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Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College
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DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL POLITICS: 1918-1932

Volume I

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of History

by

Leah Marcile Taylor
B.A., Vanderbilt University, 1962
M.A., Louisiana State University, 1966
August, 1973
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ABSTRACT

The Democracy of the Nineteen-Twenties, an incongruous combination of disparate elements underwent a monumental struggle as the party's rural and urban wings fought for control at the presidential level. By bringing cultural questions to the fore, the decade provided the perfect environment for the disintegration of the Democratic Party. Harboring both urban, Catholic, immigrant, Wet constituencies and rural, Protestant, native, Dry constituencies, the party carried the seeds of its own destruction. Consumed by internal strife, the Democracy of the Twenties failed to function as a viable alternative to Republican hegemony in national politics.

Under Wilson's supervision between 1912 and 1921, rural Democrats dominated their party and largely ignored the Democracy's urban leaders. Wilson, however, abdicated effective leadership insofar as the 1920 presidential nomination was concerned, and with the administration forces in disarray the urban Democrats forced the nomination of a compromise candidate—James M. Cox. His selection precipitated little rancor; the cultural conflicts that would engulf the party had not yet fully emerged. Nevertheless, the convention's prohibition debate and Cox's refusal to defer to the
agrarians’ demands that he adopt a Dry stance did provide portents of the impending struggle.

Whereas the 1920 contest indicated the potential for party destruction inherent in cultural questions, the 1924 contest saw that latent danger transformed into reality. In Madison Square Garden, rural and urban Democrats clashed over the necessity of denouncing the Ku Klux Klan. The bitterness engendered by this encounter set the stage for protracted deadlock. Urban Democrats with their Catholic, immigrant, Wet constituencies were bent upon destroying the rural champion--William Gibbs McAdoo. Conversely, rural Democrats representing their Protestant, native, Dry kinsmen were determined that Al Smith, the personification of urban America, should not have the nomination. Turning in exhaustion to John W. Davis, who had refused to associate himself with either of the major factions, the mangled party virtually conceded victory to the Republicans.

Leaving the 1924 convention leaderless and apathetic, the rural Democrats lacked both the candidate and the will to hold off the urban onslaught. Apprehensive lest the party be permanently crippled in the cities if Smith were denied the nomination, the rural moderates acquiesced in his selection in 1928. The Democracy's rural extremists, however, sought to "save" their party by defeating Smith in the general election. But just as the cities' triumph
in nominating Smith had been an ephemeral one, so also was the rural extremists' victory in the election. Both the urban and the rural provincials had been discredited; neither could dominate a national party.

As the 1932 convention approached, Franklin D. Roosevelt emerged as the champion of the Southern and Western agrarians who had been instrumental in elevating Wilson to power two decades earlier. He was nominated over the strident opposition of the Eastern urbanites who preferred Al Smith. While Roosevelt would create a new Democratic Party with the city at its nucleus, he emerged from the 1932 convention as rural America's candidate. The party that emerged from that convention bore a striking resemblance to the Wilsonian party. Rural Democrats were in a position of dominance; urban Democrats existed on the periphery of power.
INTRODUCTION

The Twenties witnessed a monumental struggle between rural and urban America. To the rural mind the mushrooming cities symbolized all that was evil in American life. There lived the recent immigrants with their intemperance and alien ideas; moreover, the city bred corruption and broke down traditional authority. As the city threatened to submerge the countryside, rural America struggled tenaciously to restore the old order. The issues dividing rural and urban America were not of the usual political variety. Rather they embodied diametrically opposed styles of life. Rural, native, Protestant, Dry America feared the growing influence of urban, immigrant, non-Protestant, Wet America.¹ In effect, two conflicting cultures were battling to establish their social and moral ideals as the American standard. Eventually, the prohibition issue, above all others, symbolized and embodied the whole range of cultural tensions that was widening the chasm between rural and urban America. The Ku Klux Klan's activities made that division

¹Throughout the Twenties, the terms "Dry" and "Wet" were the accepted designations for prohibitionists and anti-prohibitionists.
more explosive.\textsuperscript{2}

The defense of rural values found its most odious expression in the Ku Klux Klan's actions. Though not confined solely to rural America, the Klan represented the rural mentality. Composed primarily of religious fundamentalists, racial bigots, and devout nativists, the Klan perceived its mission to be the preservation of the older America against the alien onslaught. The "Invisible Empire" grew to tremendous proportions during the Twenties. By 1924 from three to five million hooded Americans were actively engaged in denunciation of the Catholic, the Jew, the Negro, and other "alien" groups impinging upon the nineteenth-century environment. Representing traditional rural values, the Klan's influence exceeded its mere numerical strength. During the mid-twenties, the Order emerged as a force in national politics and wielded its greatest power within the Democratic Party.\textsuperscript{3}

While the Klan represented the malignant side of rural


protest, rural America had earlier discovered a more noble spokesman in William Jennings Bryan. As early as 1896, Bryan had tailored the Democratic Party to his own image as a vehicle of rural protest against the "corrupting" forces of the East. But just as the city threatened to eclipse the countryside during the Twenties, an upheaval was imminent within Bryan's Democracy. The decade witnessed Alfred E. Smith's emergence as the leader of the urban masses.

Thus, if the Twenties provided the right atmosphere for a rural-urban conflict to come to the fore, the Democratic Party constituted the ideal arena for its attempted resolution. Historically, the Democracy had provided shelter for both Southern and Western agrarians and Eastern urban machine politicians--the very groups that were now locked in combat. This conflict did not center upon

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the economy or upon foreign policy. Rather, the issues of religious
tolerance, denunciation of the Klan, immigration restriction, and
prohibition enforcement constituted the divisive themes. The
party's heterogeneous composition made the discussion of these
cultural issues particularly dangerous. The Southern Democrats
were primarily rural, Anglo-Saxon, and Protestant. As such, they
favored prohibition enforcement, immigration restriction, and
schemes for Americanizing the immigrants. Since Southern society
provided a welcome environment for proscriptive organizations, the
Southern Democracy could count among its membership much of the
"Invisible Empire." Like the Southerner, the Western Democrat
was an ardent defender of prohibition; yet the Western Democracy
contained more Catholics and fewer Klansmen than its Southern
counterpart. Conversely, the Northeastern Democracy was strongest
in the cities where it was machine-controlled; as such, it sought
support from the immigrant masses, whose numbers were swelling
the urban population. Since the Northeastern Democracy was
largely Catholic, it was hostile to proscriptive organizations and
opposed to prohibition.  

7J. Joseph Huthmacher, Massachusetts People and Politics, 1919-1933 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), 77-81;
Campaign for the Presidential Nomination in 1924," Journal of
Southern History, XXIX (May, 1963), 216-17; Karl Schriftgiesser,
This Was Normalcy: An Account of Party Politics During Twelve
The party, composed as it was of diverse and mutually antagonistic elements, had suffered minority status nationally since 1896. In that year Bryan had forged an alliance between his party's Southern and Western wings to make their interests paramount. But Bryan's party of agrarian protest had been unable to command a national majority. Nor was Wilson's elevation to the presidency in 1912 indicative of a strengthening or enlarging of the Democratic coalition. His overwhelming victory in the electoral college resulted from the split in the ranks of the Republican Party, not from a broadened Democratic appeal. In 1916 Wilson managed to secure a large proportion of the labor vote and to carry the Democratic Party into the East. The dominant strength within the party, however, lay with the agrarian interests of the South and the West.

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The party which Bryan had forged and Wilson had expanded came under vigorous assault during the Twenties. Al Smith rose from the heart of the "enemy country" to challenge rural hegemony. Although he failed to receive the presidential nomination in 1920, Smith, in alliance with the Eastern bosses, deprived the leaderless and divided Wilsonians of the nomination. The convention subsequently nominated James M. Cox, a Wet wholly unacceptable to Bryan. As a result of Cox's devastating humiliation at the polls, the Democratic Party was reduced to its traditional Southern bastion. 9

Following the Harding landslide, the Democracy was firmly entrenched in its minority position. In order to construct a winning coalition, the Democrats could choose one of two strategies. They could seek to attract either the Western agrarians or the Eastern urbanites to their Southern nucleus. Posing as the champion of the Southern and Western agrarians, William Gibbs McAdoo, Bryan's heir apparent, launched his drive for the Democratic nomination in

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1924. The cultural clash within both the country and the Democratic Party, however, was so intense that McAdoo was anathema to his party's Eastern wing. In the 1924 national convention this rural-urban confrontation within the party reached its height in a contest over a plank specifically condemning the Ku Klux Klan. As a result of the animosities engendered over this plank, the rural forces declined to grant Smith any support; the urban contingent similarly denied McAdoo. The result was deadlock and nomination by attrition. John W. Davis emerged from the Madison Square Garden debacle as the compromise candidate. With his party hopelessly divided and rent by cultural factionalism, the hapless Davis was no more successful in broadening the Democratic base than Cox had been. The Democracy was again reduced to its Southern base.10

As 1928 approached, the party's rural wing was both unable to find a champion and weary of the struggle; it all but conceded the nomination to the cities in the person of Al Smith. The Smith strategists postulated that the Governor's popularity in urban New York would be transferable to the remainder of the Northeast.

They hoped, therefore, to graft Eastern urban votes to the Southern nucleus and thereby to formulate a national majority. This hope, however, was in vain. In a campaign dominated by cultural issues, Smith carried only Massachusetts and Rhode Island in the urban industrialized East and retained only six states in the heretofore solid South--Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina. While Smith did garner a greater number of urban votes than had heretofore gone to Democratic presidential candidates, the Democracy was at low ebb on the basis of strength in the electoral college. 11

Smith's nomination in 1928, however, did not mark an irrevocable victory of the city over the countryside within the Democratic Party. The 1932 convention found Al Smith again leading the party's urban wing in a contest with the rural element. By this time, however, the Southern and Western agrarians had discovered a new champion--Franklin D. Roosevelt. Thus, Roosevelt's nomination in 1932 signaled a victory for the old Bryan-Wilson-McAdoo coalition; but the rural Democracy's victory was pyrrhic.

In winning, they nominated the man who was to complete the

transformation that Al Smith had begun. Eventually, Roosevelt would forge a new party within which the city would emerge as the nucleus. In order to create this new party, however, he had first to reforge the Bryan coalition of the South and the West and to defeat the idol of the city masses--Al Smith. Thus, while the cities may have emerged from the Twenties as dominant in the nation, they were not yet dominant in the Democratic Party. They were not to become decisive until after Roosevelt began to react to the depression.12

12 Frank Freidel, FDR and the South (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1965), 1-2; Arthur F. Mullen, Western Democrat (New York: Wilfred Funk, Inc., 1940), 160; Huthmacher, Massachusetts People and Politics, 266; Lubell, The Future of American Politics, 34-35. Lubell has indicated that the Democratic plurality in the nation's twelve largest cities (New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Pittsburg, Detroit, Cleveland, Baltimore, St. Louis, Boston, Milwaukee, San Francisco, and Los Angeles) increased by 80 percent between 1932 and 1936. He postulates that while Smith started the movement, Roosevelt's first term vastly increased it. This is illustrated by the following figures showing the election year and the party plurality in these twelve urban centers:

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>1,638,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>1,252,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>38,000</td>
<td>Democratic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>1,910,000</td>
<td>Democratic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>3,608,000</td>
<td>Democratic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>2,210,000</td>
<td>Democratic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>2,296,000</td>
<td>Democratic</td>
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The theory that the 1928 election brought about a party realignment in the cities favorable to the Democrats has been recently challenged. Jerome M. Clubb and Howard W. Allen contend that the urban votes Smith received may have constituted only a tribute to his own personal qualities and, as such, they did not represent a permanent movement of new voters into the Democratic column. Jerome M.
While Roosevelt owed his nomination to the agrarians, once the campaign began it became evident that economic issues had regained ascendancy over cultural ones. As the cultural tensions receded, Roosevelt initially was able to garner support from all segments of both his party and the country. The submersion of the cultural issues also meant that Roosevelt was able to unite the rural and urban reform strains that had not coalesced because of the cultural antagonisms. 13

Thus, during roughly the decade that elapsed from the end of Wilson's second term to Roosevelt's nomination in 1932, the nation witnessed a titanic cultural struggle as rural America sought to stave off urban modernity. In a similar fashion, the agrarians and urbanites contested for control of the Democratic Party at the national level. Throughout much of the decade the rural forces, the old Bryanites and Wilsonians, were divided among themselves and suffered from ineffective leadership, while the urbanites succeeded in forming a cohesive alliance around the dynamic New York

Clubb and Howard W. Allen, "The Cities and the Election of 1928: Partisan Realignment?," *American Historical Review*, LXXIV (April, 1969), 1205-1220. Nevertheless, regardless of whether it was Smith or Roosevelt who began the urban revolution, two things are clear. It was not until after the depression and Roosevelt's response to the depression that urban voters began to swarm into the Democratic Party. Moreover, the party's rural wing, rather than its urban one, was clearly responsible for Roosevelt's nomination.

Ironically, it was another New York governor, Franklin D. Roosevelt, who in 1932 would lead the agrarians to their greatest victory of that decade.

The party that emerged from the Twenties at the Democratic National Convention in 1932 was essentially the same party that had entered the decade. The old Wilsonians were again largely in control of the presidential nominating process. This does not indicate that the conflicts of the Twenties were meaningless; they had either purged or discredited the party's extreme cultural purists and paved the way for the harmonizers, moderates, and practical politicians to seize the opportunity that the depression proffered. Moreover, not all the old Wilsonians were pleased with Roosevelt's nomination, even though most of the men who had championed Wilson were to be found in Roosevelt's camp. Finally, it would be an oversimplification to assume that the decade's cultural tensions determined all the participants' positions. As might be expected, petty jealousies, personal ambitions, political expediency, and ideological preferences were all involved. Nevertheless, if the Twenties found the city and country contesting for the control of the Democratic presidential nominating process, then on balance the agrarians emerged as the victors in 1932.
CHAPTER I

THE WILSONIANS

As the 1920 election approached, the once vigorous Woodrow Wilson was a shattered man; likewise, the party that he had forged in 1912 was on the verge of disintegration. In 1912 and in the years that followed, Wilson drew a great many men into his orbit. Southerners or men who could cooperate with the Southern bloc all but monopolized influence within his party. Many of the men Wilson attracted were new to national politics, and one of these new men, William Gibbs McAdoo, would prove to be very attractive to the West as well as to the South. The Northeastern city machines and their urban, immigrant, Catholic constituencies were almost totally excluded from access to national power. Most of the men who coalesced around Wilson would find themselves in the Twenties contesting to retain the power that they had won. Their antagonists would be the groups that they had once excluded and who were now vociferously demanding recognition. The Wilsonians would often be more united in their opposition to the urbanites than in support of their own nominees; yet most would find their way into the Roosevelt camp in 1932.
Wilson had engineered his victory in Baltimore in the face of
tremendous obstacles. Speaker Champ Clark of Missouri and
Oscar W. Underwood of Alabama, a Southern regional favorite son,
provided powerful opposition. Underwood, however, was handicapped
because he did not command the allegiance of the entire South.
Wilson, a transplanted Southerner, also attracted support from that
region. In fact, Southerners assumed a large role in his pre-
convention campaign. Early in the contest the brilliant but erratic
William F. McCombs, an Arkansan who had migrated to New York,
took command of the pre-convention drive. Through McCombs,
William Gibbs McAdoo joined the Wilson movement. McAdoo had
been born in Georgia, reared in Tennessee, and acquired fame as
the builder of the Hudson Tunnels in New York. The energetic, able,
and ambitious McAdoo was soon second only to McCombs in the
Wilson organization. McAdoo was responsible for recruiting
Bernard M. Baruch to the Wilson cause. Baruch, who had fled
South Carolina for New York City, would serve as the financial
mainstay for the Democracy throughout the Twenties. Colonel
E. M. House of Texas, later to provide invaluable service to Wilson,
was not of vital importance in the early stage of the campaign.¹

¹C. Vann Woodward, Origins of the New South, 1877-1913
(Volume IX of A History of the South, eds. Wendell Holmes
Stephenson and E. Merton Coulter. 10 vols.; Baton Rouge: Louisiana
State University Press, 1949-67), 471. For McAdoo's early life and
career see William G. McAdoo, Crowded Years: The Reminiscences
As the pre-convention maneuvering neared an end, it was apparent that no clear-cut alignments had emerged. Ironically, Champ Clark, the party regulars' favorite, had also fallen heir to much of Bryan's strength in the Middle and Far West. He also had the backing of William Randolph Hearst. In a campaign denouncing bossism, Wilson had gained the support of men such as Josephus Daniels of North Carolina and Carter Glass of Virginia. Daniels, an ardent Bryanite, was fighting the Simmons machine, and Glass was revolting against the Martin-Swanson organization. Nevertheless, some of Bryan's Southern followers supported Clark, and many old Southern Populists joined with the conservative Southern machines in support of Underwood. As a result of the pre-convention skirmishing, Clark entered the convention with by far the greatest number of committed delegates. Wilson had only half as many, and despite his vigorous campaign in the South, he had split that section's delegates with Underwood. It was clear that the rural-urban conflict that was
to engulf the party in the Twenties had not yet emerged. Moreover, there was no clear-cut progressive-conservative delineation.

As the convention opened, the Wilsonians were badly outnumbered. Although McCombs was on the verge of both a physical and mental collapse, he commanded the Wilson forces. The more stable McAdoo rendered valuable assistance to the visibly declining McCombs. Because Wilson's greatest strength lay in the Pennsylvania and Texas delegations, A. Mitchell Palmer of Pennsylvania and Albert S. Burleson of Texas were designated as his official floor leaders. Palmer, in concert with Joseph F. Guffey and Vance McCormick, a reforming newspaper publisher, had successfully garnered most of Pennsylvania's delegates for Wilson. Thomas B. Love and Thomas W. Gregory, both Texans, were also very active in Wilson's behalf on the convention floor. Before the balloting began, the Wilsonians won an important psychological victory. Newton D. Baker of Ohio, an ardent devotee of Wilson, broke the Ohio unit rule in an impassioned appeal before the convention. He thereby freed the Wilson minority within the delegation from voting for Ohio's Judson Harmon. 3

The convention appeared to be over on the tenth ballot when Charles Murphy, the Tammany boss, delivered the New York delegation to Clark. This gave Clark more than a majority of the convention votes. Although he needed two-thirds, no one since 1844 had received a majority and then failed of nomination. Nevertheless, both the Wilson and Underwood forces stood firm and blocked Clark's nomination. Bryan, finding it increasingly unbearable to be voting for Clark in company with the New York delegation and under pressure from Nebraska Wilsonian Gilbert M. Hitchcock, threw his vote to Wilson on the fourteenth ballot. The deadlock began to break when the bosses started to capitulate. The crafty Thomas Taggart of Indiana was the first to join the Wilson forces. The decisive break came, however, when on the forty-third ballot, Roger Sullivan delivered the Illinois delegation to Wilson. Finally, on the forty-sixth ballot Underwood released his delegates, and New York moved that Wilson be nominated by acclamation.  

Arthur Link has indicated the irony involved in Wilson's nomination. He could not have won it without the assistance of those men against whom he had been contending—the organization bosses. In part, he was able to win their support and leave the convention with so little rancor because the cultural issues, which were to

4 Link, Wilson: The Road to the White House, 444-63.

5 Ibid., 465.
plague the party in the Twenties, had not yet surfaced. Clearly positions based on traditional political or economic objectives were more clearly compromised than cultural antagonisms. Moreover, only time would tell how the organizations would fare with Wilson as President. Wilson was, after all, a rather recent convert to progressivism; he might yet prove amenable to the bosses' demands.

The hyphenated Southerners who had dominated Wilson's pre-convention organization were also largely responsible for directing the presidential campaign. McCombs, at this juncture a physical wreck and considered by many progressives to be too conservative to head the campaign, was nevertheless, made chairman. Wilson, who like Roosevelt had the habit of using men and then disposing of them, preferred McAdoo for the position. In order to avoid appearing ungrateful, however, he had no alternative but to name McCombs. When McCombs finally broke under the strain, McAdoo assumed active direction of the campaign. The distraught McCombs would eventually become one of the Wilson administration's bitterest enemies. 6

Southerners and others active in the Wilson cause prior to the convention were prominent in the campaign committee as originally constituted. The old guard politicians were quite conspicuous by their absence. Josephus Daniels headed the publicity

6Ibid., 480.
bureau. Tom Pence of North Carolina and Robert W. Woolley of Kentucky assisted him. Functioning as a peacemaker between the McCombs and McAdoo partisans, Daniels attempted to prevent a serious rift from developing within the Wilsonian camp. He thus presaged his role as a conciliator which was to serve his party in good stead in the years to come. Senator Thomas P. Gore of Oklahoma was put in charge of the organization bureau, and the loyal Burleson commanded the speakers' bureau. With these men filling the top positions and other early Wilson backers the lesser ones, Wilson offered little incentive to those elements of the party who had not been with him before Baltimore. 7

Finally, acceding to Burleson's demands, Wilson included Senator James A. Reed as a concession to the Clark contingent and Judge Will R. King of Oregon so that the Pacific coast would be

7The committee as originally slated was rounded out with the following men: Robert Ewing, the national committeeman from Louisiana; Willard Saulsbury, the Wilson leader in Delaware; Joseph E. Davies, an early Wilsonian leader of the progressive Democratic faction in Wisconsin; Senator James A. O'Gorman, the New Yorker who along with the young Franklin D. Roosevelt had vainly led the Wilson forces against Murphy in the New York state Democratic convention; Robert S. Hudspeth, a New Jersey supporter; Representative Daniel J. McGillicuddy of Maine; and the loyal Palmer. Woodward, The Origins of the New South, 1877-1913, 479; Josephus Daniels, The Wilson Era: Years of Peace, 1910-1917 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944), 69; Joseph L. Morrison, Josephus Daniels: The Small-d Democrat (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966), 47-48; Link, Wilson: The Road to the White House, 407, 413, 418, 481.
represented. Later, Henry Morgenthau of New York, one of Wilson's earliest and most steadfast financial backers, became chairman of the finance committee. Rolla Wells of St. Louis was made treasurer, and Charles R. Crane of Chicago, the largest financial contributor, was appointed vice-chairman of the finance committee. With these appointments, the formation of a campaign committee dominated by Southerners was largely completed. 8

Following Wilson's victory at the polls, Southern domination of the Democracy was insured. They not only controlled Congress by virtue of seniority, but the Cabinet was to be theirs as well. In fact, Wilson's Cabinet selections probably best illustrate the Southern proclivity of his administration. These appointments offered no comfort or recognition to the Eastern organizations. William Jennings Bryan, the man who had made a fetish of attacking the East and her bosses, was awarded the most prestigious post, that of Secretary of State. William Gibbs McAdoo became Secretary of the Treasury. Another Southerner transplanted to New York, James C. McReynolds, served as Wilson's first Attorney General. McReynolds had been born in Kentucky and practiced law in Tennessee before moving to New York. The position affording the greatest access to patronage, that of Postmaster General, went to the skilled politician Albert S. Burleson. Another faithful Southern

8Link, Wilson: The Road to the White House, 338, 422, 481-86.
partisan, Josephus Daniels, became Secretary of the Navy. At Daniels' suggestion, Wilson appointed the young country squire from Hyde Park, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Assistant Secretary of the Navy. Daniels had met Roosevelt at the Baltimore convention. Roosevelt's support for Wilson in defiance of Tammany had greatly impressed Daniels. 9

William C. Redfield, an anti-Tammany New Yorker, was appointed Secretary of Commerce. For Secretary of Agriculture Wilson selected David F. Houston, originally from North Carolina but more recently the President of the University of Texas and Chancellor of Washington University in St. Louis. The Department of Interior went to Franklin K. Lane of California. To obtain his Secretary of Labor, Wilson turned to Pennsylvania, a state which had been invaluable to him in his drive for the nomination, and selected William B. Wilson. The position of Secretary of War was offered first to the faithful A. Mitchell Palmer. But the Quaker declined it, and Wilson turned to Lindley Garrison of New Jersey to fill the post. 10

Southern influence, however, was not confined solely to Congress and the Cabinet. Colonel E. M. House of Texas and


Joseph P. Tumulty of New Jersey constituted the remainder of Wilson's inner circle. House, the President's confidant and advisor, enjoyed enormous power. Joseph P. Tumulty, Wilson's secretary, was the unique member of the President's family: a Roman Catholic of Irish-American extraction from New Jersey. It fell to Tumulty and Burleson to keep within the fold the big city organizations that had opposed Wilson before Baltimore. On the whole, they managed to accomplish their task. It was, nevertheless, difficult because of McAdoo's attempts to gain control of New York. He failed, and in the process, planted the seeds for his own future disaster.  

Bryan, McReynolds, Garrison, and McCombs were the major political casualties of Wilson's first administration. From a political viewpoint, the breach between Wilson and Bryan was the most significant. Bryan resigned in June, 1915, over the President's handling of the Lusitania crisis. Wilson unenthusiastically promoted Robert Lansing of New York to the vacated position. The President did not feel that Lansing had sufficient strength for the position he was filling. There was, however, no one outside the administration who was immediately available, and Wilson needed someone at once. Moreover, he and House concluded that a weak Secretary of State

would give them less trouble than the strong-willed Bryan had.  

Bryan's resignation, however, did not end his political career as many had no doubt hoped. The Democracy would still hear very much from William Jennings Bryan.

Earlier, in 1914, the rather unpopular McReynolds was elevated to the Supreme Court, and another Southerner joined the official family. Thomas W. Gregory of Texas became the Attorney General. The Cabinet lost what little Eastern flavor it possessed when, in 1916, Secretary of War Garrison resigned. Newton D. Baker, a Midwesterner, replaced him. Wilson had wanted Baker in his Cabinet in 1913, and the Ohioan was now free of the mayoralty duties that had prompted him to reject Wilson's earlier offer. Thus, another of Wilson's earliest supporters for the presidency had joined the administration.

Not all of the original Wilsonians, however, survived the first term. No man had done any more in the early pre-convention skirmishing than William McCombs; yet, he was not destined to savor any of the power that he had helped Wilson attain. In the

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struggle for power between McCombs and McAdoo that had characterized the 1912 campaign, McAdoo had clearly emerged victorious. Moreover, McCombs had never enjoyed Wilson's full confidence. McCombs' willingness to work with organization politicians offended the puritanical Wilson's sensibilities. Consequently, McCombs was coldly denied any voice in selecting the Cabinet. Wilson finally attempted to deprive McCombs of his little remaining power by offering him an ambassadorship. McCombs, no fool, rejected the proffer. He preferred to retain his chairmanship of the national committee. By 1914, however, real power had devolved upon Tumulty, Burleson, Pence, and others, although McCombs still retained the title. ¹⁴

By 1916, even though the pathetically neurotic McCombs was shorn of all effective power, Wilson could abide him no longer. Therefore, prior to his bid for a second term, Wilson decided to oust McCombs. The President commissioned House to perform the rather unsavory task. House, in turn, prevailed upon Bernard Baruch for assistance. Baruch persuaded McCombs to resign the chairmanship. Vance McCormick, leader of the party's progressive wing in Pennsylvania, was then elevated to the position vacated by McCombs. Although Wilson would have preferred to name Homer Cummings of Connecticut, he yielded to House's advice and selected

McCormick quickly went to work to construct a campaign organization. Undoubtedly, Daniel C. Roper of South Carolina and Robert W. Woolley were the key men in this organization. Roper had served as First Assistant Postmaster and, therefore, was in touch with key leaders throughout the country. Later, he was appointed Internal Revenue Commissioner and became a political intimate of William G. McAdoo. Commanding the New York headquarters, Roper was chairman of the organization bureau. Woolley, who had assisted Daniels in the previous campaign, headed the vitally important publicity bureau. Woolley, Director of the Mint, was also closely associated with McAdoo. On Colonel House's suggestion, Thomas B. Love of Texas assisted Roper in the New York headquarters. Roper was in constant communication with House, and from time to time Congressman Cordell Hull of Tennessee visited the command post. 16

Homer S. Cummings, national committeeman from Connecticut, headed the speakers' bureau. As usual, the Democracy's greatest problem in 1916 was money. Henry Morgenthau


again stepped into the breach and chaired the finance committee.

W. W. Marsh and W. D. Jamieson, both of Iowa, served respectively as treasurer and assistant treasurer. It was, however, Breckinridge Long, a St. Louis lawyer, who provided the most valuable financial assistance. The following year Long was given a position in the administration as Third Assistant Secretary of State. Thomas L. Chadbourne, a New York attorney, was also important in keeping the campaign going. Operating from Chicago, Senator Thomas J. Walsh had entered national politics as a Bryan supporter in 1908.

At Baltimore the Montanan had been an early champion of Wilson's cause. 17

This organization worked with Wilson as he engineered his 1916 triumph. It was a victory which saw the South and West unite to preserve an administration that was predominantly Southern. For most of the men who worked to re-elect Wilson this was to be their last taste of victory until 1932 when they would unite to nominate Franklin Roosevelt. The 1916 election marked the pinnacle of electoral success for the Wilson administration; the second term was not destined to end on the glorious note of the first.

The Southern-dominated government met a serious setback in the Congressional elections of 1918. These elections foreshadowed the much more serious debacle to come in 1920. The Democrats lost several districts in the agricultural interior, and, as a result, the Republicans gained control of the House. The Democrats also lost the Senate. While Wilson's appeal for a Democratic Congress is often cited as the reason for the defeat, the geographic concentration of the defections suggests that another factor was at work. The best explanation for the loss is that the administration's farm policies favored Southern farmers over Midwestern ones.\(^{18}\) Theodore H. Price reported to McAdoo that, "...the narrow minded policy of the southern Democrats in refusing to fix the price of cotton while voting for a fixed price on wheat was almost entirely responsible for the increased Republican vote that has been cast."\(^{19}\) There was a rather widespread dissatisfaction with Southern hegemony in


\(^{19}\) Theodore H. Price to William G. McAdoo, November 8, 1918, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 213, McAdoo Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress). This same sentiment was expressed to McAdoo prior to the election. James K. McGuire to William G. McAdoo, October 31, 1918, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 212, ibid.
Washington. Senator James Phelan of California reported to Secretary Lane that there was a strong feeling in the North and West that the South was receiving preferred treatment. There was no question in Tumulty's mind that Southern domination of the Democratic Party was primarily responsible for the defeat in 1918.20

The South's supremacy in Wilson's party was costly insofar as national elections were concerned, and, as well, it was beginning to cause serious internal breaches within the party. Late in 1918 when W. C. Redfield resigned, Daniels urged that Governor Martin H. Glynn of New York, the keynoter at the 1916 convention, be made Secretary of Commerce. Disregarding Daniels' recommendation, Wilson appointed Congressman J. W. Alexander of Missouri to the post. A bitter Glynn remarked to Daniels: "He has named no Catholic to his Cabinet or as Ambassador, and there are among us men as able as he has appointed."21 The frustrations that Glynn voiced—the demands for recognition of the heretofore unrecognized—foreshadowed the intra-party Democratic battles of the Twenties.

20 Franklin K. Lane to James H. Hawley, November 9, 1918, quoted in Anne W. Lane and Louis H. Wall (eds.), The Letters of Franklin K. Lane: Personal and Political (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1922), 301; Blum, Joe Tumulty and the Wilson Era, 187.

Whereas Daniels failed to convince Wilson that his Cabinet did not contain enough varied representation, Tumulty was more successful. Shortly after the armistice, both McAdoo and Attorney General Gregory resigned. Carter Glass of Virginia, completely devoted to Wilson and a sometime admiral of McAdoo, became Secretary of the Treasury. Walker D. Hine, another Southerner, assumed McAdoo's position as Director General of the Railroads. When Gregory urged, however, that Carroll Todd, a Virginian, take his place, Tumulty led the opposition. Tumulty, with the aid of Roper, Burleson, Woolley, McCormick, and Cummings, convinced the President that A. Mitchell Palmer should have the position. Palmer was an original Wilsonian who had served the administration loyally from the outset. With McAdoo's resignation from and Palmer's entrance into the Cabinet, the stage was set for the intra-party struggle of 1920.

Of all the Democrats who sought their party's nomination in the Twenties, none was better qualified than William Gibbs McAdoo. It was McAdoo's misfortune, however, that his political career peaked at an inopportune time. In 1920, he found himself the heir to Wilsonian progressivism, yet Wilson was not ready to be succeeded and the country was weary of Wilsonian progressives. In 1924 and 1928 McAdoo's party was more engrossed with issues of cultural

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22Blum, Joe Tumulty and the Wilson Era, 187-88.
liberalism than with economic progressivism, and McAdoo's fortunes suffered accordingly. By 1932 when the pendulum began to swing back to economic issues, McAdoo's image had become tarnished and scarred.

From the outset, McAdoo personified energy and ambition. Reared in relative poverty in Reconstruction Georgia and Tennessee, he left the University of Tennessee after two years of study to read law. Later he was admitted to the bar. McAdoo gained firsthand knowledge of railroads in Chattanooga, Tennessee, where he served as the local attorney for the Central Railroad and Banking Company of Georgia. Venturing into business, McAdoo purchased the stagnating Knoxville Street Railroad Company. He planned to convert its operating power from horses to electricity. The experiment failed, however, and McAdoo was left practically destitute. In an effort to recover his losses, McAdoo moved with his wife and children to New York in 1892 where he engaged in law practice. His energy was insatiable. Thus, between 1902 and 1909 he accomplished a task that had baffled engineers for years—the construction of the Hudson river Tunnels. In the process he had combatted not only the river, but also entrenched transit interests.

At the ceremony opening the tunnels in 1909, McAdoo revealed progressive sympathies when he asserted:

We believe in the public be pleased policy as opposed to the public be damned policy; we believe that that railroad is best which serves the public best; that decent treatment of the public evokes decent treatment from the public; that recognition by the corporation of the just rights of the people results in recognition by the people of the just rights of the corporation. A square deal for the people and a square deal for the corporation! The latter is as essential as the former and they are not incompatible. 24

In his operation of the tunnels, McAdoo quickly revealed other liberal tendencies. He insisted that women working for the company be compensated on an equal basis with men. 25

In the Cabinet, McAdoo became the center of reform. Arthur Link has labeled him one of the few advanced progressives in Wilson's inner circle. As Secretary of the Treasury, McAdoo labored to transfer control over the money supply and interest rates from Wall Street to the Treasury Department. This concern for public, as opposed to private, control of the money supply was illustrated in his struggle for the Federal Reserve Bill. McAdoo seemed a man compelled to action. In 1913, he averted a monetary shortage by offering to issue up to $500,000,000 of emergency currency. In that same year and again in 1914 McAdoo deposited federal funds in national banks in the South and West to relieve the disastrous grain and cotton situation. Further endearing himself to the agrarians,

24 McAdoo, Crowded Years, 105.

25 Synon, McAdoo, 38.
McAdoo was instrumental in forcing through the Federal Farm Loan Act. 26

Clearly, as Secretary of the Treasury, McAdoo was not hesitant to use and expand the powers of government. Surveying McAdoo's work, Louis Brandeis remarked that: "I rate him very highly and cannot recall any Secretary of the Treasury, since I have been actively interested in public matters, who can compare with him." Brandeis went on to laud McAdoo as being "...far-seeing, courageous, inventive, effective." The Boston reformer concluded his praise of McAdoo by asserting that "he has shown that he not only understands the financial power, but is able to grapple with it; and I do not know of any department of his work in which he has failed to exhibit the qualities of a master." 27

America's entrance into World War I provided new avenues for McAdoo's boundless energies. Not confining himself solely to the Treasury Department, McAdoo persuaded Wilson to take over the railroads. McAdoo then assumed the duties of Director General of the Railroads in addition to those of his Treasury post. 28

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Director General of the Railroads, McAdoo greatly enhanced his image as a friend of labor. Ironically, since in the Twenties he was labeled the Klan's candidate, McAdoo issued orders that Negroes should receive equal pay for equal work. Moreover, while he did not tamper with Southern Jim Crow laws, he did issue directives that Negro accommodations must be kept as clean and comfortable as those facilities used by white persons. 29 During the war McAdoo also helped create the War Risk Insurance Bureau and served as its administrator. Drawing on a seemingly endless supply of energy, McAdoo, over the opposition of the country's financiers, originated the idea of the Liberty Loans. He then served as Director of the Liberty Loan and War-Saving Stamp Campaigns. 30

Aside from his actions as Secretary of the Treasury and Director General of the Railroads, McAdoo had other credentials as a progressive. He was an early advocate and active supporter of women's suffrage. McAdoo also strongly espoused extending governmental control over the railroads for five years as an

29 W. G. McAdoo to B. L. Winchell, August 15, 1918, McAdoo Letterbooks, Box 500, McAdoo Papers; W. G. McAdoo to Joseph H. Harrington, July 2, 1920, McAdoo Letterbooks, Box 507, ibid.; W. G. McAdoo to W. M. Bufkin, August 12, 1920, McAdoo Letterbooks, Box 508, ibid.

experimental measure. His stand on the railroads clearly marked him as an advanced progressive. Shortly after he left office, he wrote to Brice Clagett, Assistant to the Director General of the Railroads, that "the railroad situation is rapidly getting worse all over the country, and it is due to the fundamental fact that private and competitive control cannot cope with the situation." McAdoo continued, explaining that he had always believed that "...breaking the railroads up again was a retrogressive step, like converting electric carts into horse-drawn vehicles."

