franchise to open government to the citizenry; favorable ordinances; progressive taxes on property, including unproductive land; a civil service guaranteeing public workers a living wage and job security; minimal welfare provision; judges elected for their willingness to forego injunctive relief against strikes and boycotts; juries selected from the list of all citizens and legal residents; 21-year franchises with city buyout provisions for the remaining private utilities; diligent enforcement of state labor laws; a strong council/mayor form of government; vigorous regulation of all private industry through a permanent labor industrial commission; and freedom of speech, assembly, and picketing. Examples of favorable legislation: equitable siting of factories throughout the city, a livable minimum wage, a ban on the use of police deputies as strikebreakers. Legislation to be avoided: property requirements for bond voters and selected moral reform laws against Sunday concerts, free saloon lunches, racetrack betting, boxing matches, and the like. In some respects this is an instrumental state, in others (for example the large municipal enterprises) a semi-autonomous one, but as a rule it is more open to pressure from below than either of the two competing models.

Workingclass Palmprints on a Capitalist State

Based on this dissertation's narrative, what sort of municipal state actually emerged from the economic, ideological, political, and cultural struggle waged by L.A.'s three main social forces in the years 1905-15?

The first answer is that it was decidedly capitalist. In its major functions it presided over and reinforced capitalist commodity production, the workers' sale of their labor power in a competitive job market, the capitalists' confiscation of the surplus value each worker produced, their purchase of political favors, the reproduction of capitalist hierar-

chies and ideology in ordinances, elections, and the conduct of city departments, a miserly social wage, a large reserve army of the unemployed, and the forcible suppression of workingclass protest. Did organized labor strike a dangerous blow against the capitalist moorings of this local state? Hardly. It did not even try.

The more relevant question, however, is whether the large and small capitalists represented by the Old Guard and progressives got the municipal government they wanted. As this dissertation shows, they clearly did not. They had to settle for a state that was far more porous to workingclass demands and intrusions than the ideal capitalist instrument envisioned by the Old Guard or the readily co-opted regulatory state and sinecure of "the best men" sought by most progressives in Los Angeles. The most dramatic bits of evidence for this fact are the 1904 Davenport and 1909 Harper recalls, but the chronic, everyday evidence is more compelling. Agitation by the city's central labor bodies and most of their affiliated unions from the early 1890s onward mobilized workingclass and middle-class voters in two signal ways: to reassert their *pueblo* rights and to use the ballot-box not just for *concessions from the municipal state but for transformations of it.* [17] The reassertion of pueblo rights led slowly but directly to a publicly owned and operated aqueduct and its power distribution system, the latter competing successfully against private capital. Voters reinvented city government by giving it control of huge economic enterprises and brandishing that quintessential outsider's weapon, direct democracy, to deprive it of the autonomy it would have gained under unchallenged progressive rule.

Some marxists and other scholars on the left may object that anyone who dwells on the above changes in governance is serving up distinctions without a difference--L.A.'s bourgeois democracy in 1890, after all, was still a bourgeois democracy in 1915! From the start of the progressive era to its end the principal client of city government was capitalism in the shape of the Southern Pacific, Huntington's urban railways, the Builders Exchange, the Baker and Llewellyn metal shops, Southern California Edison, the harbor

shippers, and hundreds of smaller enterprises. True enough! Such scholars may find it unconscionable to praise organized labor for making such a state more palatable to the subordinate classes. But this notion is truly dogmatic. It assumes a total dichotomy between a bourgeois-democratic state and a socialist one rather than a dialectical relation between the two. Might not socialism be foreshadowed by inchoate developments under capitalism, while bourgeois democracy serves as a training ground for workers and their allies? Marx himself insinuated that bourgeois democracy afforded the working class its nearest approach to socialism. Presumably the more complete the democracy, the nearer the approach.

Historians and political scientists on the left have made much of the differences between bourgeois democracy and fascism--both capitalist to the core--so they ought not to cavil at analyses of greater or lesser functional democracy within an avowed capitalist state. It is true that Marx and Engels defined the relationship between bourgeois democracy and socialism in the context of European parties primed for revolution, and with substantial followings. Such a context did not exist in Los Angeles a century ago, but the dogged effort by the city's unions to democratize the polity deserves our respect. It reminds us that neither our war of independence and its constitutional wake nor our Civil War and its aftermath of reconstruction completed the American democratic revolution. That project still awaits its party and may well be the prerequisite for the truly cooperative commonwealth otherwise known as socialism.

Half the Story: The State as Labor's Enemy

The accomplishments of organized workers in progressive-era Los Angeles pose a challenge to much if not most of the historical studies written in the last two decades about the relationship between American workers and the national state. During this time, it should be said at the outset, several trends in political science and labor history have deepened our understanding of what that the state is and how it functions. They have

identified a variety of state "actors," argued for their relative autonomy, and corrected the preceding tendency of social and labor historians to downplay the state's impact on everything from time discipline to popular culture. The first such studies, by political scientists writing history in the 1980s, sent ripples throughout our two professions but did not deal specifically with the state and the workingclass.[18] This oversight was soon remedied by a new wave of scholarship, mainly by "critical legal" historians, who argued that the American state had defanged American labor radicalism over the previous 125 years.[19] Challenging their repeated portrayal of workers as victims of the state, two highly influential labor scholars, Melvyn Dubofsky and David Montgomery, published works that uncovered the labor movement's efforts, occasionally successful, to wring concessions from the national state or to resist what Montgomery referred to as the coercive force of government in our states and cities. In both these books, however, the state itself--its structure and its role as disciplinarian, oppressor, or welfare provider--still looms over workers' heads *as a given.*[20]

Dubofsky presents the new state-centered histories as a correction of previous scholarship:

> "For almost two decades...the dominant tradition in the writing of labor history in the United States neglected the realm of politics and policy-making. Instead historians, influenced largely by the cultural approach to working-class history pioneered by E.P. Thompson in England and Herbert Gutman in the United States, focused on how sturdy ethnic subcultures enabled workers to resist their employers and to establish a measure of autonomy in their lives. Other historians, strongly influenced by David Montgomery, stressed that workers' shop-floor culture enabled them to exercise real power (workers' control) at the point of production. Still other historians, most notably Sean Wilentz in his study of New York City artisans and Leon Fink in his treatment of the Knights of Labor, integrated culture with the political ideology of 'republicanism,' which they used to explain the most salient aspects of working-class behavior. And more recently yet, the claims of gender and discourse theory have come to the fore. Unfortunately, the tendency of historians to emphasize ethnicity, gender, race, shop-floor traditions, and discursive ideologies has led them to slight, in the words of Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene Genovese, 'who rides whom' (or who rules whom). Indeed, all too often, the 'new' labor history exaggerated the power of working people and sentimentalized their subcultures. The stress on the private rather than the public, the cultural rather than the political, the discursive rather than the policy-making aspects of the past has made it more difficult for us to understand two central themes of labor history: (1) patterns of trade union growth and decline and (2) the persistent dominance of capital in its relations with labor." 21

Labor historians and critical legal scholars of the 1990s and later have generally

shown much more interest in the modalities of oppression and the culture of workingclass resistance than in the positive impact of labor struggles on the bourgeois state. In their way of looking at things, the state is *only* the coercive and hegemonic arm of capitalism. The possibility that capitalists have never been able to craft a state that unreservedly serves their interests in Los Angeles or elsewhere has not spurred American labor historians to study the question. I have no quarrel with the claim that over time, in its preponderant motion, the state as a local or national entity serves and reproduces capital. To presuppose that it does so exclusively, and under conditions wholly of the capitalists' making, betrays a mindset far too mechanical.

Examples of this one-sided thinking are manifold. Within their circumscribed ambit the following historians and political scientists have enriched our understanding of class oppression and exposed a heritage of resistance that is quite brave and inventive. But they have all missed the larger impact of workingclass agitation on our society, one that cannot be measured by the success of individual strikes, boycotts, or concession to labor.