While McAdoo was associated with some of the most progressive ideas emanating from the Wilson administration, he did not succumb to the illiberalism that characterized much of Wilson's second term. After leaving the Cabinet, he roundly condemned the action of the New York legislature in excluding five lawfully elected Socialists. He likewise denounced the Red hysteria in the country as contravening the Constitutional rights of free speech and free

31 W. G. McAdoo to Claude A. Swanson, October 1, 1918, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 211, McAdoo Papers; W. G. McAdoo to Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt, March 27, 1920, McAdoo Letterbooks, Box 505, ibid.; Chattanooga News, January 24, 1919, p. 4; W. G. McAdoo to M. M. Crane, May 13, 1920, McAdoo Letterbooks, Box 506, McAdoo Papers; W. G. McAdoo to Morris Sheppard, March 23, 1920, McAdoo Letterbooks, Box 504, ibid.

32 W. G. McAdoo to Brice Clagett, May 15, 1920, McAdoo Letterbooks, Box 506, McAdoo Papers.
Thus, McAdoo left office representing much that was admirable in the progressive tradition. But progressivism in the Twenties was destined to develop strange manifestations. Within a month after McAdoo left office in January, 1919, Nebraska became the thirty-sixth state to ratify the Eighteenth Amendment. The ratification by Nebraska, home of the country's foremost Dry--William Jennings Bryan--signaled the victory of prohibition. McAdoo hastened to congratulate Bryan on his victory "...for morality and the well being of the Nation..." McAdoo could not have realized at that moment that prohibition and the cultural tensions it embodied would in time tear his party asunder. Yet, "Prohibition, in the twenties," Richard Hofstadter wrote, "was the skeleton at the feast, a grim reminder of the moral frenzy that so many wished to forget, caricature of the reforming impulse, of the Yankee-Protestant notion that it is both possible and desirable to moralize private life through public action."^35

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^33 W. G. McAdoo to The World, January 13, 1920, McAdoo Letterbooks, Box 502, McAdoo Papers; W. G. McAdoo to Mrs. Kellogg Fairbank, February 27, 1920, McAdoo Letterbooks, Box 504, ibid.

^34 W. G. McAdoo to William Jennings Bryan, January 18, 1918 [sic], McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 195, McAdoo Papers.

^35 Hofstadter, The Age of Reform, 287.
The Chattanooga News, a progressive newspaper that served as the McAdoo organ from about 1918 to 1928, revealed the reverence with which rural America viewed the Eighteenth Amendment's adoption. George Fort Milton, Sr. enthusiastically editorialized:

This day, . . . , will go into the annals of time as one of the most important in the history of the world. Drunkenness has been as awful a menace to man as militarism.

The wisdom of the United States will immensely promote the movement all over the world to take away from man that which has destroyed his mind, made him temporarily and often permanently insane, which has filled the jails penitentiaries and placed the burden of poverty on the women and children and filled thousands of homes with anguish.

It is a great day for humanity. 36

McAdoo, taking a much needed rest from his labors, had no idea that forces were brewing that would bring him a decade of anguish. While McAdoo could not foresee the immense importance that the prohibition issue would assume in the coming decade, others were already working to make it paramount. In February, 1919, Charles W. Bryan wrote to his brother that: "I would not be surprised if the paramount issue next year will be law enforcement

36Chattanooga News, January 16, 1919, p. 4. George Fort Milton, Sr., a McAdoo partisan, edited the newspaper until his death in the midst of the 1924 McAdoo pre-convention campaign. His son, George Fort Milton, Jr., perhaps more devoted to McAdoo, then assumed editorship of the paper. Milton's ardor for McAdoo began to cool somewhat when McAdoo refused to be used as a sacrificial lamb for the rural forces in the 1928 convention. Milton became even more disgusted when McAdoo did not bolt the party in 1928.
of prohibition. That would be the issue underneath among all the wet and various elements that can be banded together whether it is the paramount issue on the surface or not." Charles went on to recommend that "it is therefore of vital importance that we make a fight to nominate a man who has convictions on the prohibition issue and who has a record of supporting it and enforcing it."37

For the time being, however, prohibition was only a small cloud on the horizon. And, as McAdoo surveyed the political scene, it was obvious that he had left the Cabinet with tremendous political advantages. McAdoo's administration of the Federal Reserve Board and the Farm Loan Board had won him both popularity and a political following in the West. Conducting the bond drives, he had contacted many more people and widened his field of popularity. As Director General of the Railroads, McAdoo's name was associated with higher railroad wages. Consequently, he was popular with labor. McAdoo's control of the Treasury portfolio and various wartime agencies provided him with patronage and the nucleus of a potent political machine. If prohibition were an issue, his stance as a Dry would be of value in the South and the West. At the same time, however, it would be of no help in the East. Thus, McAdoo obviously enjoyed tremendous political assets if he chose actively to seek the

37 Charles W. Bryan to William Jennings Bryan, February 27, 1919, Box 32, Bryan Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress).
Yet McAdoo, the personification of ambition, did not overtly pursue his party's nomination in 1920. His attitude toward the presidency between 1918 and 1920 was completely out of character. McAdoo, a widower, had married Wilson's daughter, Eleanor, in 1914. McAdoo's ambition was boundless, and he probably viewed himself as the "Crown Prince," a sobriquet later derisively applied to him. As early as the autumn of 1914, when it appeared that Wilson would not seek re-election in 1916, McAdoo openly revealed his ambition for the presidency to House and Wilson. In fact, McAdoo was so permeated by ambition that Newton D. Baker remarked: "McAdoo had the greatest lust for power I ever saw." As the 1920 election approached, however, McAdoo was tortured by indecision. Vacillation and delay characterized his action between late 1918 and the convention. There is little doubt that he could have had the nomination had he overtly fought for it; yet he did not.

McAdoo may have sensed the rising tide against Wilsonianism.

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38Mullen, Western Democrat, 177-78; James M. Cox, Journey Through My Years (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946), 225; Bagby, The Road to Normalcy, 64.


and concluded that 1920 was not to be a Democratic year. This, however, cannot account for his actions. McAdoo would not have passively watched control of the party slip from his grasp. Rather, McAdoo was faced with a situation beyond his control. He could not actively seek the presidency without Wilson's blessings or at the very least Wilson's renunciation of any desire for a third term. But McAdoo received neither. Burleson remarked to Daniels in November, 1918, that Wilson did not think McAdoo was fit for the presidency. Baruch, devoted to both Wilson and McAdoo, reported that McAdoo could have been nominated had Wilson endorsed him. Baruch explained, however, that Wilson endorsed no one because he hoped to be nominated himself. 41

Thus, Wilson's ambitions collided with McAdoo's, and this explains the tortuous route that McAdoo was compelled to follow. Because many of McAdoo's supporters were also devoted to Wilson, McAdoo could not openly seek the nomination until Wilson made his intentions clear. So long as Wilson remained a receptive but not an active candidate, McAdoo could do nothing overtly in his own cause. He could only hold himself ready, watch the Wilson sentiment run its course, and wait to see its outcome.

McAdoo began this policy of watchful waiting before he left the Cabinet. He was widely recognized as Wilson's logical successor. Congressman Jouett Shouse of Kansas, later Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, wrote McAdoo early in 1918 that, "in common with many of my colleagues from the West I am looking to you as the logical and probable candidate of our party for the presidency in 1920." In October, 1918, McAdoo wrote Major John S. Cohen, editor of the Atlanta Journal, enjoining the editor to stop organizational activities in his behalf in Georgia. McAdoo declared that he was not a candidate and that he had no desire to be one. He contended that his wartime service to his country would be impaired if his presidential candidacy were advocated. Nevertheless, the presidential talk would not die. In November, 1918, George Fort Milton, Sr., politically important newspaper publisher, prophesied that McAdoo could easily be nominated.

As the year 1918 ended, McAdoo left the Cabinet still protesting that he had no desire for the presidency. He explained that he

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42 Jouett Shouse to W. G. McAdoo, January 7, 1918, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 194, McAdoo Papers. Much correspondence along this same line may be found in Boxes 194, 195, 196, 199, 211, 213, McAdoo General Correspondence, ibid. See also McAdoo Letterbooks, Box 500, ibid.

43 John S. Cohen to W. G. McAdoo, September 30, 1918, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 211, McAdoo Papers; W. G. McAdoo to John S. Cohen, October 2, 1918, ibid.; George Fort Milton to W. G. McAdoo, November 20, 1918, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 213, McAdoo Papers.
needed to return to law practice in New York in order to restore his depleted finances and take care of his family. While there is every reason to doubt the honesty of McAdoo's protestations concerning the presidency, he was probably sincere in his expressed need to improve his deteriorating financial condition. Doubtless, however, there were other factors involved in his decision to leave the Cabinet. The New Republic speculated that, with the President engrossed in problems of peace and world organization, the progressive faction of the party would no longer be in control. They concluded that McAdoo resigned because he was not able to command support for bold new programs. Moreover, perhaps McAdoo had read the portents of the November elections and wished to dissociate himself from an administration that was growing increasingly unpopular.

While McAdoo left the Cabinet with his reputation made and unimpaired, Palmer, not yet a nationally known figure, entered. Coming from a relatively prosperous Quaker family in Republican Pennsylvania, Palmer first entered Congress in 1908. He served three terms before he retired and conducted an unsuccessful campaign for the Senate. From the outset a politician's politician, he so

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44 W. G. McAdoo to Pat O'Keefe, December 14, 1918, McAdoo Letterbooks, Box 500, McAdoo Papers; W. G. McAdoo to Miss L. Graham Crozier, December 14, 1918, ibid.; W. G. McAdoo to Norman Hapgood, December 14, 1918, ibid.

ingratiated himself with fellow Democrats that as a freshman congressman he was appointed vice-chairman of the Democratic congressional campaign committee. 46

In 1910 Palmer actively participated in reorganizing the Pennsylvania Democratic Party, and he returned to the House in 1911 as the leader of his state party. Consequently, he was elevated to the powerful Ways and Means Committee. Within a very short time he was very close to the Southern leadership that dominated the House. Palmer was likewise a very active and popular member of the Democratic national committee where he served from 1912 to 1920. In Congress Palmer, a devoted Wilsonian, was loyal to the President's program. An advanced progressive in some respects, Palmer was an early advocate of women's suffrage and child labor laws. In fact, he was so popular with labor that he served as the party's contact man with that group in 1916. In 1917 Wilson called Palmer to the post of Alien Property Custodian, and in March, 1919, Palmer became Attorney General. Ironically, he assumed that position as a recognized friend of labor and the foreign born. 47


In the months that followed, Palmer, already well-known to party leaders, became a nationally known figure. His entrance into the Cabinet coincided with the upsurge of the Red Scare. Palmer, at first cautious, was soon swept along with the wave of public hysteria. Perhaps he hoped to ride its crest to the presidency. Following a series of bombings in June, 1919, Palmer requested an increased budget in order to combat radicalism. He then established an anti-radical division in the Justice Department under J. Edgar Hoover. With the country applauding, Palmer launched his raids with the massive violations of civil liberties they entailed in November, 1919. Palmer, however, did not confine his activities to scourging "radicals." Late in 1919, Palmer, once labor's friend, obtained an injunction ordering striking coal miners to return to work. Palmer's raids reached their height in January, 1920, and Palmer was a national hero. The Red Scare, however, ended almost as quickly as it had begun, and Palmer, whose predicted May Day revolution in 1920 failed to materialize, suddenly looked very foolish. 48

Palmer's fortunes as a presidential aspirant largely followed the popularity of the national hysteria associated with the Red Scare. Initially, however, Palmer enjoyed very valuable political assets.

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He was extremely popular with Democratic national committeemen. For years Palmer had worked with these committeemen who were recognized political powers in their respective states. Thus, known as a staunch party man who always honored party obligations, Palmer was on strong ground with the party regulars. He had also formed close ties with many congressmen during his tenure in the House. Moreover, as Alien Property Custodian, Palmer had many lucrative contracts to bestow. Finally, Palmer had at his disposal the Justice Department patronage. Palmer, however, could not escape the same situation that had enfeebled McAdoo. Wilson's enigmatic position circumscribed Palmer's actions just as it did McAdoo's. Palmer was also an original Wilsonian and, while not a member of the President's personal family, was a member of the Cabinet. Throughout late 1919 and early 1920 Palmer pondered whether he could count on the President's support, whether it would go elsewhere, or whether Wilson would seek the nomination himself. Eventually, however, Palmer took more action than McAdoo in the face of Presidential silence. 49

The Armistice not only signaled changes in the Cabinet; it also precipitated a shake-up in the personnel of the national committee. On January 15, 1919, Carter Glass revealed that Vance McCormick had relinquished his position as chairman of the national committee.

49Coben, A. Mitchell Palmer, 246-52.
McCormick had resigned December 28, 1918, before leaving for Paris with Bernard Baruch. Wilson, already in Europe, had summoned both McCormick and Baruch to act as advisors to the American Peace Commission. Unable to satisfactorily discharge all the duties with which the President had burdened him, McCormick resigned. The national committee was called to meet in Washington, February 26, 1919, to receive the resignation and select a successor. It was widely speculated that Homer Cummings, vice-chairman of the committee, would succeed McCormick.  

When the national committee assembled, Cummings, as anticipated, was routinely and unanimously elected to complete McCormick's unexpired term. Turning to the selection of a vice-chairman, Arthur Mullen of Nebraska counseled the advisability of having all sections represented on the executive committee. He recommended that because the West had provided the margin of victory in 1916, the vice-chairman should be a Westerner. Mullen, therefore, nominated J. Bruce Kremer of Montana. Kremer was routinely elected first vice-chairman. With the Northeast and the Northwest represented, R. H. Elder of Idaho presented the name of Samuel B. Amidon of Kansas for second vice-chairman. Amidon was likewise systematically accepted. In a similar pre-arranged

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fashion Glass resigned as secretary and was succeeded by W. R. Hollister of Missouri; W. D. Jamieson of Iowa was elected director of finance, and W. W. Marsh of Iowa remained treasurer. 51

There can be little doubt that these committee officers were purposely selected to shore up the party in the Middle and Far West. In chairman Cummings' report to the full committee on the 1918 elections, he emphasized that, although the party had made a net congressional gain in the East, the election had been lost because of defections in the Middle and Far West. He also stressed that the loss of Missouri and Colorado had deprived the Democrats of control of the Senate. Addressing the committee, he did not attribute the defeat solely to the Southern domination of the Democracy, although he did indicate that it was partially responsible. Privately, however, Cummings agreed with Tumulty that Southern domination was the chief reason for the party's failure in 1918. Moreover, the slate of committee officers revealed a studied attempt to woo the Middle and Far West. 52


52 DNC Proceedings, 1920, 481-83; Blum, Joe Tumulty and the Wilson Era, 188. In addition to the charges of sectionalism, of Southern domination in the House and Senate, and of Western discontent over farm policy, Cummings mentioned several other factors
Cummings was Wilson's choice for the chairmanship and Tumulty approved of the selection. An energetic party worker, Cummings had a liberal reputation. Perhaps more important, insofar as Wilson was concerned, Cummings was a strong advocate of the League of Nations. Tumulty was pleased because Cummings was a Northerner who had never been a pawn of Colonel House. Yet, while Cummings' election no doubt strengthened the party organization, the political climate did not augur Democratic successes. Wilson was in Europe for the greater part of the period between December 2, 1918 and July 8, 1919. During his absence the party lacked any purpose or direction. McAdoo's resignation had deprived the administration of the executive leadership it so badly needed while Wilson was away. 53

With the party and the country floundering badly in the abeyance of executive leadership, a new and more divisive element that contributed to the defeat. He indicated that Democrats, absorbed in war work, did not have time to answer the Republicans' sniping attacks. Further, an influenza epidemic disrupted speaking plans. Cummings also suggested that some Democrats resented Republicans receiving appointments. He also noted that there had been business disturbances. Moreover, the belief still persisted that Republicans represented business and manufacturing better than Democrats. There was the usual charge that the Republicans made a lavish use of money. Cummings also referred to the loss of the German vote in the West and Midwest and a misrepresentation of the President's purposes and attitudes. DNC Proceedings, 1920, 481-83.

53 Blum, Joe Tumulty and the Wilson Era, 188-89; Burner The Politics of Provincialism, 50-51.
was added to the already unstable condition. Advance copies of the peace treaty, especially the League of Nations portion of it, were coming under sharp attack in the Senate. The whole controversy was deeply shaded with partisan overtones. Eventually, the League question and speculation concerning a third term for Woodrow Wilson became inextricably intertwined. Late in May, 1919, long held questions and doubts began to be expressed openly. The Springfield Republican, a consistent supporter of both Wilson and the League, offered this advice to the President:

The taunt so often heard today that the president means to capitalize the league of nations for the promotion of his ambition to win what no other man in American history has won hitherto might well be silenced before the treaty goes to the senate. Then freed from any possible handicap of partisan antipathy on account of the presidency to be fought in 1920, the covenant of the league of nations could be left to develop the strength which its intrinsic merits bring to it.54

The Springfield Republican raised the issue of a third term, but Tumulty advised Wilson to refuse comment on the editorial. Tumulty, at this point, did not seriously expect Wilson to seek renomination and was not in favor of such a maneuver. As Tumulty looked at the confused and dispirited party, however, he felt that a public renunciation would only further demoralize the Democrats who were clearly suffering while the President was in Europe. Moreover, Tumulty felt that the mere threat of a third term would speed

54 Quoted in the Chattanooga News, May 22, 1919, p. 4.
ratification of the treaty. Thus, Wilson declined to make any comment. He adhered to this position through the 1920 convention.  

That a third term for Wilson was intimately linked to the fate of the League of Nations covenant was emphasized later that same month when the Democratic national committee met in Chicago on May 28, 1919. The national committee unanimously concluded that the League of Nations covenant was the most important issue before the country and called upon Congress to vote immediately to approve both the covenant and the peace treaty. While chairman Cummings indicated that he did not feel the League was a party issue, he went on to say that "...it would strengthen the pressure on the President to run again if it should be defeated in the Senate."  

As of June, 1919, there seemed little doubt that the President could have his party's nomination if he desired it. Obviously, he completely controlled the party machinery. Edward G. Lowry commented that "the figure of Woodrow Wilson, ..., overshadows all the others." Lowry speculated that "if he wants to be the nominee of his party for a third term, he can be. If he does not want that distinction for himself, he can virtually without opposition look over

55 Blum, Joe Tumulty and the Wilson Era, 189-90.

56 New York Times, May 29, 1919, p. 1. Interestingly, unlike most minutes of national committee meetings, the minutes of his meeting were not included in the Proceedings of the national convention.
the ranks of his party and say: 'This is the man.' Since Wilson, however, said nothing, none of those potential candidates closely associated with his administration could take any positive action.

Politicians outside the official family, however, could take negative action. A very sick and bitter William McCombs was determined that Wilson would not have a third term. McCombs was also doggedly opposed to his old antagonist McAdoo. Moreover, McCombs preferred that neither A. Mitchell Palmer nor anyone else associated with the President's official family be nominated. Thus, when the executive committee of the Democratic national committee met in Atlantic City, September 24, 1919, McCombs was vitally interested in the proceedings. Although he was too ill to attend, he kept in close communication by telephone.

The meeting had been called to discuss methods of wiping out the campaign deficit and providing adequate funds for the 1920 campaign. McCombs, however, feared that the committee would go on record for Wilson, McAdoo, or Palmer. In an effort to forestall any action, McCombs kept in constant communication with Fred B. Lynch of Minnesota, Wilbur W. Marsh of Iowa, and Norman E. Mack of New York, committeemen opposed to McAdoo. There is little


58 McCombs, Making Woodrow Wilson President, 294-95.
reason to believe that the committee would have endorsed anyone. It is doubtful the committee had ever intended sanctioning a third term for Wilson—a contingency existing in McCombs' troubled mind—but if so Wilson's collapse abruptly terminated any such possibility.  

In the midst of the meeting, on September 25, 1919, Woodrow Wilson collapsed during his Western speaking tour in support of the League. Shortly after his breakdown, he suffered a paralyzing cerebral hemorrhage.  

With Wilson's collapse, a new element was injected into the Democratic presidential picture. Prior to his breakdown, both the press and politicians had speculated that Wilson would run again. After his collapse, however, considerable pressure was brought upon Wilson to renounce any ambitions for the presidency and accept a compromise ratification of the treaty. When Wilson did neither, his would-be successors, Palmer and McAdoo, were still trapped in their dilemma.

As Attorney General, however, Palmer was in a position to keep his name before the public. And in the latter part of 1919 and

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59 ^Ibid., 294-97. McCombs, increasingly more neurotic, does not provide the most reliable source of information. Nevertheless, it is clear that he hoped to help destroy the administration that he had been so instrumental in helping create.


61 ^Bagby, *The Road to Normalcy*, 54-55.
early 1920 his popularity was reaching its height. Nevertheless, not everyone viewed the Attorney General's actions favorably. While McAdoo could not openly advocate his own cause, he and his partisans could assail Palmer. In late November, George Fort Milton, Sr. editorially rebuked the Attorney General. The News felt that positive action, not negativism and restraint, was called for. Milton went on to avow that "...measures of rational reform which really get us somewhere will accomplish more in producing content among the people than filling every jail in the country."62

Later in November, non-candidate McAdoo sent a politically laden telegram to Harry A. Garfield, Fuel Administrator. McAdoo declared that the striking coal miners should be granted wage increases. He also recommended that mine operators should not be permitted to pass the price on to consumers. Not stopping at this, McAdoo added that the mine operators should have their income tax records investigated and published before any final determination was reached on coal prices. He revealed that as Secretary of the Treasury in 1918 he had examined tax returns and discovered that in 1917 many mine operators had made "shocking and indefensible profits."63 Thus, while Palmer was rapidly alienating labor, McAdoo

62Chattanooga News, November 22, 1919, p. 4.

was reminding them of his support.

Palmer likewise came under fire from the liberal New Republic. Demanding that Palmer resign, it averred that his method of digging coal by injunction had both failed and been disastrous economically. Moreover, it charged that the Attorney General's actions had strengthened the conviction that the government was hostile to labor. This, it contended, had undermined an already weak labor morale. The journal inferred that Palmer's motives were political. Palmer, it felt, was striving to prove that he was the strong man that the country so desperately needed. It was not his motives, however, that the New Republic indicted; rather, it was his failure. Yet the New Republic did not represent the mainstream of Democratic thought, and Palmer, though in trouble with labor, remained a viable contender.

As the year ended, McAdoo still denied that he was seeking the presidency, but the denials were less vigorous and more ambiguous. In his correspondence McAdoo was no longer stating that he had no desire for the presidency. Rather, he spoke of not seeking the presidency. McAdoo, a man dominated by ambition, was tortured because of his inability to take the step that his very nature demanded. To Clarence Poe, editor of The Progressive

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Farmer, McAdoo wrote that he was discouraging efforts in his behalf.

Yet the next paragraph of the letter revealed tormented and studied ambiguity. McAdoo wrote:

> The time has not yet arrived when I can say something definite about this matter and, then again, I shall come to no final conclusion until the situation is more clearly defined. In other words, I would prefer to speak, when I do speak on this subject, with reference to more definitely ascertained conditions than those now developed. I have a strong conviction, however, that I shall not re-enter public life, but if I should you may be sure that I would welcome your influential support.\(^5\)

McAdoo's oft expressed fears that the reactionaries were seeking to gain control of the country and that a determined fight must be made to stop them likewise belied his pose as a non-candidate.\(^6\) Moreover, McAdoo's complaints to Homer Cummings concerning Wilbur Marsh's activities were scarcely those of a disinterested bystander. Marsh was actively promoting Palmer's candidacy. Furthermore, in the process he was attacking McAdoo. McAdoo sanctimoniously contended that, while this did not really bother him personally, he did not feel that it was in the best interests of the party. Clearly annoyed, McAdoo asserted that Marsh in his

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\(^5\)W. G. McAdoo to Clarence Poe, December 24, 1919, McAdoo Letterbooks, Box 501, McAdoo Papers.

position as treasurer of the national committee should not actively promote a particular candidacy.67

As the year 1919 came to a close with McAdoo and Palmer sparring beneath the surface, the Democratic situation remained as murky as ever. With Wilson a question mark, the only men prominently mentioned for the presidency were Palmer and McAdoo. While James Gerard of New York and Robert Owen of Oklahoma had announced their candidacies, no one viewed them as serious contenders.68 Neither Palmer nor McAdoo had announced their candidacies because they were waiting for Wilson to clarify his intentions. Continuing silence on Wilson's part would leave his followers leaderless, paralyzed, and divided. It might then be possible for a candidate, not closely associated with the Wilson circle, to slip through and receive the nomination. This was precisely what was to happen in the months ahead as the Wilsonians contributed to their own defeat.

67 W. G. McAdoo to Homer Cummings, December 31, 1919, ibid.

CHAPTER II

THE CHALLENGERS

The year 1920 saw Wilson's party subjected to severe internal stresses. Eight years of Wilsonianism had bred discontent among two sharply divergent elements of the party--the city bosses and the followers of William Jennings Bryan. While they shared a dissatisfaction with Wilson leadership, these two diametrically opposed factions remained repugnant to one another. Their mutual hostility was vented in a confrontation over the Eighteenth Amendment. The conflict, of course, went deeper. It was essentially a battle that arrayed rural values against urban ones. The skirmishing between these groups over prohibition was but a prelude to the bitter struggles ahead. Thus, the pre-convention maneuvering introduced an issue that would eventually dominate Democratic politics and haunt the party until 1932. The early months of 1920 also witnessed the ascendency of several candidates outside the administration inner circle who would challenge the right of the Wilsonians--Palmer or McAdoo--to inherit the party.

As the year opened, the party's attention focused on the Democratic national committee meeting and its sequel, the Jackson-
Day banquet in Washington, January 8, 1920. While numerous speakers were scheduled to deliver addresses at the banquet, interest prior to the dinner centered around Bryan and Wilson. Emerging from relative quiescence, Bryan appeared intent upon actively re-entering politics. While Bryan probably had no personal designs on the presidency, it was obvious that he intended to shape the platform and have a voice in selecting the candidate. Wilson likewise planned to use the banquet as a forum to express platform preferences. Given the two strong-willed men in question, there was little reason to expect that they would agree. It was widely speculated that Wilson would demand unconditional ratification of the treaty and that Bryan would urge compromise on the question of reservations. ¹

If Bryan seriously contemplated challenging Wilson for control of the party over the League issue, however, he was not likely to succeed. Wilson completely controlled the party machinery. Prior to the dinner a subservient national committee unanimously adopted a resolution supporting the President's position. The declaration affirmed the party's approval of the Treaty of Versailles and condemned those senators "...who would defeat its ratification,

either directly, or by overwhelming it with reservations that are intended to, and will have the effect of, nullifying it. 2

Nevertheless, at the dinner following the committee meeting Bryan did challenge Wilson's leadership. While Wilson did not attend, he did dispatch a letter to the dinner. Ignoring domestic issues, Wilson demanded that the 1920 election be conducted upon the League issue. The President disclosed that, while he did not object to interpretative resolutions, the meaning and intent of the treaty should not be altered. He contended that the question must be taken to the people if the Republicans failed to ratify the treaty as it was. In a tactful address Bryan lauded the President for having secured the Treaty. Admitting that he had at first opposed reservations, Bryan now favored them as the only means of obtaining ratification. He counseled against making the League issue paramount and warned of the impracticality of failing to act until a Democratic Senate was insured. 3

Bryan felt that the party should concentrate upon domestic issues that needed attention. He called upon the Democrats to fight monopoly and profiteering and to accept prohibition and women's suffrage as permanent policies of the nation. Bryan proposed a


national highway, a national bulletin, and nationwide acceptance of
the initiative and referendum. He charged that the Republican Party
had reverted from Rooseveltian progressivism to a narrow capital-
istic point of view. Calling attention to the narrowness of the 1916
victory, Bryan entreated that the party be true to its traditions and
espouse the needs and aspirations of the less articulate. In a
moment of clear prophecy, he warned that if the party did not
represent the less fortunate the result might be the formation of a
farmer's party and a labor party. 4

Bryan was on hostile ground in this exchange with Wilson.
Most of the committee was openly sympathetic toward Wilson and
turned a cold shoulder toward Bryan. Robert Lansing, however, who
had also broken with Wilson, felt that Bryan had won the argument.
Lansing believed that international questions should not be settled in
the domestic political arena. Moreover, he did not feel that the
country should wait another year before making peace with Germany.
While both the New Republic and the Nation agreed that domestic
issues should not be ignored, they found Bryan's program inadequate. 5

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As a result of the Jackson-Day dinner, the Republican press generally depicted a great schism opening in the Democratic Party between Bryan and Wilson. On the other hand, both the Democratic press and party leaders minimized the differences between the two men. Bryan helped temper the controversy when he stated that "the President and I differ only in method and not in purposes; . . ."

Bryan went on to remark that "the Republicans and those who are anxious to believe that there is a Democratic split will find nothing in my actions or speech hostile to my party's welfare." It would have been inconceivable for Bryan, who pictured himself as the conscience of the Democratic Party, to believe that anything he did could harm his party.

It was clear that Bryan had not converted the Democratic Party to his program. It was equally apparent that Bryan was back in politics and that he desired to direct his party's fortunes. Less manifest was the role that Wilson intended to play in the future. It had been anticipated that Wilson's letter to the assembled Democrats would clarify his position on a third term. And while Wilson made no direct appeal for renomination, his insistence that the election of 1920 be a referendum on the League seemed tantamount to a request for a third term. The Nation commented that "one puts down the

letter with a feeling of uncertainty as to whether Mr. Wilson is really abdicating leadership in favor of the people, or whether he is only making a shrewd bid for a third term. "7

This sentiment was expressed by others. George Fort Milton, Sr. observed that "... if the league of nations is to be the only issue Mr. Wilson is the only logical candidate, ..." This raised some doubts in Milton's mind, however, for he continued: "Strongly as the democrats desire to back up the president in every way, there is some shrinking observed not only as to the issue he puts out but also to the logical involvement of the party as to candidate."8 Robert Lansing likewise reasoned that Wilson's failure to deny that he was a candidate, coupled with his ultimatum that the League of Nations be the principal issue, made him the logical standard bearer. Terming this a grave miscalculation, Lansing asserted that the American people would never tolerate the idea of a third term.9

While the third term talk at the banquet tended to submerge other booms, there was, nevertheless, a great deal of activity on the behalf of other aspirants. McAdoo, still posing as a non-candidate,

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7 Nation, CX (January 17, 1920), 63.
8 Chattanooga News, January 12, 1920, p. 4.
9 Robert Lansing to John W. Davis, January 9, 1920, Box 15, Davis Papers (Yale University).
did not attend the dinner. Thomas B. Love of Texas and Isadore B. Dockweiler of California, however, were present to look after McAdoo's interests. Palmer was very much in attendance, and Joseph F. Guffey of Pennsylvania, Fred Lynch of Minnesota, and W. W. Marsh of Iowa were spearheading his drive.  

Palmer, perhaps, at the height of his glory, took full advantage of the craze for one hundred per cent Americanism. At the dinner Vice-Chairman Kremer introduced Palmer as "an American whose Americanism cannot be misunderstood." Palmer was indisputably the sensation of the evening. Even Oswald Garrison Villard, who abhorred everything that Palmer represented, admitted that "...only... the Attorney General, seemed in presence and bearing any delivery to measure up to the standard one expects in any country of men competent to govern..." Yet Villard hastened to add that Palmer "...had not a single constructive idea to advance." George Fort Milton, Sr., staunch McAdoo supporter that he was, reported that the speaker who aroused the greatest degree of enthusiasm was unquestionably Palmer. While praising Palmer's eloquence and magnetism, Milton reminded his readers that Palmer came from a state that would not vote Democratic.

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10 Chattanooga News, January 8, 1920, pp. 1 and 4.

11 Quoted in Coben, A. Mitchell Palmer, 250.

12 Villard, "Ordeal by Dinner," 68.
Reports that Palmer had made a very favorable impression reached John W. Davis in London. There were strong indications that Palmer was the choice of most of the committeemen.  

Undoubtedly Palmer had a great deal of support among the national committeemen early in the race. Chairman Cummings and Vice-Chairman Kremer were early backers, although Cummings, with ambitions of his own, would later give only limited support. Other prominent committeemen who backed the Attorney General early in the race were W. W. Marsh of Iowa, Frederick B. Lynch of Minnesota, Cordell Hull of Tennessee, Edward F. Goltra of Missouri, Clark Howell of Georgia, and A. R. Titlow of Washington. Tom Taggart, former committeeman from Indiana, also leaned toward Palmer initially. But Taggart, who liked to be with the winner, was certainly not a steadfast backer.

Strangely, however, it was not Palmer's potential strength that most alarmed McAdoo. A new boom surfaced at the Jackson-Day dinner, and it was the Hoover phenomenon that concerned McAdoo as the new year opened. A strong surge of sentiment for Herbert Hoover had pulsed through the gathering. Milton reported that Hoover's appeal was particularly vibrant in the West and noted that

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13 Chattanooga News, January 9, 1920, p. 1; Frank L. Polk to John W. Davis, January 17, 1920, Box 15, Davis Papers; Samuel J. Graham to John W. Davis, January 15, 1920, ibid.

14 Coben, A. Mitchell Palmer, 246-47.
the choice of San Francisco as a convention site had increased the Hoover talk. 15

Although the Hoover movement was largely in the hands of political amateurs, The World also actively espoused his cause. While Hoover had supported Theodore Roosevelt in 1912, his services to the Wilson administration had convinced many people that he had Democratic inclinations. Hoover's endorsement of Wilson's 1918 appeal for congressmen and senators sympathetic to administration policies also added credibility to the belief that Hoover might opt for the Democratic Party. Lacking any organizational backing, Hoover's support emanated from a grass roots constituency. Moreover, this dissociation from partisan politics greatly strengthened his appeal. Hoover's candidacy was also championed because of his experience in business and international affairs. 16

While there was a growing sentiment among men of both parties for Hoover, he looked particularly appealing to some of the despairing Democrats as the year opened. Early in January, Franklin Roosevelt wrote to Hugh Gibson that perhaps Hoover was


the only man who could avert a Democratic disaster. Having just spoken with Hoover, Roosevelt wrote: "He is certainly a wonder, and I wish we could make him President of the United States. There could not be a better one."17 Franklin K. Lane also thought highly of Hoover. Lane described Hoover as "...sane, progressive, competent." Professing that he would not be surprised to see Hoover nominated on either ticket, Lane believed that he would "...vote for him now as against anybody else."18

Hoover and McAdoo were not strangers to one another. They had labored together in the same administration; yet they had often worked at cross purposes.19 McAdoo initially reacted rather cavalierly to the Hoover boom. Obviously he did not take it very seriously.20 As the boom mushroomed, however, so did McAdoo's

17Quoted in Frank Freidel, Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Ordeal (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1954), 57.

18Franklin K. Lane to Hugo K. Asher, January 3, 1920, printed in Lane (ed.), The Letters of Franklin K. Lane, 334.

19Franklin K. Lane noted in his diary on February 25, 1918, that "Hoover and McAdoo are at swords drawn." Note on Cabinet meeting of February 25, 1918, Lane (ed.), The Letters of Franklin K. Lane, 265. Hoover had not thought highly of McAdoo's managerial skills. Herbert Hoover, The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover: Volume I: Years of Adventure, 1874-1920 (New York: Macmillan, 1951), 262.

20W. G. McAdoo to J. H. O'Neil, December 30, 1919, McAdoo Letterbooks, Box 501, McAdoo Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress).
self-righteous indignation. Writing to E. T. Meredith of Iowa, editor of _Successful Farming_ and Wilson's second Secretary of Agriculture, McAdoo remarked that he still found the Hoover boom humorous. Nevertheless, McAdoo was concerned. "Hoover," McAdoo wrote disdainfully, "is a Progressive Republican and if he cannot get the Republican nomination he might graciously accept the Democratic nomination, as the Democratic Party has come to such a pass that it has no man whom it can honor with the nomination of the Presidency, except one who may be cast off by his own party."\(^{21}\)

As might be expected, McAdoo protested that his interest in the Hoover boom was not personal and that he was only concerned with the party's welfare. Writing to Claude Bowers, McAdoo asserted that the Democrats could not maintain an effective and militant party except under Democratic leadership. As always, however, McAdoo was forced to play a dual role. Thus, he disparaged the Hoover candidacy on the one hand; on the other hand, he told his supporters that Hoover was perfectly free to seek the nomination and that they should remain on good terms with the Hoover people.\(^ {22}\)

To Love, McAdoo even went so far as to say of the Hoover

\(^{21}\) W. G. McAdoo to E. T. Meredith, January 15, 1920, _ibid._; See also W. G. McAdoo to D. C. Roper, January 15, 1920, _ibid._

\(^{22}\) W. G. McAdoo to Claude G. Bowers, January 24, 1920, McAdoo Letterbooks, Box 503, McAdoo Papers; W. G. McAdoo to Mrs. Kellogg Fairbank, January 26, 1920, _ibid._; W. G. McAdoo to Tom Love, January 25, 1920, _ibid._
forces: "Certainly I do not feel that they are treading on my toes in any way. As a matter of fact, you know that I have not felt at any time that I was in the race because I have been consistently saying that I was not a candidate and I have made no effort to secure support in my behalf."²³ McAdoo, however, was too concerned with the Hoover talk to make this disinterestedness credible. Meanwhile, the Chattanooga News had appropriated McAdoo's chief line of attack. Late in January, it announced editorially that "...democrats do not think the party is so bankrupt that it must nominate a candidate, no matter how distinguished his services to the world, who never officially affiliated with the organization and who has been out of the country for twenty years."²⁴

Nevertheless, it was obvious that the Hoover boom was gathering momentum and that it was detrimental to McAdoo's fortunes. Gavin McNab, a power in California politics, revealed to Josephus Daniels that Hoover would probably be the Democratic nominee. Daniels questioned whether a victory with Hoover would help or destroy the party. Daniels concluded that McAdoo still seemed the best hope.²⁵ Notwithstanding Daniels' reasoning, the

²³W. G. McAdoo to Thomas B. Love, January 26, 1920, ibid.


²⁵Daniels Diary, January 16, 1920, Box 3, Daniels Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress); Daniels Diary, January 29, 1920, ibid.
Hoover boom, coupled with McAdoo's continued silence, was eating away at the base of McAdoo's natural constituency. Woolley reported to House that the Hoover boom had grown to tremendous proportions. Confiding that he and Roper had been active in McAdoo's behalf throughout the country, Woolley felt that at the proper time McAdoo would commit himself to run. Roper and Woolley had tried to impress this fact upon Carter Glass. According to Woolley, however, Glass was tired of McAdoo's continued disavowals, and the testy Virginian felt that if McAdoo were not to be the candidate then Hoover was probably the most available man.  

Hoover's appeal was not confined to the West and the South; it also existed in the East. Andrew J. Peters, the mayor of Boston, believed that Hoover's nomination was the only real chance that the Democrats had to defeat the Republicans. As for McAdoo, Peters believed that he could have the nomination if Wilson backed him. The Mayor doubted, however, that McAdoo could be nominated without Wilson's support. Peters, of course, had penetrated to the core of McAdoo's problem--Wilson's continuing silence.

While the inscrutable Wilson continued to keep his own counsel, McAdoo grew increasingly restive. Counter pressures were building

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26 Robert Woolley to E. M. House, January 23, 1920, Box 8, Woolley Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress).

27 Andrew J. Peters to John W. Davis, February 4, 1920, Box 15, Davis Papers.
in the face of Presidential silence. The strength of the Hoover
sentiment, combined with the approach of the primaries, evidently
forced McAdoo into a more receptive role. In late January and
early February, he ventured further than he had dared go before.
While assuring Tom Love that he was not a candidate, McAdoo added:
"I have always said that I am not prepared to eliminate myself
completely merely because I think we ought to wait until conditions
are clearer and we can judge more intelligently the wise thing to do
for the country." 28

To Claude Bowers, McAdoo confided that he could not "...be
put in the position of seeking the nomination..." but that there was
no reason why his friends could not express themselves as they wished
in regard to his candidacy. 29 Finally, after conferring with Tom Love
and others, McAdoo began to advise his correspondents that he would
continue to adhere to his course of not actively seeking the nomination.
But taking the next logical step, he professed that it would be his
"...duty to respond to a call if the Convention should finally decide
that I am the most available man to make the fight." 30

28 W. G. McAdoo to Thomas B. Love, January 26, 1920,
McAdoo Letterbooks, Box 503, McAdoo Papers.

29 W. G. McAdoo to Claude G. Bowers, January 24, 1920, ibid.;
See also W. G. McAdoo to Morrison Shafroth, February 2, 1920, ibid.

30 W. G. McAdoo to Thomas Love, February 7, 1920, ibid.;
See also W. G. McAdoo to Dixon C. Williams, February 7, 1920,
McAdoo Letterbooks, Box 501, McAdoo Papers.
Suddenly, on February 13, McAdoo growing increasingly bolder but still protesting that he was not a candidate, gave permission to his Georgia backers to test his name in the primary there. \(^{31}\) Perhaps he had gone too far? Conceivably he had tried to force Wilson's hand. At any rate McAdoo began to recoil from his own devisiveness. The next day he wrote Admiral Cary T. Grayson, the President's personal physician, that:

> Things are taking a turn that is exceedingly embarrassing to me. My hand is being forced, against my wish, and at a time when I am frank to say that my indecision is very great. You know, I do not remain in a state of indecision long as a rule but the factors in this situation are difficult to appraise and reckon with.

> Of course, the President's silence makes it very awkward for me, even if I had the inclination to stand for the presidency--which, as you know, I have not--but it is not possible to resist the demands of one's friends to state either that they may proceed or that they may not. \(^{32}\)

If McAdoo was anticipating some type of response from Wilson through Grayson, there is no physical evidence that he received one. McAdoo, apparently fearing that he had exceeded political proprieties, wired his supporters in Georgia on February 17, to withdraw his name from the primary. He would accept the nomination, however, if it came to him unsolicited. McAdoo adopted the position that

\(^{31}\)W. G. McAdoo to F. W. Hazlehurst, February 13, 1920, McAdoo Letterbooks, Box 502, ibid.

\(^{32}\)W. G. McAdoo to Cary T. Grayson, February 14, 1920, McAdoo Letterbooks, Box 503, ibid.
delegates should be sent to the convention uninstructed. He stressed this tactic more as the campaign proceeded. 33

At approximately the same time that McAdoo was endeavoring to establish a satisfactory posture vis-a-vis the President, Palmer was also attempting to elicit a reaction from Wilson. Palmer confided to Antoinette Funk, a strong McAdoo partisan, that both he and McAdoo were constricted in their actions because of what the President might do. He called McAdoo's appeal for an uninstructed Georgia delegation a bluff and said that McAdoo knew that the delegates should be instructed. Palmer also disclosed that Vance McCormick had agreed to serve as his campaign manager as soon as the President made it possible for him to announce his candidacy. 34

Meanwhile, McCormick attempted to intercede with the President on Palmer's behalf. McCormick, however, saw only Mrs. Wilson who informed him that it might be necessary for the President to run again. Taking Daniels into his confidence, Palmer professed concern about the Pennsylvania primaries. He felt that if he did not enter the primary the liquor interests would control the


34Antoinette Funk to D. C. Roper, February 27, 1920, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 230, ibid.
delegation and use it against the administration. Whether this contingency sincerely worried Palmer or whether he was merely sounding out Daniels is open to conjecture. Later, through Tumulty, Palmer told the President that he might announce his candidacy in the near future. Palmer indicated, however, that he would not take this step if the President objected or planned to support another candidate. All that Palmer received, however, was an ambiguous and peevish reply that he could do as he pleased.

Thus, McAdoo and Palmer were confronted by the same impasse. Yet delay would probably be more costly to Palmer than to McAdoo. It is true that Palmer had the support of many national committeemen. Moreover, in February there was evidence that Southern members of Congress were beginning to look with favor on Palmer's candidacy. Palmer's service in the House was paying political dividends. He had been close to Underwood when he had served on the House Ways and Means Committee. Now Underwood, along with Congressman James F. Byrnes of South Carolina and Charles Carlin of Virginia, was leaning toward Palmer. Nevertheless, many politicians were hesitant to endorse someone who would not fare well at the polls. Unfortunately for Palmer, he had lost

35 Daniels Diary, February 20, 1920, Box 3, Daniels Papers.

36 Coben, A. Mitchell Palmer, 252; Bagby, The Road to Normalcy, 60.
his senatorial race in 1914, and he had not been able to swing Pennsylvania for Wilson in either 1912 or 1916.  

Moreover, Palmer was acquiring some potent enemies. On February 1, The Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Engineer's Magazine said of Palmer: "Clearly he has favored the powers of wealth and privilege, while handling labor with the mailed fist of the autocratic tyrant." There was no secret that the railroad workers preferred McAdoo to Palmer. Describing Palmer's antiradical activities as "part of a despicable propaganda against labor," Timothy Healy expressed the opinion of many railroad employees. Perhaps most damaging, Palmer's coal injunction had won him the undying enmity of Samuel Gompers. Doubtless pressures were converging upon Palmer to illustrate his strength at the polls and to prove that he could win in the face of labor's hostility. But what of Wilson? Always there was Wilson. Palmer hesitated a while longer.

The President's reticence was paralyzing not only McAdoo and Palmer but also all the men around him. Wilson commanded such intense devotion from his loyal followers that they were politically stultified. For example, late in February, Newton D. 

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38 Quoted in ibid., 254.

39 Quoted in ibid.

40 Ibid., 255.
Baker pleaded that after all his years in the Cabinet he needed to return to work and could not assume an active role in politics. More important, he went on to write:

As a member of the President's Cabinet I am one of his counselors, advisers, and agents. I have not the faintest idea what the President's intentions or wishes are about the next presidential campaign... He will decide his course without ever remembering, much less considering himself, neither his health nor his comfort. As I have said I have no idea of what is in his mind on this subject and therefore anything I say is pure speculation; but I can imagine the President determining to run again or seeking to bring the Party together on a candidate who in his judgment would be best qualified to deal with the momentous, if not tragic questions which we will have to face in the next four years. If I permit myself to be designated as a delegate at large from Ohio, I will, of course, under our presidential primary law, be obliged to vote against my chief or disabled from assisting in an attempt to bring the Party together upon another candidate. This I think would be an impossible situation.\(^{41}\)

While McAdoo and Palmer continued to maneuver beneath the surface and the government drifted with no one at the helm, William Jennings Bryan gave every evidence of attempting to regain suzerainty within the party. His appearance at the Jackson-Day banquet had accurately signaled his political renaissance. As might be anticipated a mixed reaction greeted his reappearance. The New Republic, bemoaning the lack of leadership from Washington and sympathizing with McAdoo for not wanting to lead a hopeless cause, applauded Bryan's re-emergence. The journal mused that "... Mr. Bryan,

\(^{41}\)Newton D. Baker to W. B. Congwer, February 19, 1920, Box 12, Baker Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress)
whatever else he may be, is the one figure left in the Democratic
Party who knows how to lead the party to not altogether discreditable
defeat.\(^\text{42}\) The World's Work was less charitable. Of Bryan, they
attested: "He is an amiable person and it is even possible to respect
his sincerity; but as a real force in American life his power is
gone; . . ."\(^\text{43}\)

In truth, Bryan never again savored the power that he once
had known. Yet he remained a force with which to be reckoned
within the Democratic Party. He still voiced the aspirations and
emotions of rural America, and the rural-urban strife that was
eventually to debilitate the Democracy was launched early in 1920.

In the latter part of January, Governor Edward I. Edwards
of New Jersey, elected on a Wet platform, launched his presidential
candidacy at a banquet attended by Homer Cummings. Bryan
immediately assailed not only Edwards but also Cummings. Assert-
ing that "the Democratic Party is too near and dear to me to allow me
to let it be buried with the liquor interests," Bryan assumed the
offensive. He made scathing remarks concerning the presence of the
national chairman at a dinner where a Wet boom was inaugurated.\(^\text{44}\)

\(^\text{42}\) New Republic, XXI (January 14, 1920), 180.

\(^\text{43}\) "Mr. Bryan's Reappearance," World's Work, XXXIX
(March, 1920), 430.

The issue that would render the Democracy impotent for years to come was beginning to manifest itself.

Cummings' response that he must be neutral among the candidates did not satisfy George Fort Milton, Sr. The Chattanooga editor indicted Cummings as follows:

He says he must be neutral and impartial between democratic candidates for the presidency. Well a national democracy in favor of prohibition is not going to be satisfied with any chairman who is neutral on such a subject. The newly inaugurated New Jersey governor is proposing to annul the federal amendment. He is the worst bolshevik who has recently appeared. He is preaching lawlessness.45

Deep and intense passions were being aroused, and before the decade was over some men would become so blinded by them that they could see nothing else. Edwards announced early in February that he intended to carry the fight against prohibition to the convention in San Francisco. The issue, he averred, was not prohibition, but the principle of state rights and home rule.46 If Edwards were

45 Chattanooga News, January 24, 1920, p. 4.

46 New York Times, February 6, 1920, p. 3. Just what Edwards' motives were are not altogether clear. McCombs alleged that he was responsible for initiating the movement in order to consolidate the Eastern states against Wilson and McAdoo and then promote Edwards for the presidency. McCombs, Making Woodrow Wilson President, 297. The Chattanooga News charged that Cummings and Tumulty were proferring Edwards as the "wet hope" for the presidential nomination. Chattanooga News, January 26, 1920, p. 4. This seems highly implausible. While Tumulty wanted to see the Volstead Act amended, he ignored the Edwards campaign. Blum, Joe Tumulty and the Wilson Era, 240, 245. It also seems quite apparent that Cummings was completely loyal to Wilson and it has been noted that he leaned toward Palmer early in the race.
determined, however, Bryan was even more so. Outlining his platform views for the Cleveland Plain Dealer, Bryan insisted: "The platform will contain a plank in favor of prohibition as the permanent policy of the country, and our candidate will be pledged to the strict enforcement of the law in letter and spirit."47

It was undeniable that the prohibition issue was potentially capable of splitting the party along sectional and cultural lines. Late in February, the Chicago Democratic organization, led by Anton J. Cermak, endorsed Edwards and called for a light wine and beer amendment to be attached to the enforcement act. At the same time the New York Democrats, in informal session, demanded an anti-Dry plank.48 Meanwhile, Columnist Mark Sullivan scoffed at the Edwards nomination and added:

... every person who understands conditions in the democratic party throughout the country knows perfectly well that no man can get the democratic nomination for the presidency whose record and probable intentions on the subject of prohibition are not fully acceptable to those western and southern states that regard this as the supreme issue.49

Undoubtedly Bryan and the Wets were girding themselves for a melee. Early in March, Roger Sullivan, Charles Murphy, Tom Taggart, and national committeemen E. F. Goltra of Missouri,

49Chattanooga News, March 8, 1920, p. 4.
Charles Boeckenstein of Illinois, and E. H. Moore of Ohio met to discuss platform planks at Hot Springs, Virginia. The Chattanooga News characterized the participants as "Vultures Gathering."

Moreover, in a gesture that was to become increasingly common as the decade progressed, the newspaper informed these men that the Democratic Party did not really need their services. 50

According to Louis Seibold, Bryan feared that the Wets would control the resolutions committee and force through a plank favoring the manufacture and sale of light wines and beer. On the other hand, Democratic leaders who felt that the party's salvation lay in renunciation of intolerance were alarmed lest Bryan force an out and out Dry plank into the platform. Siebold reported that those who opposed Bryan's position were depending upon Woodrow Wilson to urge modification of the Eighteenth Amendment to permit the manufacture and sale of light wines and beer. Wilson, who thought only about the League, said nothing. 51

The Bryan-Edwards feud continued unabated. Withdrawing from the primaries, Governor Edwards persisted in his attacks on prohibition and Bryan. Lashing out at Bryan, Edwards vowed: "To say that the Democratic platform will be fashioned by Mr. Bryan is to say it will be fashioned by the money of the Anti-Saloon League. I do

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50 Chattanooga News, March 9, 1920, p. 4.
not believe the Democratic Party has reached this low level." The Democracy had not come to this point in 1920. Yet before the decade was over one group of extremists seemed bent upon making the Democratic Party the political arm of the Anti-Saloon League, while another seemed equally intent upon making it the political agency of the Association Against the Prohibition Amendment.

While the strife between Wets and Drys diverted the country's attention, the Democratic presidential race became more visible. Palmer, unwilling to hesitate any longer, announced his candidacy on March 1. Shortly thereafter he set up a primary campaign committee. Former Representative C. C. Carlin of Virginia served as chairman. Former Representative J. Harry Covington of Maryland, Major Oliver P. Newman, and Wilbur W. Marsh constituted the remainder of the organizational leadership.53

In an effort to court a wide national following, Palmer had acted in the face of Presidential silence. He evidently determined that it was a risk that he must take. In so doing, however, he made a strong bid for the loyal Wilsonians' support. Entering the Georgia primary early in March, Palmer rather presumptuously asserted: "I deem it highly important that the Democrats of Georgia should have the opportunity to pass directly upon the record made by the

present administration. The candidacy of one who supports that record in every phase presents that opportunity.\footnote{54}

Once the campaign commenced, Palmer discovered that he had badly miscalculated his strategy. His support of the administration made him unsavory to such bosses as Murphy and Brennan. Ironically, while Palmer's stance as the administration candidate made him unpalatable to the bosses, it did not garner him the support of the President and his followers. They either remained loyal to the President or supported McAdoo. Moreover, Murphy felt that only a Wet could carry New York, and Palmer, unwilling to concede the Dry areas to McAdoo, would not unequivocally demand prohibition repeal. Murphy, who had earlier felt that Palmer showed some promise, was also hesitant to antagonize the New York labor vote. Finally, Palmer was unable to overcome either the excesses of the Red Scare or labor's antagonism at the polls.\footnote{55}

At about the time that Palmer was actively entering the race, Hoover was in the process of removing himself from Democratic speculation. As March opened, The World vigorously continued to recommend Hoover to the Democrats. Louis Seibold admitted that President Wilson's silence was stultifying the Democratic aspirants.

\footnote{54}{Quoted in Abbot, "A. Mitchell Palmer, 'Fighting Quaker,'" 51.}

\footnote{55}{Coben, A. Mitchell Palmer, 249-50.}
Seibold declared, however, that the Democrats would find it more
difficult to deny Hoover the nomination than the Republicans, provided
that Wilson did not inject himself into the picture. The reporter
asserted that many Democratic leaders sensed Hoover's growing
popularity and admitted that he would be their strongest nominee. 56

Hoover addressed himself to the speculation early in March.
Denouncing both the "reactionary group" in the Republican Party and
the "radical group" in the Democratic Party, Hoover referred to
himself as an "independent Progressive." He pointed out that he had
been a progressive Republican before the war and non-partisan during
the war. The issues before the country were new, Hoover said, and
partisan alignments had not yet been made upon them. Vowing that
he was not seeking office, Hoover admitted that he could not prevent
groups from advancing his cause. He would not, however, join in
any organization to effect his nomination. 57

While this statement made it clear that Hoover was a receptive
candidate, his party preference remained a mystery. This matter
was clarified late in March. In a telegram to Warren Gregory,
secretary of the San Francisco Hoover Club, Hoover announced that
he would assist those California Republicans who wanted an opportu-
nity to register their approval of the League with proper reservations

56 The World (New York), March 8, 1920, p. 6.
as opposed to those extremists who were against American participation. Moreover, Hoover pledged that he would support the Republican Party if it adopted forward-looking, liberal, and constructive policies and was neither radical nor reactionary. Of course, Hoover would not seek the nomination, but he would accept it if his services were demanded. 58

With this message Hoover removed himself from Democratic consideration. The Democrats, however, were still tormented by the same problem that had plagued them from the outset—Woodrow Wilson. Since the defeat of the treaty in November, 1919, Democrats had increased their pressure upon Wilson to withdraw; still he remained silent. Wilson appeared increasingly willing to run. Early in March, he summoned a group of political friends to a meeting at the Chevy Chase Club. Present were Cummings, Baruch, Tumulty,

58 The World (New York), March 31, 1920, p. 1. In his memoirs Hoover explains that skilled workmen, farmers, professional and small businessmen constituted the backbone of the Republican Party. He felt that they gave the party cohesion and represented the American aspirations that he preferred. Admitting that there were some men of high ideals and purpose in the Democratic Party, Hoover felt that most Democratic leaders in Washington reflected the chaotic coalition that constituted the party. While Hoover's picture of the Democratic Party was accurate in part, it was overdrawn. He saw Southerners interested only in "white ascendancy" and the spoils of office; "plundering political machines" in the large cities; the whole "lunatic fringe of greenback, 'free silver' agrarian fanatics and near Socialists." Hoover felt that this third group had acquired a large voice in party affairs through "Bryanesque demogoguery." Hoover, The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover, II, 33-34.
Glass, Palmer, McCormick, Daniels, Houston, Burleson, and Bainbridge Colby. Colby had replaced Lansing as Secretary of State. These men were presented with a card from Wilson which asked what part he should play in politics in the immediate future. Only Burleson supported his running again, and even Burleson felt that it was politically inexpedient to base a campaign on unconditional ratification of the treaty. Wilson, however, elicited such deep devotion from those around him that no one would take the message to the White House. 59

In late March, an attempt at treaty ratification failed again. Subsequently, demands intensified that Wilson both renounce any ambition for a third term and accept reservations. Some Democratic senators, among them Senator King of Utah, who had voted for ratification over White House protests, feared that Wilson would use his influence to force the San Francisco convention to demand unconditional ratification. King planned to join Bryan in an effort to forestall such a possibility. 60

Meanwhile, Tumulty sent Wilson a letter asking him to declare that he would not seek the presidency again. On the morning of March 25, Wilson confided to Grayson that such a statement would give leadership of the party to Bryan. After some self-serving

59 Bagby, The Road to Normalcy, 59-60.

60 The World (New York), March 22, 1920, p. 3.
statements about the presumptuousness of rejecting a nomination that had not been offered, Wilson disclosed his true feelings. Reportedly, he told Grayson that:

With things in such a turmoil in the United States and throughout the world as they are today, the Democratic Convention in San Francisco may get into a hopeless tie-up, and it may, by the time of the Convention, become imperative that the League of Nations and the Peace Treaty be made the dominant issue. The Convention may come to a deadlock as to candidates, and there may be practically a universal demand for the selection of someone to lead them out of the wilderness. The members of the Convention may feel that I as the logical one to lead--perhaps the only one to champion this cause. In such circumstances I would feel obliged to accept the nomination even if I thought it would cost me my life.61

Wilson, hanging like an albatross about his party's neck, again said nothing. That very afternoon tempers began to flare. On the House floor Representative Benjamin C. Humphreys of Mississippi delivered a lengthy tirade, frequently interrupted by applause, defending the no third term precedent. During the course of his remarks, Humphreys stated that he regretted that Wilson had "...remained silent as to his intentions in the matter of a third term, ...permitted so many of his friends, including members of his own Cabinet, to advocate publicly his reelection to a third term and, by remaining silent, allowed the country to believe that he was willing to break the ancient precedent."62

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62 Congressional Record, 66 Congress, 2 Session, 4815.
Charles Michaelson explained the outburst by Humphreys, a loyal Wilson supporter, as merely symptomatic of the nervousness of Democratic politicians over the possibility that Wilson might attempt to succeed himself. Michaelson also suggested that the speech might have been an effort to force the President's hand and thus clear the way for other presidential candidacies. 63

Of course, the most promising presidential candidacy that Wilson's silence was blighting was his son-in-law's. Having no real alternative, McAdoo continued to maneuver behind the scenes. Roper was in charge of this underground work. He received assistance from Robert Woolley, George Creel, Antoinette Funk and Labert St. Clair, a Treasury Department official. In order to counter Palmer's active battle for delegates, the McAdoo forces counseled the selection of uninstructed delegations. McAdoo advised that delegates should go to San Francisco unencumbered by personal ambitions so that they could determine what was best for the country. Although he placed this appeal on a very high plane, obviously it was a mere subterfuge to garner friendly delegations without actually having them named for him. McAdoo was also pleased with developments which placed favorite sons whom he considered friends at the heads of delegations. He was satisfied when North Carolina endorsed Furnifold Simmons; Iowa pledged herself for E. T. Meredith; and Virginia backed

Carter Glass.64

While surreptitiously maneuvering for delegates, McAdoo also managed to keep his name before the public. Early in April, in a New York Globe interview, McAdoo indirectly indicted Palmer. McAdoo asserted: "America is in no such danger from radicalism as the alarmists would have us believe." McAdoo added: "I do not think a bolshevist revolution in the United States is either probable or possible." Going further, he asserted that "we can embargo commodities, but we cannot embargo ideas. Russia has the absolute right to live under any form of government she chooses, even if we do not think well of it. She must be allowed to work out her own destiny, and if we keep our hands off and leave her alone she will do so."65

Later in April, McAdoo called for immediate revision of the tax laws. He wanted them altered so that the burden of taxation would fall most heavily upon those who drew incomes from safe investments rather than upon those who labored for their livings. In short, he

64M. L. Fox to W. G. McAdoo, February 27, 1920, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 230, McAdoo Papers; Antoinette Funk to W. G. McAdoo, March 13, 1920, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 231, ibid.; W. G. McAdoo to D. S. Ewing, March 6, 1920, McAdoo Letterbooks, Box 502, ibid.; W. G. McAdoo to F. M. Simmons, April 9, 1920, McAdoo Letterbooks, Box 505, ibid.; W. G. McAdoo to E. T. Meredith, April 13, 1920, ibid.; W. G. McAdoo to Carter Glass, May 1, 1920, McAdoo Letterbooks, Box 506, McAdoo Papers.

65Quoted in Chattanooga News, April 1, 1920, p. 4.
wanted a distinction made between unearned and earned incomes.
McAdoo also opposed the issuance of tax-free bonds. He asserted
that they helped create a tax-exempt class of wealth and put additional
burdens on the poor. McAdoo reiterated that private control of the
railroads was not likely to succeed, and that government operation
should then be reimposed. Again McAdoo denounced the abridgement
of free speech, free press, and free opinion. ⁶⁶

While McAdoo was gathering delegates behind the scenes and
expressing much of the most advanced thinking to come out of the
Wilson administration, Wilsonianism as personified by A. Mitchell
Palmer suffered a serious reversal in April, 1920. Palmer entered
the Michigan and Georgia primaries in an effort to demonstrate to
Democratic leaders that he had a broad appeal and could win without
labor's support. The results were catastrophic.

Palmer exhibited poor judgment in entering the Michigan
contest. Michigan was primarily a Republican state, and its
Democrats were, for the most part, concentrated in the cities where
the labor vote was important. Palmer was the only candidate to
actively campaign, yet in the presidential preference primary he
finished fifth behind Hoover, Edwards, McAdoo, and Bryan. State
law had prevented both Hoover and McAdoo from withdrawing their
names from the presidential preference ballot. This, however, was

only a popularity contest. Palmer received most of the delegates because the regular party organization slates for Palmer met little opposition. For all practical purposes, however, even though he would not admit it, Palmer was almost finished as a serious candidate. 67

Speaking in Georgia, Palmer attempted to rationalize the Michigan debacle. He explained that the large pro-German and alien radical population of Michigan had worked to defeat him. Palmer also asserted that Michigan had never supported the Wilson administration. Thus, Palmer campaigned in Georgia on the issues of Americanism and Wilsonianism. He encountered stiff opposition on both positions. Tom Watson and Hoke Smith, two popular Georgians, challenged Palmer in the primary. Watson, an opponent of the war who had been threatened with prosecution in 1918, was no supporter of Palmer or Wilsonianism. Smith opposed Wilson on the League. In a tight race Watson won the popular vote followed closely by Palmer and Smith. Palmer, however, would eventually name all the Georgia delegates. 68

While Palmer had won the delegates, he had not proved that he was a popular candidate. His candidacy suffered another blow in mid-April when Roger Sullivan, the Illinois boss, died. Sullivan had

67 Coben, A. Mitchell Palmer, 256, 258.

68 Ibid., 257-58.
been an early Palmer supporter. George E. Brennan, the new head of the Illinois organization, may have desired to honor Sullivan's pledge, but he decided that it was not expedient to do so. Brennan concluded that Palmer would have difficulty carrying the cities and would, therefore, not be of much help to the organization slates.  

Although it was not yet clear to Palmer, he had gambled and lost. He had completely alienated labor; he had not won over the Wilsonians; he did not have the full support of the bosses. Moreover, his reputation was becoming more sullied. Following close on the heels of his Georgia defeat, the New Republic unequivocally denounced him. The journal asserted: "For sheer incompetence, for mischievous meddling, for braying and bragging, for ignorance of fact, for lawless and disorderly conduct, there is none to touch Mr. Palmer. He is clearly the worst cabinet officer within memory."  

While Palmer was floundering in April, William Jennings Bryan emerged from the month victorious. Although Bryan probably had no illusions about gaining the nomination for himself, he did desire to influence the convention. But in order to accomplish this, it was necessary that he be a delegate to the convention. The Wet Gilbert Hitchcock, however, controlled the Nebraska Democratic 

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69 Ibid., 249.

Party. Hitchcock, loyal Wilson supporter in the Senate, and Bryan were driven further apart by their opposing views on the Lodge Reservations. 71

The contest was pictured as one between the White House and Bryan. Hitchcock, who had led the President's fight for ratification without reservations, sought the presidential preference vote in the Nebraska primary. He did not make this decision, however, until after Bryan's appearance at the Jackson-Day banquet. Moreover, it was rumored that the White House sanctioned Hitchcock's entry. According to Hitchcock, Bryan would adopt a rule or ruin policy in his efforts to seize control of the convention and undermine Wilson's leadership. 72

The Nebraska contest, however, could not be viewed as a clear-cut referendum on Wilsonian versus Bryanesque leadership. The picture was clouded by the Wet and Dry issue. It was widely speculated that the majority of the Nebraska Democracy was Wet on the light wine and beer issue, a cause openly espoused by Hitchcock. The Hitchcock supporters expressed concern, however, that large numbers of Republican women might cross over and vote for Bryan. 73

In the contest that followed, Bryan's cause was completely

71 Levine, Defender of the Faith, 157.
vindicated, and he emerged with a majority of the Nebraska delegates. Cummings and Burleson feared that Bryan was seeking to wrest control of the party from Wilson. Both the New York Times and the Chattanooga News, however, interpreted Bryan's success as a Dry victory rather than an anti-administration one. The Washington Star likewise saw it as a Dry triumph pointing out that "it was the foremost democratic champion of the Eighteenth Amendment, and not an advocate of the peace treaty with reservations, who scored." Nevertheless, whatever the paramount issue had been, it was clear that the Nebraska primary had not been a triumph for Wilsonianism.

April had seen two exponents of Wilsonianism, Palmer and Hitchcock, humiliated, and May witnessed the emergency of a new threat--James M. Cox. While Cox was not anti-administration, he was dissociated from the administration. Cox had begun his career as an Ohio newspaperman. First entering Congress in 1908, he had aligned himself with the progressive Democrats. While Cox had favored Wilson's nomination in 1912, he had been pledged to Ohio's Judson Harmon. Cox worked to reform Ohio's antiquated constitution and in 1912 was elected Governor. An abundance of progressive

74 Levine, Defender of the Faith, 159.


76 Editorial reprinted in the Chattanooga News, April 29, 1920, p. 4.
legislation distinguished Cox's first term. He pushed through a workmen's compensation law drafted by William Green. His other progressive measures included: a general school code, highway programs, prison reform, administrative reforms, a mothers' pension law, and an efficient budget system. Cox also supported the Wilson administration. 77

Defeated for re-election in 1914, Cox again became Governor in 1916. He initially opposed America's entrance into World War I; however, once that decision had been made he supported the war effort. Unlike his first term, his second administration was not characterized by any enlightened reforms. In fact, it was marked by one terribly intolerant measure. Cox had a law passed forbidding the teaching of German in the schools. While he took measures against wartime strikes, his relations with labor were not generally repressive. Re-elected in 1918, Cox became the first three-term Governor of Ohio. 78

In addition to being governor of a pivotal state, Cox enjoyed other very definite political advantages. He opposed prohibition and felt that the liquor traffic should be regulated by the states. Moreover, although he supported the League in a general way, he was not

77Cox, Journey Through My Years, 116-211; Bagby, The Road to Normalcy, 73.

78Cox, Journey Through My Years, 211-221; Bagby, The Road to Normalcy, 74.
closely associated with either the League fight or the Wilson administration. Cox, therefore, appealed to those elements of the party who wanted a Wet candidate and one not too closely identified with the administration. Cox's position would, of course, be jeopardized if the administration forces concentrated upon a single candidate. 79

Although Cox announced his candidacy early in the year, it aroused little notice or enthusiasm. Early in April, Newton D. Baker wrote Brand Whitlock that, while the Ohio Governor was a promising possibility, he did not think Cox could possibly defeat McAdoo. 80 Outside Ohio, Cox made an open fight only in Kentucky which had no primary. He emerged from the county and state conventions early in May with twenty of the twenty-six delegates. With this victory Cox became more than a mere favorite son. 81

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79Cox, Journey Through My Years, 157; Bagby, The Road to Normalcy, 75. Walter Lippmann to Newton D. Baker, April 7, 1920, Box 12, Baker Papers.

80Newton D. Baker to Brand Whitlock, April 4, 1920, Box 13, Baker Papers.

81New York Times, May 3, 1920, p. 3; New York Times, May 6, 1920, p. 2. Cox, like McAdoo, was undoubtedly counting upon uninstructed delegations that would come to him in the event of a deadlock. It also appears that he worked to keep the McAdoo and Palmer partisans divided. According to Mrs. Funk, E. H. Moore volunteered Cox's services in Texas in an effort to forestall the Palmer candidacy. It is difficult to determine to what degree McAdoo's opposition manipulated the talkative Mrs. Funk. Nevertheless, as Cox later allied with Palmer to stop McAdoo, it is not unlikely that at an early date he might have leaned toward McAdoo in an attempt to hinder Palmer's candidacy. Love gently informed Mrs. Funk that he could handle Texas without the aid of outsiders. Antoinette Funk to
Nevertheless, early in May, with Palmer fading and Cox just emerging, McAdoo, the unannounced candidate, appeared to have the inside track on the nomination. The World's Work and the New Republic were in accord on McAdoo's availability. The World's Work felt that the loss of Hoover left McAdoo as the strongest possible Democratic candidate. It dismissed Palmer both as inferior to McAdoo and as a man who elicited no popular response. The New Republic predicted that McAdoo could attract countless independent voters and that he would be very dangerous to any conservative Republican nominee.\(^{82}\) Echoing these sentiments, Senator Thomas J. Walsh discerned that Palmer was growing less available and that McAdoo's candidacy seemed greatly strengthened.\(^{83}\)

More visible than the maneuvering for the presidency, however, was the continuing internecine warfare between the Wets and Bryan. In caucus the New Jersey delegation formally endorsed Edward I. Edwards for the presidency and applauded his policies. Moreover, James R. Nugent, advocate of an anti-prohibition plank,

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\(^{82}\) Thomas Love, April 7, 1920, File IU-8E, Love Papers (Dallas Historical Society); Thomas Love to Antoinette Funk, April 14, 1920, ibid.