Stephen Skowronek and Theda Skocpol offer a point of departure for this review. During the 1980s and early 1990s both political scientists described how a modern American state with large administrative capacities and highly selective welfare provisions replaced the nineteenth century's miniscule "state of courts and parties."[22] Skowronek argued that American government so lacked an effective civil service and other powers a century and a half ago that it had to rely on political parties and the judiciary for whatever coherence it possessed. Addressing this claim, David Montgomery insisted that "[t]he coercive capacity of government grew steadily throughout the century even as the authority it exercised was narrowed in scope."[23] His 1993 study, *Citizen Worker,* makes the meaning of this remark clear. Largely because of court rulings, the nineteenth-century U.S. government found itself increasingly able to suppress strikes and boycotts but increasingly *less* capable of regulating corporate practices harmful to workers and their

communities. "By the 1840s," he writes, "the economy was basically shielded from democratic control." [24]

Montgomery's study, like works by Dubofsky, Christopher L. Tomlins, William Forbath, and Gloria Hattam in the same decade, answers an implied question that has dominated the writing of labor history ever since political and legal scholars rediscovered the American state. Mimicking Montgomery's own interpretation of 19th-century government, the hegemonic power of this question stands in negative relation to its narrowness. It is this: what has the American state done ***to*** the American workingclass? [25]

It is certainly a provocative question, one that has inspired a wealth of books and articles that help us see with unprecedented clarity the obstacles strewn in labor's path by courts and jurists--what Forbath calls "the constitutive power of law" and Montgomery calls the redefinition of crime--as well as by local police, the National Guard, welfare agencies and policies, legislatures, and free-market ideology in its several manifestations. Virtually all these studies present workers and their unions as true historical agents: they struggle as best they can against the juridical tide, adapting to it ingeniously or stubbornly fighting it, drawing always on their collective power. For Hattam the worker's choice of weapons is an ideological vision, whether of a future cooperative commonwealth or militant collective bargaining. For Dubofsky, it is organized labor's opportunistic seizure of American moments of economic opportunity--six in all--to win government concessions. For Montgomery, it is the political mobilization of the working class in the municipal arena. These legal and labor history studies are rich in detail, and we learn a great deal from them not only about the American state we daily confront but about the resilience of the workingclass.

Still, when all is said, the point made by each of these works except perhaps Dubofsky's is that the self-organization of American workers has been stunted, deformed, and grievously slowed by the power of a hostile American state.

Forbath: "How does one explain this," he asks, "how account for organized labor's historical devotion to voluntarism? And what part did the legal order itself play in the story?" In a footnote Forbath explains his question:

> "'Voluntarism is the political philosophy that predominated in the American labor movement from the 1890s through the 1920s and continues to color organized labor's outlook today. It stands for a staunch commitment to the 'private' ordering of industrial relations between unions and employers. Voluntarism teaches that workers should pursue improvements in their living and working conditions through collective bargaining and concerted action in the private sphere rather than through public political action and legislation. Thus voluntarism is labor's version of laissez-faire, an anti-statist philosophy that says that the 'best thing the State can do for Labor is to leave Labor alone.' *(Gompers, 'Judicial Vindication of Labor's Claims,' 7 American Federationist, 1901, pp. 283, 284)* In truth, even in the Gompers era, voluntarism never meant abstention from politics. Rather, as we shall see, voluntarism meant spurning broad 'positive' state regulation of industrial life, such as maximum-hours laws for all workers or state-based social insurance."]

"Contemporary labor historians have redrawn the classic picture of the nineteenth-century labor movement," Forbath observes. "The American labor movement, these scholars have shown, was *not* born with a voluntarist perspective. In the Gilded Age, from the 1870s through the 1890s, most American trade unionists embraced broad and radical reform ambitions. They did not shun politics in favor of pure and simple trade unionism, but rather put great faith in the ballot and in reforming industry through legislation. What now demands analysis is the way in which labor's broader vision of reform was dethroned by the rise of Samuel Gompers' 'pure and simple' trade unionism....[D]uring the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries," Forbath concludes, "courts, legal doctrine and language, and legal violence played a crucial, irreducible part in shaping the modern American labor movement."[26]

Hattam: "This book defends the claim that a strong judiciary created a politically weak labor movement in the United States. Judicial regulation of industrial conflict was antithetical to labor politics, I argue, because even successful political campaigns could not ensure a corresponding change in government policy toward labor."[27]

Montgomery: "As Gompers never hesitated to point out...judicial treatment of union rules, fines, boycotts, and sympathetic strikes as illegal, coupled with the elaboration of

employers' authority in common law, had placed the machinery of government on the side of 'autocracy in the shop,' at times even in defiance of state legislatures....By the 1890s workers engaged in large strikes were overawed by the armed forces of state and federal governments with increasing regularity.[28]

Tomlins: "[I]n the main, the effect of the reverses of the late 1890s and early 1900s was to accelerate and generalize throughout the organized labor movement the adoption of strategies which abandoned all but the immediate economic struggle, and which concentrated on protecting the power of the leading national unions. The associational visions of the 1880s and 1890s, as a consequence, were rendered progressively more remote of attainment."[29]

Embedded in all these accounts save Dubofsky's, moreover, is the consignment of the liberal-pluralist state to the historical midden-heap. For these legal and labor scholars, the national state functions neither autonomously nor as the sole instrument of any one group; it is so constituted, however, as to advance the immediate and long-range interests of capitalism--interests that are seldom negotiable. Dubofsky does not quite share this view. He insists that the American state still afford workers and their unions many of the opportunities for successful bargaining, with or through the state, assumed by pluralist theory. For Montgomery, the state is almost wholly the instrument, though not always self-consciously so, of capital.

The Municipal State: A Fertile Field of Research

All the writers I have quoted but Montgomery confine their analyses to the *national* state, despite the fact that during most of the decades under their scrutiny this state mattered a good deal less to most Americans than their local governments. Like plants bending toward the sun, their tropism can be explained partly by the system of "judge-made law"--i.e. very conservative interpretations of nationally exigent common law and the

U.S. constitution--that critical legal scholars identify as the chief culprit in organized labor's vitiation and therefore the place they must look for answers. It is very likely the wrong place.

Several historians have returned to the municipal field that Herbert Gutman and other scholars plowed from the early 1960s to the mid-1980s.[30] Shelton Stromquist is one of them. In a 2002 lecture at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, he couched his comparisons of radical unionism here and abroad and his skeptical view of American exceptionalism in a municipal context. "What interested me," he said, were

> "the ways in which working class politics and political culture changed during these years [1886-1922] and what place workers ought to occupy in the story of "progressivism", a story typically told as a narrative of middle class agency. I focused on local "laboratories" of labor politics because there, it seemed to me, one could observe the most active, vibrant and, for workers, most relevant arena of political activism. It also permitted me to examine a realm of politics over which the national AFL never really managed to exercise the kind of suffocating control that it did nationally. I wanted, in a word, to construct a view of municipal politics "from below" (as we social historians used to say). It seemed to me an "open site" where interesting, important, and largely neglected political things were happening....I want to reaffirm the importance of the municipality as a realm of working-class political activism that has been strikingly neglected by historians of virtually all of the countries in question." [31]

Stromquist did not address the nexus of workers and the state, but his municipal call to arms speaks indirectly to it. Purely local accounts, written by historians and political scientists, offer a more dialectical view of the state than most labor and critical legal scholars with a national focus. In particular, both Erie and Ingram have described the Los Angeles municipal government as a work in progress. Through charter reforms, bond elections, deep indebtedness, and its citizens' willingness to tax themselves to the hilt, the city transformed itself from what Erie calls the limited "night-watchman" state of the 1890s into the imposing managerial regime of 1915. In the process of this change it favored some classes more than others.[32]

Both these studies have a glaring omission: the role of organized workers. Ingram does recognize the ballot-box power of L.A.'s workers in aqueduct water bond elections and charter reforms, and even more tellingly in aqueduct power elections. But ballot

campaigns required an enormous amount of public education and organizing which Ingram attributes solely to the "progressives". Erie treats workers in cavalier fashion, claiming that the DWP revived the city's "moribund" labor movement, that open-shop campaigns had "gutted" L.A.'s unions, that the few surviving ones had "embraced municipal power for its job-creation possibilities," and that liberals like Haynes had "wooed" and "domesticated" labor into a bureaucratically-led growth machine. [33]

> "The DWP also helped breathe life into the city's moribund labor movement. Los Angeles' trade unions had been gutted both by a well-organized union-busting campaign [led by the *Times'* Harrison Gray Otis and the Merchant & Manufacturers Association] and by the confession of union officials to the dynamiting of the *Times* building in 1910. Wooed by liberal reformers such as John Randolph Haynes and the reform-minded Municipal League, what was left of organized labor embraced municipal power for its job-creation possibilities. From 1913 onward the Central Labor Council and the Electrical Workers joined forces with the DWP to endorse public power bonds. The remnants of Los Angeles' once-powerful labor movement had been domesticated into a bureaucratically-led growth coalition." [34]

This is an unusual approach to the state as labor's funeral director, with the victim's demise occurring not at the hands of police and hanging judges but through bureaucratic suffocation. In fact the L.A. labor movement was far from moribund in 1910-1913. Its unions were not gutted. John Randolph Haynes was one of a small handful of left-wing progressives who worked with labor when it suited them. And if the historical record makes one thing clear it is that organized labor did not advocate public power mainly for its job-creating possibilities but to end municipal corruption and strike a sharp blow against monopoly.