\(^{83}\) Thomas J. Walsh to S. V. Stewart, May 7, 1920, Box 372, Walsh Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress).
was nominated for the resolutions committee. Meanwhile, William
Jennings Bryan, Edwards' chief antagonist, ventured into Alabama
in what was to be an unsuccessful effort to purge Oscar Underwood
from the Senate. Denouncing Underwood as the greatest enemy to
national prohibition in the Senate, Bryan pleaded with the Alabama
electorate not to renominate him. 84

Bryan was in high spirits and confident of his ability to
influence the party. 85 As the convention neared, he trained his
oratory upon both the Wilsonians and the Wets. He denounced as a
tragedy Wilson's choice of Cummings to be the keynoter. Bryan
asserted that, "if the Democratic Party is to be wrapped in a 'wet'
shroud, locked up on a Wall Street safe, and buried at sea, Cummings
is just the person to officiate, . . ." 86 Ironically, Nugent had earlier
attacked Cummings' leadership and championed instead that of the
Wet Oscar Underwood. The administration was finding itself under
assault from two strikingly dissimilar sources. 87

Bryan had also discovered a new opponent to flay. Calling
Governor Edwards a joke, Bryan announced that it was becoming

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84 New York Times, May 6, 1920, p. 3; New York Times,

85 Levine, Defender of the Faith, 160.


87 New York Times, May 6, 1920, p. 3.
apparent that Cox was the candidate around whom the Wets would coalesce. In a typical denunciation, Bryan asserted that "for years the men engaged in the liquor business have been the real anarchists of the country, far more dangerous than the professional anarchists." He charged that Cox was now their candidate. Moreover, Bryan protested that Cox's nomination "... would make the Democratic Party the leader of the lawless element of the country. ..." Bryan concluded: "There is no likelihood of his nomination and no chance of his election if nominated, but why should any Democrat be willing to support a man whose nomination would insult the conscience of the nation? For the triumph of prohibition is a triumph of the nation's conscience."88

Bryan's nation was composed of Southern and Western agrarians, and the "enemy country" was not slow to respond. The New York Times sarcastically asserted:

One by one they fall before the silver bullets of the Anti-Saloon League's lecturer. 'Why should any Democrat be willing to support a man whose nomination would insult the conscience of the nation?' There is only one man, we are to infer, whose nomination would not be such an insult; and that is the Keeper of the National Conscience, the Orator of the Platte.

88 New York Times, May 14, 1920, p. 2. Interestingly, two years earlier Bryan had believed that Cox was the most available man in the party. At that time Bryan had urged Cox to support prohibition when the question was raised in Ohio. Cox had rejected Bryan's advice, and as far as Bryan was concerned Cox had committed political suicide. W. J. Bryan to Harvey C. Garber, March 6, 1920, Box 33, Bryan Papers.
Meanwhile, Alabama ignores the protest of the incarnate conscience of the nation and gives its support to Senator Underwood; Governor Cox goes on picking up delegates; and Governor Edward's [sic] friends smile hopefully. It looks as if the conscience of the nation were in for a shock.\(^89\)

If events in New York were symptomatic of prevailing attitudes, then it was not only Bryan but also Wilsonianism that was in for a shock. The New York Democrats would in effect repudiate Wilsonianism. In mid-April, the New York Democratic state committee held a reorganization meeting. At that meeting national committeeman Norman Mack asserted that New York Democrats would demand both modification of the Volstead Act to permit the manufacture and sale of light wines and beer and a referendum on the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment. The committee was divided over possible candidates. The upstate delegates favored McAdoo, but Tammany was adamantly opposed to him.\(^90\)

Early in May, the New York delegates to the national convention held their final session and elected Governor Alfred E. Smith chairman of the delegation. The meeting was significant in several respects. No resolutions were enacted praising the achievements of the Wilson administration. There was also no direct pronouncement on the League or the Treaty. A proposal by Mayor George R.

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\(^90\)New York Times, April 17, 1920, p. 17.
Lunn of Schenectady, a McAdoo supporter, binding the Democratic Party to rigid enforcement of the Eighteenth Amendment was defeated. Letting the record stand as left by the April meeting, the committee recommended no action with regard to prohibition.\textsuperscript{91}

New York, of course, was McAdoo's home state, and one of the chief purposes of the meeting was to kill the McAdoo boom by imposing the unit rule on the delegation. Franklin Roosevelt sent a letter recommending that the rule be dropped. Mayor Lunn and Samuel Seabury, Bryan's spokesman in New York, led the floor fight to abolish the unit rule. The anti-Tammany Democrats, however, were in a hopeless minority. Not accepting defeat, they planned to appeal the ruling at the national convention with Bryan's aid. While the delegation was uncommitted, it was rumored that Smith would be presented to the convention in order to hold the delegates together until it was decided whom to support.\textsuperscript{92}

Charles Murphy, the New York boss, had come to the New York convention from French Lick Springs, Indiana. He had conferred with Brennan, Taggart, John N. Camden of Kentucky, and prominent Pennsylvania organization leaders. The purpose of the meeting was to eliminate McAdoo and select a candidate acceptable to the organization leaders. Although there was a great deal of Marshall


\textsuperscript{92}New York Times, May 9, 1920, Sec. I, p. 1; Sec. II, p. 1.
talk, apparently they planned to run either Palmer or Cox as a Wet candidate. Moreover, because Cox's views on the light wines and beer issue were well known, the platform would make no difference if Cox were the nominee. The conferees denied that they had any type of arrangement with William McCombs. 93

Meanwhile, McCombs was actively promoting Cox. Declaring that domestic questions, not the League, should be the principal issues, McCombs asserted that Cox was best qualified to cope with them. McCombs dismissed McAdoo as the "Crown Prince" who would carry the stigma of the Wilson administration. According to McCombs, Palmer was also too closely identified with Wilson. 94

Wilsonianism likewise came under direct assault from a divided Georgia delegation. By a narrow vote the delegates passed resolutions opposing the League as advocated by Wilson, opposing the third term idea, demanding repeal of all espionage and sedition acts passed during the war, and upholding free speech and free press.


94 New York Times, May 24, 1920, p. 3. According to McCombs, it was definitely decided at the conference that Cox was to be the nominee. McCombs, Making Woodrow Wilson President, 297-98. Even if such a decision were reached it was obvious that the bosses needed Palmer to help block McAdoo. It is not altogether unlikely that the bosses were playing Palmer along. For this reason, they would be compelled to denounce the anti-Palmer McCombs, which is exactly what they did. Precisely what occurred at the frequent conferences at French Lick Springs throughout the decade, however, will probably always remain shrouded in mystery.
Two rival delegations were selected to go to San Francisco. A slate composed of Watson and Smith supporters was unpledged, and a second slate was pledged to Palmer. 95

While Wilson and his leadership of the party was being challenged from several different fronts, Wilson moved to make his control more secure. Obviously, the League was the issue on which he intended to exercise his leadership. On May 9, he made it absolutely clear that he intended for the party to stand squarely on the League in opposition to the Lodge reservations. Moreover, the circumstances surrounding his decision made it apparent that he intended to punish those Democratic Senators who had supported ratification with the Lodge reservations. G. E. Hamaker of Portland, Oregon, sent Wilson a telegram asking if he felt that it was important to nominate candidates in the primary who favored ratification without the Lodge reservations. Hamaker led the state faction that was attempting to defeat Senator Chamberlain who had voted for the Lodge reservations. 96

Wilson wired back:

I think it imperative that the party should at once proclaim itself the uncompromising champion of the nation's honor and the advocate of everything that the United States can do in the service of humanity; that it should therefore indorse and support the Versailles

95San Francisco Chronicle, May 19, 1920, pp. 1 and 2.

Treaty and condemn the Lodge reservations as utterly inconsistent with the nation's honor and destructive of the world leadership which it had established, and which all the free peoples of the world, including the great powers themselves, had shown themselves ready to welcome. 97

With this pronouncement, James Reed of Missouri, an inveterate foe of Wilsonianism, exploded. Predicting electoral disaster, Reed asserted that "the President's demand that the treaty shall be accepted exactly as he brought it from Versailles is the finest scheme of premeditated political suicide yet devised." 98 Bryan, no friend of the Wet Reed, also denounced the President's action. Bryan declared that it was time to accept ratification with whatever amendments were necessary to secure it and take the issue "... out of the campaign and speak peace to war-distracted Europe." 99 Senator Thomas of Colorado thundered that if the Democratic Party in their convention advocated unconditional ratification "... it will do so because it has determined that it does not care to live any longer and accepts that means for certain dissolution." 100 Taking a more moderate position, Hitchcock said that the President was not ruling out all qualifications, only the Lodge

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reservations. Oscar Underwood, newly elected Democratic leader in the Senate, admitted that the issue had been transferred from the Capitol to the conventions. 101

Despite the protests, Wilson and his loyal followers prepared the platform for the convention. Later that month Carter Glass inserted a strong treaty plank in the Virginia platform. Evidently the treaty plank had been submitted to Wilson before Glass presented it to the Virginia delegates. Subsequently, the Virginia plank was endorsed by Wilson and sent to the San Francisco convention. Its salient feature read: "We advocate prompt ratification of the Treaty without reservations which would impair its essential integrity." 102

As the month of May ended and the convention approached, the Democrats were clearly in disarray. Wilson, in his single-minded determination to vindicate himself by having his League adopted, refused to abdicate control of the party. A broken man who could not possibly be elected to a third term, Wilson would neither designate nor clear the way for a successor. Moreover, there was obviously a growing resentment within the party to Wilsonianism itself.

It was at this juncture that the New York Times brought forward a new Democratic champion--John W. Davis. On May 23,
in a three column editorial, "A Great Democrat," the Times urged that the Democrats nominate John W. Davis, United States Ambassador to Great Britain. The Times extolled Davis as a man who "... if elected, would bring to the executive office high qualifications of character, learning, cultivation, long experience in public affairs, full knowledge of the processes of Government and personal qualities that have won for him the friendship, confidence and admiration of all with whom he has been associated."\(^{103}\)

Again on May 26, under the caption, "The Democratic Duty and Opportunity," the Times praised Davis and called him as strong a Democrat as Grover Cleveland. Perhaps the Times feared a McAdoo nomination. The newspaper asserted:

The Democrats have not impressed the country by their pre-convention campaign or by the candidates for the nomination who have been put forward—or rather who have put themselves forward. They are average men, not strong men, not great men. This is the year when, if ever, the Democratic Party has need of strength and force and great qualities in its candidate. If the Republicans nominate Hiram Johnson, great numbers of the conservative and sober-minded men of the party will vote for the Democratic candidate if he is a man worthy of confidence. For sober-minded Republicans regard Hiram Johnson as sound-money Democrats regarded William J. Bryan in 1896. ... If there is a bolt from the Chicago convention and a second candidate takes the field, the Democrats will certainly elect their candidate unless they throw away their chances by a weak nomination.\(^{104}\)

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The *Times* had never been satisfied with any of the leading Democratic contenders. The paper had evidently hoped that Hoover would get the Democratic nomination and might have supported Hoover as a Republican. Only when it became apparent that Hoover would get neither nomination did the *Times* begin to show interest in Davis. According to Davis' informant, their only apparent motive was to find a candidate who could win and who would make a satisfactory president. Nevertheless, the timing and tenor of the editorials might also indicate that the *Times* hoped to use Davis to block McAdoo's nomination.

John W. Davis had compiled a very distinguished record. Born in West Virginia, he entered law practice and was head of the West Virginia Bar at the age of thirty-three. Five years later in 1911, he entered the Sixty-second Congress. Davis was acquainted with Charles C. Carlin, congressman from Virginia and member of the House judiciary committee. Working through Henry Clayton, chairman of that committee, Carlin pressured Oscar Underwood, the party floor leader, into assigning Davis to the judiciary committee. While serving on this committee, Davis was active in preparing the anti-injunction and anti-conspiracy clauses of the Clayton Anti-Trust Act. Davis attracted the country's attention through his prosecution

105 *New York Times*, May 23, 1920, Sec. II., p. 2; W. H. Lamar to John W. Davis, June 16, 1920, Box 16, Davis Papers.
of impeachment and contempt cases before the House. This reputation led Woodrow Wilson to appoint Davis Solicitor General in 1913. In this position he helped draft the Adamson Act.\(^{106}\)

While serving as solicitor general, Davis and Robert Lansing became close friends. Lansing and the President remained on cordial terms until the peace conference in the winter of 1918-1919. There was, therefore, no friction between them in the summer of 1918 and Davis was chosen as a member of the American High Commission to deal with the exchange of war prisoners. Before this assignment was announced, however, other diplomatic maneuvers took place, and Davis was appointed Ambassador to Great Britain on September 18, 1918. He was still serving in this capacity as the 1920 national convention neared.\(^{107}\)

The idea of nominating Davis for the presidency had been germinating in the minds of West Virginia politicians for quite some time. On June 24, 1919, Clem Shaver had the editor of the Fairmont (West Virginia) Times publish an article proposing Davis for the presidency and calling for an effort to launch a boom in his behalf.\(^{108}\)

While this did not stimulate a gigantic boom, in August Cordell Hull


\(^{107}\)Ibid., 107-11.

\(^{108}\)Ibid., 127-28.
reported to Davis that his name was being "...frequently and favorably mentioned in connection with the presidency." 109

With the exception of Lansing, however, Davis' following was confined primarily to West Virginians. His supporters urged him to resign his ambassadorial post and return to the United States prior to the convention. Davis' availability was urged on the premise that hostility toward the President was so intense that it would be impossible to nominate anyone closely identified with the administration. It was to Davis' advantage that, while he was associated with the administration, the connection was not a close one. Moreover, Davis was assured that if he returned he would receive more than mere local backing. 110

Despite the pleas of friends, Davis did not take his candidacy seriously. He did not really believe that there was any substantial movement in his behalf. While he would accept the nomination if drafted by the party, he would not resign to return to the United States to actively seek it. He pointed out that there were problems involved in his returning as an active candidate. If he resigned in order to actively seek the presidency, he would be labeled a quitter.

109 Cordell Hull to John W. Davis, August 28, 1919, Series I, Container 2, Hull Papers.

110 Robert Lansing to John W. Davis, January 1, 1920, Box 15, Davis Papers; James W. Robinson to John W. Davis, January 29, 1920, ibid.
On the other hand, if he returned to the United States without resigning, he could not speak openly upon the issues.  

Nevertheless, the campaign went ahead. On March 9, 1920, the West Virginia executive committee, with Shaver presiding, endorsed Davis for the presidency. Davis responded that, while he was gratified and would not refuse the nomination, he could not seek it. Not even Davis, however, was completely impervious to the presidential fever. By late April, he was advancing a new reason for not returning to the United States. He pointed out to Shaver that the only chance he had was as a dark horse; therefore, there was nothing to be gained from an active pursuit of delegates at such a late date. Moreover, because his availability arose from his position as ambassador, Davis felt that he would lose more than he would gain by resigning. He left everything in Shaver's hands. Davis requested only that he not be burdened with a Wet platform or one advocating government ownership. He also made it clear that he did not want the vice-presidency.

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111 John W. Davis to Robert Lansing, February 1, 1920, ibid.; John W. Davis to Frank L. Polk, April 19, 1920, Box 16, Davis Papers.

112 Huntley, The Life of John W. Davis, 128.

113 John W. Davis to John J. Cornwell, March 12, 1920, Box 15, Davis Papers; John W. Davis to Clem Shaver, March 12, 1920, ibid.

114 John W. Davis to Clem Shaver, April 24, 1920, Box 16, Davis Papers; see also John W. Davis to John J. Cornwell, May 26, 1920, ibid.
As the convention grew nearer the Davis supporters became more confident. It was anticipated that, while the administration would control half the convention, at least one-third would be opposed to McAdoo. The Davis devotees felt that this situation would present their opportunity. They believed that Davis would be acceptable to both the administration and anti-administration Democrats. 115

At this point, the New York Times made its contribution to the Davis movement. Their editorial elicited a response from Colonel House. House, no longer Wilson's intimate adviser, reported that the Times had been contemplating the action for weeks and that the editorial had been favorably received. While McAdoo was in the lead, House did not believe that he could get two-thirds of the votes. House speculated that Edwards and Cox would be eliminated because the majority of the convention would be Dry. In such a situation House reasoned that either Davis or Carter Glass would be the most likely nominee. 116

There is no doubt that the Times editorial inflated Davis' hopes. While he still protested that he really did not have much of a chance, the disclaimers were less emphatic. He also made renewed pleas that he not be considered for the vice-presidency. The editorial


clearly elated Lansing. He did, however, foresee some difficulty in Davis' achieving the nomination. Davis' vulnerability, Lansing felt, lay in the West. He felt that Davis' chances of winning would be stronger if the convention were held in New York or Chicago rather than in San Francisco where Davis was not well known. 117

Meanwhile, the New York Times reported that its editorial had aroused great interest. Those who commented on the article admitted that Davis would have been a strong contender had he permitted his name to be used. It was generally felt, however, that most of the influential people were already committed. In the event of a deadlock, however, Davis would be a very strong possibility for the nomination. Davis had another advantage. While McAdoo appeared to be in the lead, conservative leaders were reported to be opposed to him. They felt that his close association with the Wilson administration would be a burden. He was also reported to be too radical for the conservatives who felt that Davis would be a better man to lead the country. 118

Thus, May ended with a new presidential boom launched on the eve of the convention. Since early in the year, the Democrats had witnessed a Hoover boom die before borning and Palmer risk


the President's wrath by actively pursuing the nomination. Stumbling badly, for all practical purposes Palmer was through except as a spoiler. Cox had been gathering momentum. Nevertheless, despite Wilson's silence regarding a third term and McAdoo's relative inactivity, McAdoo had emerged as the man to defeat. While McAdoo seemed preoccupied with domestic economic concerns, two other issues dominated Democratic debate. Wilson and his administration allies were most concerned with the League question. Meanwhile, those on the fringes of power, those on the outside looking in--Bryan and the Eastern machines--were courting disaster for the party in a fight over prohibition, an issue that symbolized the yawning chasm between the rural and urban minds.
CHAPTER III

SAN FRANCISCO

Although the 1920 national convention was staged in San Francisco, the script was written in Washington and the players were manipulated from the Capitol. Woodrow Wilson, by his actions, his failures to act, and the reactions to him, completely dominated the proceedings. Exercising firm leadership, Wilson dictated the platform and helped avoid a damaging split over prohibition. He failed to act with identical authority in regard to the presidential nomination, however, and his abdication of leadership, without a renunciation of his own ambitions, made the nominating process more tortuous.

While the rural-urban split within the party remained more potential than real, both the platform debate and the presidential nomination foreshadowed the conflict to come.

As May blended into June, Wilson began to marshal his forces. Meeting with Homer Cummings, Wilson outlined his instructions with regard to the convention. Later Wilson conferred with his Cabinet on the same subject. It was revealed that the President favored the Virginia platform with its strong declaration on the League and its silence on prohibition. Arthur Sears Hennings
reported that Wilson considered the prohibition question settled and, therefore, wanted neither a Wet nor a Dry plank incorporated into the platform. As a result of these consultations, Cummings confidently reported that the Wilson forces would control the proceedings. He speculated that Bryan would be unsuccessful in any attempts to secure either a Dry plank or a League plank favoring reservations.¹

¹San Francisco Chronicle, June 1, 1920, pp. 1 and 2; San Francisco Chronicle, June 2, 1920, p. 1. Wilson's intentions in regard to the Eighteenth Amendment at the 1920 convention are not altogether clear. Wilson had vetoed the Volstead Act and that veto had been overridden. According to Blum, Wilson accepted Tumulty's views on the need to modify the Volstead Act to permit the manufacture and sale of light wines and beer. Wilson, therefore, incorporated Tumulty's ideas into a plank to be presented to the convention. Considering it politically inexpedient, however, Wilson dropped the plank before June. Blum, Ice Tumulty and the Wilson Era, 240. Bagby reports that Wilson sent a plank to the convention advocating liberalization of the Volstead Act, but Glass did not produce it. Bagby, The Road to Normalcy, 105.

Allegations that Wilson had dispatched a Wet plank to the San Francisco convention were raised during the 1928 campaign. Daniels wired Glass, chairman of the 1920 resolutions committee, to ascertian whether these statements were true. Glass replied that he had lunched with Wilson immediately before departing for San Francisco. The two of them had gone over the proposed platform which Glass had drafted. Had Wilson proposed a Wet plank, Glass was sure that he would have received it at that meeting. According to Glass, however, Wilson did not give him one. Daniels then responded to the charges by explaining that Tumulty had a great failing in that he sincerely assumed that whatever he thought, Wilson thought also. Josephus Daniels to Carter Glass, August 21, 1928, Box 8, Glass Papers (University of Virginia); Carter Glass to Josephus Daniels, September 4, 1928, ibid.; Josephus Daniels to P. H. Callahan, November 17, 1928, Box 626, Daniels Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress).

Glass' reply to Daniels, while not untrue, did not reveal the whole truth. At that meeting prior to Glass' departure, Wilson had asked Glass his opinion of the Volstead Act and about the advisability of modifying it. Glass replied that, whatever its defects, it should not be made a political issue before being given a fair trial. Moreover,
The President's meeting with Cummings naturally aroused speculation as to whether Wilson had decided upon a successor. The hostile San Francisco Chronicle commented: "Apparently the President has not yet decided whether he will be his own successor, but the job is not to go out of the family." The editorial continued disdainfully, "no wonder Heir Apparent McAdoo has not bothered with a slush fund. If the President decides to install him he will not need it, and if he decides to succeed himself no McAdoo slush fund would do any good." In fact, while Wilson had neither indicated a successor nor broached the subject of a third term, Cummings left the meeting with a feeling that Wilson desired renomination. Publicly commenting on the meeting, W. W. Marsh expressed doubt that Wilson had recommended any candidate. Moreover, Marsh indicated that he did not think that Wilson could dictate the choice of his successor.\(^3\)

Glass asserted that any attempt to make modification a political issue would be interpreted as nullification in the brewers' interests. According to Glass, at that point the President dropped the subject. From Glass' notes quoted in Rixey Smith and Norman Beasley, *Carter Glass: A Biography* (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1939), 208.

It seems probable that, while Wilson may have considered a Wet plank, he did not send one to San Francisco. Certainly all the statements coming from administration sources indicated that they considered the matter settled. Moreover, it is apparent that Wilson wanted the League question emphasized, and it is doubtful that he would have wanted the party torn asunder over the prohibition question.

\(^2\)San Francisco Chronicle, June 2, 1920, p. 22.

At the moment, William Gibbs McAdoo loomed as the most likely figure to be that successor. On the eve of the Convention the *Literary Digest* poll of voters revealed McAdoo as the overwhelming favorite for the Democratic nomination. He had thirty thousand more first-choice votes than his closest rival. Moreover, Mrs. Antoinette Funk, staunch McAdoo partisan, had already arrived in San Francisco. She denied that she was in charge of any campaign in McAdoo's behalf. Rather, she averred that she was merely present as an ardent admirer. Having issued her disclaimer, however, she enumerated the reasons for McAdoo's popularity. Mrs. Funk pointed out that McAdoo was the best known public figure in either party and that business people, farmers, and laborers trusted him. Most importantly, he was not seeking the nomination, and this fact, Mrs. Funk concluded, increased his popularity immeasurably.

An assertion that McAdoo was not seeking the nomination was very much open to doubt. At any rate, there were those who were steadfastly resolved that he would not receive it. Woolley reported early in June that McCombs had formed a coalition with Jamieson representing Meredith, Marsh representing Palmer, and Moore representing Cox and Edwards to prevent McAdoo's nomination at all.

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costs. Woolley also confided that Bryan was determined to stop McAdoo. As in his opposition to Wilson, Bryan in his efforts to impede McAdoo's nomination found himself an unwilling ally of the bosses. Bryan revealed to a friend as early as May that he felt McAdoo was unavailable because of his close connection with the Wilson administration.

Meanwhile, en route to San Francisco, Murphy and Smith conferred with Taggart at French Lick Springs, Indiana. It was reported that they considered Cox to be the most suitable instrumentality for stopping McAdoo. They reached no final decision, however, and planned to stop in Chicago to discuss the matter with Brennan. Smith would be placed in nomination to hold the New York delegation together as a unit until a final decision was reached. Moreover, former Senator Watson of West Virginia was on hand and assured the leaders that West Virginia would not desert Davis. Watson was corolling second-choice support. By pledging to stay with Davis,

6 Robert Woolley to D. C. Roper, June 5, 1920, Box 18, Woolley Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress). There seemed to be some confusion concerning Meredith's role throughout the convention. McAdoo apparently believed that Meredith sided with him but lost control of the Iowa delegation to Marsh. As evidenced by Woolley's letter, however, not all of McAdoo's supporters trusted Meredith.

he in effect became a member of the stop-McAdoo movement. 8

Thus, while McAdoo continued to be the front-runner, Cox appeared to be emerging from obscurity. Moreover, Cox's ascendency was to Palmer's detriment. Reports from Chicago in mid-June indicated that, while on the surface the Illinois delegation was for Palmer, their real choice was Cox. Palmer would be used to block McAdoo and then a drive would be initiated for Cox. Palmer also experienced defections in his Michigan, Iowa, and Minnesota delegations. Moreover, Taggart deserted Palmer in mid-June and Lynch and Marsh would extricate themselves from Palmer's losing cause soon after the convention began. Although Major Newman arrived in San Francisco on June 14, to launch the Palmer candidacy, it appeared hopeless. 9 Palmer had in effect been relegated to the role of a spoiler, a member of the stop-McAdoo movement.

The situation in San Francisco was highly fluid and unstable because two-thirds of the delegates were formally unpledged. As a result there were a number of booms in the making in the convention city. Senator Robert L. Owen of Oklahoma was the first candidate to arrive on the scene. Owen, a progressive, urged that domestic

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concerns be accentuated and that the League issue be assigned a position of lesser importance. He also felt that the party should pledge itself to carry out the will of the nation as expressed in the Eighteenth Amendment. Owen echoed Bryan's sentiments, and Bryan would support the Oklahoma Senator.

Ironically, Vice-President Thomas R. Marshall was among those mentioned as a possible anti-administration candidate. He had opposed prohibition, favored League reservations, and was sympathetic to Irish freedom. Marshall denied that he was either a candidate or had any desire for the nomination; yet the talk would not die. There was also considerable sentiment expressed for Homer Cummings. Cummings was not associated with any particular faction of the party and had maintained cordial relations with most of its elements during his tenure as national chairman. John W. Davis was the dark horse receiving the greatest amount of attention. It was repeatedly indicated that his reputation was of the highest caliber and that he would not be burdened by association with the administration. Davis, suffered, however, in that his views on current issues were unknown.

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With the Democratic presidential outlook scarcely stabilized, the New York Times, in mid-June following Harding's nomination, again counseled the Democratic party as to what type of man it should nominate. The paper warned the Democrats that their nominee must be a man who the "great productive interests" would trust. It cautioned the Democracy neither to court Hiram Johnson's following nor to try to please the Gompers's and the Plumb's. In short, the party should not accede to the demands of the discontented. The paper asserted that "...the Democratic Party ought to have the wisdom and firmness not to allow itself to be outdone by the Republicans in interpreting the overmastering desire of the great masses of the people. This is to rebuild the fabric of industry and commerce as rapidly as possible, to assure all sound business of its opportunity and all workingmen of the fruits of their labor."^12 The New York Times quite obviously did not want to see McAdoo nominated.

The same day, however, the Chattanooga News offered advice of a different nature. Milton asserted that the party could not hope to receive votes from the country's reactionary elements and that if the party nominated a conservative it would go down to overwhelming defeat. He saw nothing to be gained by appealing to the big business vote because the Democrats would not inherit it. In short, the Chattanooga News felt that the Harding nomination made it more vital

than ever that the Democrats nominate McAdoo and remain the party of the masses. 13

At this juncture, however, the McAdoo campaign, handicapped from the outset by Presidential silence, was dealt what appeared to be a staggering blow when Wilson decided to speak. Wilson injected a new note of uncertainty into a situation already fraught with confusion. The President granted an interview to Louis Siebold which, when published, emphasized Wilson's remarkable recovery. Siebold wrote that "during the three hours that I spent with the President I saw him transact the important functions of his office with his old-time decisiveness, method and keeness of intellectual appraisement." 14 Tumulty had urged that the interview take place. He wanted the President to stress his platform views and renounce any desire for a third term. Wilson, however, utilized the interview to emphasize his good health and to reiterate that the party supported his position on the League. As for the presidential nomination, Wilson indicated that he had done nothing to promote any candidacy. 15 On the heels of the President's interview, McAdoo, on June 18, announced that he would not permit his name to go before the San Francisco

13 Chattanooga News, June 14, 1920, p. 4.

14 Article originally published in The World (New York) and reprinted the next day in New York Times, June 18, 1920, pp. 1 and 2.

15 Bagby, The Road to Normalcy, 60-61.
Prior to this sudden withdrawal and despite Wilson's silence, McAdoo had assumed the lead. There had to be some reason for his rejecting the nomination that appeared to be within his grasp. The explanation foremost in people's minds was that Wilson wanted renomination and that McAdoo could not stand in his father-in-law's way. Columnist Grafton Wilcox pondered why Wilson had not denied that he was a candidate. He also speculated why McAdoo, the leading contender, had withdrawn immediately after the Seibold interview.

Answering his own queries, Wilcox asserted that McAdoo had withdrawn because Wilson desired the nomination for himself.  

The Nation and the New Republic reached a similar conclusion and they were unhappy about it. Of the Seibold interview and the McAdoo announcement, the Nation stated: "Not unnaturally his letter set the politicians to buzzing and the prophets to prophesying that Mr. Wilson will be renominated, particularly as Mr. McAdoo has seen the handwriting on the wall and refused the Democratic nomination." The Nation continued sardonically that "we can only say that logically speaking, no one ought to be asked to defend the mess which


Mr. Wilson has made of things but Mr. Wilson himself. "18 The journal felt, however, that the President's illness, coupled with the American people's aversion to the third-term idea, would prevent Wilson's nomination.19

Likewise, the New Republic could do nothing but lament the President's interview. Sick at heart it reported:

President Wilson's interview makes it perfectly clear that there is to be no quiet substitution of a new management and new policies in the Democratic party, if he can prevent it. Wilsonianism must be the chief issue. The Democratic Convention will have to find in the Treaty and the League Covenant, unamended, a perfect fulfillment of American war aims and of American promises to the world. It will have to stand for the administration of the Espionage law, for Palmer and arrests without warrant, for Burleson and arbitrary mail censorship, for Baker and sales on dubious credit of war material to bolster up Polish imperialism. It will have to stand for a record of unauthorized war upon Russia and a blockade which continues in force when the only European countries not opposed to it are France and Poland, and these for reasons with which Americans can have no sympathy.20

As for McAdoo's withdrawal, the New Republic sympathized with him for not desiring to offer himself as the Democracy's sacrificial lamb. The journal felt that McAdoo realized no one could be elected on a platform that praised all the President's actions; hence, he withdrew. The New Republic speculated that McAdoo might

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18 Nation, CX (June 26, 1920), 839.
19 Ibid.
20 New Republic, XXIII (June 30, 1920), 134.
have entered the battle to shape a different program. It was obvious to the journal's editors that McAdoo did not support all the administration policies. They pointed out that he had not approved of the restoration of the railroads to private control or of Palmer's handling of the coal strike. In fact, they asserted that "in published interviews he has exhibited himself as a liberal beyond the comprehension of the group around the President." Yet they admitted that he could not strike out in new directions because "... the circumstances of his personal relations with the President makes it out of the question that McAdoo could lead the forces of reform within the Democratic party." 21

It appeared, therefore, that Wilson's interview had forced McAdoo's withdrawal. Furthermore, Frank Kent, correspondent for the Baltimore Sun, felt sure that McAdoo could have had the nomination had he not made his emphatic and public withdrawal. 22 It was undeniable that McAdoo's withdrawal, appearing immediately after Wilson's interview, created the impression that McAdoo, surmising that Wilson wanted the nomination, stepped aside. McAdoo flatly denied any such connection in a statement issued on June 21. He declared that he knew nothing about Wilson's interview until he saw it

21 Ibid., 134-35.

in print and that Wilson knew nothing about his withdrawal until it was published. McAdoo emphatically denied that there was any relationship between the two actions.²³

On June 16, prior to the publication of Wilson's interview, McAdoo contacted Carter Glass and arranged a meeting for the 17th. At that meeting, McAdoo showed Glass the withdrawal statement. Glass objected. The Virginian felt that this was a mistake because it would deprive the McAdoo supporters of a candidate. McAdoo countered that he intended to instruct his supporters to endorse Glass. When Glass protested that such a move was nonsense, McAdoo arranged for him to talk with Roper. Roper confirmed the fact that McAdoo's adherents would be urged to assist Glass. Glass mentioned to Roper that McAdoo's statement nowhere said that he would not accept a nomination, and Roper informed Glass that he had persuaded McAdoo not to go that far. In fact, Roper told Glass that he expected the publication of the letter to help, rather than to hurt, McAdoo. Glass, clearly miffed, inquired why McAdoo's friends were being asked to support him. Roper confided to Glass that McAdoo did not feel that the effect of the letter would keep him in the race and that he wanted his friends to advocate Glass' candidacy.²⁴

²³San Francisco Chronicle, June 22, 1920, p. 3.

²⁴From Glass notes quoted in Smith and Beasley, Carter Glass, 206-07. See also Carter Glass to Horace N. Hawkins, October 29, 1931, Box 280, Glass Papers.
Undoubtedly there was considerable disagreement within the McAdoo camp as to the probable consequences of the letter of withdrawal. McAdoo and Roper had conferred, and McAdoo had declined to be a candidate. Moreover, McAdoo refused to allow Roper to go to San Francisco to coordinate activities, a task that Roper was ready to undertake. It seems likely that this last decision sealed McAdoo's ultimate fate.

It is difficult to ascertain whether McAdoo had any actual forewarning of the Seibold interview. Although he had made withdrawal plans prior to its publication, that alone does not necessarily prove that he had not received some advance word. On the other hand, McAdoo, on the eve of the convention, had heard nothing to indicate that Wilson did not want a third term; so having received no Presidential reprieve perhaps he felt that he had no choice but to withdraw. The circumstances of his withdrawal, however, indicate that it was not as complete as it might have been. This suggests that he did not wish to alienate his supporters who had nowhere else to turn. Thus while he left himself receptive to a draft, he implemented no organizational steps to maximize the possibility of a "draft." It seems likely that, by this stage, McAdoo felt that his relationship with Wilson was ruinous and that Democratic chances were hopeless. Yet he did not want to lose the allegiance of his own supporters and would

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25 Roper, Fifty Years of Public Life, 209.
accept a genuine draft if it materialized. He must have already been looking ahead to 1924.

Meanwhile, Jouett Shouse, immediately following McAdoo's withdrawal, issued a public statement advocating Carter Glass' nomination. Glass, however, still believed that he was merely being used. And, indeed, while Shouse was publicly supporting Glass, he had private reservations. Shouse wired Woolley that McAdoo was definitely out of the race and that he had urged his friends to endorse Glass. Shouse indicated that he and Roper deemed it essential to hold McAdoo's forces together as a bloc until a decision could be reached as to the best candidate. Moreover, Shouse believed that Glass was the strongest candidate around whom the McAdoo forces could coalesce.

Woolley then wired Glass that he would be the next president. Nevertheless, at the same time, Woolley told a friend that, while he would do all he could to observe McAdoo's request and try to nominate Glass, if McAdoo were nominated he would have to accept it. To Shouse, Woolley confided that, while he would love to see Glass nominated, he did not feel that the Virginian could attract the full support of the McAdoo partisans. Woolley believed that there was no way to stop the movement to nominate McAdoo.26

Meanwhile, Carter Glass, the visibly irritated recipient of all this attention, conferred with Woodrow Wilson. Glass, a devoted Wilsonian, felt that the party had no one of Wilson's caliber to nominate, a feeling undoubtedly shared by Wilson himself. Wilson asked Glass about McAdoo's letter. Glass indicated that McAdoo had not specified that he would refuse to accept a nomination. Wilson quickly agreed that he had gained a similar impression. Concerning the other possibilities, Wilson believed that Palmer's nomination would be "futile" and Cox's a "joke." After leaving the President, Glass, accompanied by Tumulty and Grayson to the railway station, departed for San Francisco. Tumulty and Grayson inquired whether the President had mentioned a third term. Glass replied that he had not, but mentioned Wilson's comments concerning the presidential aspirants. Grayson then pleaded with Glass to save Wilson's life and reputation by suppressing any third-term sentiment that might manifest itself at the convention.  

Elsewhere, the immediate reaction to McAdoo's withdrawal was mixed. Tom Ball of Texas reported that in his estimation McAdoo still should receive the nomination. Moreover, notwithstanding McAdoo's endorsement, Carter Glass released a statement from

1920, Box 13, ibid.; Robert Woolley to Jouett Shouse, June 19, 1920, Box 18, ibid.

27 From Glass notes quoted in Smith and Beasley, Carter Glass, 207-08.
Washington that he favored McAdoo's nomination. The McAdoo adherents in the Illinois delegation formally asserted that McAdoo's personal wishes could not be made paramount over the interests of the nation. On the other hand, the New York Times reported that McAdoo was apparently sincere in his withdrawal and that many of his loyal supporters would diligently endeavor to nominate Glass. Byron Newton, Collector of the Port of New York and a McAdoo intimate, said that he regarded the McAdoo statement as final.