It is easy to see why Erie, Ingram, and most other historians of Los Angeles credit the rise of its local managerial state to progressives like Haynes, Meyer Lissner, and Charles Willard. These men wrote well and prolifically. Self-conscious about their place in history, they left voluminous records in well-organized folders. It's fun to romp down their paper trail, but also a risky business, because it gives you no idea, or at best a rather patronizing idea, of what the less celebrated folk were doing. To dig out the deeds and intentions of an urban working class that left virtually no personal papers, and whose min-

ute-books, flyers, and newspapers are missing, fill of lacunae, or hard to find, takes much more work and guesswork.

A long tradition in L.A. labor scholarship positions the municipal state as an éminence gris behind the scrim of city life or as an occasionally nasty cop during strikes. Since no labor historian from Ira Cross (1935), Grace Stimson (1955), and Lewis B. and Richard S. Perry (1963) down to William B. Friedricks (1990), Thomas Clark (1993), and David Johnson (1997) set out to deal with municipal government in a coherent way, the relationship of labor to the local state in their writings is fragmentary. Stimson offers the best glimpses of the state acting against unions, but they are scattered throughout her durably useful *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles*. As a member in good standing of the Wisconsin/Selig Perlman labor history school, she focuses on the workplace and electoral politics and displays a low regard for radical reform. The remarkable thing about Stimson is that her conscientiousness as a scholar impels her to write carefully and at length about aspects of the L.A. labor movement she really doesn't care for. The result of this large sense of duty is that she remains a goldmine of information about everything from the personalities of labor activists and their foes to the platforms and internal rifts of the Los Angeles Socialist Party. Although it shows workers and unions constantly bumping up against this or that politician, this or that bureaucrat, and this or that unfriendly statute, *Rise of the Labor Movement* offers practically no consciousness of the state as such. One reason later historians have not picked up on Stimson's occasional references to labor agitation for public ownership and direct democracy may be that she herself did not give them conceptual, structural, or analytical weight. They are written in her usual matter-of-fact tone as unremarkable parts of a meticulous institutional chronology. There is no chapter or section of a chapter, for example, headed "Labor's Battle for Public Ownership," nor is there any analysis of this or any other important statebuilding topic anywhere in her book.[35]

Three quarters of the labor history monographs written since Stimson's time continue in this vein, offering different interpretations of labor's poor showing in Los Angeles. None of them confront the issue squarely, though some provide valuable insights. In his 1990 "Capital and Labor in Los Angeles," Friedricks "seeks to explain how Los Angeles' most powerful entrepreneur [railway magnate Henry Huntington], rather than quashing the labor movement among his employees, at best battled the movement to a draw."[36] While this statement is a slight exaggeration, it portrays Los Angeles labor in the Progressive era more accurately than the view, still prevalent, that Otis all but crushed it.[37]

A recent dissertation by another historian of progressive-era Los Angeles moves the main source of labor's travails from Otis to the municipal government. Thomas R. Clark's "The Limits of Liberty" (1994) localizes the outlook of Forbath, Tomlins, and other critical legal scholars by showing organized labor's drastically harsher treatment at the hands of the police, city council, and appointed commissions in Progressive-era Los Angeles than in San Francisco. "Throughout the Union Labor Party period in San Francisco (1902-1911)," Clark states, "the police did indeed remain 'neutral' that is, while they responded to incidents of crowd disorder and violence, Union Labor administrations refused to allow regular or special police to escort strikebreakers, denied gun permits to company guards, and not infrequently arrested company guards for carrying weapons. In Los Angeles, on the other hand, employer requests for regular or special police protection were routinely granted.... [W]eaker unions and a readily available police force made labor injunctions a rarity before 1910." Clark treads the line of march laid out by Cross six decades earlier. He describes in great detail what the municipal state did to workers and unions while telling us nothing about the state's forced adaptations to labor.[38]

Autonomy: Another Bone of Contention

An important scholarly debate has arisen from the early twentieth-century emergence of an American state with unprecedented functions and capacities. It is a debate over the

degree of autonomy this state possesses. Stephen Skowronek, Theda Skocpol, and other political scientists have used the term "semi-autonomous" to signal the emergence of national government leaders and bureaucrats who had axes to grind which were not those of any political party or social class. However much they might do the bidding of the Republican or Democratic parties, the capitalist class or specific capitalists, the working class or specific unions, professional lobbyists, or grassroots pressure groups, these new leaders and cadres also acted *sui generis* and increasingly *sui juris* on their own behalf.[39]

Since a secure incumbency must be one of the sturdiest underpinnings of a semi-autonomous state, the Los Angeles electorate's recall of councilman Davenport in 1904 and Judge Oster's denial of his claim that council members had a property right to their office struck a fatal blow against the view, expressed by Erie, that what arose in Los Angeles after 1906 was "an unusually large, powerful, and *autonomous* local-state apparatus..." Perhaps we should be relieved that he added, contradictorily: "requiring voter approval at each step of the way."[40] The dichotomies political scientists ping-pong--namely, weak vs. strong states, instrumental vs. autonomous ones--are unhelpful categories if we try to shoehorn whole states into any one of them. They are useful tools of analysis, though, if we apply them to the complexities of an evolving city government in a discriminating way that lets us see where it may be heading and how its various branches may differ.

At the harbor, direct democracy helped progressives create a more or less supple instrument for the profitability of the commerce that poured in and out of Los Angeles, especially after the first ocean-going ship steamed through the Panama Canal on August 15, 1914. The Harbor Commission/Harbor Department neither sought nor had much autonomy, for its low-rate policy seldom clashed with the interests of shippers and their customers. Was this a weak arm of the state? From the viewpoint of the downtown government, yes, because it did not yield revenues for the city budget. But the harbor regime did ex-

actly what its progressive sponsors designed it to do, with opposition only from organized labor over its outside contracting and the Alembic Club over its slowness to invest in the publicly owned facilities at the outer harbor.

The mature water and power bureaucracy (DWP), in which both Erie and Ingram find elements of a political machine, behaved more like a government-for-itself. Lacking the firm consensus that buoyed harbor developments, at least for electric power expansion, it fought tenaciously to absorb its private competitors until it gained monopoly status in the 1930s. The DWP organized its own large and growing staff for frontline action in the battle for bonding authority and leaned heavily on a staunch outside ally in organized labor. Thus we see the ironic development of a mini-state that grew strong and semi-autonomous because it was threatened.

Yet even the DWP had to rely on voter approval, as Erie says, "each step of the way." No less than the harbor regime, the civil service, and the mayor's appointive powers, it was a creature of the initiative and referendum and a hostage to the recall. Direct democracy was both the universal solvent that partially dissolved the protective boundaries of the Los Angeles state and the mortar that workers and their unions used to reconstruct it.