Meanwhile, Raymond Baker, Director of the Mint, shifted to Palmer's camp. Undoubtedly, however, Pat Harrison's defection was the most significant loss triggered by the McAdoo announcement. Harrison had initially favored McAdoo, but, after receiving notice of McAdoo's withdrawal, the Mississippi Senator enlisted under Cox's banner. Harrison served as Cox's floor manager and seconded his nomination. It is probable that if Harrison had fought as tenaciously for McAdoo as he did for Cox, McAdoo might have received the nomination. 28

Nevertheless, despite key defections from McAdoo's camp, it soon became obvious that the movement in his behalf remained a potent one. Many of the California delegates refused to accept his

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withdrawal, and the Texas delegation decided to remain with McAdoo. While Tammany leaders had initially accepted McAdoo's statement at face value, they later decided that the renunciation had been made in order to create the impression that there was a tremendous popular demand for McAdoo's nomination. Meanwhile, Robert Woolley arrived in San Francisco. Reporting to McAdoo and Roper that Glass could not possibly be nominated, Woolley revealed that McAdoo's partisans would continue to support him regardless of his wishes. While neither McAdoo nor Roper intervened in order to prevent this, they did nothing to capitalize upon the sentiment.  

Consequently, McAdoo's campaign devolved upon the shoulders of numerous self-appointed managers. Samuel B. Amidon, national committeeman from Kansas, P. H. Callahan of Kentucky, Stuart Gibbony of New York, Robert Woolley, Jouett Shouse, Tom Love, Arthur Mullen, Labert St. Clair, and Mrs. Funk constituted the McAdoo high command. Burleson tried to become a member of this group, but his wetness offended some of the McAdoo managers. While these people were enthusiastic, Roper's expertise was missed. Moreover, many of McAdoo's adherents, like Harrison, had accepted his withdrawal at face value and had irretrievably entered

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the Cox camp.30

With conflicting reports concerning both McAdoo's and Wilson's actual intentions, San Francisco was rife with rumors. Wilson desired a third term and he would receive it. Wilson desired a third term and he could not receive it. Colby was bringing the final word from Wilson. Colby had no word from Wilson. Colby was the President's chosen successor. Homer Cummings was actually the President's choice. McAdoo would be the nominee. McAdoo would not be the nominee. Wilson would dictate the conventions every action. The convention would be free from Wilson's interference.31

Only one thing was clearly discernible: the party was leaderless and floundering insofar as the presidential nomination was concerned. One man could have alleviated the situation. A simple statement from Wilson renouncing any desire for a third term would have clarified the atmosphere to a considerable degree. That utterance never came as Wilson sat silently waiting for the summons that never materialized.

The early convention battles were fought out in the meetings of


the national committee and the resolutions committee, and these struggles witnessed the vindication of Wilsonianism. Beyond this, however, the convention was not prepared to go. While it might adulate Woodrow Wilson, it could not nominate him. The meetings of both committees left little doubt that Wilson completely dominated the convention's machinery. The most politically explosive issues before the national committee were the questions of whether to seat the Palmer or the anti-administration Georgia delegations and whether Missouri's renegade Senator Jim Reed should be certified to participate as a delegate. The resolutions committee was entrusted with the task of fending off efforts to amend the Wilsonian platform.

On June 25, the most important decision that the Democratic national committee encountered was the determination of who should hear delegate challenges. Cummings initially recommended that the challenges should be heard by a sub-committee. This position was immediately questioned by Edmund H. Moore, committeeman from Ohio and Cox's campaign manager. Moore argued that the contests should be reviewed by the full committee. He stated that to do otherwise would give the public the impression that partisan politics were involved and that the committee was intent upon squelching a full debate. Samuel Amidon, committeeman from Kansas and McAdoo supporter, countered that the cases should be heard by a sub-committee which would report back to the full committee. J. Bruce Kremer, committeeman from Montana, supported the Amidon position. Those
who wanted the challenges heard by a sub-committee argued that it would save time. Robert Hudspeth, committeeman from New Jersey, and Norman Mack, committeeman from New York, supported Moore. They charged that a sub-committee would suppress open debate. In the vote that followed, the Moore position won.  

On the surface this appeared to be an anti-administration victory and was so interpreted by the San Francisco Chronicle. The paper pointed out that the states voting for a full committee hearing were the ones that favored candidates other than McAdoo or Palmer; those opposing full committee hearings were pro-administration states. While in a very general way this was a valid interpretation, there were notable exceptions. Cummings voted for full committee hearings and he certainly could not be considered anti-administration. On the other hand, Cordell Hull voted for a sub-committee and his state, Tennessee, was a staunch Davis bastion. Moreover, this supposedly anti-administration coalition by no means asserted itself in the crucial Reed case the following day. It would, therefore, be erroneous to view the vote as an irreparable blow to the administration's control of the convention.

The Georgia contest was the first case to be considered when

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the committee met on June 26. It was generally conceded beforehand
that the Palmer delegation led by Clark Howell would probably be
seated unanimously. As a result of the April primaries, Palmer
had received 148 county unit votes, Tom Watson 132, and Hoke Smith
with 106. Under the rules promulgated by the state executive
committee, Palmer was entitled to have the delegation selected from
among his supporters. At the May state convention, however, the
Watson adherents had attacked this rule and had combined with the
Smith partisans to select an anti-Palmer delegation. Thus, the
Watson supporters claimed that the state convention was binding while
the Palmer forces contended that the rule by which the state executive
committee summoned the convention was binding. The debate, how­
ever, was not confined to legal technicalities. Those opposing Palmer
charged that a vote for the Palmer delegation was a vote for autocracy
because less than one-third of the Georgia voters had supported the
Attorney-General and his position on the League. They begged the
committee not to deny two-thirds of the Georgia electorate their
rights. The Palmer forces adhered to the strictly legal argument that
the rules could not be altered after the fact. Not surprisingly, with
Guffey holding Palmer's proxy on this vote, the national committee
unanimously seated the Palmer delegation.36

The Missouri challenge was potentially much more explosive and more open to interpretation as an administration-anti-administration contest. Reed had steadfastly opposed Wilson's position on the League and had thereby won the enmity of Missouri Wilsonians. The President's Missouri supporters had launched a state-wide campaign to deny Reed a place in the Missouri delegation to the San Francisco convention. Custom dictated that Missouri senators be sent to conventions as delegates-at-large. It was impossible for Reed to win such a position, however, as county after county adopted resolutions opposing Reed's selection as a delegate. In order to circumvent the Wilsonian opposition, the Democrats of the Fifth district, an urban district encompassing Kansas City, voted to send Reed to the convention as their representative, thus bypassing the Wilsonian state convention. The Wilsonians countered by saying that all district delegates would be subject to the approval of the state convention. The state convention, strongly pro-League and anti-Reed, did not approve Reed and the stage was set for a showdown.\(^{37}\)

the matter back to the Fifth district. Reed's supporters alleged that this referral was made without reservations. Nevertheless, at the state convention, the Fifth district representatives had said that they had no other recommendations to make. Then after the convention adjourned the Fifth district re-elected Reed. Reed's spokesmen averred that the question was merely whether the Fifth district had the right to select its own delegates and reiterated that the state convention's referral had been made without reservations. Reed's opponents asserted that once the state convention had adjourned, the Fifth congressional district had no right to re-elect Reed because the matter was closed. According to this interpretation, the Fifth district should have made its selection before the state convention adjourned. Again Reed's friends countered with the assertion that there were no conditions attached to the referral. 38

Below the surface of the legal maneuvering, however, lurked a more fundamental and divisive issue. Isidore Dockweiler cut through the pretense and struck at the heart of the question. Referring to the 178 delegates who constituted the Fifth district convention, Dockweiler asked: "...were those 178 delegates all anti-leaguers and special friends of the Senator and sympathizers with the Senator entirely on the Senator's stand against the League of Nations?" 39 This question

38DNC Proceedings, 1920, 628-36.

39Ibid., 640-41.
engendered a long and heated debate. John Cosgrove and other Missourians charged that the state convention ousted Reed because of his opposition to the League and his disloyalty to the administration. Francis Wilson, representing Reed, regretted that the facts of the case had been ignored and that Reed's opposition had injected Reed's position on the League into the debate. Moreover, Wilson did not deem it proper that the Fifth district should be represented by only one delegate. 40

Moore charged that the committee, rather than adhering to the questions of fact, had in effect raised the question of loyalty to the administration. He, therefore, deplored the course that the hearing had taken. Yet Moore, an astute politician, must have realized that this was precisely the character the hearings would assume. Perhaps he hoped to embarrass the administration forces. Willard Saulsbury, committeeman from Delaware, declared that the convention, by refusing to seat Reed, would be infringing upon senators' rights to freedom of speech. The ubiquitous Carter Glass, visibly angered and arguing the facts, wanted Reed ousted. Glass simply contended that once the convention adjourned it was too late for the Fifth district to act again. Arthur Mullen, a McAdoo partisan and therefore scarcely anti-administration, maintained that if the committee did not seat Reed, regardless of the legal technicalities,
it would appear that they had acted because of his position on the League.\footnote{Ibid., 655-78.}

In the balloting that followed, only twelve votes could be mustered for Reed. While the majority of those votes came from states hostile to Palmer and to McAdoo, not all those voting to seat Reed could be designated an anti-administration people.\footnote{Those committee members voting to seat Reed were as follows: Dockweiler, California; Saulsbury, Delaware; Boeckenstein, Illinois; Hoffman, Indiana; Marsh, Iowa; Camden, Kentucky; Mullen, Nebraska; McCarthy, Nevada; Hudspeth, New Jersey; Mack, New York; Perry, North Dakota; and Moore, Ohio. Ibid. 678-83.} Nevertheless, while the legal technicalities were very complex, Mullen had been correct when he asserted that only one interpretation would be placed on the committee's failure to seat Reed. E. O. Phillips, commenting for the San Francisco Chronicle, insisted that "the issue was clean-cut on the Reed credentials, and he was put out of business simply because he had opposed President Wilson on the treaty of peace and the league of nations. The fight was made upon him strictly upon that basis."\footnote{San Francisco Chronicle, June 27, 1920, p. 1.} While this interpretation was undoubtedly valid insofar as the action of the Missouri state convention was concerned, it was not entirely accurate in regard to the national committee. Nevertheless, the national committee's action gave every appearance
of being a purge. Senator Reed, in San Francisco, immediately charged that the Wilson administration had subjected him to steam-roller tactics. The Wilsonians would later rue the day that they had antagonized Jim Reed.

While the national committee hearings were in progress, the delegations continued to arrive in San Francisco, and the resolutions committee began its work. The prohibition question was the largest problem facing that committee. With Bryan not yet on the scene, there was a growing conviction on both sides of the controversy that prohibition should not be mentioned in the platform. The Supreme Court's decision earlier in the month upholding both the validity of the Volstead Prohibition Enforcement Act and of the enactment of the Eighteenth Amendment appeared to make the Wet-Dry issue less viable. It was known that the Wilsonian leadership considered the matter to be settled. Moreover, some of the Wets were considering ignoring prohibition in the platform and letting the personal views of the nominee suffice. It was maintained that if Cox were the nominee there would be no necessity for the light wine and beer plank. It was anticipated that Bryan would constitute the greatest barrier to compromise because of his insistence upon a bone-dry platform. It was speculated that if there were an actual test between a Wet plank and a Dry plank, Bryan would win. On the other hand,

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if the question were between a Dry plank and no plank, Bryan was expected to lose. The Wets' realization that their insistence on a Wet plank might lead to the insertion of a Dry one probably led some of them to ease their demands.  

Meanwhile, Representative Upshaw of Georgia, a former vice-president of the Anti-Saloon League, wired Bryan and asked him to moderate his views on the prohibition question. Upshaw informed Bryan that in view of the Supreme Court decision Drys felt that it was "... best for the cause and for the party to accept and assume the prohibition question closed by Congress and the court." Upshaw believed that Bryan's supreme achievement would "... not be to put a dry plank in, but to keep a wet plank out." When Bryan was on a crusade, however, he could not be silenced. Speaking at a luncheon of the Commonwealth Club, Bryan told his listeners that the liquor question was the most important issue that the Democrats faced. Moreover, Burleson did not seem content to let the matter rest. He declared that there must be a statement on the prohibition question and that Congress should repeal the

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46 San Francisco Chronicle, June 27, 1920, p. 2.
unreasonable Volstead Act.\textsuperscript{47}

The wrangling over prohibition finally elicited a statement from the man around whom most of the Wets were gathering—Cox. Perhaps in an effort to placate the Drys and to avoid a thoroughly Wet stigma, Governor Cox let it be known that he did not want prohibition mentioned in the platform. James E. Campbell, a former governor of Ohio, issued a statement that asserted: "Governor Cox does not consider the Democratic platform the proper place for the wet or dry issue." Continuing, Campbell stated that "we don't look on prohibition as an issue one way or the other. Governor Cox has refused to be used by either element. His record is one of law enforcement."\textsuperscript{48}

Cox appeared to be the only candidate seriously affected by the Wet-Dry controversy. The Wets clearly did not control a majority of the convention. In fact, the convention appeared to favor compromise. It was speculated, therefore, that initially Cox had lost ground because the Wets had rallied to his standard. This probably accounts for his efforts to subordinate the prohibition issue. On the other hand, McAdoo's candidacy did not seem to be affected by the issue at all. While McAdoo was viewed as a Dry and had the endorsement of the Anti-Saloon League, Bryan opposed him.

\textsuperscript{47}San Francisco Chronicle, June 27, 1920, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{48}San Francisco Chronicle, June 27, 1920, p. 2.
Moreover, McAdoo's support seemed to be based on considerations other than his Dryness. 49

In the days just prior to the balloting, it was the Wet New York delegation's actions that presented the greatest puzzle. On June 28, the New York Times reported that Murphy had decided to desert Cox and support McAdoo because Cox had retreated on the question of a Wet plank. Murphy immediately denied this. Notwithstanding Murphy's denials, the rumors persisted that the local New York situation demanded a damp plank and that the New Yorkers would back McAdoo in exchange for such a plank. It was reported that Moore visited Murphy and promised that the majority of the Ohio delegation would support a Wet plank if Cox did not have to personally favor it. Moore reportedly told Murphy that Cox's sympathies were known to be with the Wets, but that if he actively fought for a Wet platform Bryan would be able to mobilize one-third of the convention against him and prevent his nomination. Cox, therefore, had to do something to placate the Drys. While Murphy continued to deny these reports, it was decided that New York would support Smith longer than had originally been anticipated. 50

As late as June 30, the New York Times reported that the


New York delegation's actions were a mystery. The paper asserted that the delegation had not returned to Cox and that if it appeared that McAdoo were going to be the winner New York might support him.\textsuperscript{51}

That Murphy would actually have endorsed McAdoo is a contention almost beyond comprehension. According to Roper, he contacted both Murphy and Brennan and endeavored to persuade them to cast a few ballots for McAdoo. Both leaders refused. Murphy and Brennan both indicated that they needed a candidate who could carry their cities in order to protect the jobs at their disposal.\textsuperscript{52} Murphy's vacillation may have been more than a clever ploy. It assured his constituency that he was doing all that he could to secure a Wet plank. On the one hand, Murphy's indecision may have assisted Cox in that he did not appear to be a complete tool of the Wets. On the other hand, Murphy may have been attempting to extort some type of concessions from Cox. Later in the convention a majority of the Ohio delegation did support a Wet plank and Murphy did endorse Cox.

On June 28, the convention formally began its proceedings. As Homer Cummings delivered the keynote address, there could be no doubt that the convention was to be a reaffirmation of Wilsonianism in general and Wilson's vision of the League in particular. Cummings glorified the Wilson administration's achievements and denounced the

\textsuperscript{51}New York Times, June 20, 1920, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{52}Roper, Fifty Years of Public Life, 209-10.
Republican record since 1918. He bitterly censured Republican attacks upon Wilson. The major portion of Cummings' address was devoted to a condemnation of the Republican position on the League and a commendation of Wilson's stand. Even the most obtuse could see that the upcoming election was to be waged to vindicate Wilson's position on the League. With a typical Wilsonian rhetorical flourish, Cummings declared: "We will not submit to the repudiation of the Peace Treaty or to any process by which it is whittled down to the vanishing point. We decline to compromise our principles or pawn our immortal souls for selfish purposes."

Prior to the meeting of the resolutions committee that evening, notwithstanding the expressions of adulation for Wilson, there was a movement to loosen up the Wilsonian control of the convention. Bryan and Senate Democrats who had opposed Wilson on the League hoped to force a League substitute on the convention. They also wanted to substitute Senator Thomas Walsh of Montana for Carter Glass, the administration's choice, as chairman of the resolutions committee. Senator David I. Walsh of Massachusetts assumed leadership of the Democratic Senators opposed to the President's League plank.

The movement to blunt the Wilsonian leadership failed

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54 Ibid., 26.

55 San Francisco Chronicle, June 28, 1920, p. 3.
miserably. In fact, the fight to remove Glass as chairman of the resolutions committee collapsed before the organizational meeting of the committee began. Senator Thomas Walsh withdrew from the contest because he had no chance to win and because of what he labeled the erroneous rumor that he was part of an anti-administration movement. Walsh indicated that he had always been for the League without reservations. In withdrawing, however, Walsh did announce, without stating the reasons, that he did not consider Glass to be fit for the position. Walsh had earlier indicated privately that with Glass as chairman of the resolutions committee it would give every appearance that the delegates were mere pawns to be used by the White House. Because Walsh felt that the convention would endorse Wilson's policies in any case, he saw no reason to give credence to the charge that the President was an autocrat. Some recognition was granted to the Wilsonian opposition, however, when Senator Davis I. Walsh was elected secretary of the resolutions committee.

In the initial meeting of the resolutions committee it became

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56 *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 29, 1920, p. 4. Thomas Walsh to Bruce Kremer, June 15, 1920, Box 372, Walsh Papers. It was clear that Walsh was not anti-administration. Walsh voted for McAdoo on all forty-four ballots at San Francisco and was only reluctantly reconciled to the Cox candidacy. Thomas Walsh to Tom Stout, July 15, 1920, Box 372, Walsh Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress).

57 *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 29, 1920, p. 4.
evident that the Wilsonian program would not be passively accepted. Challenging Wilson's demand for unqualified endorsement of the League, Bryan offered a substitute proposal. He called for a constitutional amendment whereby treaties would be ratified by a majority rather than a two-thirds vote. Bryan's plan also advocated that the Senate immediately reconvene in order to ratify the Treaty with reservations. Undeterred, Bryan also submitted a Dry enforcement plank to the committee despite the efforts of others to avoid the issue altogether. An indication of the probable futility of Bryan's efforts came when he was not appointed to the sub-committee of nine who would actually draft the platform.58

The initial meetings of the credentials and rules committees were also controversial. The credentials committee, by a vote of thirty-nine to nine, denied James Reed his seat and passed the following resolution: "James A. Reed is not legally accredited and is not entitled to a seat in this convention."59 Again, following the lead of the national committee, the credentials committee agreed to seat the Palmer delegation from Georgia. Meanwhile, the rules committee adjourned amidst a feud when, to Tammany's surprise, Franklin D. Roosevelt proposed abolishing the New York unit rule in an effort to free the McAdoo votes in that delegation. The committee deferred

58 San Francisco Chronicle, June 29, 1920, p. 4.

taking any action in order to give Governor Smith time to prepare a rebuttal to Roosevelt's proposal. 60

As the first day of the convention closed, McAdoo retained the lead. Cox appeared to be in second place, but some observers felt that he was in trouble. While the Wets had originally endorsed him, they evinced displeasure over his gestures to placate the Drys. In essence, it was reported that Cox was too Wet for the Drys and too Dry for the Wets. Palmer was scarcely considered a real possibility. Riding on the crest of his keynote speech, Cummings was the dark horse of the hour. He joined the other dark horses, Vice-President Marshall and Ambassador Davis. Speculation also centered about the convention's two enigmatic figures—Woodrow Wilson and William Jennings Bryan. In advocating the availability of Meredith or Owen, Bryan left the distinct impression that he wanted the nomination for himself. 61

As Oswald Garrison Villard examined the field of Democratic presidential hopefuls, he despondently asserted:

...the array of candidates gives one a sinking of the heart and makes James Buchanan look like a strong and respectable figure. James W. Gerard, Homer Cummings, Secretary Glass, Mitchell Palmer, Governor Edwards--these are not names to conjure with. McAdoo would have brought ability to the office--the ability of an imperialist--and would have

60 San Francisco Chronicle, June 29, 1920, p. 1.

61 San Francisco Chronicle, June 29, 1920, pp. 1 and 2.
continued the Southern tradition in the White House with its connivance at the disfranchisement of one-tenth of our population and its hateful segregation in the Departments at Washington. John W. Davis would bring a new and interesting personality into public life, marked ability, and a well-trained legal mind—just when we need least of all the legalistic mind so cold and clear-cut. Governor Cox, despite a fair administrative record, ranks below Harding in the opinion of discriminating Ohioans who have followed his career. Some dark-horse nominee may possess different qualities. But the chances are that we shall get as little light and inspiration from San Francisco as we have from Chicago. 62

The Democratic convention process, seen by many as an exercise in futility, continued in its methodical fashion. The second session, June 29, 1920, was largely given over to formalities. The credentials committee recommended that Palmer's Georgia delegation be seated and that Joseph B. Shannon was the only elected delegate from the Fifth Missouri district. Before the full convention Shannon vigorously protested that Reed was being denied his seat because of his differences with the President. Shannon further charged that his district was being disfranchised. Speaking for the credentials committee, Hugh K. Asher, secretary, denied that Reed was being excluded because he was a renegade. He was not seated, stated Asher, because the state convention had rejected him. Asher did not elaborate, however, that the state convention had rejected him

because of his differences with Wilson. The Wilsonians were still
fully in control. 63

The address of Joseph T. Robinson of Arkansas, permanent
chairman of the convention, continued the deification of Wilson. In
stirring Wilsonian rhetoric, a rhetoric of which the people were
tiring, Robinson called for the battle to be waged on the League issue.
Taking the highest possible ground, Robinson asserted: "Never
before has a nation-wide political battle been waged in the name of
international justice, humanity and peace." Castigating the opposi-
tion, Robinson avowed that "the Republications have occupied low and
untenable ground. Let the Democratic Party occupy the heights, and
never again in American political history will a great party trifle
with the hearts and consciences of the American people." 64

When the committee on rules reported, it was evident that
the McAdoo forces in New York had won a victory. While the unit
rule as such was not abrogated, it was abolished in states where
mandatory statutes were in effect which did not subject delegates to
the state convention's authority. 65 New York was the only state to
be adversely affected by the decision. The ruling's effect was to
release ten to twenty votes for McAdoo. The rules committee

63 DNC Proceedings, 1920, 41-43.
64 Ibid., 83.
65 Ibid., 85.
reached this decision by the very large vote of twenty-six to eleven.
The action of the rules committee further attested to the administration's control of the convention machinery. 66

Insofar as presidential prospects were concerned during the second day of the convention, McAdoo still enjoyed the lead. Opposition to him, however, was stiffening. Cox and Palmer joined with the overtly anti-administration contingent to blunt McAdoo's drive. George Brennan of Illinois assumed leadership of the anti-McAdoo forces. The Illinois boss' antagonism stemmed from McAdoo's failure as Secretary of the Treasury to assist organization Democrats in Illinois. Meanwhile, Charles Murphy continued to vacillate. Reports persisted that Murphy might opt for McAdoo in exchange for the type of prohibition plank that he wanted. Murphy blatantly admitted that he was concerned only with the success of the local ticket. Moreover, because New York was a Wet city, Murphy wanted a Wet platform. 67

As a result of Murphy's provincialism, the Tammany delegation came under fire from the New York Times. The paper viewed, with disgust, the New York delegation's failure to join in the opening day demonstration for Wilson. Moreover, the editorial staff did not


find it peculiar that Tammany delegates were disliked at Democratic conventions. In explanation the paper asserted:

The reasons are known to everybody. Democratic conventions seek to take measures that lead to victory in the nation. Tammany cares nothing for national victories of the party. It has no feeling of loyal to the Democracy. It is concerned only with getting and retaining the offices in its power in this city. If it can control the local expenditures and patronage, it cares not who sits in the White House.  

It was not solely Tammany, however, that aroused the New York Times editorial staff's wrath. They also loosed their barbs at William Jennings Bryan. With obvious disgust the paper announced:

However it may be with others, Mr. Bryan informs the reporters at San Francisco that he will not change. There will always be one man in the convention 'fighting for the right.' Yes, and fighting in the same old way. That means, in the first place, fighting for his own hand. It means doing as serious harm as he can to other Democratic leaders. It means contriving as much division and mischief as possible for his party. It means the putting forward of half-baked ideas and happy-thought proposals.

. . . It would appear that he intends to range--or derange--over many features of party policy, throwing sand into the gearing whenever he can. Truly, it is the same ole Bryan. And the only wise course for the Democrats is to deal with him now as a habitual marplot and disturber of the party peace.  

On that day in June 1920, the New York Times had indicted the two elements of the party which in time would rend the Democracy and reduce it to impotence. For the time being, however, more

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moderate men prevailed. The Mississippi delegation in a lengthy caucus voted to support Cox for the presidency after first casting a complimentary ballot for John Sharp Williams. The delegation was divided between Cox and McAdoo, and the decision to endorse Cox was reached once the question of winning was introduced. 70

Undoubtedly Pat Harrison strongly influenced this decision. Throughout the decade Harrison would be a voice for moderation within the party. The Mississippi Senator never became involved in the Wet-Dry controversy, and his overriding concern appeared to be national victory. In assuming this overtly pragmatic stance, Harrison appeared to work in tandem with Joseph T. Robinson, the Senator from Arkansas. 71

Thus, Mississippi's role was to be that of moderation.

Emerging from the meeting of the Mississippi caucus, Howard S. Williams issued the following statement. "The wet or dry plank was of small importance to our delegates, as we come from a prohibition

70San Francisco Chronicle, June 30, 1920, p. 6.

71Unfortunately, Pat Harrison directed that his political correspondence be destroyed before his papers were deposited at the University of Mississippi. Thus, the collection does not yield much. While this author has been unable to view the Robinson papers, Nevin Neal apparently mined them rather extensively. See Nevin Emil Neal, "A Biography of Joseph T. Robinson" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, the University of Oklahoma, Norman, 1958.) This dissertation reveals very little concerning Robinson's role in intra-party politics. Of course, this may be because Robinson's papers contained nothing. Consequently, the role of two very powerful Southern Senators remains somewhat shrouded in mystery.
State and consider the action of the Supreme Court as final on this matter. We, however, do not favor a prolonged argument in the convention on this question and the general sentiment is to support the Administration in these matters. If Mississippi had her way the convention would not tear itself apart over the prohibition question.

On the third day of the convention, June 30, 1920, the process of formally placing the candidates' names before the convention began. In a cascade of oratory, a number of very dark horses were introduced to the delegates. Robert L. Owen, of Oklahoma, Bryan's choice, was the first candidate to be placed in nomination. Owen, depicted as the personification of progressivism, was lauded as a champion of women's suffrage, prohibition, the peace treaty, child labor legislation, the Federal Reserve Act, and the Farm Loan Act. James W. Gerard of New York, former Ambassador to Germany was then presented as a man experienced in international affairs. Homer S. Cummings' nomination was urged because of his ability to carry forward the fight for Wilson's League as revealed in the keynote address. There seemed to be considerable disagreement, however,

72 San Francisco Chronicle, June 30, 1920, p. 6.
73 DNC Proceedings, 1920, 93-103.
74 Ibid., 103-07.
75 Ibid., 107-12.
as to who was best qualified to carry forward the Wilsonian quest. Gilbert Hitchcock was placed in nomination next on the grounds that he was indeed the logical man to champion Wilson's cause. 76

Finally, A. Mitchell Palmer, the man whose candidacy had from the outset been based on Wilsonianism--albeit, the darker side of that phenomenon--was placed before the convention. John H. Bigelow of Pennsylvania stepped forward to offer A. Mitchell Palmer to the assembled delegates. Bigelow repeatedly appealed to Palmer's vision of America. Bigelow asserted:

The inevitable heritages of the war are ours. From every quarter of the globe they are thrust upon us. A rising disrespect for government surrounds us. A spirit of discontent pervades us. Industrial unrest stalks about us. The army of anarchy and the hosts of evil are amongst us. Their hands are raised against every agency of the government and the firm foundations laid by the founders of the country are threatened. 77

Palmer's vision of America was to find few supporters at this Democratic conclave.

Palmer's nomination as followed by that of Iowa's favorite son, Edwin T. Meredith. 78 Then James M. Cox, a candidate not closely identified with either the altruistic or the apocalyptic version of Wilsonianism, was placed in nomination. Thus, there was a

76 Ibid., 112-13.
77 Ibid., 114.
78 Ibid., 124-27.
change in the tenor of the nominating speeches. The initial addresses delivered in Cox's behalf praised his progressive achievements as Governor of Ohio and stressed the practical political necessity of the Democracy's carrying Ohio.\(^7^9\) Most significant, perhaps, was the speech delivered by Pat Harrison. Harrison made it clear that Cox's position on prohibition did not frighten him and that his chief concern was victory in November. And Harrison believed that the Ohio electoral vote was necessary for that victory. Harrison thundered:

> One of the first states that adopted state-wide prohibition was Mississippi. The state that was first to ratify the Federal Prohibition Amendment was Mississippi. . . . That far and distant state in the southland, ever true to the Democratic Party, only waiting now to pass its solid vote for the Democratic Party in November, has but one thought, one hope—Democracy's success.\(^8^0\)

New York then presented her favorite son. The eloquent Bourke Cochran asserted:

> I nominate here today the man whose career savors more of a page from romance than a mere biographic narrative; a man who, starting in the very humblest conditions, has risen in the comparatively short space of sixteen years to the second highest, as we believe, position in the country; a man who has risen from a peddler's wagon, while yet short of his prime, to the Governor's chair of the greatest state in the Union . . . .\(^8^1\)

\(^7^9\)Ibid., 128-33.

\(^8^0\)Ibid., 134.

\(^8^1\)Ibid., 136.
In this fashion Al Smith, soon to become the symbol of the cities and of the aspirations of the hitherto unrecognized urban masses, was first introduced to a Democratic national convention. Franklin D. Roosevelt and Mrs. Lillian R. Sire briefly seconded the Smith nomination. 82

Ironically, Smith's nomination, a mere favorite son endorsement, was followed by the nomination of a man who would one day be his bitter antagonist and who had requested that his name not be placed in nomination--William Gibbs McAdoo. The Reverend Burris Jenkins of Missouri informed the delegates that, while he had planned to make a nominating speech, he would not do so, out of deference to his candidate's desire not to have his name offered to the convention. Nevertheless, having made that disclaimer, Jenkins assured the convention that McAdoo would accept a draft, and with that assertion he placed McAdoo's name in nomination. 83

Bryan's nemesis, Edward I. Edwards of New Jersey, was the last man to be placed in nomination on Wednesday. Charles F. X. O'Brien offered Edwards as the champion of personal liberty. 84 The prohibition issue was, thus, clearly injected into the proceedings, but the time was not yet ripe nor was Edwards the proper symbolic

82 Ibid., 140-41.
83 Ibid., 142.
84 Ibid., 142-47.
leader to elevate the question to a divisive level.

When the convention adjourned that evening, McAdoo retained his apparently favorable position. The unremittingly hostile San Francisco Chronicle abandoned any pretense of objectivity in an effort to slow McAdoo's ascendancy. In an unsigned front-page story, the paper asserted:

With political chicanery exposed, and secrecy no longer available as an asset, the royal suite of Cabinet Ministers, Senators and lesser Federal satellites now in this city, yesterday came out in the open to fight for the 'crown prince'.

Forces of the 'crown prince' are not lacking in political diplomacy. The leaders are perfectly willing that Cox and Palmer and Meredith and Marshall, and all the rest may be given complimentary votes, but--the final choice must be McAdoo. This is the dictum that has gone forth.

Interesting sidelights on the varied influences behind the campaign to perpetuate the Wilson dynasty are penetrating the political darkness that hitherto has shrouded the more or less palpable efforts to substitute the son-in-law for the reigning head of the Bourbon hosts. 85

Meanwhile, the Cox campaign appeared to be suffering from the double onus of having offended the Wets by trying to appease the Drys and of having affronted the administration leaders by leading the fight to seat Reed. George Brennan of Illinois was still in the forefront of the movement to stop McAdoo and seemed confident of his ability to do so. It did appear, however, that the big anti-administration delegations were in search of someone around whom

85San Francisco Chronicle, July 1, 1920, p. 1.
to coalesce. The name frequently mentioned that night was Bainbridge Colby who favored a degree of moistness in the platform. 86

Jenkins' presentation of McAdoo's name had ignited this flurry of activity. The decision to place McAdoo before the convention had apparently been reached the night before in a conference attended by Burleson, Shouse, Love, Amidon, Woolley, Jenkins, and others. 87 Judged by the indignation it aroused, the stratagem must have been somewhat successful. Those opposed to McAdoo's nomination were terribly upset. Samuel Amidon stated that McAdoo, if nominated, would stand for and accept the entire platform. Evaluating Amidon's comment, columnist Hal Layton quipped: "Why not? His candidate's wife's father is writing it." Layton continued: "Hurrah for the Crown Prince. Thus shall the Wilson dynasty be perpetuated, and whether Senator Pat Harrison of Mississippi, strong Cox adherent, likes it or not." 88 Thus, as he had been from the outset, Woodrow Wilson was the greatest handicap under which McAdoo labored.

The fourth day of the convention, Thursday, July 1, 1920, saw more nominations. North Carolina presented her favorite son, Furnifold F. Simmons. 89 Virginia put forward Carter Glass. 90

86 San Francisco Chronicle, July 1, 1920, pp. 1, 5, and 10.
87 San Francisco Chronicle, July 1, 1920, p. 2.
88 San Francisco Chronicle, July 1, 1920, p. 5.
89 DNC Proceedings, 1920, 152. 90 Ibid., 153-57.
Then John J. Cornwell, Governor of West Virginia, placed the name of John W. Davis, one of the most likely dark horses of them all, before the convention. The marthon procedure finally came to an end when Mrs. Bessie Agnes Dwyer of the Philippines placed Francis Burton Harrison, Governor-General of the Philippines, in nomination. Not surprisingly, the resolutions committee was not ready to report, and the convention was recessed until that evening. When the convention reconvened, the resolutions committee was still deliberating so the convention adjourned until the following day.

The resolutions committee's inability to present a draft to the convention stemmed primarily from dissension over the prohibition and League planks. The previous night's session of the drafting sub-committee had been grueling. After hours of discussion, the sub-committee had no recommendation to make upon prohibition. The Anti-Saloon League's plank calling for rigid enforcement, without mentioning the Volstead Act, was tabled by a vote of five to four. The Bryan plank was likewise tabled. The Burleson Wet plank, which would have amended and liberalized the enforcement act, was rejected by a vote of six to three. The sub-committee then considered recommending a compromise plank drafted by Carter Glass.

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91 Ibid., 157-60.
92 Ibid., 164-65.
93 Ibid., 167-77.
proposal denounced the saloon and called for rigid enforcement of the Volstead Act, but without "vexatious invasion of the privacy of the citizen." The sub-committee, however, finally decided that it would make no recommendation to the full committee on the subject of prohibition.  

When the full committee met Thursday evening, the session was again long and exhausting. As a result of the deliberations, however, the administration emerged in full control of the platform and the way was paved for a convention floor fight. Ignoring vigorous protests by Bryan, the committee resolved not to mention prohibition in the platform. The remainder of Bryan's minority planks, including his League proposal, were also defeated. After a protracted struggle over the League plank, the administration forces made one slight concession to David I. Walsh. They added a phrase indicating that the party would not oppose reservations which merely clarified the country's obligations under the charter.  

By the fifth day of the convention, Friday, July 2, the platform was at long last ready for presentation. Carter Glass offered the document to the convention, and, naturally, the first plank dealt with the League of Nations. The principal portion of the plank asserted:

"We advocate the immediate ratification of the treaty without reservations which would impair its essential integrity; but do not oppose the acceptance of any reservations making clearer or more specific the obligations of the United States to the League associates." Moreover, signaling that the contest was to be waged to vindicate Woodrow Wilson, the plank continued: "Only by doing this may we retrieve the reputation of this nation among the powers of the earth and recover the moral leadership which President Wilson won and which Republican politicians at Washington sacrificed."  