Tomlins acknowledges that the material he presents in *The State and the Unions* "amply confirms...Block's contention that the actions of 'state-managers'--whether nineteenth-century judges or twentieth-century labor relations bureaucrats--owe quite as much to their concern for their own institutional power and prestige as to the lobbying initiatives of businessmen." However Tomlins goes on to insist that

> "rejection of instrumentalist explanations of state action does not entail the further conclusion that the state is in some formalist sense 'autonomous' of the prevailing economy....[T]he very form and structure of the state, and of the law which is the state's language, has continued to exhibit an 'essential identity' with the essence of capitalism--sufficient to ensure that even those courses of action consciously chosen and pursued by state managers out of institutional self-interest, or out of idealistic concern for the public interest, courses of action demonstrably damaging to the interests of particular capitalists, will in the long run exhibit an overall bias toward reproduction of the poli-

tical-economic status quo." 41

In Los Angeles, the progressives unabashedly defined themselves as the social stratum best equipped by education, skills, and scientific outlook to run the city. They often spoke of themselves as "the best men." While they were building autonomy into the system through a professional civil service, non-partisan primaries, and the demolition of ward voting and patronage, it was their own tenure in office that they most hoped to shore up. Put another way, they created autonomy for the representatives of a specific class, since with but few exceptions the L.A. progressives either earned their living in non-monopoly business or served its interests as lawyers, writers, and public officials--witness the 1910 anti-strike law. The state-centered autonomy that Skowronek and Skocpol write about was a masquerade in turn-of-the-century Los Angeles. To the degree that it existed at all, it was constantly challenged by the direct democracy measures organized labor had placed in the city charter. There were no greater threats to local state autonomy than the recall (which progressives originally "shied off" from), the referendum, and the initiative.

One approach to the events described in this paper, then, is to see them as flashpoints in a protracted struggle between organized labor and the progressives over the degree of autonomy to be granted the municipal state. The progressives favored popular suffrage, but they did not want the suffrage to become so broad and open that it would jeopardize their status as insiders. The labor movement favored a much more exposed state whose boundaries could be breached at will by the initiative, referendum, and recall, momentarily erasing the distinction between insiders and outsiders. And indeed, this is what they achieved.

The Questions We Ask

I end my historiographical note with a salute to a scholarly work that inspired much of what I have written in this dissertation and added more clarity to its main argument

than it would otherwise have possessed.

Preceding pages have shown how the questions historians ask channel the answers they obtain. What political scientist Karen Orren has done in her 1991 work, *Belated Feudalism*, is ask an altogether different set of questions than Forbath, Tomlins, Hattam, Dubofsky, Montgomery, and Clark. In *Belated Feudalism* Orren sets out to learn why and how American liberal society got that way, and her search leads her not through bootless intellectual history but to the labor movement's struggle to throw off a straitjacket of master-and-servant law. Nothing new there, but at that point she asks the extraordinarily simple yet paradigm-shifting question: How did organized workers fundamentally reshape American government? While other scholars have done what they could to bring the state back into labor history, Orren has brought labor back into the history of the state.

In *Belated Feudalism,* Orren contends that "a feudal remnant was embedded in the American governmental system in the form of the law of master and servant, which endured well into the 20th century. Administered by an independent professionalized judiciary, it cut off the workforce from democratic politics and democratized work. Only through the labor movement's initiative in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was the modern liberal state achieved, ushered in by the New Deal."[42]

This ancient residue in common law--the English law of master and servant--had several corollaries including employment at will and the law of enticement.[43] Together they trapped 19th- and early 20th-century American workers in a legal system that gave dictatorial power to employers and almost no power to employees. The only power workers had was what they harnessed through collective action. Yet by *resisting continually,* at times in the courts but much more so in the workplace and on the picketline, they fomented so great a degree of disorder involving so many other strata of society after the turn of the century that the master-and-servant system was rendered inept.

"Against the existing structure of master and servant," Orren writes, "employees

broke their own contracts and interfered with the performance and formation of contracts by others; they stopped, shut down, stalled, intruded upon, blocked access to, shouted and hammered away at the old regime. The progress of American trade unionism can be described...as a succession of assaults against the series of perimeters surrounding a given workplace and radiating outward to the region known in contract language as 'all the world.' "[44] Moreover, "Workers' collective actions expressed a new mode of ordering work relations, violated the rules and expectations of ancient law, and undermined the rationale of judicial governance by establishing its irrelevance in practice.[45] Further, "The dismantling of the master-servant regime had an impact on American politics that was, in a word, pervasive....Constitutionally, [it] marked the final shift from the medieval system of government, centered in the judiciary, to the modern liberal state, centered in the national legislature....Despite the formal persistence of the separation of powers, the change in labor regulation instituted full legislative sovereignty in American government."[46]

What an extraordinary recital of workingclass agency! Labor agitation and its consequences were strongest on the railroads, so the change in governance appeared first in the agency that oversaw them.

"The regulation of railroads through the agency of the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) ushered in a new era of national administration and the beginning of a long pattern of interfacing between public and private institutions that has become familiar within the framework of 'interest-group liberalism,' states Orren. "The case of the ICC illustrates the importance of the changes in the old labor system for the development of the liberal state. At every point in institution-building, labor relations were woven tightly into the business, and thus into the regulation, of railroads.[47]

The new system of labor governance was institutionalized nationally through passage

of the 1935 National Labor Relations Act. Militant labor, unwilling to wear the master-and-servant straitjacket, had finally forced government "actors" to banish the feudal residue from American life and law.

As an approach to the changing relationship between American workers and the state, I have found *Belated Feudalism* to be by far the most useful title in my bibliography--this despite the fact that conditions in Progressive-era Los Angeles were quite unlike those prevailing under the national common law regime Orren describes. Los Angeles unions faced only two significant labor injunctions between 1890 and 1911, and while the second of these provoked a very strong reaction it by no means colored workers' relations with the state during the entire period. What oppressed Los Angeles organized labor most indelibly was not "judge-made law" but city council law and the hostility most mayoral regimes displayed toward unions.

Another difference is that the wellspring of workers' protest in Los Angeles was political action, while for Orren it was workplace action. Los Angeles unions waged a long, imaginative, resourceful fight against employers and their struggle had some impact on the municipal state, but their most decisive statebuilding role took place in the public arena, not the workplace.

Still, *Belated Feudalism* held two invaluable lessons for my dissertation when I read it a decade ago. It showed how stubborn agitation by mostly organized workers transformed the state under extremely trying conditions, and it revealed how they were able to do so from *outside* the government. During the whole period my dissertation covers, only two union members served the L.A. city government in a major decisionmaking capacity, one through appointment, the other by election. The large municipal workforce, brought under civil service in 1902, played no significant statebuilding role on its own initiative until after 1914.[48] Labor unions and workers outside the government did.

A state (national or local) is never a given. It is an organism that is acted upon by

workers both when they win concessions from it and in more fundamental ways when they compel it to undergo a serious change in function. The working class, in other words, does not merely resist disciplining by the state, it also disciplines the state. Unlike the classes from which capitalism draws its ruling elites, and despite the rare occurrences of labor leaders in government, the working class acts on the state primarily as a political outsider. That may be why its power to transform government has been so consistently overlooked by historians.

Notes

[1] Norman Weinstein. a workingclass intellectual, was one of the first observers of workplace information technology to recognize its reskilling tendencies while pointing out that capitalist enterprises would try to use it as they did under the older electro-mechanical technology to maintain maximum control of their employees, sacrificing higher productivity to do so. His career as a machinist took him from garment shops in Manhattan to a rubber tire factory in Detroit and machine shops in Los Angeles and acquainted him with the full range of mid-20th-century workplace technological innovations. In one early job he used a long pole to move garments by overhead pulley; later he operated metal-cutting tools with punch-cards, and he ended his worklife using computers. Norman never collected a pension, choosing to quit every job before vesting to write another chapter of a manuscript on the history of technology and the lessons its latest modality holds for the working class. [Norman Weinstein, unpublished letter to *Monthly Review*, March 9, 1877.]

[2] E.P. Thompson, "Preface." *The Making of the Working Class*, Vintage Books (Random House), New York, 1966 (first published in 1963), p. 12.

[3] Schneirov, Richard, "Rethinking the Relation of Labor to the Politics of Urban Social Reform in Late Nineteenth-Century America: The Case of Chicago," *International Labor & Working Class History* 46 (Fall, 1994), pp. 94-95, 105, and passim..