The platform, of course, was silent on the subject of prohibition, and, when Glass asked that it be adopted without modification, William Jennings Bryan rose to offer a minority report. Bryan gave two speeches that day, and it was the Bryan who evoked memories of greatness. His oratorical efforts were rewarded with a tremendously warm reception. Bryan received perhaps the largest personal demonstration of the convention. At one point it took more than twenty minutes to restore order as the tears streamed from Bryan's eyes and he was called again and again to the front of the podium. In the end, his causes were lost; but for the moment Bryan was the old master.  

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96 DNC Proceedings, 1920, p. 182.

97 Ibid., 200.

98 Bagby, The Road to Normalcy, 108; Levine, Defender of the Faith, 165.
Bryan would be so well received; in 1924 it would be quite a different story. Mark Sullivan has left a moving portrait of Bryan in that convention:

One thought of Bryan at that 1920 convention as an elderly uncle who comes to visit us, wearing his black alpaca coat and his starched white short and his narrow black tie. He read us the Bible every night, he said grace at every meal, he quoted a good deal from Isaiah and the prophets, and he exhorted us to morality and virtue. We were all glad to see him; we listened to him very respectfully; we paid him the greatest deference; we treated him altogether with genuine and unstudied affection; but when he got around to telling us what we should do about our business, we gently and kindly, but firmly, elbowed him aside. 99

Bryan offered two proposals on prohibition. The first, he presented on behalf of Richard Pearson Hobson of Alabama. It stated simply: "We declare for the effective enforcement of the 18th Amendment and laws enacted pursuant thereto." 100 Bryan's own proposition was much more militant. He offered a plank which asserted:

We heartily congratulate the Democratic party on its splendid leadership in the submission and ratification of the Prohibition Amendment to the federal constitution and we pledge the party to the effective enforcement of the present enforcement law, honestly and in good faith, without any increase in the alcoholic content of permitted beverages, and without any weakening of any other of its provisions. 101


100 DNC Proceedings, 1920, 202. 101 Ibid.
In addition, Bryan recommended planks advocating the establishment of a national bulletin, stronger anti-profiteering measures, and opposition to universal compulsory military training in time of peace. Bryan's League plank ran counter to the administration proposal. Adhering to his earlier suggestion, he advocated a federal amendment to provide for a majority rather than a two-thirds vote to ratify treaties. He then urged ratification with those reservations upon which a majority of the senators could agree.\(^\text{102}\)

Although the administration leaders had attempted to avoid any acrimonious controversy over the liquor question, Bryan had offered a challenge and the Wets were prepared to respond. They sent forward one of their most effective orators, Bourke Cochran of New York. Cochran suggested that he might not have offered a minority plank had Bryan not attacked the majority report. Cochran's remarks, however, were delivered without rancor. It was as if both sides on this question were merely going through the motions to satisfy their consciences and their constituencies. Their positions, however, were diametrically opposed and portended future trouble when passions should become more deeply aroused. The Cochran provision asserted:

> The validity of the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution has been sustained by the Supreme Court, and any law enacted under its authority must be

\(^{102}\text{Ibid.}, 202-03.\)
enforced. In the interest of personal liberty, and to conserve the rights of the states, we favor federal legislation under the Eighteenth Amendment, allowing the manufacture and sale, for home consumption only, of cider, light wines, and beer; reserving to the various states power to fix any alcoholic contents thereof lower than that fixed by Congress, as may be demanded by the opinion and conscience of each locality. 103

There were other minority reports presented on a variety of subjects and then debate began. William Jennings Bryan was the initial speaker. While he defended all of his propositions, he devoted the greatest attention to his prohibition plank. In the oratory of old, Bryan quoted scripture and appealed to the nation's morality and conscience. He entreated that the platform not be silent on the subject of prohibition. Bryan insisted that his nation's morality be proclaimed even if it meant losing some votes in the enemy country. He asserted:

The Democratic party led this fight; it was the Democratic south that raised the standard of this, the greatest moral reform of the generation, and the nation has followed the standard to overwhelming victory. Shall we accept the result sullenly—just acquiesce with tears in the voice—or shall we rejoice that the banner of our party has been lifted so high that it draws to it those who believe that conscience should control politics? Enemies of the home should not be permitted to raise their bloodstained flag above the Stars and Stripes. 104

103 _Ibid._ , 205.

Other speakers delivered highly emotional appeals for the prohibition cause, and then Bourke Cochran rose to defend his plank. Cochran's defense lacked the lofty, albeit unsophisticated to modern ears, idealism of Bryan's appeal. Essentially, Cochran argued that the law could not be enforced and that each locality should be entrusted with establishing its own solution. He referred repeatedly to the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments and the South's solution of the "negro problem." Arguing that the resolution of that problem had eventually been left in the hands of the South, Cochran felt that the enforcement of the Eighteenth Amendment should similarly be handled locally. 105

Bainbridge Colby and Carter Glass concluded the debate by urging that the majority report be accepted without alteration. 106 Concerning prohibition, Glass retorted that "Mr. Bryan complains that we are trying to revive the corpse of the liquor traffic. Not at all. We are simply opposed to dragging the corpse from one end of the country to the other when other great issues are involved." 107

The moderates were indisputably in control. Glass, plainly exasperated with both the Wets and the Drys, went on to exhort:

\[\text{105}\text{Ibid.}, 220-27.\]
\[\text{106}\text{Ibid.}, 242-54.\]
\[\text{107}\text{Ibid.}, 250.\]
"Oh, gentlemen, the battle is won! The Eighteenth Amendment stands in the Constitution and there it remains. Why make an issue of the degree of loyalty to this issue, . . . We have not been challenged by our political adversaries on this question." Glass reiterated that the resolutions committee felt that the issue was settled and that they did not want to cloud the primary issue—the League. The Wilsonian leadership was determined to keep the prohibition issue submerged, and it had not yet acquired the symbolic connotations that Al Smith would bring to it.

Thus it was not surprising that the Bryan prohibition amendment was resoundingly defeated by a vote of 929-1/2 to 155-1/2. The only delegations which cast a majority vote for the Bryan proposal were those from the Western states of Idaho, Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Washington. The Cochran Wet plank was also defeated, but by the smaller margin of 726-1/2 to 356. Delegations casting a majority of their votes for the Wet proposal were from the states of Connecticut, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont. Evidently endeavoring to antagonize as few Drys as possible, yet at the same

108 Ibid., 250-51.
109 Ibid., 251.
110 Ibid., 256-57.
time appease the Wets, the Ohio vote was twenty-eight Wet, twenty opposed. 111 With the exception of the New England states, the Wet vote came from the large industrial centers. The South acquiesced in the leadership's view to let the matter rest. Nevertheless, the vote had provided the first indication of the rural-urban split in the party, manifesting itself in a division between the East and the West. The remainder of the minority proposals were also defeated, and the administration platform was accepted.112

After adopting the platform, the convention proceeded to the presidential balloting, and two ballots were taken Friday before the convention adjourned. Although the votes were scattered on these ballots due to the presence of so many favorite sons, McAdoo led on both. On the second ballot of the day, McAdoo had 289 votes, Palmer 264, and Cox 159 with the remainder well distributed among numerous other candidates.113 The administration grip that had reined so tightly over the platform fight was completely relaxed. Now only silence emitted from the White House; the delegates were deprived of any type of administration leadership.

Evidently because of his overwhelming need to vindicate himself, Wilson could not bring himself to gracefully relinquish

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111 Ibid., 259-60.

112 Ibid., 261-65.

113 Ibid., 271-74.
power. This reluctance almost led to what certainly would have been a tremendously humiliating experience for Wilson. In the face of all the apparent enthusiasm for the League and the homage being paid to Wilson, Colby, without consulting anyone, sent Wilson a message that the convention was in a mood to draft him. Colby further stipulated that, unless expressly forbidden, he would present Wilson's name to the convention. The White House contacted Wilson's friends at the convention and asked them to discuss Colby's proposal and inform Wilson of their decision. Daniels and the other Cabinet members present were indignant at Colby's effrontery. They knew that Wilson's physical condition made it impossible for him to be nominated and that to present his name would only humiliate him. They tactfully informed the President that Colby's suggestion should not be carried out.114

Once he finished his work on the platform, Glass joined the McAdoo leadership in an effort to secure votes for their candidate. While the opposition asserted that it had the votes to stop McAdoo, their problem still lay in finding a suitable candidate around whom to coalesce. In conferences late Friday night, Murphy, Brennan, Taggart, and Nugent finally decided that Cox was the only man who could defeat McAdoo. Tom Taggart was the weakest link in this combination. Taggart, who was running for the United States Senate,

114Daniels, The Wilson Era: Years of War and After, 555-57.
could not afford to appear too anti-administration. Meanwhile, the Cox managers were attempting to convince Palmer to withdraw in Cox's favor. The Cox leaders argued that Palmer had attained his maximum strength, as in truth he had, and that only Cox could defeat McAdoo. Moore, however, could obtain no affirmative response from the doggedly stubborn Palmer. 115

Saturday, July 3, 1920, marked the convention's sixth day, and it was one of marathon balloting. As favorite sons quit the field, McAdoo and Cox climbed steadily while Palmer merely held his own. Then on the seventh ballot, New York deserted Smith and gave Cox sixty-eight votes, McAdoo sixteen, and Palmer two. Although McAdoo retained the lead, Cox vaulted past Palmer. 116 On the twelfth ballot, Illinois shifted the votes she had been casting for Palmer to Cox, and for the first time Cox took the lead. 117 The sixteenth ballot saw Cox garner 454-1/2 votes, McAdoo 337, Palmer 164-1/2, and the remainder of the votes were scattered. 118 Following this ballot, the convention recessed until the evening. 119

117Ibid., 315.
118Ibid., 334.
119Ibid., 339.
Frantic activity characterized the recess. Cone Johnson, Jouett Shouse, and other McAdoo leaders arranged to meet with Palmer at a neighboring hotel on the pretext of compromising their differences. When Palmer learned that all they wanted was his withdrawal in McAdoo's favor, the Attorney-General departed in a state of high indignation. Palmer informed the press that if he were not nominated that the nominee would assuredly be someone other than McAdoo or Cox. It was now apparent that the administration forces were hopelessly splintered and would be unable to coalesce around either McAdoo or Palmer.\(^{120}\)

Also during this recess several different leaders attempted to contact the White House. Evidently Glass, on behalf of the administration forces, desired some assistance from Wilson in determining the proper course of action. At the same time, Cox wanted a statement from the White House to counter Glass' charge that Cox was unacceptable to Wilson. The White House replied that Wilson had gone to bed and would not intervene in any case. Finally on his own initiative, Tumulty issued a statement that Wilson had not expressed an opinion to anyone in reference to any particular candidacy.\(^{121}\)

\(^{120}\)San Francisco Chronicle, July 4, 1920, pp. 1 and 3.

\(^{121}\)San Francisco Chronicle, July 4, 1920, pp. 1 and 3; Blum, Joe Tumulty and the Wilson Era, 246.
Receiving no succor from Wilson, the convention reconvened Saturday evening and went through six more rather fruitless ballots. McAdoo gained a modicum of support at the expense of both Palmer and Cox but not enough to materially affect their relative positions. At the end of the twenty-second and final ballot of the evening Cox had 454-1/2 votes, McAdoo 337, Palmer 164-1/2 and the remainder were scattered. When Grayson visited his patient to give him the results of the balloting that evening, Wilson commented: "If they nominate Cox, he is one of the weakest of the lot." It certainly appeared that McAdoo had been stopped. It was, however, Saturday evening and that left Sunday for maneuvering.

McAdoo had been stalled well short of the necessary votes and part of his problem lay in the Virginia delegation. While Glass had been able to hold the delegation for himself, he had been unable to deliver it to McAdoo. Former Congressman Carlin, Palmer's manager, was from Virginia and there was a great deal of Palmer sentiment in the delegation. It was rumored that Glass yearned for the nomination himself, and, therefore, would not release the delegates. This probably was not the case; Glass simply could not deliver his delegation.  

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\[^{122}\text{DNC Proceedings, 1920, 355.}\]

\[^{123}\text{Grayson, Woodrow Wilson, 118.}\]

\[^{124}\text{New York Times, July 5, 1920, p. 1.}\]
Regardless of whether Glass harbored any secret ambitions for the presidency, the situation did appear right for the emergence of a dark horse. John W. Davis was the most prominently mentioned compromise candidate. Most people agreed that his character and ability qualified him for the office. The chief objection to Davis appeared to be that his service as Ambassador to Great Britain might make him repugnant to those city dwellers who espoused the cause of Irish freedom. Marshall, Colby, and Cummings were other prominently mentioned dark horses.  

Faced with the possibility of a deadlocked convention, Mrs. Funk, Amidon, Mullen, and Love held a strategy conference Sunday morning. They concluded that Palmer would not be nominated and that Cox could not get the nomination without McAdoo's support. The conferees decided that they could not support any of the dark horses that had been mentioned, and after surveying their delegates, they found that these delegates' second choice was Cox. Later that day the McAdoo leaders met with Moore and informed him that they were standing by McAdoo. Moore was worried about the Davis boom, and they assured him that neither Davis nor any other dark horse in the field would be nominated. The McAdoo forces expressed a great deal of concern about the stigma that the New York vote attached to the Cox candidacy, even though, ironically, they had sought this vote  

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Thus, the McAdoo forces were determined to enter Monday's session as they had left Saturday's. Moreover, neither Palmer nor Cox were ready to retire from the field. Pat Harrison issued assurances that Cox would be nominated. His reasoning was typically pragmatic. He asserted that:

Three of the biggest Democratic States of the North, pivotal ones, say that he is the only man who can win in the coming election. The rest of the country, especially the solid South is seeing the logic of this argument, and the Southern delegates want to see as the nominee a man who can enter the field with good chances of carrying Ohio and Illinois, Indiana and New York.\(^{127}\)

Although Cox may have been the second choice of some of McAdoo's delegates and looked upon favorably by Harrison, he had one unremittingly bitter foe--William Jennings Bryan. While Harrison looked at Cox and envisioned national victory, Bryan looked at him and saw something quite different. Bryan asserted:

\[ \ldots \text{The Cox contingent is held together by several ties. First, the wets hail him as their logical chief.} \]
\[ \text{They think of him every time they are thirsty and their enthusiasm increases with the time between drinks.} \ldots \]
\[ \text{He is the residuary legatee of all the booms that had any degree of moisture in them.} \]
\[ \text{He has also drawn into his ranks all the opposition to the president that is personal and his campaign has the benefit of skillful leadership.} \]

\(^{126}\text{Antoinette Funk to W. G. McAdoo, July 6, 1920, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 238, McAdoo Papers.} \)

\(^{127}\text{New York Times, July 5, 1920, p. 2.} \)
. . . These men [Murphy, Nugent, Taggart, Brennan] having combined these political powers of a decadent liquor traffic with an irritated group of big businessmen are standing out for their man, and to all outward appearances are holding the line.\(^{128}\)

While the McAdoo forces might be reconciled to a Cox victory, could Bryan ever be?

The seventh day of the convention, Monday, July 5, 1920, saw twenty-two ballots taken and a presidential candidate finally nominated. The first significant change occurred on the twenty-ninth ballot when the wily Tom Taggart, as always keeping his options open, transferred most of his votes from Cox to McAdoo.\(^{129}\) By the thirtieth ballot McAdoo had passed Cox and was again in the lead. On the thirty-first ballot Glass released the Virginia delegation and the majority of these votes gravitated to Palmer.\(^{130}\) As a result of the thirty-sixth ballot, McAdoo had 399 votes, Cox 377, and Palmer 241.\(^{131}\)

At this juncture, Fred Lynch of Minnesota moved that the convention recess and his motion carried.\(^{132}\)

During the recess party leaders approached Palmer and


\(^{129}\) DNC Proceedings, 1920, 377.

\(^{130}\) Ibid., 379-80, 385-87.

\(^{131}\) Ibid., 398.

\(^{132}\) Ibid.
informed him that he was beaten. His closest friends told him that if he persisted in remaining in the contest that they would be forced to desert him. While Palmer was not sure that Cox was the strongest possible candidate, he did tell his followers, without explanation, that the future of the party demanded McAdoo's defeat. Palmer was still pondering his course of action when the recess ended. His supporters, however, began to desert him. Following the thirty-eighth ballot, Charles Carlin, Palmer's campaign manager, unconditionally released the Palmer delegates. While some of them voted for McAdoo, more supported Cox. On the forty-fourth ballot Cox had attained victory, and Samuel Amidon, McAdoo partisan, moved that Cox be accepted unanimously. 133

Thus, the rather obscure James Middleton Cox, Governor of Ohio, became the Democratic nominee. What had made his nomination possible? E. H. Moore stated after the convention that "Cox was the logical beneficiary of the unwillingness of the Democratic party,

133 Coben, A. Mitchell Palmer, 262; New York Times, July 7, 1920, p. 8; DNC Proceedings, 1920, 405, 418-20. Standing on the convention floor, a beaming William McCombs derived the utmost pleasure from Cox's nomination. McCombs had helped make Woodrow Wilson President, and now he felt that he had destroyed his monstrous creation. McCombs, scorned by Wilson and obviously tormented in mind, asserted: "I have lived to see Woodrow Wilson deprived of his ambition to be Emperor of the World; balked in his desire to become President a third time; thwarted in his plan to make his dynasty perpetual through the nomination of his son-in-law, William G. McAdoo, as his heir, and thoroughly discredited at home and abroad." McCombs, Making Woodrow Wilson President, 298.
after full deliberation on all the circumstances to nominate McAdoo. This was not an entirely accurate explanation. Rather, Cox was the beneficiary of all those circumstances that had prevented McAdoo from waging a vigorous campaign. Despite Wilson's silence and Palmer's active campaign, McAdoo had entered the convention with amazing strength for a man who had been unable to announce any type of candidacy. He had retained a measure of this vitality despite his last minute withdrawal. This withdrawal had, nevertheless, been costly. It had not only deprived McAdoo of the indefatigable Harrison's services but also the entire Tennessee delegation which had taken his withdrawal at face value and voted for Davis. Moreover, that withdrawal had tempted numerous favorite sons to remain in the race. Finally, the McAdoo candidacy had suffered tremendously from inadequate organization. It appeared obvious that Roper's absence had constituted an insurmountable disadvantage.

Cox drew his support from many sources. Obviously he benefitted from the allegiance of the anti-administration and Wet partisans. Antoinette Funk bemoaned that the forces behind Cox placed him before the country as a Wet candidate. Moreover, while

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134 Quoted in Bagby, The Road to Normalcy, 116.

135 Antoinette Funk to W. G. McAdoo, July 6, 1920, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 238, McAdoo Papers; Labert St. Clair to W. G. McAdoo, July 11, 1920, Ibid., Bagby, The Road to Normalcy, 116.
she did not know if Cox were anti-administration, she felt that the
convention had labeled him as an anti-administration candidate.  

Concerning the Cox adherents, Franklin Roosevelt asserted that "the
support of Murphy and similar so-called leaders was given him in
the convention not so much because they felt they could use him, as
to register their opposition to any candidate connected with the
present Wilson administration, . . . In other words, they were not
so much for Cox, as against McAdoo and Palmer."  

There was no
doubt in Bryan's mind as to the forces lurking behind the Cox
candidacy. The Peerless Leader commented:

The nomination of Governor Cox signalizes the
surrender of the democratic party into the hands of
the reactionaries on both the liquor question and
financial question generally. A candidate like an
individual is to be judged by the company he keeps
and Governor Cox's company leaves no doubt as to
the view entertained for him by those interested in
the manufacture, sale and use of intoxicating liquors,
and by those who represent big business.

While there was some truth in Bryan's polemics, Cox's
nomination was not promoted entirely by Wets, bosses, and anti-
administration forces. An analysis of the balloting reveals several
interesting features. Cox, indeed, ran well in the populous Eastern

136 Antoinette Funk to W. G. McAdoo, July 6, 1920, McAdoo
General Correspondence, Box 238, McAdoo Papers.

137 Franklin Roosevelt to W. Rossell Bowie, July 30, 1920,
Group 15, Box 12, FDR Papers.

138 Chattanooga News, July 6, 1920, p. 3.
and Midwestern states with large urban populations and hence a large Wet vote. But significantly, he also enjoyed success in the South.

Evidently, many Southerners shared Harrison's pragmatism. McAdoo, on the other hand, fared relatively poorly in the South, a fact that clearly distressed him. The West, however, was practically solid in its allegiance to McAdoo. Thus, as had been the case in the fight over prohibition, the party divided on an East-West basis with the South rather neutralized. McAdoo's poor showing in the South may go far toward explaining his less than heroic actions in regard to the Ku Klux Klan in 1924.  

For McAdoo's disappointment over his showing in the South see W. G. McAdoo to George Fort Milton, August 12, 1920, McAdoo Letterbooks, Box 508, McAdoo Papers; W. G. McAdoo to Charles A. Lyerly, August 3, 1920, ibid. Taking into consideration the fact that the unit rule masks many things, the following states were practically solid in their support for McAdoo: Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Utah, New Mexico, North Dakota, Kansas, Texas, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Obviously his strength was in the West. McAdoo could claim about half of the delegates from California, Arizona, and South Dakota. Moreover, he garnered about one-third of the Colorado delegation. The only votes he lost in the West were primarily to Cox who could claim a portion of the California delegation, half of Arizona, two-thirds of Colorado and the entire Nevada contingent. Nebraska was split between Owen and McAdoo with Owen enjoying a slight edge. This vote undoubtedly reflected the split between the Bryan and the Hitchcock-Mullen wings of the Nebraska Democracy. Ironically, McAdoo's support came from the Hitchcock-Mullen faction which was the Wet element of the party in the state. Oklahoma, of course, was for Owen. In the South, McAdoo lost Arkansas, Mississippi, most of Louisiana, most of Florida, and a portion of Alabama to Cox. Palmer carried Georgia. Davis had Tennessee in addition to his native West Virginia, and once Glass released Virginia much of it went to Palmer. The votes of the Midwestern states were splintered between Cox and McAdoo, and those of the New England states between Cox, Palmer, and McAdoo. Cox's
Thus, Cox owed his nomination to several factors. One of the most balanced views of his selection was penned by George Fort Milton who asserted:

Looking at the matter retrospectively, the nomination of Cox does not appear illogical. Several elements—not all of them kindred—combined in his support. Many party men considered the more promising expedient of keeping Ohio in the democratic column. In the east his ambition met favor from those who hoped for some modification of the enforcement of prohibition. Yet again, he received strong support from some states which are, at the same time, steadfast supporters of the cause, notably Mississippi and Iowa, both of which went to him solidly.

Another fact which contributed to the nomination of Cox was the division of the administration forces between McAdoo and Palmer. The latter had very little popular support, but he had contrived to secure enough of the delegates to defeat the nomination of McAdoo. 140

Democrats generally expressed pleasure over Cox’s nomination. Newton Baker in both his public and private statements indicated that the choice of his fellow Ohioan was a good one. Gilbert Hitchcock likewise believed that the Democrats had chosen a strong candidate. 141 Not surprisingly, Murphy applauded the choice. The greatest bloc of votes came from Ohio, Illinois, New York, and New Jersey. In the last crucial balloting, Indiana had also returned to him. DNC Proceedings, 1920, passim.

140 Chattanooga News, July 6, 1920, p. 4.

Tammany leader insisted that "in Governor Cox we have an ideal candidate, who will add tremendous strength to the party's position in New York State."\textsuperscript{142} John W. Davis considered Cox to be the party's strongest possible candidate. He felt that Cox's legislative record would make him attractive to progressives and that he should be able to capitalize on the administration's good points without being burdened with its liabilities. Davis proffered his services in the campaign and that offer was accepted.\textsuperscript{143}

Commenting on the Cox nomination, McAdoo told newsmen "that's fine. I am greatly relieved and delighted that the call did not come to me."\textsuperscript{144} McAdoo probably meant this. He had made a strong showing; he had fulfilled his obligations to his supporters; and he must have been aware that this was not to be a Democratic year. Labert St. Clair, who had labored for McAdoo in San Francisco, wrote: "Especially, I hope, will you make speeches for Cox. He will be defeated, of course, but it is the duty of every supporter you have to help in every possible way. When he is defeated, there will be only one Democrat left in public life to whom the people will turn in

\textsuperscript{142}New York Times, July 7, 1920, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{143}John W. Davis to John Cornwell, July 6, 1920, Box 16, Davis Papers; John W. Davis to Robert Lansing, July 8, 1920, \textit{ibid.}; John W. Davis to James W. Ewing, August 3, 1920, Box 17, Davis Papers; James M. Cox to John W. Davis, August 9, 1920, \textit{ibid.}

\textsuperscript{144}New York Times, July 7, 1920, p. 5.
1924. " McAdoo replied: "Now I shall have, as you say, an opportunity to put my house in order and be ready for any opportunity the future may present. We shall all be able to perform useful service, I hope, for the public, even as private citizens. Then again in 1924 there may be a very different story!" 145

Not all Democrats, however, were reconciled to Cox's nomination. William Jennings Bryan was a bitterly disappointed man. Sitting in his hotel room following Cox's nomination, Bryan remarked: "My heart is in the grave with our cause." 146 Not only had he been crushed by the administration forces in the platform fight, but he had witnessed the nomination of Cox who in Bryan's estimation was a Wet. But the man that Bryan held most responsible for crushing progressive Democracy was not Cox, but Wilson. It was Wilson who had prevented Bryan's planks from being incorporated into the platform. Bryan wrote in the July edition of the Commoner: "...having reached the highest pinnacle of fame to which a human being was ever lifted, he [Wilson] has rewarded the confidence of his nation and the generosity of his party by an exhibition of egotism which would be pathetic if it were not tragic." 147 Cox's nomination merely rubbed

145Labert St. Clair to W. G. McAdoo, July 11, 1920, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 238, McAdoo Papers; W. G. McAdoo to Labert St. Clair, July 15, 1920, McAdoo Letterbooks, Box 507, ibid.


147Quoted in Levine, Defender of the Faith, 170.
salt into the open wounds. Bryan indicated that he did not know what
course he would take with regard to the Democratic Party. There
was a great deal of speculation that he might join forces with the
Prohibition Party to the detriment of Democratic chances in the
November elections. 148

The press viewed Cox's nomination with something less than
total enthusiasm. The conservative press felt that he posed no
threat, and the socialist papers saw absolutely no difference between
Harding and Cox. Some papers pictured Cox as a strong nominee.
The San Francisco Bulletin asserted that "Cox is a candidate of
Presidential quality, a man of the people; he has risen to his present
position by hard work and superior abilities." 149 The Springfield
Republican, however, indicated that Cox's nomination had been flawed
by the nature of his support. The paper asserted:

Governor Cox emerges from the San Francisco con-
vention as its nominee in some degree less attractive
than he entered it as a candidate. His record as
Governor of Ohio appears that of a liberal, forward-
looking executive; it had and it will still have a large
measure of appeal to the independent, liberal voter.
But the fact that he was supported throughout by
Tammany, and that without that support he could not
have been nominated, can not be ignored. 150

While the Democratic press expressed enthusiasm, there were


149 "Cox's Chances," Literary Digest, LXVI (July 17, 1920), 12.

150 Ibid., 13.
mutterings from the South about Cox's connection with the Wets and Tammany. The Republican press also hastened to point out these same aspects of Cox's nomination. Interestingly, however, the Chattanooga News was initially prepared to minimize Cox's Wet and Tammany affiliations. The paper pronounced Cox to be a good choice. Milton visualized Cox as a party unifier. The Chattanooga editor felt that "by his choice the influential eastern democratic vote which was favorable to a less aride attitude on wine and beer will be pleased, for, while . . . Cox has not fought prohibition in Ohio, neither has he battled for it." Moreover, Milton felt that Cox's nomination would help reconcile those elements of the party who had been bitterly opposed to the President's policies. Milton pointed to Cox's progressive record as governor of Ohio to prove that he was no tool of reactionary interests.

The Nation, meanwhile, sank deeper into despondency over Cox's selection. It asserted:

Precisely as the Republican Convention turned at the end to the weakest candidate, so has the Democratic. Their followers must, therefore, choose between two mediocrities, between two second-rate Ohio newspaper editors, neither of whom can truthfully be said to have the caliber requisite for the Presidency even in

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151 Ibid., 13-14.

152 Chattanooga News, July 6, 1920, p. 4.

153 Ibid.
ordinary times, much less the extraordinary ones in which we live. 154

These sentiments were echoed by the World's Work which avowed that "the Democrats have followed the example of the Republicans and nominated one of their most commonplace men for the highest office in the nation." 155 According to the World's Work, the chief reason for Cox's nomination was the mere accident that he came from the pivotal state of Ohio. Moreover, the World's Work, like many others, felt that Tammany was too heavy a burden to carry. 156

For its vice-presidential nominee the party turned to Franklin D. Roosevelt. 157 Roosevelt probably hoped for the vice-presidential nomination and by the time of the convention there were numerous rumors circulating that Roosevelt would make an excellent choice. 158 Cox opted for the Assistant Secretary of the Navy because he added geographical balance to the ticket, had a record as an independent Democrat, and possessed the magic Roosevelt name. Cox instructed Moore to clear the nomination with Murphy. Murphy, not particularly happy with the selection, was gratified at being consulted and gave

156 Ibid.
157 DNC Proceedings, 1920, 450.
158 Freidel, Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Ordeal, 51-61.
his assent. Roosevelt was a popular choice. Significantly, Roosevelt was a popular choice. Western Democrats were particularly pleased with Roosevelt's nomination. They felt that Roosevelt would be an asset in their region because of his attractive personality, his name, and his progressivism. The Nation, which was so distressed with the top of the ticket, believed Roosevelt's selection as vice-president to be a satisfactory one. While the journal considered him to be too much of an imperialist, it felt that he was essentially inclined to liberalism.

In terms of control of the Democratic Party, most commentators agreed that the party had shifted to the right, that Cox's nomination represented a repudiation of Wilsonianism. The New York Tribune insisted that Cox was "as far away from Wilsonianism as possible." Boise Penrose observed that the nomination meant that the old line leaders had recaptured control of the party from Wilson's "amateurs and alleged idealists." Bruce Bliven could only dourly comment that "the delegates began in terms of Jefferson, went on to terms of Wilson and ended in terms of Boss Tweed or

159 Cox, Journey Through My Years, 232.
161 Nation, CXI (July 17, 1920), 57.
162 Quoted in Bagby, The Road to Normalcy, 121.
163 Quoted in ibid., 122.
Charlie Murphy. "164 The World's Work commented emphatically:

"The one definite outcome of the San Francisco Convention is the
elimination of Woodrow Wilson as the dominant force in American
public life." The journal continued that "... in San Francisco the
forces in the Democratic Party which are most antagonistic to Mr.
Wilson emerged triumphant." The most important aspect of the
convention as the World's Work saw it "... was the decisive
influence exercised by such practical political leaders as Charles F.
Murphy, ... James R. Nugent, ... George E. Brennan, ... and
Thomas Taggart." Insofar as the World's Work was concerned, the
President had lost control of the party organization, 165

The important fact to emphasize, however, is that the bosses
had not wrested control of the party from the Wilsonians; rather
Wilson had abdicated leadership. Wilson had drafted the platform
and the Wilsonians had brushed aside his opponents--Reed and Bryan.
Wilson's desire for a third term, however, had so clouded the
picture that McAdoo, who could have attained the nomination if Wilson
had not inhibited him, was forced into a losing strategy. This fact
was not lost on contemporaries. The World's Work asserted:

164 Bruce Bliven, "San Francisco," New Republic, XXIII
(July 14, 1920), 196.

165 "A Change in Democratic Leadership," World's Work, XL
(September, 1920), 425.
Except for President Wilson's attitude, Mr. McAdoo would in all probability have been named. He was the strongest candidate; yet his position of openly refusing the honor while his supporters were actively promoting his interest was one that necessarily spelled defeat; and into this position he was forced by the President's scarcely concealed ambition to succeed himself. 166

While Wilson had been largely responsible for his followers losing control of the party at San Francisco, the loss had not been to a man totally repugnant to them. And while the McAdoo supporters were disappointed, they looked beyond 1920 to the future. Unbeknown to them that future would bring a bitter struggle for control of the party. Although Cox owed his nomination in large measure to the urban bosses, his candidacy posed no immediate threat to rural civilization. Nevertheless, during the campaign the rural-urban conflict began to emerge over the prohibition issue. And when one of the urban bosses' own--Alfred E. Smith--threatened ascendancy, the struggle for control of the party would become vicious. At that point the administration-anti-administration conflict became obscured by the larger rural-urban struggle. Although the antagonists in both instances were not perfectly synonymous, most of the strong administration people, while not necessarily agreeing on a champion, would be opposed to the symbolic leader of the urban masses--Alfred E. Smith.

CHAPTER IV

FROM DEFEAT TO VICTORY

Although Cox's nomination assured him formal control of the party's machinery, he did not, in fact he could not, completely eliminate those men and women who had labored for Wilson and whose primary sympathies lay with McAdoo. The result was a campaign within a campaign. While the McAdooites were willing to assist Cox, they looked beyond 1920 to 1924. Moreover, as the campaign progressed, it became apparent that the Wet-Dry issue was potentially capable of rendering the Democracy impotent. Even though Cox embraced Wilsonianism, his image as a Wet alienated many of the Wilsonians. Thus, as early as the 1920 campaign, cultural issues were beginning to emerge as the dominant ones in the minds of some Democrats.

Cox's overwhelming defeat appeared to clear the path for McAdoo's nomination in 1924. With the 1924 contest in view the McAdoo partisans assiduously undertook the task of reorganizing and strengthening the party. In the process they succeeded in forcing the resignation of Cox's national chairman and placing the party under more capable management. Their actions appeared to be
vindicated when the party scored tremendous gains in the off-year elections of 1922. Nevertheless, the emergency of the Klan issue in these elections portended future disaster for the Democracy. Both the Klan and liquor questions were in essence reflections of the growing antagonism between the city and the countryside within the party. Consequently, McAdoo succeeded in revitalizing the party machinery at a moment when the party was sinking into a malaise that would leave it on the verge of disintegration.

The first problem Cox faced after his nomination was that of selecting a national chairman. Even though custom dictated that Cox should choose his own national chairman, there was a great deal of sentiment for retaining Homer Cummings in that position. Not unnaturally Wilson wanted Cummings to remain, and Cummings informed Cox that he would serve if asked. While the pliable Cox was not averse to the suggestion, there was vehement opposition to Cummings both inside and outside the Cox camp. Tom Love, ardent McAdoo partisan, cautioned against selecting Cummings. Love informed Cox that while Cummings was a great speaker, he was a poor organizer and manager. There were, however, other considerations involved in Love's evaluation of the situation which he did not make privy to Cox. Love did not believe that McAdoo had anything to gain from Cummings' re-election. The McAdoo supporters suspected that Cummings had been too ambitious to win the presidential nomination for himself at San Francisco. Understandably, the anti-
administration forces were not elated over the prospects of Wilson's
man continuing as chairman. Both Moore and Marsh threatened to
resign from the national committee if Cox selected Cummings. ¹

Cox was caught in an unenviable position. Although he had
won the nomination, Wilson's supporters constituted the majority of
the national committee. Thus, while the chairmanship normally
would have gone to E. H. Moore, Cox's campaign manager, he was
entirely unacceptable to the committee's Wilsonian majority. Moore
had been a persistent opponent of Wilson within the committee. More­
over, Moore frowned upon making the League the chief issue in the
campaign and was an avowed Wet. Consequently, Love strongly
objected to Moore's selections and did not hesitate to voice his dis­
pleasure to Cox. Cox replied that he did not think that Moore would
accept the chairmanship. ²

With Cummings and Moore too closely identified with the
Wilsonian and anti-Wilsonian elements respectively, sentiment
seemed to be mushrooming for Representative Cordell Hull of
Tennessee. On July 18, prior to the scheduled national committee

¹Bagby, The Road to Normalcy, 127; Thomas B. Love to
W. G. McAdoo, July 23, 1920, McAdoo General Correspondence,
Box 239, McAdoo Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of
Congress).