[4] Stromquist, Shelton. *Reinventing "The People": The Progressive Movement, the Class Problem, and the Origins of Modern Liberalism*. University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 2006, p. viii. For more of his view that progressives failed to engage with the realities of class see pp. 2-7 and 71-76. The latter section, which deals with their approach to the national state, would benefit from some municipal fine-tuning.

[5] Displaying his lifelong condescension toward the dangerous classes, Charles Dwight Willard commented on the 1888 charter as follows: "[T]he document was faulty in providing too many elective offices and in failing to definitely locate responsibility. The city government...is by no means up to the standard that the city is entitled to enjoy, considering the unusual character of its population. There is no such percentage of foreign element as is to be found in most American cities, neither is there an illiterate or impoverished element. On the other hand, the exceptionally large proportion of people of comfortable means who have the

time that they might devote to the duties of citizenship, gives an opportunity such as few cities enjoy for a high quality of local government." Willard, Charles D. *The Herald's History of Los Angeles City,* Kingsley-Barnes & Neuner Co., Publishers, Los Angeles, 1901, p. 353; Los Angeles City Council *Minutes,* Vol. 28, Dec. 31, 1888; Hunter, *The Evolution of Municipal Organization and Administrative Practice in the City of Los Angeles,* p. 69.

[6] *Los Angeles Herald*, May 6, 1900, quoted in Clodius, "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles, 1890-1910," p. 18; Hunter, pp. 71-77; Mayor Henry T. Hazard, speech, Los Angeles City Council *Minutes*, Vol. 33, Jan. 12, 1891.

[7] Erie, Steven P. "How the Urban West Was Won: The Local State and Economic Growth in Los Angeles, 1880-1932," *Urban Affairs Quarterly* v. 27, no. 4 (June, 1992), pp. 525-26.

[8] Two-thirds majorities in bond elections were mandated by the 1879 state constitution. [Ingram, James W. III. "Building the Municipal State: Coalitions and Infrastructure Development in Los Angeles, 1889–1939," paper prepared for delivery at 1994 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, New York City (typescript), p. 11.]

[9] The tax burden included the levy on property-holders in special improvement districts as well as the general property tax. [Erie, "How the Urban West Was Won," pp. 547-48.]

[10] Fogelson, Robert M. *The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930,* Harvard Univ. Press, Cambridge, MA, 1967, pp. 32-38, 41-42.

[11] Crouch, Winston W. and Beatrice Dinerman. *Southern California Metropolis: A Study in the Development of Government for a Metropolitan Area,* University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1964. Hereinafter Crouch & Dinerman

[12] Mayor Alexander estimated that the city saved between $10,000,000 and $15,000,000 by using its own labor force to build the aqueduct. [Crouch & Dinerman, *Southern California Metropolis*, p. 173; *Municipal News,* Jan. 8, 1913]

[13] "In the anti-radical hysteria that followed [the Times bombing]," says Woods, "the police force was raised to 500 men. Subsequent experience indicated that a large increase in police strength was a predictable response to social crisis in Los Angeles. ["Woods, Gerald. *The Police in Los Angeles: Reform and Professionalization,* Garland Publishing, Inc., New York & London, 1993, pp. 17, 25-26; *Souvenir Album,* pp. 21-85.]

[14] During this period the city financed infrastructure with long-term general obligation bonds marketed through banks, investment houses, and Wall Street underwriters. Later, revenue bonds issued against the city's earnings came into vogue. [Erie, "How the Urban West Was Won," pp. 522, 550]

[15] Bridges, Amy, "Winning the West to Municipal Reform," *Urban Affairs Quarterly* v. 27, no. 4 (June, 1992), pp. 494-47.

[16] Erie, "How the Urban West Was Won," pp. 528-30, 535, 538-39, 540-41.

[17] Concessions are not the crux of the matter. When a legislature concedes a higher social wage to its constituents in the form of a public park, parenting leave, a home mortgage tax deduction, or a G.I. Bill, it redistributes the economic surplus without changing the function

of the state in a substantial way. The direct democracy reforms imposed on the Los Angeles city government by organized labor were fundamental, not distributive. They occupied a middle ground between concessions and revolution which has not been adequately examined by labor and urban historians.

[18] Theda Skocpol, "Political Response to Capitalist Crisis: Neo-Marxist Theories of the State and the Case of the New Deal," *Politics and Society* 10 (1980): 155. Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, eds. *Bringing the State Back In*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1985; Stephen Skowronek, *Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877-1920*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge & New York, 1982.

[19] Christopher L. Tomlins, *The State and the Unions: Labor Relations, Law, and the Organized Labor Movement in America, 1880-1960* (Cambridge, 1985); William Forbath, *Law and the Shaping of the American Labor Movement* (Cambridge, 1991); Robert J. Steinfeld, *Invention of Free Labor: The Employment Relations in English and American Law and Culture, 1350-1870* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1991; Victoria Hattam, *Labor Visions and State Power: The Origins of Business Unionism in the United States*, Princeton Univ. Press, Princeton, NJ, 1992.

[20] Dubofsky, Melvyn. *The State & Labor in Modern America*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill & London, 1994. Montgomery, David. *Citizen Worker: The Experience of Workers in the United States with Democracy and the Free Market during the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1993.

[21] Dubofsky, *The State & Labor in Modern America*, p. ix.

[22] Skowronek, Stephen, *Building a New American State*; Evans, Rueschemeyer, and Skocpol, eds. *Bringing the State Back In*, 1985; Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers.*

[23] Montgomery, *Citizen Worker*, p. 117.

[24] Montgomery, *Citizen Worker*, p. 2.

[25] Dubofsky, *The State & Labor in Modern America*; Tomlins, *The State and the Unions*; Forbath, *Law and the Shaping of the American Labor Movement*; Hattam, *Labor Visions and State Power*, all passim.

[26] Forbath, *Law and the Shaping of the American Labor Movement*, pp. 1,3.

[27] Hattam, *Labor Visions and State Power*, p. ix.

[28] Montgomery, *Citizen Worker*, p. 159.

[29] Tomlins, *The State and the Unions*, pp. 60-61.

[30] See especially Gutman, Herbert G., "Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America, 1815-1919," *American Historical Review* v. 78, no. 3 (June, 1973) and several of his articles in *Power & Culture: Essays on the American Working Class*, Pantheon Books, New York, 1987.

[31] Stromquist, Shelton, "It Did Happen Here! U.S. Municipal Labor and Socialist Politics in Comparative Perspective," invited lecture, the University of Wisconsin–Green Bay, September 23, 2002.

[32] Erie, "How the Urban West Was Won " and Ingram, "Building the Municipal State," both passim.

[33] Erie, "How the Urban West Was Won ," p. 546.

[34] Erie, "How the Urban West Was Won ," p. 546.

[35] Grace Heilman Stimson, *Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles,* University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1955, passim.

[36] William B. Friedricks, "Capital and Labor in Los Angeles: Henry E. Huntington vs. Organized Labor, 1900-1920," *Pacific Historical Review,* Vol. LIX, No. 3, August, 1990, p. 376.

[37] Other examples of Otismania include Mike Davis' *City of Quartz:* "The same iron will, as we have seen, also *smashed* the labor movement in Los Angeles with the aim of giving the Otis-organized Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association a competitive advantage over their regional rivals in union citadel San Francisco" and William Issel's "Citizens Outside the Government": Otis and the M&M "set out to master the threat of future depressions as well as to establish control over labor relations....In 1911, after a decade of bitter struggle, Los Angeles businessmen *defeated* the labor movement..." [Davis, Mike. *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles.* New York and London: Verso, 1990, p.113; Issel, William. "'Citizens Outside the Government': Business and Urban Policy in San Francisco and Los Angeles, 1890-1932," *Pacific Historical Review* 57 (May 1988), p. 123. My italics]

[38] Thomas R. Clark, "The Limits of Liberty: Courts, Police, & Labor Unrest in California, 1890-1926, *Ph.D. dissertation,* UCLA, 1994, pp. 371-72 and passim.

[39] Skowronek, *Building a New American State*; Skocpol, *Bringing the State Back In,* both passim.