²Bagby, The Road to Normalcy, 127-28; Thomas B. Love to
W. G. McAdoo, July 23, 1920, McAdoo General Correspondence,
Box 239, McAdoo Papers.
meeting in Columbus, Ohio, some party leaders conferred in Chicago. Moore, Murphy, and Smith were among those in attendance. When Moore revealed that it was definitely settled that he would not become chairman, the belief began to grow that Hull, who had the open backing of Thomas Taggart, would be selected. Yet, although Hull was Cox's personal choice, E. H. Moore objected. Moore believed that Hull was too closely associated with Homer Cummings and J. Bruce Kremer.3

While speculation centered on the national chairmanship, a potentially divisive subject, evidence mounted that McAdoo's backers intended to support the ticket. Glass visited Cox on McAdoo's behalf and assured him that the McAdoo partisans would assist him in his election bid. Daniel Roper likewise conferred with Cox and pledged his support, and it was reported that McAdoo would speak in behalf of the ticket. Nevertheless, there were disturbing portents. While assuring Cox that he would render assistance, Tom Love refused to have any formal association with the campaign. As a "militant dry," Love's conscience would not permit such a connection. Thus, the process that would lead to Love's bolting the party in 1928 had already begun.4


4 New York Times, July 19, 1920, p. 2; Thomas Love to W. G. McAdoo, July 23, 1920, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 239, McAdoo Papers.
Cox’s immediate problem, however, was the party chairmanship. He faced the dilemma of attempting to unite the party on his choice. Nevertheless, on the evening prior to the national committee meeting, Cox issued a statement asserting that he would like to see E. H. Moore elected chairman. In light of Moore’s persistent refusals and the knowledge that he was unpalatable to the Wilsonians, perhaps the offer was a mere gesture of gratitude on Cox’s part.

Rumors still pointed toward Hull’s selection. A new name, George White, however, was mentioned that evening. White, a former Ohio congressman, had been one of Cox’s staunchest backers. Ironically, in view of the McAdoo contingent’s haste to replace White after the election, Tom Love recommended White’s selection to E. H. Moore. Love believed that White was friendly toward McAdoo. Moreover, White strongly supported both Wilson and the League of Nations. Probably most important from Love’s perspective, however, White was a Dry who had consistently voted the Dry position.5

The situation was still nebulous when the national committee convened on the morning of July 20, 1920, in Columbus. A subcommittee of fifteen members was appointed to meet with Cox to

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5New York Times, July 20, 1920, pp. 1 and 3; Thomas B. Love to W. G. McAdoo, July 23, 1920, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 239, McAdoo Papers.
ascertain his wishes in regard to the chairmanship. When the sub-committee met with Cox and Roosevelt, Cox informed them that he wanted an Ohioan for the chairmanship. Because Moore would not accept it and there was strenuous opposition to him, Cox's choice was George White. Moore arranged to resign from the national committee so that White could be appointed to his position. This maneuver made White eligible for the chairmanship. Roosevelt, acting as a conciliator, thought that the choice was an excellent one.

By the time the full committee reconvened that afternoon the matter had been settled. Cummings announced Cox's choice, and Moore resigned opening the way for White to become Ohio's national committeeman. White was then perfunctorily elected national chairman. J. Bruce Kremer and S. B. Amidon retained their positions as vice-chairmen, and in addition, Miss Charle Williams of Tennessee was selected as a vice-chairman. E. H. Hoffman continued as

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6 In addition to the three most prominently mentioned men for the position—Cummings, Moore, and Hull—the committee consisted of Mack, Marsh, Dockweiler, Love, Amidon, Connolly of Michigan, Hoffman of Indiana, Mrs. Cantrill of Kentucky, Mrs. Smith of Illinois, Angus McLean of North Carolina, Mrs. Pyke of Ohio, and A. R. Titlow of Washington. The delegation represented a fair balance of administration and anti-administration supporters. *DNC Proceedings, 1920*, 699-700.

secretary and Marsh remained treasurer.  

At the time of his election, White was only forty-eight years old. He had studied under Wilson at Princeton, had been elected to Congress from an overwhelmingly Republican district in Ohio, and had amassed a fortune. The New York Times applauded his selection. The paper reported that White had "... shown courage, intelligence, a sense of fair play... In short, he is the type of clean, able, forcible, new-school political manager of which Mr. Vance McCormick and Mr. Will Hays are admirable examples." Time was to prove that, notwithstanding his good qualities, White was simply not equal to the task that had fallen to him almost by default.

In his selection of White, Cox had taken pains to choose someone acceptable to the Wilsonian wing of the party. The position that Cox assumed on the League, likewise, belied his image as an anti-administration candidate. Nevertheless, Cox would not alter his position on prohibition. And in his efforts to appease every element of the party in some measure, Cox apparently satisfied none. This failure to capture the imagination of his own party, coupled with the overwhelming resentment against Wilsonianism among the electorate and White's organizational and managerial ineptitude, would lead to

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8 *DNC Proceedings, 1920*, 701-05.

9 *Bagby, The Road to Normalcy*, 128.

an overwhelming humiliation at the polls.

Shortly after his nomination, it became apparent that those party members who believed that they had discovered an anti-administration champion in Cox were to be disappointed. As early as July 10, Cox intimated that he intended to stress the League issue, not prohibition. He also planned to visit Wilson in order to discuss the national campaign. E. H. Moore contended that such a trip would be politically inexpedient. Moore argued that many of the party's elements had construed Cox's victory over Palmer and McAdoo as a defeat of the administration. He averred that to visit the President would merely offend many of the people who had worked for Cox's nomination. Cox had, however, already determined that the League was to be the principal issue and intended to see Wilson regardless of the consequences. 11

Other opposition surfaced once it became public knowledge that Cox and Roosevelt were to journey to the White House. It was felt that such a visit would hurt Cox among the Irish voters lodged in the cities. Moreover, because Cox had won his nomination without the administration's aid, it was felt that he would be wise to completely dissociate himself from Wilsonianism. Nevertheless, Cox was doggedly determined to carry on Wilson's fight for the League. During

11 New York Times, July 11, 1920, p. 1; Cox, Journey Through My Years, 243-44.
the course of the conference, Cox promised Wilson that, if he were elected, he would do everything within his power to carry out Wilson's pledges in regard to the League. While Cox's pilgrimage to the White House may have alienated anti-Wilsonians, it helped reconcile some of the reluctant Wilsonians, notably Bernard Baruch, to his cause. Wilson was apparently satisfied with Cox's handling of party affairs. Later in July, Cummings emerged from a meeting with Wilson and announced that "the President has a high opinion of Chairman White, and is well satisfied with the outcome of the San Francisco convention."  

While the Wilson and McAdoo forces appeared to be reconciled to the Cox candidacy, Bryan was not to be mollified. Bryan had been visibly distraught over both the platform and the candidate. Yet the man who had been three times honored with the Democracy's presidential nomination could not bring himself to actually bolt the party. Bryan, therefore, refused the presidential nomination proffered him by the Prohibition Party in 1920. The refusal did not, however, constitute an endorsement of Cox. Bryan wired the Prohibition Party convention:


My connection with other reforms would make it impossible for me to focus my attention upon the prohibition question alone, and besides I am not willing to sever my connections with the Democratic Party, which has so signally honored me in years past. I have not decided yet how I shall vote this Fall, but whatever I may feel it my duty to do in this campaign, I expect to continue as a member of the Democratic Party and to serve my country through it. 14

Bryan obviously did not feel that he could serve his country by supporting Cox. Despite repeated efforts by various Democrats to actively engage Bryan in the contest, the Commoner sat out the campaign. Bryan responded to Pat Harrison's request that he speak in behalf of the ticket by expressing regret that he could not participate. Unwilling to sacrifice his political purity, Bryan explained that any speeches he might deliver would only alienate those to whom Cox was appealing. Bryan not only opposed Cox's position on prohibition and the League but also his demand for repeal of the excess profits tax. 15

In an effort to attract both Bryan and financing to the campaign, Thomas Chadbourne and James Gerard urged Cox to promise to veto any act increasing the permissible alcoholic content under the Volstead Act. Chadbourne contended that Cox could not carry New


15 W. J. Bryan to Pat Harrison, August 7, 1920, Box 33, Bryan Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress).
York or New Jersey in any case, and that he should, therefore, direct his appeal to the Middle and Far West.\textsuperscript{16} Tumulty, however, disagreed with Chadbourne's analysis of the situation. He did not believe that Cox should adopt a Dry stand. Such a reversal, wired Tumulty, would mean that Cox "... would not only lose the liberal support," but "... would not gain the dry support." Tumulty maintained that even Drys preferred "frankness" to "wobbling."\textsuperscript{17}

Cox agreed with Tumulty, and it is doubtful that a Dry declaration would have converted Bryan. It was not solely Cox's position on prohibition that disturbed the Commoner. When Gerard informed Bryan of Chadbourne's advice to Cox, Bryan replied:

> Having been nominated by the wets because he [Cox] is wet and having gone out of his way... to pledge himself to sign a wet bill if Congress passes it... he could not recover lost ground by a change now. He could not regain the dry support without a change so complete that it would lose all the wet vote. . . . I would be glad to commend him for doing right. . . . but could not decide until I saw his statement how far I could go in supporting him.

> But this is not the paramount issue. He has accepted the President's view and stands for the League without reservations--an indefensible position since 23 Democratic Senators voted for reservations...\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{16}Thomas L. Chadbourne to James M. Cox, September 2, 1920, \textit{ibid.}; James Gerard to W. J. Bryan, September 4, 1920, \textit{ibid.}

\textsuperscript{17}Quoted in Blum, \textit{Joe Tumulty and the Wilson Era}, 251.

\textsuperscript{18}W. J. Bryan to James Gerard, September 20, 1920, Box 33, Bryan Papers.
Bryan, therefore, remained intractable. He sat out the campaign and exhibited a proclivity for rule or ruin politics, a trait that would be appropriated by numerous Democrats before the decade was over. There could be little question about the strategy that Bryan was contemplating. One of his followers stated it simply when he wrote that, once Cox had been defeated, they could pick up the pieces and reorganize the party with the Murphys, Taggarts, and Wilsons excluded. Thus, Bryan awaited the coming disaster, perhaps hoping that he would once again control his party's destiny.

Bryan's attitude, however, was not the only discomfort that Cox endured from the hands of his own party. Although Wilson endorsed Cox, the President did nothing to help his would-be successor. Conceding victory to the Republicans, Colonel House offered no support. Senator Reed refused to endorse the ticket. David I. Walsh was suddenly too ill to speak, perhaps because he could not face his Irish constituency in a campaign based upon the League. Moreover, although White was the titular leader of the national committee, E. H. Moore appeared to wield the real power with the organization. Distrustful of both of these men, Cummings dissociated himself as much as possible from them. Unfortunately, neither Moore nor White were capable managers, and the burden of conducting the campaign fell increasingly upon the shoulders of Harrison, Tumulty and

19Steven B. Ayres to W. J. Bryan, September 15, 1920, ibid.
Key Pittman. 20

White had descended upon the New York headquarters with ambitious plans for a large scale campaign. Pat Harrison was installed as chairman of the speaker's bureau, Wilbur Marsh as treasurer, and James Gerard as chairman of the finance committee. The campaign, however, never materialized. 21 The problems were legion, and many of them stemmed from internal dissension over Cox's stand on prohibition. Early in August, Woolley advised Cox that if the campaign were to be successful, it would have to be won in the South, the West, and the Midwest. Woolley informed Cox that White must not be deluded into believing that he could carry New York or New Jersey. At the same time, Woolley confided to Roper that it would be impossible for strong McAdoo partisans to work on the campaign committee and avoid friction. Professing to like White personally, Woolley felt that the Chairman was too inexperienced in national politics and too subject to the influence of Marsh and Moore, neither of whom was friendly to McAdoo. Nevertheless, at White's request, Woolley agreed to work in the New York office. Woolley became convinced that success depended upon a Dry declaration from Cox. Former Governor West of Oregon and former Senator Shafroth

20 Bagby, The Road to Normalcy, 130; Mitchell, Embattled Democracy, 40; Blum, Joe Tumulty and the Wilson Era, 248-49.

of Colorado assured Woolley that all hope was lost in the West unless Cox adopted a Dry stance. Woolley believed that although White agreed with this estimate of the situation, he was not strong enough to impress this view upon Cox. 22

There could be no doubt that the Republican newspapers in the West were making a strong issue of Cox's Wetness. William Allen White declared that in the Middle West the Wet and Dry issue was shaping up as the paramount issue of the campaign. Further, he stated that on prohibition "Cox must make a statement which will be conspicuously offensive to Tammany or he must lose the women of the Middle West . . ."

The Kansas City Journal asserted that "Cox is stuck all over with beer labels," and the Tulsa World depicted Cox to be as "wet as the Atlantic Ocean." The Portland Oregonian insisted that:

> If Cox is elected it will be by booze and the appetite for booze. Every little paper in Oregon, and everywhere, that supports Cox is a partner, willing or unwilling, in the great scheme for an under-surface appeal to the 'wet' instincts, habits, and purposes of Tammany, its 'wet' allies and all the other 'wets.' Fighting for Cox they are fighting with the forces that are fighting for booze.

In New York it is the hand of Tammany; in Illinois, of Boss Brennan; in New Jersey it is the rule of Boss Nugent; in Indiana it is Boss Taggart that holds sway; and in Oregon it is the voice of Democratic partisanship, one hundred per cent genuine, but hypocritically posing always as champions of the uplift, that would elect Cox, friend of light wines and real beer.  

Woolley, fully convinced that Cox's only salvation lay in a Dry declaration, wrote the candidate on September 4, reiterating that the campaign could not be won in the East, and that the fight must be carried to the South and the Middle and Far West. Moreover, Woolley reported that his conferences with Middle and Far Westerners completely satisfied him that those regions could be won only by an unequivocal Dry declaration. Later in September, Woolley, panicking, wired Cox that conditions in the New York headquarters were utterly deplorable. There was simply no money available. In Woolley's opinion, the only way this situation could be alleviated was through a bone-dry declaration. Roper, likewise, attributed the lack of financial support to Cox's failure to assume a strong Dry posture. Thomas Chadbourne, a large contributor in the past, hesitated to give full financial backing because of Cox's position on prohibition.  

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23 The Dry Drive on Cox, "Literary Digest, LXVI (August 14, 1920), 14-16.

24 Robert Woolley to James M. Cox, September 4, 1920, Box 3, Woolley Papers; Robert Woolley to James M. Cox, September 14, 1920, ibid.; Roper, Fifty Years of Public Life, 210-11.
With the Democratic organization visibly deteriorating, there was a movement in the midst of the campaign to call a meeting of the national committee in order to oust the clearly inefficient White. Tom Love, however, counseled Jouett Shouse that any attempt to get the national committee to take such action would be of no avail. In fact, Love believed that any action by the national committee would only worsen the situation. He felt that Cox would have to initiate any such change. Indicating that the greatest need was money, Love castigated not only the rich men who had wanted Cox nominated and then failed to support him financially, but also the administration officials who had not contributed very heavily.

It was not only the McAdoo partisans and the Drys who recognized the necessity for restructuring the campaign organization. Tumulty, certainly no Dry and closer to Cox than to McAdoo, implored Cox to effect a reorganization. Tumulty felt that the national organization was a farce. There was no money; there was no campaign. Tumulty wanted Cox to call a meeting of the national committee at once and find a man of Roper's type to fill White's position. Cox wired Tumulty and asked him to contact Moore and agree upon a course of action. Tumulty, of course, could not comply with this request because Moore, to a greater degree than White, was

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25 Thomas Love to Jouett Shouse, September 24, 1920, Box IU-8E, Love Papers.
responsible for the chaotic condition of the national campaign. In
October, Cox attempted to get Moore to assume full control, but it
was argued that White was functioning as well as possible without
any money. 26

Meanwhile, conditions deteriorated to such a degree, that
Key Pittman of Nevada, originally a McAdoo supporter who was
serving as Cox's Western campaign manager, was forced to close
the San Francisco headquarters on September 20, for lack of
sufficient funds. The West was virtually conceded to the Republicans.
Notwithstanding the hopeless situation, some Democrats did make at
least a token effort in behalf of the ticket. McAdoo, Palmer,
Cummings, Daniels, Smith, Robinson, Underwood, Marshall,
Cochran, and Baker all spoke in Cox's behalf. This was scarcely
enough, however, for a campaign doomed from the outset and beset
by a debilitating organizational fiasco. 27

William Gibbs McAdoo, the most conspicuous loser at San
Francisco, expended considerable energy in Cox's behalf. In so
doing, however, he was laying the groundwork for 1924. McAdoo
spent the greater part of July mending political fences and pulling

26 Blum, Joe Tumulty and the Wilson Era, 248-49; Bagby, The Road to Normalcy, 130.

27 Fred L. Israel, Nevada's Key Pittman, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1963), 44-45; Bagby, The Road to Normalcy, 129; Blum, Joe Tumulty and the Wilson Era, 249.
his own forces together. He thanked all the delegates who had worked for him in San Francisco and urged them to support Cox. Even though he was advocating Cox's candidacy, at the same time, McAdoo was carefully delineating his differences with Cox. McAdoo pointed out that, while Cox had been nominated by the bosses, he would rise above their influence, if elected. While McAdoo believed that the Democratic platform should have been more liberal, he assured his partisans that Cox was certainly superior to Harding. At the same time, McAdoo, perhaps looking to the future, reassured Glass and Meredith that he understood the difficulties under which they had labored in San Francisco and that he certainly harbored no ill will toward them. Nevertheless, the general tenor of the correspondence was that the McAdoo forces should support Cox in order to prevent the reactionaries from gaining control of the country. One must suspect, however, that McAdoo expected Cox to be defeated and that by aiding him McAdoo was enhancing his own chances for nomination four years hence.  

Notwithstanding his support of the Cox candidacy, McAdoo did not agree with Cox's strategy. McAdoo believed that the election was to be won in the South and the West. He, therefore, felt that it would be a mistake for Cox to court the party's Wet element. By September, McAdoo more vigorously expressed the misgivings of his followers concerning Cox's approach to the prohibition issue. This was something of a new departure for McAdoo who heretofore had seemed more interested in economic than in moral questions. Whether McAdoo was sincerely concerned about the Wet-Dry issue at this point or was merely catering to his natural constituency is open to conjecture. Earlier, Walter Lippmann had said of McAdoo: "He is not organized by a class feeling, nor by a set of profoundly imbedded general principles. He is organized by a remarkable sense of what a governing majority of voters wants and will receive." If McAdoo were indeed guided by his constituency, then the constituency that had made him progressive economically would now make him less

1920, ibid.; W. G. McAdoo to Mrs. Antoinette Funk, July 21, 1920, ibid.; W. G. McAdoo to Mrs. Mary Synon, July 21, 1920, ibid.; W. G. McAdoo to Carter Glass, July 21, 1920, ibid. See McAdoo Letterbooks, Box 507, McAdoo Papers for other expressions of McAdoo's thanks to his supporters and his advocacy of Cox's candidacy.

29W. G. McAdoo to J. B. Coulston, July 31, 1920, McAdoo Letterbooks, Box 507, McAdoo Papers.

than liberal culturally. Regardless of what motivated him, however, McAdoo began to step into the debate that would eventually overwhelm him. Corresponding with Jouett Shouse regarding Cox's position on prohibition, McAdoo asserted:

I was sorry to see Governor Cox evade the light wine and beer issue. I am firmly convinced that if he would come out strongly against any modification of the Volstead Act which would emasculate or nullify the 18th Amendment, he would array back of him all the great moral forces of the country, which are already strong for the League of Nations, and as strong for holding fast to the great victory we have gained for temperance. I think the wet vote is a disappearing quantity, and that it is a broken staff to lean upon. My own conviction is that the wet side is not even the strong side in the East, viewing it from the standpoint of expediency. Of course I would not myself view a great moral question like this from the standpoint of expediency. I would stand on the principles of morality and humanity no matter what the cost might be.\(^3\)

Despite his misgivings, McAdoo continued to support Cox whom he found preferable to Harding. Nevertheless, McAdoo felt that Cox's failure to adopt a Dry stance had harmed his candidacy, particularly in the West.\(^3\) Perhaps with tongue in cheek, McAdoo reported to Tumulty that he \"... was absolutely confident that Cox could have been elected if he had said unequivocally at Seattle, when

\(^3\)W. G. McAdoo to Jouett Shouse, September 13, 1920, McAdoo Letterbooks, Box 508, McAdoo Papers.

\(^3\)W. G. McAdoo to Labert St. Clair, September 14, 1920, McAdoo Letterbooks, Box 508, McAdoo Papers; W. G. McAdoo to E. T. Meredith, September 15, 1920, Box 509, ibid.; W. G. McAdoo to Jouett Shouse, September 17, 1920, ibid.
the question was put to him, that he was against any change in the
Volstead Act which would permit the sale of beer and light wines."  
McAdoo explained that "this would have put the West back of him,
and, with the Solid South would have elected him."  
While this statement accurately foreshadowed McAdoo's future strategy of
attempting to construct a Southern and Western alliance, McAdoo
must have been aware that prohibition was neither the sole, nor the
chief, issue in the 1920 campaign. It was, however, symptomatic
of the widening chasm between the rural and urban wings of the
party.

Cox and Roosevelt waged a tireless campaign in what was
doomed from the outset to be a losing cause. For the Republicans,
Wilson, not Cox, was the real enemy, and by 1920 Wilson had
devastated his party and alienated the electorate. His appointments
had divided the party and his intransigence on the League had rent
the party further and wearied the electorate. Furthermore, Wilson's
policies had alienated labor and agriculture, and the last years of
his administration had witnessed marked intolerance.  
Just prior to the election, Franklin K. Lane predicted that Cox "... is to be

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33 W. G. McAdoo to Joseph Tumulty, September 17, 1920, ibid.

34 Burner, The Politics of Provincialism, 67-69. For a
detailed study of the 1920 presidential campaign see Bagby, The
Road to Normalcy, 123-67.
beaten because Wilson is as unpopular as he once was popular."

McAdoo reported that "apparently there was indifference to every
issue before the election, and a blind purpose merely to effect a
change."36

Caught in the overwhelming reaction against Wilsonianism,
Cox's defeat was overwhelming. Voters of immigrant stock deserted
the party, and the Democrats received less than their normal vote in
every section of the country. Significantly, the party suffered most
in the West, the section that McAdoo hoped to capture at the expense
of the East. The Democracy even lost Tennessee and was reduced to
its traditional Southern base with the addition of Kentucky.37
Notwithstanding the debacle at the polls, the Democratic Party was not
dead. Even though the Nation believed that the party should die, it
commented that "as everyone knows, the election of Mr. Harding was
not a vote of confidence in the Republicans but merely the registering
of a remarkably unanimous vote of disapproval upon Wilson's
record..."38

35 Franklin K. Lane to Benjamin Ide Wheeler, October 28, 1920, printed in Lane (ed.), The Letters of Franklin K. Lane, 359.


Moreover, there were prominent Democrats who privately viewed the election as much less than a disaster. Franklin Roosevelt was certainly not depressed. He had built a national reputation and had contacted party leaders throughout the country. The young vice-presidential nominee made a particularly strong impression in the West. Roosevelt immediately entered into correspondence with these local leaders. He urged them to reorganize and to be ready to capitalize on Republican mistakes in time for the 1922 congressional elections. 39

Furthermore, McAdoo, who must have been congratulating himself on not receiving the nomination, was scarcely distraught. He was confident that the Democratic Party could win in 1924 if the organization were revitalized with a proper man placed in charge. As for his own role, McAdoo again issued studied disclaimers. Immediately following the election, McAdoo confided to Edward E. Britton that:

Of course no man can tell what the conditions may be in 1924, but if the opportunity presents itself for me to render a service to the country and to the Party at the same time, I hope to be in a position to respond to it. I do not wish to be misunderstood when I say this. I have no designs upon any political office, not even the presidency, and only mean that I intend to put my affairs in such shape that I shall be able to respond to

39 Freidel, Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Ordeal, 70, 91; Cox, Journey Through My Years, 238.
any call which may be made upon me, not because I want something for McAdoo, but because I want to serve the country.\textsuperscript{40}

Robert Lansing was certainly not surprised by the outcome of the election. Immediately following Cox's nomination, Lansing had informed Davis that he was looking forward to 1924 when he hoped to see Davis nominated. Following Cox's humiliation at the polls, Lansing expressed even greater pleasure that Davis had escaped the nomination in 1920. From Lansing's point of view, not even Davis could have escaped the people's disgust with Wilson and Wilsonianism.\textsuperscript{41} While the always blunt Carter Glass likewise was not dismayed by the election results, he did not attribute the defeat to a repudiation of Wilsonianism. He believed that at the very least the election should have taught the Democrats a lesson. He confided that "it should teach us to quit the practice of letting a triumvirate of Irishmen like Murphy, Taggart and Brennan to\textsuperscript{sic} nominate the candidate they want at the national convention merely in order to sell him out at the national election."\textsuperscript{42}

Nor surprisingly, William Jennings Bryan was neither

\textsuperscript{40}W. G. McAdoo to Edward E. Britton, November 4, 1920, McAdoo Letterbooks, Box 509, McAdoo Papers.

\textsuperscript{41}Robert Lansing to J. W. Davis, July 18, 1920, Box 16, Davis Papers (Yale University). Robert Lansing to J. W. Davis, November 5, 1920, Box 17, \textit{ibid}.

\textsuperscript{42}Carter Glass to J. H. Tyler, November 4, 1920, Box 169, Glass Papers (University of Virginia).
dismayed nor depressed by the Republican victory. Doubtless, he felt a degree of vindication. The Democrats had, after all, ignored all of his proposals and then suffered an overwhelming defeat. Bryan felt that the way was now open for a progressive reorganization of the party. He announced that the party was not dead and that it should not be judged by the recent campaign. The party, Bryan felt, had merely momentarily veered from its proper progressive course. Bryan, therefore, intended to reshape the party after his own image. Of all the would-be reorganizers, Bryan was the first to overtly attempt to capitalize upon the Cox disaster. There were, however, other reorganizers who would prove to be more potent than he.

Meanwhile, in the face of rumors that White should be asked to resign and Bryan purged from the party, Pat Harrison sought to bring harmony out of the disorder. He called upon the Democrats to forget the recent campaign and to rise above their differences. While Harrison urged reorganization, the restructuring he had in mind was synonymous neither with ousting White nor reading Bryan out of the party.

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43 Levine, Defender of the Faith, 175.

party. Always the harmonizer, Harrison asserted that "the Democratic Party is not dead. It has only received a temporary setback..." Harrison believed that White had "...showed marked ability in the management of the recent campaign, which was waged against overwhelming odds." Nor did Harrison castigate those Democrats who sat out the campaign. He obviously wanted them back. Harrison asserted: "I want to see every Democrat in the country, no matter what his views in the past have been or what his course was in the recent campaign, brought into line and a militant organization maintained to fight unitedly the reactionary policies the Republican Party will assuredly attempt to inaugurate." 45

Notwithstanding Harrison's advice, the next year witnessed Democrats maneuvering among themselves for control of the party rather than engaging the Republicans. There was a concerned movement to reorganize the party and to deprive White of the chairmanship. Although White was clearly not suited for the chairmanship, presidential politics, nevertheless, complicated the question of removing him. No one doubted that, if the elections of 1922 and 1924 were to be won, the Democratic committee must be transformed into a more effective organization than it had been in 1920. The problem, however, arose over the question of whom a revitalized party was to serve. Moreover,

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the political ineptitude of McAdoo's lieutenants delayed a solution of
the party's organizational woes.

McAdoo was quite anxious to see the party revitalized. Immediately following Cox's defeat, without a proper period of
mourning, McAdoo counseled the need for stronger party organization. With perhaps undue haste, McAdoo confided to Woolley that, if the
party were to be an effective force in 1922 and 1924, it needed a chair-
man who could devote his full energies to the task. Professing to like
the Chairman personally, McAdoo assumed that White's business
affairs would prevent him from devoting his full time to the committee
and that he would, therefore, resign. Nevertheless, McAdoo warned
Woolley that indefinite delay could not be tolerated. Looking to the
future, McAdoo believed that Tom Chadbourne would be an excellent
choice to succeed White. 46

Woolley, who with Tom Love would lead the first stage of the
reorganization fight, informed Carter Glass that a reorganization was
in order. Woolley had learned from Love that White planned to call a
meeting of the national committee in December and resign. Woolley,
therefore, was initially concerned with finding a proper successor
for White, and suggested that Chadbourne would be an excellent choice.
Woolley expected the Cox forces to oppose Chadbourne and realized

46 W. G. McAdoo to Walter Myers, November 5, 1920, McAdoo
Letterbooks, Box 509, McAdoo Papers; W. G. McAdoo to Robert
Woolley, November 12, 1920, ibid.
also that Chadbourne's Wall Street connections might make him unacceptable to Bryan. Woolley artfully tried to win Bryan's support for Chadbourne. He argued that Chadbourne was Dry, possessed broad social vision, was an organizational genius, and was progressive. Moreover, Woolley was confident that Chadbourne's work as chairman would erase any liability that the Wall Street connection might carry. Failing to convince Bryan, Woolley conferred with Chadbourne and reported that Chadbourne likewise questioned the wisdom of selecting someone with Wall Street connections.47

Meanwhile, Cox, aware of the growing movement to replace his chairman, wired Woolley in order to ascertain what was transpiring. Woolley denied both that he personally wanted to succeed George White and that the movement for reorganization was being undertaken in behalf of any particular candidate. In a display of self-righteous indignation, Woolley protested that:

Certainly, because a Democrat or a group of Democrats were for any particular man prior to the action of the San Francisco Convention is no reason why he or they should be held to be irrevocably for that man in 1924, regardless of the interests of their party--and because they had their interests in San Francisco is no reason why any other group should try to get

47 Robert Woolley to Carter Glass, November 13, 1920, Box 6, Woolley Papers; Robert Woolley to W. J. Bryan, December 4, 1920, Box 33, Bryan Papers; Robert Woolley to W. J. Bryan, December 13, 1920, ibid.
revenge on them, or suspect their motives in showing an active interest in the future of the Democratic Party. 48

Nevertheless, the press charged that McAdoo's partisans were actively attempting to replace White with Woolley as chairman of the national committee. Furthermore, it was reported that the McAdoo forces were already launching a campaign to capture the 1924 nomination. 49 In the face of these charges, Woolley desperately tried to convince Bryan that the reorganization movement was not in McAdoo's behalf. Woolley insisted that the next four years would produce the candidate and that his present object was merely to transform the party into a militant and progressive organization. 50 Notwithstanding Woolley's disclaimers, McAdoo's own utterances seemed to lend credence to the charge that the reorganization

48 Robert Woolley to James M. Cox, December 4, 1920, Box 3, Woolley Papers.


50 Robert Woolley to W. J. Bryan, January 4, 1921, Box 33, Bryan Papers. Woolley evidently believed that he enjoyed some degree of influence over Bryan. Moreover, Woolley indicated that he was Bryan's choice to succeed White. Woolley Unpublished autobiography, Chapter 30, p. 28, Box 44, Woolley Papers. Levine asserts, however, that Bryan chose to remain neutral in the matter of the chairmanship in order to insure that policies were made paramount over personalities. Bryan believed that "the people are intensely in earnest, and the committee can best serve the party not by burning incense before any particular idol, but by getting down to work for the protection of the public against exploiters." Quoted in Levine, Defender of the Faith, 184.
movement was being undertaken in his interests. He would not let the subject die. Early in January, 1921, at the Jackson Day Dinner of the Southern California Democratic Club in Los Angeles, McAdoo demanded that immediate steps be taken to organize the party for future campaigns under a chairman who would "devote all, or practically all, of his time to party affairs." McAdoo attributed the recent Democratic defeat "... in large measure to lack of effective national organization and the failure to get the Democratic side before the people through proper publicity." 51

Moving to counter such talk, Cox conferred in Washington with Tumulty, Cummings, Harrison, Pittman, Judge T. T. Ansbury, Joseph Guffey, and Angus McLean. At the conclusion of these meetings, it was reported that George White would retain the chairmanship at least for the present. 52 Nevertheless, McAdoo continued to advise his correspondents that the officers of the national committee would have to be reorganized. He confided that he had no doubt that the party could gain the support of a majority of the electorate, "... but the leadership must be in the hands of men who think in progressive and liberal terms, and not in the hands of base


materialists who want to use party organizations for selfish ends." 53

Faced with an incipient revolt within the ranks of the party, George White maneuvered to promote harmony. He had informally discussed his plans with Cox in Washington the previous week. White announced the appointment of an executive committee comprised of sixteen members. This committee was to meet in Washington on February 17 to discuss means of making the national committee more efficient. White's gesture seemed to make it obvious that he did not intend to relinquish control of the national committee. 54 Thus, while the announcement of the meeting was intended to promote harmony, it produced precisely the opposite effect. The advocates of thorough-going reorganization wanted White to call a meeting of the full committee. The national committee would consider reorganization and select a new chairman who could devote his full time to readying the party machinery for the 1922 and 1924 campaigns. The zealous

53 W. G. McAdoo to Byron Newton, January 25, 1921, McAdoo Letterbooks, Box 512, McAdoo Papers. See also W. G. McAdoo to E. M. Morgan, January 26, 1921, ibid.

54 Those national committee members appointed to the executive committee were: W. T. Sanders, Alabama; Homer Cummings, Connecticut; Miles G. Saunders, Colorado; Miss Julia L. Landers, Indiana; Mrs. Campbell Cantrell, Kentucky; Mrs. Julia Hamilton Briscoe, Maryland; William F. Connolly, Michigan; J. Bruce Kremer, Montana; Norman E. Mack, New York; Angus W. McLean, Oklahoma; Mrs. Rose Heiflin, Oregon; Joseph F. Guffey, Pennsylvania; Cordell Hull, Tennessee; and Carter Glass, Virginia. In addition, White, Marsh, and Hoffman served as ex-officio members. New York Times, February 3, 1921, p. 1.
reorganizers interpreted White's establishment of an executive committee as a means of thwarting both reorganization and a change in the chairmanship. Meanwhile, the press reported that the Cox, Palmer, and Underwood forces had formed a coalition both to counter the McAdoo supporters and to shape party affairs so that the next national campaign would be waged in the East in an effort to capture states such as New York, New Jersey, Ohio, and Indiana. This strategy was diametrically opposed to McAdoo's plans which envisioned a Southern and Western alliance as the best means to achieve victory.