[40] Erie, "How the Urban West Was Won," p. 520.

[41] Tomlins, *The State and the Unions,* pp. xii-xiv.

[42] Karen Orren, *Belated Feudalism: Labor, the Law, and Liberal Development in the United States,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge & New York, 1991, p. v.

[43] Employment at will denied workers seniority rights and any other entitlement to the jobs for which they had been hired. In other words they could be fired without recourse. The old English law against one employer's enticement of a worker away from his toil for another was later reinterpreted, especially in American jurisprudence, to bar a union from organizing a workforce.

[44] Orren, *Belated Feudalism,* pp. 128-29.

[45] Orren, *Belated Feudalism,* p. 121.

[46] A case could be made that by 1906 organized workers in Los Angeles had already created a municipal version of "the modern liberal state" through their charter reforms, especially direct democracy. [Orren, *Belated Feudalism*, p. 212.]

[47] Orren, *Belated Feudalism*, p. 161.

[48] As the narrative portion of the dissertation briefly notes, union workers in what is now the Department of Water & Power (DWP) did play an important role after 1914 in the agency's political mobilizations to secure power bond approvals and defend itself from attacks by private power companies.

Appendix 1

"What a Heterogeneous Mess!"[1]
The Many Currents of Reform

Chapters 2-5 of this dissertation reflect a classification scheme for progressive reform that I have borrowed with thanks from political scientist James W. Ingram III (see footnote 12). The long and rather tortured historiographical debate over progressivism has generated many such schemes but Ingram's is by far the most apt for reforms Los Angeles adopted during the quarter-century from 1890 to 1915.

Two and a half decades have passed since historian Daniel T. Rodgers went out "in search of progressivism". The fugitive had been AWOL for some time, and when Rodgers finally caught up with it he collared a famous American tendency so starved of content as to be almost transparent. "Only by discarding the mistaken assumption of a coherent reform movement," he wrote, "could one see the progressives' world for what it really was: an era of shifting, ideologically fluid, issue-focused coalitions, all competing for the reshaping of American society."[2]

Rodgers and other historians of his generation effectively shredded the idea that in the 1890s a nationally cohesive group of reformers had set out to soften the rough edges of capitalism while reclaiming a lost middleclass authority in American politics. The main advocates of the older view were Richard Hofstadter (1955) for the country as a whole and George E. Mowry (1951) for California.[3] Among the revisionists, John D. Buenker (1969) found progressives hopelessly divided over women's suffrage, trust-busting, and direct democracy; Melvin Holli (1969) saw little common ground between "social" and "structural" reformers; Church and Sedlak (1976) discovered an equally wide gap between "social justice" and "social order" reformers; and Peter Filene (1970) declared progressivism "dead and buried" as a historical category.[4]

If progressivism was indeed so divided, contradictory, and evanescent, Rodgers asked,

"why then did so many issue-oriented groups demanding so many novel changes burst on the scene at once?" He found the answer in a seminal work by Walter Dean Burnham: *Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics* (1970).[5] "What impressed Burnham about the Progressive era," he said, "was that it coincided with what appeared to be a seismic shift in American electoral behavior: not a party realignment of the sort familiar to the nineteenth century, but a critical weakening of all party loyalties and a massive decline in voting itself." Into the party vacuum poured a welter of pressure groups, from manufacturers' and trade associations to civic leagues, men's clubs, and professional societies. They had little in common, but so many of them sought reforms that historians of the Hofstadter era treated them as a single phenomenon. [6]

A chronological flaw weakened Rodger's analysis. Two developments he listed as key harbingers of progressivism--new ballot laws and direct primaries--were in fact its consequences. Throughout the United States it was the reformers themselves who moved local elections to odd-numbered years, abolished ward-based voting, and replaced party conventions with direct nonpartisan primaries. The origins of progressivism lay elsewhere and varied from place to place. In Los Angeles the movement--and it *was* a movement--took root in a class whose economic prospects and political ambitions had come under siege by large, increasingly monopolistic corporations.

Recent historians and political scientists, notably those of the institutional school, have discerned in the rift between the attitudes and the votes of progressive-era citizens an even more fundamental discontinuity than any noted by Rodgers.

In his 1993 study of Boston, Chicago, New York, and San Francisco, for example, Philip J. Ethington approached voting behavior through the mediation of party and state institutions; he rejected the "new political history'" of the 1970s and early 1980s that treated political parties and policies as the outcome of aggregated voter choices. "The

institutionalist approach to voting behavior, by contrast, makes no assumptions that the 'attitudes' of voters accords with their choices," he wrote. "It begins instead with the structuring of mass choice imposed by party organizations and election law. Votes cast are treated as the outcome of institutionally empowered leaders' ability to persuade or mobilize masses."[7] Terrence McDonald has used a similar approach to discredit the patronage model of "machine" rule, and another institutionalist scholar, Kenneth Finegold, has described how progressives in Cleveland and New York found ways to win votes from both upper-class and workingclass constituencies.[8]

Institutional history rejects the idea that workers who disliked reformers--and whose rancor against them was stirred up by union leaders--could be counted on to vote against reform candidates. Substantial numbers of them voted for Mayor Alexander in L.A.'s December, 1909 election, and they did so at least in part for an institutionalist reason: the city's progressives led by Meyer Lissner had changed the electoral rules, creating a direct primary system which allowed only two runoff candidates to vie for each city office.[9] Nevertheless Ethington goes too far when he says urban party organizations were "'hanging gardens,' suspended in a highly disputatious public space where the rational content of policy appeals mattered to voters *who were relatively free to defy sociological categories* and alter their apparent group identities."[10] Class dismissed? Not so easily!

Ethington's own multiple linear regressions of 1910-13 voting results in four cities prove that class does indeed exert an independent force. Despite persistent appeals by "progressive" candidates across class lines, he finds,

> "the variable High White Collar was a very strong correlate of mobilization for progressive candidates, and Unskilled was an equally strong negative correlate....Much more important was the large Semiskilled category, also showing a strong negative relationship to the mobilized vote for the 'progressive' mayoral candidate. Most striking, in light of the theories identifying the middle class as a crucial constituency, is the negative correlation of the Low White Collar variable with the vote for the 'progressive' mayors..." [11]

Although the U.S. Bureau of the Census and many sociologists since Weber have thoroughly muddled class, producing a demographic stew in which Low and High White Collar are just two of the lumps, these categories do tell us *something*: the wage worker (factory hand or clerk) tended *not* to vote for progressive reformers while the bourgeois and his professional allies tended to support them. As it was in Boston, Chicago, New York, and San Francisco, so it was in Los Angeles. Workers there routinely found many of their worst employers in the progressive camp.

The deconstruction of progressivism by Rodgers, Holli, Ethington, *et. al* boiled down to this: not just one reform current swept through U.S. cities a century ago, but many. Naming them became the niche occupation of a dozen or more historians and political scientists. While none of their classifications is likely to produce a consensus, the four-part typology James W. Ingram III devised for Los Angeles seems apt. Praising Holli's contribution but taking it several steps further, he stated:

> "The problem with the division of reform into social and structural varieties is that this schema does not capture the full richness of the Progressive Era. In order to understand Los Angeles and other cities in this period, we have to choose categories that are more sensitive to the variation between reforms and reformers....The regulation and prohibition of liquor, vice, and gambling are better understood as *moral reform* and separated from the organizational, electoral, and administrative changes identified by *structural reform* ....Public utility regulation and municipal ownership could...be used to spur economic development by improving urban infrastructure; in the case of Los Angeles, and other Western cities, these tools are best understood as *developmental reforms*. Voters who supported developmental reforms would not necessarily support *social reforms* that would allow the city to perform welfare state functions." [12]

Ingram's four categories of reform should be instantly recognizable to any student of Los Angeles in the period 1890-1915. It is worth noting that they make conceptual, not personal, distinctions. Most reformers wore more than one hat. Meyer Lissner, for example, fought doggedly and successfully to abolish L.A.'s voting wards (a structural reform) and also backed a number of development-reform measures that promoted the city's growth. Thomas E. Gibbon made a name for himself in the free harbor fight (a developmental issue) and later helped run the Harbor Commission, but he also served on

the 1915 Board of Freeholders that tried and failed to restructure the city charter. Charles Willard was a structural reformer, but as we have seen he also threw his energies into developmental, moral, and social reform. Los Angeles' most liberal progressive, John Randolph Haynes, was downright ubiquitous. He campaigned against saloons, lobbied for workers' health and safety laws, joined with organized labor to fight for direct democracy, ran the city's civil service commission and the county's public welfare commission, and championed the municipal ownership of utilities more relentlessly than any other progressive--i.e. he exemplified all four varieties of reform defined by Ingram.

[1] Editorial comment on "progressive" electoral politics by the labor movement's weekly newspaper, the *Citizen*, on April 18, 1913, p. 4.

[2] Rodgers, Daniel T., "In Search of Progressivism," *Reviews in American History,* Dec., 1982, p. 114.

[3] Hofstadter, Richard, *The Age of Reform from Bryan to FDR,* Vintage Books, New York, 1955; Mowry, *The California Progressives,* University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1951.

[4] Peter G. Filene, "An Obituary for 'The Progressive Movement'," *American Quarterly* 22 (1970); John D. Buenker, John C. Burnham, & Robert M. Crunden, *Progressivism,* Schenkman, Cambridge MA, 1969; Melvin G. Holli, *Reform in Detroit: Hazen S. Pingree and Urban Politics,* Oxford University Press, New York, 1969; Robert L. Church and Michael W. Sedlak, *Education in the United States: An Interpretive History*, Free Press, New York, 1976.

[5] Walter Dean Burnham, *Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics,* W.W. Norton & Co., New York, 1970, chapters. 4-5.

[6] Rodgers, "In Search of Progressivism," pp. 115-16.

[7] Institutional scholars like Ethington employ ecological (bivariate and multivariate) regressions and other statistical methods to support their theoretical interpretations. [Ethington, Philip J., "Urban Constituencies, Regimes, and Policy Innovation in the Progressive Era: An Analysis of Boston, Chicago, New York City, and San Francisco," *Studies in American Political Development,* 7 (Fall 1993), p. 277.]

[8] McDonald, Terrence J. *The Parameters of Urban Fiscal Policy: Socioeconomic Change and Political Culture in San Francisco, 1860-1906,* University of California Press, Berkeley, 1986; Finegold, Kenneth, "Progressivism, Electoral Change, and Public Policy: Reform Outcomes in New York, Cleveland, and Chicago," Ph.D dissertation, Harvard University, 1985. See also McDonald, "The Burdens of Urban History: The Theory of the State in Recent American Social History, *Studies in American Political Development* (Annual) 3: 1989, pp. 2-55.

[9] Under the new rules, the two rivals for the mayoralty were George Alexander of the Good Government Organization and George A. Smith, a regular Republican supported by the Southern Pacific Railroad. "In this contest," states Daniel J. Johnson, "the working class *Record* grudgingly withdrew its opposition to Alexander..." [Johnson, Daniel J., "'And Never the Twain Shall Meet': Working Class Politics in Los Angeles, 1903–1909," unpublished paper presented at the 19th Annual Conference of the Southwest Labor Studies Association, April 17, 1993, pp. 21-22].

[10] Ethington, "Urban Constituencies," p. 278 *[my italics]*. See also his *The Public City: The Political Construction of Urban Life in San Francisco, 1850–1900,* Cambridge University Press, New York, 1994.

[11] Ethington, "Urban Constituencies," pp. 296-99.

[12] Ingram, James W. III, "Building the Municipal State: Coalitions and Infrastructure Development in Los Angeles, 1889–1939," paper prepared for delivery at 1994 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, New York City, pp. 3-4 *[my italics]*.

Appendix 2

Occupations, City of Los Angeles 1908 Great Register

This table is based on a random sample of registered voters computed by my original committee chair, Eric Monkkonen. When his sample hit on a registrant whose occupation was given as "none," "retired," or "student," I substituted the next person with a recognized occupation. See below for how occupations were classified.

Ward	Precinct	Workingclass Blue	Workingclass White	Professional and semi- Professional	Uncertain White	Manager-Proprietor	
1	1	1	–	2	–	–	
1	2	3	–	4	1	2	
1	3	1	1	5	1	1	
1	4	3	–	2	–	–	
1	5	5	–	–	1	1	
1	6	4	2	1	1	–	
1	7	8	3	–	–	1	
1	8	1	–	–	–	1	
1	9	6	–	3	–	–	
1	10	4	–	1	1	1	
1	11	5	–	–	–	2	
1	12	8	–	–	1	1	
Ward Totals		**49**	**6**	**18**	**6**	**10**	**89**
2	13	3	–	–	–	–	
2	14	4	–	–	1	–	
2	15	5	–	1	–	1	
2	16	4	–	1	1	1	
2	17	6	–	2	1	1	
2	18	5	4	2	1	1	
2	19	4	–	–	–	–	
2	20	1	2	2	1	1	
2	21	3	–	4	–	1	
2	22	2	2	2	–	2	
2	23	1	3	5	–	–	
2	24	3	2	2	–	2	
2	25	4	–	3	1	2	
2	26	9	–	–	–	1	
Ward Totals		**54**	**13**	**24**	**6**	**13**	**110**
3	27	6	1	4	1	1	
3	28	–	5	4	3	3	
3	29	4	3	2	2	2	
3	30	2	–	2	–	2	
3	31	2	4	3	2	2	
3	32	5	1	2	2	3	
3	33	10	3	8	–	2	
3	34	1	–	1	1	–	
3	35	2	–	3	–	2	
3	36	1	1	4	1	3	
3	37	–	–	1	1	–	
3	38	–	–	1	–	1	
3	39	–	–	2	–	–	
Ward Totals		**33**	**18**	**37**	**13**	**21**	**122**

4	40	3	2	2	–	4	
4	41	5	2	3	2	–	
4	42	4	4	4	3	4	
4	43	–	1	2	–	–	
4	44	1	1	4	1	1	
4	45	–	1	4	2	1	
4	46	–	1	2	1	–	
4	47	3	–	4	–	–	
4	48	1	1	2	–	–	
4	49	1	3	1	–	5	
4	50	1	3	5	–	1	
4	51	1	1	4	–	6	
4	52	–	–	4	1	1	
4	53	1	–	3	–	2	
4	54	3	1	7	1	3	
4	55	5	2	2	–		
4	56	1	1	2	1	1	
4	57	2	3	5	–	2	
4	58	4	–	–	1	3	
4	59	–	1	1	–	–	
4	60	3	–	1	1	4	
4	61	1	–	4	1	4	
4	62	–	–	2	–	1	
4	63	2	–	2	–	2	
4	64	1	1	3	–	1	
4	65	2	1	2	1	2	
4	66	–	1	3	–	1	
4	67	1	–	6	–	–	
Ward Totals		**46**	**31**	**84**	**16**	**49**	**226**
5	68	1	–	1	–	3	
5	69	1	–	5	–	–	
5	70	–	–	–	–	–	
5	71	1	–	1	–	1	
5	72	–	–	6	–	2	
5	73	2	–	1	–	–	
5	74	1	–	–	–	–	
5	75	1	–	2	–	–	
5	76	3	1	5	–	3	
5	77	1	1	2	–	2	
5	78	–	1	4	–	1	
5	79	3	–	1	–	–	
5	80	–	1	2	–	–	
5	81	–	–	1	–	1	
5	82	–	–	2	–	3	
5	83	1	–	3	1	2	
5	84	–	1	1	–	3	
5	85	–	–	5	–	2	
5	86	1	–	2	–	1	
5	87	4	–	1	1	1	
5	88	1	–	–	–	1	
5	89	1	–	–	–	–	
5	90	2	–	–	–	–	
5	91	1	–	–	–	–	
5	92	–	–	–	–	–	
5	93	1	–	1	–	–	

5	94	–	–	–	–	3	
5	95	1	3	5	1	1	
5	96	–	–	3	–	1	
5	97	1	–	1	–	–	
5	98	2	–	3	–	1	
5	99	1	–	–	–	1	
5	100	1	1	4	1	2	
5	101	3	1	1	–	1	
5	102	2	–	1	–	1	
5	103	1	2	1	–	2	
5	104	–	–	2	–	1	
5	105	2	–	–	1	4	
5	106	1	1	1	–	1	
5	107	1	–	–	–	–	
Ward Totals		**42**	**13**	**68**	**5**	**45**	**173**
6	108	–	–	–	–	1	
6	109	1	1	1	–	1	
6	110	3	–	–	–	–	
6	111	–	–	2	–	–	
6	112	5	–	1	–	–	
6	113	5	1	2	–	–	
6	114	4	–	–	1	–	
6	115	3	1	5	–	1	
6	116	3	–	–	–	–	
6	117	1	1	1	–	–	
6	118	4	–	1	–	2	
6	119	–	1	1	–	–	
6	120	8	1	2	–	1	
6	121	6	–	–	1	–	
6	122	4	3	–	–	–	
6	123	1	–	–	–	2	
6	124	1	2	–	1	–	
6	125	5	–	2	1	–	
6	126	3	1	1	–	–	
6	127	1	–	–	–	2	
6	128	–	–	–	–	–	
6	129	1	–	–	–	1	
6	130	4	–	–	–	–	
6	131	5	1	–	1	–	
6	132	2	–	1	1	1	
6	133	3	–	1	–	–	
6	134	5	–	–	1	–	
6	135	10	2	2	–	–	
6	136	3	–	–	–	–	
6	137	5	–	–	–	–	
6	138	7	1	1	1	1	
6	139	6	1	2	–	1	
6	140	3	2	1	1	2	
6	141	–	–	–	–	–	
6	142	6	–	–	–	1	
6	143	7	1	3	–	–	
6	144	–	–	1	–	1	
6	145	1	–	–	–	1	
6	146	6	–	–	–	–	
Ward Totals		**132**	**20**	**31**	**9**	**19**	**211**

7	147	1	1	–	–	1	
7	148	4	–	1	1	–	
7	149	2	–	2	–	1	
7	150	3	–	1	–	–	
7	151	5	2	1	–	–	
7	152	6	–	–	–	1	
7	153	3	1	2	1	1	
7	154	5	2	–	2	–	
7	155	6	–	–	–	1	
7	156	6	1	–	–	–	
7	157	3	–	–	1	–	
7	158	1	1	1	1	–	
7	159	7	–	1	–	1	
7	160	5	1	–	3	–	
7	161	4	1	–	–	2	
7	162	1	1	1	–	1	
7	163	3	1	–	–	1	
7	164	6	–	–	–	1	
7	165	1	2	–	–	–	
7	166	4	1	–	–	1	
7	167	3	–	–	–	–	
Ward Totals		**79**	**15**	**10**	**9**	**12**	**125**
8	168	5	–	–	–	1	
8	169	4	–	1	2	1	
8	170	3	–	–	–	–	
8	171	–	1	1	–	1	
8	172	2	–	–	–	–	
8	173	3	–	–	–	–	
8	174	6	–	–	1	–	
8	175	1	1	–	–	2	
8	176	3	–	–	–	1	
Ward Totals		**27**	**2**	**2**	**3**	**6**	**40**
9	177	1	2	–	–	–	
9	178	5	1	–	–	1	
9	179	5	1	–	1	1	
9	180	4	1	2	–	2	
9	181	2	–	–	–	2	
9	182	4	1	–	–	–	
9	183	2	1	–	1	1	
9	184	3	–	1	–	–	
9	185	2	–	–	–	2	
9	186	3	1	1	–	1	
9	187	5	–	2	1	1	
9	188	4	1	–	–	–	
9	189	2	1	1	–	–	
Ward Totals		**42**	**10**	**7**	**3**	**11**	**73**
Grand totals		**504**	**128**	**281**	**70**	**186**	**1,169**

How Occupations Were Classified

"Manager-Proprietor" is a broad category that includes owners of industrial, merchant, and service firms, owners of "ma & pa" businesses such as grocery stores, and supervisors above the level of foremen. In L.A. at the turn of the century many foremen were rooted in the skilled trades and were

often unionized, as in the chapels of Typographical Union No. 174. For this reason foremen are counted as workingclass blue or white, depending on the business.

Most "Uncertain White" entries refer to persons listed merely as "clerks." Retail clerks and certain other clerks in specific lines of work were counted as workingclass white-collar or, less often, as semi-professionals. Unspecified "engineers" were counted as "Uncertain White, while engineers in specific lines of work were counted as workingclass white-collar or as professional, based on my knowledge of L.A. unionized trades in 1908. Stationary, hoisting, and marine engineers, for example, were counted as workingclass white-collar. Chemical, civil, hydrological, and mechanical engineers were counted as professional.

As a general rule, service employees were designated workingclass white and manufacturing workers were designated workingclass blue.

Drivers and chauffeurs were designated workingclass white. Teamsters, who often had to do heavy lifting as part of their work, were designated workingclass blue.

Most secretaries were counted as workingclass white-collar. A few, among them legal secretaries, were counted as semi-professionals, as were stenographers.

Barkeepers and saloonkeepers were counted as workingclass white-collar unless other evidence from the register indicated they owned the enterprise, in which case they were counted as manager-proprietor. In turn-of-the-century Los Angeles saloons were focal points of workingclass culture and politics.

Professionals routinely involved in the ownership of a small business, such as taxidermists, shoemakers, and dentists, were counted as manager-proprietors. Lawyers and other professionals whose involvement in business ownership was not routine were counted as professional/semi-professionals. On the assumption that gem cutters worked for jewelers, the former were placed in the professional-semi-pro category and the latter in the manager-proprietor category.

Some peddlers owned their small businesses, but many others were hired to do the work. Peddlers were therefore counted as workingclass white-collar.

Primary and secondary school teachers today would be considered workingclass white-collar, but in turn-of-the-century Los Angeles their desire to be viewed as professionals dominated their behavior and made them resistant to unionization. They were therefore counted as professional/semi-pros.

Specific class designations for selected occupations:

accountant/bookkeeper	professional/semi-pro
agent	professional/semi-pro
automobile sales	professional/semi-pro
barber	workingclass white
barkeeper/saloonkeeper	workingclass white or manager-proprietor
butcher	workingclass blue
cabinetmaker	workingclass blue
clerk, hotel	workingclass white
clerk, post office	workingclass white
clerk, railroad	workingclass white
coachman	workingclass, white
collector	workingclass white
conductor	workingclass white
cook	workingclass white
cutter	workingclass blue
dentist	manager-proprietor
deputy sheriff	professional/semi-pro
draftsman	professional/semi-pro
driver	workingclass white
engineer	uncertain white
engineer, civil	professional/semi-pro
engineer, electrical	professional/semi-pro

engineer, marine	workingclass blue
engineer, stationary	workingclass blue
engraver	workingclass white
expressman/transferman	workingclass white
rancher/farmer	manager-proprietor
foreman	workingclass white
gardener	workingclass blue or proprietor
gem cutter	professional/semi-pro
gilder	workingclass white
grocer	manager-proprietor
hatter	workingclass blue
inspector	workingclass white or professional/semi-pro
insurance salesman	professional/semi-pro
knife grinder	workingclass blue
mail carrier/postman	workingclass white
merchant	manager-proprietor
meter man	workingclass white
nurse	professional/semi-pro
nurseryman	workingclass blue
peddler	workingclass white
plumbers	workingclass blue
police officer	professional/semi-pro
porter	workingclass white
presser	workingclass blue
printer	workingclass blue
real estate broker	professional/semi-pro
shampooer	workingclass white
shoemaker	manager-proprietor
showman	professional/semi-pro
sign painter	workingclass blue
stenographer	professional/semi-pro
steward	workingclass white
stock broker/investor	professional/semi-pro
tailor	workingclass blue or manager-proprietor
taxidermist	manager-proprietor
teacher	professional/semi-pro
teamster	workingclass blue
telegraph operator	professional/semi-pro
teller	workingclass white
timekeeper	workingclass white
tinner	workingclass blue
upholsterer	workingclass blue or manager-proprietor
waiter/waitress	workingclass white
watchmaker/jeweler	manager-proprietor
watchman	workingclass white

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