Nevertheless, the would-be reorganizers, led by Robert Woolley and Tom Love, were determined to force a showdown. In their zeal, however, they alienated potential supporters and strengthened White's determination to retain the chairmanship. On February 6, they sent a petition to Chairman White demanding that he call a meeting of the national committee. Moreover, the petition contained a very thinly veiled demand that White resign. Charle Williams of Tennessee and Samuel Amidon of Kansas, vice-chairmen of the national committee, and fifty-three other committee members signed the petition. Its wording was less than tactful and scarcely likely to elicit a positive response from Chairman White. The first part of the petition urged White to call a meeting of the Democratic

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national committee for March 1, in St. Louis, "... in order that the
forces of progress may be organized for continued constructive,
patriotic action in the succeeding four years, and for a righteous and
richly earned victory in 1924." It was the second paragraph of the
petition that was so abrasive. It asserted:

We congratulate our chairman and his associates
upon their valiant and patriotic efforts in the recent
campaign under the leadership of that splendid
Democrat, Governor James M. Cox, of Ohio, and
beg to wish for Mr. White many years of happiness
and added usefulness upon the retirement which, he
announced, shortly after November 2nd, his private
interests will make it necessary for him to seek. 56

56 The signers of the petition were not restricted to any one
geographic area. The petition was signed by: Miss Charle Williams,
Tennessee; Samuel B. Amidon, Kansas, Mrs. J. D. McNeal, Alabama;
Vincent Miles, Arkansas; Mrs. Charles F. Donohue, California;
Josiah O. Wolcott, Delaware; Mrs. F. I. McIntire, Georgia; Mrs.
W. A. Cochel, Kansas; Mrs. J. E. Friend, Louisiana; Mrs. C. M.
Pattengall, Maine; Mrs. M. F. Sullivan, Massachusetts; Fred E.
Wheaton, Minnesota; Henrietta Mitchell, Mississippi; W. H. Thompson,
Nebraska; Robert C. Murchie, New Hampshire; Robert S. Hudspeth,
New Jersey; Mrs. F. W. Kirby, New Mexico; H. H. Parr, North
Dakota; George L. Bowman, Oklahoma; Mary Archer, Pennsylvania;
Robert E. Newton, Rhode Island; Mrs. Richard I. Manning, South
Carolina; James H. Moyle, Utah; Mrs. Cone Johnson, Texas; Mrs.
C. M. Brislin, Vermont; Joseph Martin, Wisconsin; P. J. Quealy,
Wyoming; Mrs. James D. Finch, Nevada; M. A. Otero, Canal Zone;
W. L. Barnum, Arizona; Isidore B. Dockweiler, California;
Caroline Ruutz-Rees, Connecticut; Leah Evans, Delaware; Charles
Boechenstein, Illinois; Samuel B. Hicks, Louisiana; D. J. Mc Gilli-
cuddy, Maine; Edward W. Quinn, Massachusetts; Mrs. Peter Olesen,
Minnesota; O. G. Johnson, Mississippi; Mrs. Burris A. Jenkins,
Missouri; Jennie Calfass, Nebraska; Dorothy B. Jackson, New Hamp-
shire; A. A. Jones, New Mexico; Mrs. S. Johnson, North Dakota;
Bernice S. Pyke, Ohio; Dr. J. W. Morrow, Oregon; Patrick H.
Quinn, Rhode Island; John Gary Evans, South Carolina; Thomas B.
Love, Texas; Mrs. George H. Dern, Utah; Frank H. Duffy, Vermont;
Mary C. B. Munford, Virginia; Mrs. Gertrude Bowler, Wisconsin;
Perhaps more embarrassing, it was reported that six members of the executive committee, while not signing the petition, favored a meeting of the national committee. Tom Love asserted that Angus McLean of North Carolina, Cordell Hull of Tennessee, Senator Carter Glass of Virginia, Mrs. Campbell Cantrell of Kentucky, Mrs. Rose Heiflin of Oregon, and Mrs. W. A. McDougal of Oklahoma also desired a meeting of the full committee. White's immediate response to the petition was not one of meek intimidation. He revealed that he had been threatened two weeks earlier that a meeting of the full committee would be requested. This threat had probably prompted his creation of the executive committee. White indicated that he would place the request for a national committee meeting before the executive committee for their consideration.\(^57\)

The brazen effrontery of the petition's final paragraph assured that it would be greeted by a storm of protest. This adverse reaction was not slow in developing. White announced that he had been inundated with telegrams urging him to remain national chairman. There could be no doubt that the petition had been counter productive. White contended that "conditions have changed since last fall, when I said I might retire." White announced that "I now feel

\(^{57}\)New York Times, February 7, 1921, p. 15.
that I do not need to give my entire time to business and will be able
to take care of the chairmanship."\(^{58}\) Meanwhile, former Speaker
Champ Clark and Representative Henry D. Flood, chairman of the
Democratic congressional committee, issued statements opposing
Love's efforts to convene the committee in order to oust White.
The press interpreted these statements as an effort to unify the Cox,
Palmer, and Underwood factions of the party against the McAdoo
forces.\(^{59}\)

The New York Times, envisioning the reorganization attempt
as a plot to capture the party for McAdoo, hastened to join the
opposition. Disinterested observation alone did not actuate the paper's
opposition. The editorial staff, as before the San Francisco conven-
tion, obviously feared McAdoo and pictured him as a radical. Pointing
out that "... the fate of the nation does not hang on the Chairmanship
of the Democratic Committee," the paper went on to say "but if
forty-nine members of it are seeking to make it a campaign committee
for Mr. William G. McAdoo, sensible Democrats will resent the
effort." The editorial did not hesitate to explain why the effort would
be resented by "sensible" Democrats: "In the first place, it is no
business of the National Committee to pick out Democratic candidates." But more important from the paper's point of view: "In the second

\(^{58}\) New York Times, February 8, 1921, p. 16.

\(^{59}\) New York Times, February 8, 1921, p. 16.
place, Mr. McAdoo is, in the belief of many Democrats, mixed up with the Plumb Plan. The Democratic Party has made sufficient invitations to disaster without that preposterous policy. If it wants to continue to wander indefinitely in the wilderness, that is the way to do it.  

Meanwhile, George White adopted a more belligerent stance. He indicated that he did not intend to call a meeting of the national committee. He felt that the proper course of action would be to let the situation alone for a few months and see what developed. Although he agreed to bring the matter before the executive committee, he professed to believe that no sentiment for a national committee meeting existed outside the signers of the petition. He did not mention, however, that the petitioners constituted more than a simple majority of the committee. White also denied having told Tom Love in November that he was going to resign.

The reorganizers' case was damaged further when it became apparent that Tom Love had been less than frank in obtaining some of the signatures. Mrs. A. B. Pyke, committeewoman from White's own state of Ohio and a member of the executive committee, charged that she had signed the petition under false pretenses. According to Mrs. Pyke, Love had asked her if she would join in a call for a

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60 New York Times, February 8, 1921, p. 10.

reorganization meeting, and she had agreed. She asserted, however, that: "I certainly did not image that my name would be used as it was to serve notice on Mr. White from a faction of the committee that he was no longer wanted as Chairman. In fact, I did not even know that there were any factional troubles."62

In a rather feeble effort to repair the damage wrought by the petition, Woolley issued a statement asserting that he and Love meant no offense to Chairman White and had merely acted upon his own statements that he intended to resign. Rather incredibly, Woolley professed to see nothing deceptive about the telegram sent out over Love's signature which asserted:

Chairman White informs me he will call Executive Committee just appointed to meet in Washington, February 15, and ask it to decide whether early meeting National Committee shall be held. Suggest you wire me collect. . . , authorizing me to sign your name with many others to petition respect to wiring our distinguished Chairman and Executive Committee to call National Committee to meet. . . not later than March 1, so forces of progress may be organized for Democratic victory in next election.63

Others might properly suggest that there was a vast difference between the telegram and the petition's final paragraph. Nevertheless, Woolley asserted that there could be no doubt as to the petitioners' desires. He avowed that "they want a new deal and in

many of their telegrams they employed the word 'reorganize' rather than the word 'organize' which I used.'

64 Thus, despite Woolley's apologies, it was transparently obvious that he wanted White ousted.

It was equally clear, however, that Woolley and Love's precipitous actions had placed the reorganizers on the defensive. With tongue in cheek the New York Times declared that the forces of progress had been foiled. The paper sarcastically concluded that "it is sad to see Mr. White blind and deaf to the most majestic moral movement that has cheered the world since the Convention of the Three Tailors of Tooley Street." 65 Although Woolley insisted that the fight to call a meeting of the national committee would be pressed, George White indicated that the movement was deteriorating. White was correct. To have insisted upon a meeting of the full committee at this juncture would have been tantamount to approving Woolley's and Love's tactics. Thus, Cordell Hull and Carter Glass, two highly respected committee members, opposed an immediate meeting of the national committee. 66

The reorganizers' problems stemmed not only from their


tactless demand for White's resignation but also from the assumption that the entire movement was directed toward McAdoo's candidacy. Bryan commented that "if the proposed meeting of the subcommittees or the full committees have no higher purpose than the boosting of some particular aspirant for office they will do little." In short, the Woolley-Love petition threatened to disrupt the party in the name of strengthening it. Key Pittman, like Harrison a staunch party man, summed up the problem:

I regret that an effort has been made, in the manner in which it was made, to displace George White as Chairman of the National Committee. He was doing no harm. The telegram which was published calling for the meeting practically demanded his resignation. This in its very nature, aroused great antagonism and made it practically impossible for us to hold a meeting. Any meeting held under such circumstances would result in a party fight and disrupt our party at the very time we need solidarity.

Behind the scenes each faction sought to buttress its position. George White bared his feelings in a very lengthy letter to Carter Glass. White indicated that, while he had not sought the chairmanship, he had been unanimously elected for the customary period of four years. Moreover, he asserted that party officers had performed as well as possible under the adverse circumstances accompanying the last election. White averred that the Democrats should wait

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67 New York Times, February 11, 1921, p. 3.

68 Key Pittman to R. P. Dunlap, February 12, 1921, Box 12, Pittman Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress).
until the Republican administration had outlined its policies and then
attack. He professed to believe that the Democrats in both Houses
would be placed at a terrible disadvantage if the full committee met
immediately and attempted to delineate a specific program. Rather,
the legislators should determine the issues. White, therefore, did
not deem it necessary to call the full committee together. He
believed that the time, trouble, and expense involved in such a meet-
ing could be more advantageously employed at a more opportune time.
Furthermore, White reported that he was setting the machinery in
motion to eradicate the party debt. Finally, White made his case
against the petitioners. He stressed that he wanted to avoid placing
personal over party considerations and hoped to submerge factional-
ism in the interest of unity. Clearly, Woolley and Love had stiffened
White's resolve not to depart. White confided that:

The wording of the request indicated rather clearly
that the idea paramount in the minds of those who have
thus far been most active in promoting the movement
for a meeting of the full committee was to receive my
resignation as chairman. Certain individuals seem to
have been more concerned in selecting my successor
during the past winter, if press reports are to be
credited, than in other kinds of party services. The
closing paragraph of the written request for a full meet-
ing, moreover, bluntly suggests, if it does not in fact
plainly call for, my resignation. In the face of this
rather personal movement I beg again to say that the
party welfare and not personal considerations should be
paramount at this, as at every stage, and that the party
situation does not suggest nor even permit my resignation
at this juncture under the conditions precipitated by those individuals to whom reference has just been made. 69

Tom Love and Robert Woolley were, of course, the individuals to whom White was referring. Woolley confided to Desha Breckinridge that perhaps the petition had been unfortunately worded. Nevertheless, Woolley, claiming that he meant no injustice, asserted that White was a thoroughly incompetent political manager. Moreover, Woolley contended that, if White intended to retain the chairmanship for four years, there was no alternative but to fight. Woolley suggested that "it would be better to have the row over with now and get in motion than to lag along under incompetent leadership and have the storm break when we are turning into the home stretch." 70

William Gibbs McAdoo, the man behind whom Woolley wanted an effective organization, had very definite ideas on reorganization. He repeatedly denied that he was connected with the attempts to call a meeting of the national committee. Nevertheless, inasmuch as the movement had been initiated, McAdoo saw no reason why the committee should not be summoned to meet. He insisted that it was ridiculous to consider candidates at this time and that his only concern was his party's welfare. McAdoo averred that, without a competent

69 George White to Carter Glass, February 12, 1921, Box 168, Glass Papers.

70 Robert Woolley to Desha Breckinridge, February 14, 1921, Box 2, Woolley Papers.
national chairman, the nomination in 1924 would be absolutely worthless to any candidate. As usual, however, McAdoo seemed to protest too much. Petulantly he asserted:

Of course the movement is not in my personal interest, nor would I permit a movement to be made in my personal interest. I am seeking nothing, and want nothing except the success of the Party. The White and Cox faction, backed by the bosses and all those elements which have been consistently hostile to the President and me, are camouflaging and trying to prejudice the situation by saying that the movement is in my personal interest. This is, of course, a deliberate falsification of the facts. But even if the movement was in my interest, why would that be any more heinous than for Mr. Cox and his followers to try to preserve an organization in his own interest in view of his already declared candidacy in 1924?\footnote{W. G. McAdoo to Carter Glass, February 16, 1921, Box 5, Glass Papers. For similar expressions of sentiment see W. G. McAdoo to George McAneny, February 16, 1921, McAdoo Letterbooks, Box 511, McAdoo Papers; W. G. McAdoo to H. H. Childers, February 17, 1921, \textit{ibid.}; W. G. McAdoo to George Fort Milton, February 18, 1921, \textit{ibid.}}

Despite the reorganizers' intentions to force a showdown, it was generally conceded prior to the meeting of White's executive committee that the reorganizers had failed. It was felt that George White should retain the chairmanship and that the national committee would not be called. Although the petition was to be presented, the last paragraph, that calling for White's resignation, was not to be considered. Further evidence that the reorganization efforts would be abortive came when the members of the Democratic congressional campaign committee adopted resolutions opposing both an early...
meeting of the national committee and altering the chairmanship. Their resolution indicated that reorganization efforts would endanger that "party harmony so essential to the Democratic Party in the Sixty-seventh Congress, upon which there inevitably must rest primary responsibility for the issues and record upon which the contests of the future are to be waged."72

The Executive Committee met on February 17, and Love presented the petition, minus the offensive paragraph. He denied both that the purpose of the full committee meeting was to oust White and that the movement had been initiated in McAdoo's interests. Samuel Amidon and Robert Woolley expressed regret that the question of Mr. White's retirement had been raised in connection with the call for a meeting, and Isidore Dockweiler and Mary Archer carried on the fight for a national committee meeting. George White, however, was intransigent. He asserted that his sole interest was the welfare of the party and that the press, rightly or wrongly, had interpreted the petition as an effort to reorganize the party in the interests of a particular candidate. White, therefore, was opposed to calling the full committee together. Evidence of Woolley's and Love's blunder accumulated when both Glass and Cummings stated that, while they had originally favored an early meeting of the full committee, they were now opposed to it because of the construction placed on the

petition. Although Chairman White's position was sustained by a unanimous vote of the committee, White did indicate that he might call a meeting of the national committee within two or three months if conditions warranted it. Nevertheless, he indicated that he had no plans to retire in the near future. 73

The press interpreted the meeting as a defeat for the reorganizers. 74 Yet Robert Woolley, whose unseemly haste had precipitated the crisis, did not concur with that judgment. Woolley confided to Chadbourne that, notwithstanding newspaper interpretations, their side had won. They had pushed through a resolution requesting White to ascertain each national committee member's feelings concerning the necessity for an early meeting of the full committee. Woolley averred that it was in the interest of party harmony "... to give George White a breathing spell in which to find a good excuse for again reconsidering, then to call the meeting and resign." Woolley was now quite willing to allow White to save face, but his determination that White must resign had not abated. Woolley admitted that he had blundered in the wording of the petition, but he felt that it was an inconsequential error. Woolley realized that "it would have been heralded and condemned as a McAdoo movement just the same. Anything that we may do will be bitterly

73 New York Times, February 18, 1921, p. 15.

misrepresented by the other side; so our only course is to press forward to the ultimate victory in sight." 75

Thus, despite White's apparent victory in the executive committee, the struggle was obviously not over. The second stage of the reorganization effort, however, saw Carter Glass come to the forefront of the reorganization movement. Glass, who enjoyed the confidence of White, McAdoo, and Woolley, was caught in the middle of the struggle from the outset. While Glass believed that White should resign, he was opposed to the Woolley-Love tactics. Glass assured White that, although he felt that a full meeting of the committee was in order, he did not know that a factional fight had been intended. White, well aware that he occupied a precarious position, reiterated his belief that the party's best interests would not be served by an immediate meeting of the national committee. Unsure of himself, however, White indicated that a meeting of the full committee might be very desirable at a later date and solicited Glass' advice. 76

75 Robert Woolley to Thomas Chadbourne, February 19, 1921, Box 8, Woolley Papers; See also Robert Woolley to R. C. Murchie, February 21, 1921, Box 27, ibid.; Robert Woolley to Tom Love, February 21, 1921, Box IU-8E, Love Papers.

76 Carter Glass to George White, February 19, 1921, Box 168, Glass Papers; George White to Carter Glass, February 21, 1921, ibid. Glass perhaps best explained his position to Mrs. C. B. Munford, national committeewoman from Virginia, who had signed the petition. Glass wrote that: "As an abstract proposition, I did think that the National Committee should meet; but I also think that
Meanwhile, Glass hastened to explain his position to McAdoo. Glass admitted that White lacked the requisite organizational and administrative talents for the chairmanship and should, therefore, resign. He believed, however, that White would have voluntarily resigned had it not been for Woolley's and Love's tactless actions. Furthermore, in Glass' opinion immediate reorganization had become unacceptable when the press charged that McAdoo's friends were attempting to seize control of the committee. This interpretation had been widely accepted by the public. McAdoo's friends in Washington decided that any attempt to force a national committee meeting would merely strengthen this impression and lead to factional bitterness. Glass was sure that McAdoo wished to avoid the latter. Therefore, Glass, McLean, Hull, and other of McAdoo's friends had fashioned the compromise that left the door open for reorganization at a later date. McAdoo replied that Glass had acted wisely,

my friends, Judge Love and Bob Woolley, were decidedly tactless in the way they proposed to get a meeting. Their movement assumed the aspect of a factional fight against Chairman White, who should, in my judgment, be permitted to retire leisurely as he proposes to do, and not be booted out unceremoniously as seemed to be the object of the movement for an immediate meeting of the committee. I think Mr. White should and will retire before very long, and then we may have a meeting of the National Committee to select a successor without producing factional discord." Carter Glass to Mrs. C. B. Munford, February 23, 1921, ibid.

77 Carter Glass to W. G. McAdoo, March 7, 1921, Box 5, Glass Papers.
but added that "of course, the situation will have to be worked out sooner or later and for the good of the Party the sooner the better I think." 78

Meanwhile, White's position continued to deteriorate. In April, Tumulty assured Woolley that Cox was now convinced that White should resign. Even Tumulty, who was closer to Cox than to McAdoo, felt that White should step aside. Like Glass, however, Tumulty objected to the tactics being employed. Tom Love, growing impatient, was again ready to press for action. Unless Woolley objected, Love planned to write to each of the petitioners telling them that a meeting of the full committee was desirable and requesting their views on what should be done. Woolley, however, had learned a lesson from their recent misadventure. Conferring with Roper and McLean, Woolley wired Love to postpone sending the letter. Moreover, Woolley suggested that when a letter was sent it would be better tactics to have it dispatched by someone else. 79

By mid-May, Woolley was convinced that Roper was the man to replace White, yet White showed no signs of bowing to the inevitable.

78 W. G. McAdoo to Carter Glass, March 8, 1921, McAdoo Letterbooks, Box 511, McAdoo Papers. See also W. G. McAdoo to J. C. Hemphill, March 12, 1921, McAdoo Letterbooks, Box 513, ibid.

79 Robert Woolley to Tom Love, April 9, 1921, Box IU-8E, Love Papers; Blum, Joe Tumulty and the Wilson Era, 261; Tom Love to Robert Woolley, April 12, 1921, Box IU-8E, Love Papers; Robert Woolley to Tom Love, April 15, 1921, ibid.
Nevertheless, the longer White procrastinated, the greater the pressures grew for his resignation. By early June, Woolley reported that Glass, who had talked with White, was thoroughly disgusted and ready to assist in the ouster proceedings. Cummings was also ready for action. Moreover, Woodrow Wilson was now ready to lend his influence to the reorganization efforts. On June 21, Wilson invited Arthur Mullen to his home and asked the Nebraskan to attempt to persuade White to resign. Wilson then suggested that Tom Chadbourne would make a very suitable chairman. The former President brushed aside Mullen's protests concerning Chadbourne's Wall Street connections. Wilson felt that Chadbourne would be capable of building a strong Democratic organization.

Throughout the month of July, the embattled White continued to frustrate his opponents. Glass again talked with White who assured him that he would call a meeting of the national committee in August and resign. Yet, notwithstanding this pledge to Glass, White continued to waver. Mullen acceded to Wilson's request and visited White to seek his resignation. Much to Mullen's amazement, White said that Glass had advised him not to resign and that he, therefore, 

80 Robert Woolley to Tom Love, May 16, 1921, Box IU-8E, Love Papers; Robert Woolley to Tom Love, June 8, 1921, ibid.; Mullen, Western Democrat, 201-205. As late as August, Wilson was still promoting Chadbourne for the chairmanship. Although Chadbourne was not opposed to the idea, he felt that Roper would do a better job. Bernard Baruch to Woodrow Wilson, August 10, 1921, S. C. Vol. III, Baruch Papers.
would not. Glass, not a man to be trifled with, was understandably furious and demanded that he be allowed to lead the fight to oust White. Mullen visited White again. During this visit White told Mullen that he intended to call a national committee meeting for September. Moreover, White informed Mullen that Cox had written him in substance not to resign. Mullen left the meeting with the distinct impression that White intended to retain the chairmanship.81

As August passed and no meeting was called, Glass lost all patience. Never one to mince his words, Glass bluntly informed White that there should be an immediate meeting of the national committee for organizational purposes. Glass reminded White of his promise to call a meeting in August. He also pointed out that, while there was to be a United States senator elected in New Mexico the following month, the Democratic national organization had not exhibited the slightest concern about the outcome of the election. Glass asserted that "no party can make progress by an exhibition of the docility which seems to have characterized the Democratic organization in recent months, and I am speaking plainly about it with the greater readiness, because I feel somewhat responsible for the delay."

If this were not enough to convey the message to White, Glass

81 Robert Woolley to Tom Love, June 21, 1921, Box IU-8E, Love Papers; Carter Glass to W. G. McAdoo, June 22, 1921, Box 5, Glass Papers; Robert Woolley to Tom Love, July 2, 1921, Box IU-8E, Love Papers; Daniel Roper to Carter Glass, July 5, 1921, Box 11, Glass Papers.
concluded: "I shall be very glad to talk to you about matters personally if you care for an interview; but, in any event, I shall no longer attempt to resist the discontent which prolonged delay in calling the National Committee has created and is every day intensifying."^82

Wilson considered it a "bully letter to White" and agreed that the time had come "for drastic measures."^83 Robert Woolley and Bernard Baruch likewise were pleased with the letter. Baruch, who like Glass had earlier protested against humiliating White, was so weary of White's vacillation that he refused either to contribute or to raise more money for the party until White called a meeting and resigned. Baruch also entertained very definite ideas about White's replacement. It was rumored that Cox, Moore, and White had decided that Scott Ferris should become the new national chairman. Baruch was vigorously opposed to Ferris because he had failed in his role as chairman of the congressional campaign committee in 1918. Likewise, Chadbourne urged Glass to forestall Ferris' selection and suggested that Daniel Roper was the logical man for the chairmanship. Glass, who professed to believe that Roper's support of McAdoo in 1920 was immaterial, was also sure that Roper was the proper man

^82 Carter Glass to George White, August 23, 1921, Box 165, Glass Papers.

^83 Woodrow Wilson to Carter Glass, September 15, 1921, Box 8, Glass Papers.
for the position. 84

Hovering in the background, McAdoo also suggested Roper's name to Glass. McAdoo asserted that Roper's organizational abilities and financial contacts were superior to those possessed by Ferris. Having presented this case, McAdoo assured Glass that he was thinking only of the party and could take no part in the fight over the chairmanship because people would unjustly infer that he was trying to advance his own personal interests. 85 Nevertheless, for a man who was not actively participating in the contest, McAdoo was certainly free with his advice. He suggested that if some of Amidon's friends could not attend the national committee meeting, they should send their proxies to Glass because the Virginia Senator could be counted upon to "... use such proxies for the benefit of the Party, and not for the benefit of any individual." 86 It is not surprising that McAdoo, like Bryan and Wilson before him, had come to believe that his best interests and those of the party were synonymous.

84 Robert Woolley to Carter Glass, September 7, 1921, Box 165, Glass Papers; Robert Woolley to Carter Glass, September 21, 1921, ibid.; Bernard Baruch to Carter Glass, September 22, 1921, ibid.; Thomas Chadbourne to Carter Glass, September 23, 1921, ibid.; Carter Glass to Thomas Chadbourne, September 26, 1921, ibid.

85 W. G. McAdoo to Carter Glass, September 23, 1921, McAdoo Letterbooks, Box 515, McAdoo Papers.

86 W. G. McAdoo to S. B. Amidon, September 27, 1921, ibid.
George White finally submitted to the pressure. Early in October, he issued a call for a meeting of the national committee to be held in St. Louis on November 1. Moreover, he announced that he would resign as chairman. His offer to retire, however, was conditional. He insisted that the Cox and McAdoo forces must come to harmonious agreement upon his successor or he would not retire. This stipulation seemed to rule out any possibility that Roper could be selected chairman. His close connection with McAdoo would obviously make him unpalatable to the Cox forces.

The White announcement generated a flurry of activity behind the scenes to find an acceptable successor. Although McAdoo still favored Roper, he was not averse to compromise and felt that Senator Kendrick might be a good choice. Meanwhile, Senator Thomas J. Walsh joined the ranks of those urging Scott Ferris' selection. While Walsh professed to regard Roper highly, he felt that naming a Southerner to the chairmanship would hurt the party in the West. Moreover, Walsh contended that Roper's association both with the Wilson administration and the McAdoo candidacy would be a liability in some quarters. On the other hand, Walsh believed that Ferris would perform admirably and would be particularly helpful in the West. Pat Harrison, Norman Mack, and Clark Howell also

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87New York Times, October 9, 1921, p. 2; New York Times, October 11, 1921, p. 4.
supported Ferris for the chairmanship. Glass and Woolley, however, cited Ferris' disastrous handling of the 1918 congressional elections as proof of his inadequacy. The Glass-Woolley forces now were considering either Cordell Hull or Breckinridge Long.\(^8\)

White arrived in St. Louis on October 31, and reiterated:

"I have no idea of submitting my resignation at this time, unless all elements of the party can agree upon someone to succeed me, thus assuring party harmony and the conduct of the committee's affairs solely in the interest of the party as a whole."\(^9\) White's opponents were willing to compromise. It is apparent, however, that, even had they not been in a conciliatory mood, they could have forced White to retire. In conference Glass proved that White's opponents controlled, either in person or by proxy, at least sixty-six votes out of the less than one hundred to be cast. The reorganizers then proposed the names of Cordell Hull and Breckinridge Long to Pat Harrison who acted as Chairman White's representative. Both these men were acceptable. When Edward F. Goltra, national committman from Missouri, refused to resign in order that Long could become a member of the committee and be eligible for its

\(^{8}\)W. G. McAdoo to Daniel Roper, October 27, 1921, McAdoo Letterbooks, Box 515, McAdoo Papers; T. J. Walsh to W. G. McAdoo, October 28, 1921, Box 373, Walsh Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress). Woolley Unpublished Autobiography, Chapter 30, pp. 29 and 30, Box 44, Woolley Papers.

\(^{9}\)New York Times, November 1, 1921, p. 3.
chairmanship, Cordell Hull became the new national chairman.\footnote{New York \textit{Times}, November 2, 1921, p. 10.}

Ostensibly, McAdoo's ambitions had been thwarted. Roper had not been selected to head the committee. Not unexpectedly, the press interpreted Hull's selection as a McAdoo defeat. The \textit{New York Times} congratulated the committee for not letting itself be made "... the agent of a particular candidate for the Presidency..." Describing Hull as a distinguished judge and an able representative, the paper averred that he had "no part in the premature ambitions of any Democrats who are casting sheep's eyes at the White House."\footnote{New York \textit{Times}, November 3, 1921, p. 18.}

Charles Carlin, once Palmer's campaign manager and soon to hold an identical position with Oscar Underwood, asserted that Hull's selection meant that "the McAdoo forces were routed."\footnote{New York \textit{Times}, November 2, 1921, p. 10.}

In a very real sense, however, McAdoo had not lost. Had McAdoo or his associates insisted upon Roper's selection, they would have completely factionalized the party. McAdoo needed a united party with an efficient national chairman if he had any real hopes of being elected in 1924. In this respect, Cordell Hull, a highly respected and efficient congressman who had been swept from office in the Harding landslide of 1920, was an ideal choice.\footnote{Cordell Hull, \textit{The Memoirs of Cordell Hull; Volume I} (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1948), 103, 114.} In reality,
the McAdoo forces had scored a net gain. McAdoo's partisans seemed to control a working majority of the committee and the chairmanship had been plucked from the Cox faction. More importantly, Hull seemed to hold out the promise of both efficiency and unity.

Hull's selection was widely heralded as a good one. Representative J. F. Byrnes of South Carolina asserted that "it was the wisest selection, because Hull is a progressive Democrat who is familiar with the situation throughout the country, and a wise counsellor." Perhaps more important, Byrnes pointed out that Hull "... will be the Chairman of all the Democrats and his supporters will always be assured that his efforts will be in the interests of the whole party and never to advance the cause of any individual candidate or faction." Although Thomas J. Walsh was not certain that Hull's abilities were suited for the chairmanship, he did hold Hull in very high esteem. Moreover, Scott Ferris, who had served with Hull in Congress, evinced no bitterness. On the contrary, Ferris believed that Hull would be a wonderful chairman. As might be anticipated, McAdoo, Glass, and Baruch felt that Hull was an excellent choice. 95

94 New York Times, November 2, 1921, p. 10.
95 Thomas J. Walsh to Scott Ferris, December 1, 1921, Box 373, Walsh Papers; Scott Ferris to Thomas J. Walsh, November 27, 1921, ibid.; W. G. McAdoo to Robert Woolley, November 4, 1921, McAdoo Letterbooks, Box 515, McAdoo Papers; Carter Glass to Bernard Baruch, November 18, 1921, Box 1, Glass Papers.
James Cox, who had been favorably disposed toward the Tennessean in 1920, expressed pleasure over Hull's selection. Cox assured his supporters that "... the choice of Mr. Hull seems to have been as unanimous in sentiment as it was in expression. He is a very high-grade man and will serve the interests of no individual."96 Franklin D. Roosevelt, who three months earlier had been stricken with polio, likewise applauded Hull's selection. Roosevelt wrote to Hull that it was his "... general feeling that it was the Democratic Party that should be congratulated instead of yourself, on your selection as Chairman of our National Committee." Roosevelt also offered both his services and suggestions to Hull and invited the Chairman to visit with him when in New York.97 Hull responded graciously, thanked Roosevelt for his suggestions, informed Roosevelt of his own plans, and promised that he would confer with him in New York on party matters.98 Perhaps Hull was merely bolstering the morale of a man struck down in the prime of life. Roosevelt, however, was pursuing a contact with a man who would one day be very influential in making him the presidential nominee of his party.

96 James M. Cox to W. D. Johnson, November 23, 1921, Ser. I, Con. 2, Hull Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress).

97 Franklin D. Roosevelt to Cordell Hull, November 4, 1921, Group 11, Box 3, FDR Papers (Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park).

98 Cordell Hull to Franklin Roosevelt, November 12, 1921, ibid.
McAdoo informed Henry French Hollis that it would be a very unwise move "... especially because it would at once be taken (and I think very properly) as a definite declaration of my candidacy in 1924, a thing which I have by no means determined upon and which I would think most unfortunate to announce now, even if I had any such definite purpose."\(^{101}\)

Moreover, McAdoo seriously contemplated leaving New York and moving to California. New York obviously was not the proper base from which McAdoo could launch a presidential bid. Tammany was implacably hostile toward him as was the New York Times. On the other hand, the 1920 convention had proved that he had tremendous support in the West. McAdoo strenously denied, however, that the contemplated move was in any way politically motivated. McAdoo confided that "if I should go there it would be purely for business and professional reasons, and without any regard whatever to political consequences."\(^{102}\) Notwithstanding his disclaimers, California was a more propitious political environment than New York for McAdoo and he moved there. Ironically, however, in improving his position, McAdoo unwittingly worsened it. In California, McAdoo served as legal counsel for Edward L. Doheny, an oilman and a friend of Albert

\(^{101}\)W. G. McAdoo to Henry French Hollis, January 18, 1922, McAdoo Letterbooks, Box 516, McAdoo Papers.

\(^{102}\)Ibid.; See also W. G. McAdoo to Arthur Mullen, February 28, 1922, McAdoo Letterbooks, Box 516, McAdoo Papers.
When Reed won his primary contest, a disgusted Missouri Democrat wrote Key Pittman that:

The Wilson democrats who voted for Mr. Long at the primaries here this week were really voting against Jim Reed, and we will continue to do so in November. We do not like the source of his strength. It came from the Ghetto, Little Italy and the slums. The pro-German element, the wet interests, and all who hate what we stand for were in line for their friend Jim. 106

Thus, Missouri politics presented the perfect microcosm of the rural-urban conflict that soon erupted within the national Democratic Party. The Louisville Courier Journal pointed out that Reed's strongholds had been St. Louis and Kansas City, but that Long had led outside these urban bastions. The Springfield Republican noted that "the Senator drew a heavy vote from anti-prohibitionists, who are strong in St. Louis and Kansas City." 107 Moreover, rural hostility toward Reed continued to intensify. Ewing Y. Mitchell described Reed's supporters as the "underworld of the cities, the sports, gamblers, bootleggers, wets, and the riff-raff of society generally." 108 As the rural Democracy's hatred of the urban, Irish-Catholic wing of the Missouri Democratic Party grew, many of the rural Missourians during the fall and winter of 1923 found a

106 Virgil Moore to Key Pittman, August 4, 1922, Box 13, Pittman Papers.

107 "Why Lone Wolf Reed Came Back," 16.

108 Quoted in Mitchell, Embattled Democracy, 67.
suitable outlet for their frustrations in the Ku Klux Klan. \textsuperscript{109}

Meanwhile, the Klan was already making its presence felt in Texas Democratic politics, and August brought rumblings of discord from Texas. This was particularly significant because Texas and Texans figured prominently in the McAdoo movement. Commenting on the Texas primary, Love explained to McAdoo that initially E. B. Mayfield had been his third choice. Love described Mayfield as a Wilsonian progressive and long-time friend. Love explained that "the only objection to him of any substance was that he was supported by the Ku Klux Klan which, in Texas, is simply a recreation of the old Know Nothing party, that is composed of good people who are allowing their anti-Catholic prejudices to dominate them politically." Mayfield, however, had reached the second primary with Jim Ferguson, a man who Love could not support. Therefore, Love reported that "I am supporting Mayfield though I am an avowed anti-Ku Klux." \textsuperscript{110} Love's support of Mayfield was to be of more than passing importance.

Thus, if events in Missouri were symptomatic of impending divisiveness, so were those in Texas. When the platform committee of the Texas state convention rejected resolutions condemning the

\textsuperscript{109}\textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{110}Thomas Love to W. G. McAdoo, August 9, 1922, Box IU-9A, Love Papers.
questions. Evidently by 1924 a movement favorable to such a program will have set in. 112

Those problems, however, were in the future. For the present there was the question of the November mid-term elections. This was a campaign in which McAdoo enthusiastically participated. He engaged in a widespread speaking tour in behalf of Democratic candidates for the House and Senate and, according to his own reports, was very well received. Significantly, he addressed himself particularly to agricultural problems and devoted his primary attention to the Middle and Far West. Sensing a growing dissatisfaction with the Republican administration, McAdoo looked forward confidently to a Democratic victory in 1924. Although he professed to be embarrassed by the sentiment he had discovered for his own candidacy in 1924, there was little doubt that McAdoo had launched a drive for that nomination. 113

When the mid-term elections were over, Cordell Hull could take immeasurable pride in his stewardship of the Democratic Party. He had conducted the combined campaigns of the national and congressional committees, and the Democrats had gained seventy-eight seats


in the House. Moreover, Hull regained his congressional seat, and Alfred E. Smith, another victim of the Harding landslide, returned to the New York governorship after a two-year absence. Nevertheless, while the results of these mid-term elections brought elation to the Democrats, they also contained the seeds of future disruption. In states such as Missouri and Indiana, the congressional victories merely constituted a resurgence of traditional Democratic strength in those areas. In the West agricultural discontent accounted for some Democratic victories. More important and potentially disruptive, there were significant breakthroughs for the party in the Eastern cities. Immigrants who had deserted the party in 1920 were back, and some urban districts elected Democrats for the first time. It is not surprising that these new urban Democrats would seek a larger voice in the party's counsels, a party that since the time of Bryan had been largely dominated by the South and the West. 114

The McAdoo forces, however, were determined that agrarian domination would continue, and the Democratic gains in the off-year elections bolstered their hopes for a successful campaign in 1924. Shouse was ebullient. Looking forward to 1924, he advised McAdoo that his friends should confer in the summer and map out plans for the campaign. Shouse counseled that McAdoo should remain in the

background for the time being, but that he must enter the primaries and not simply passively assert that he would accept the nomination if it should come to him. Shouse obviously wanted no repetition of 1920. For the present McAdoo clearly held the advantage. Shouse sensed that, but for his Catholicism, Al Smith would be a dangerous antagonist. Nevertheless, even though Shouse believed that Smith's religion made him unavailable, he expected that states such as New York, New Jersey, Illinois, and perhaps Indiana would support the New York Governor. Shouse speculated that Reed, Cox, and Underwood might also go after the nomination. Underwood was in fact already making preliminary gestures toward capturing the nomination. In March 1922, a group of Underwood's New York supporters had formed a campaign committee. Moreover, when questioned about his probable candidacy, the Alabama senator was very evasive.

Thus, unlike 1920, the year 1922 ended on a very high note for the Democrats. They saw in the November election returns a chance for capturing the presidency in 1924. Moreover, McAdoo's supporters were sure that 1924 was to be their year. The party

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115 Jouett Shouse to W. G. McAdoo, November 10, 1922, Correspondence, 1911-1929, Shouse Papers. For other expressions of McAdoo's strength at this point see Thomas Love to Jouett Shouse, November 24, 1922, Box IU-15D, Love Papers; James H. Moyle to Thomas Love, November 28, 1922, Box IU-9A, ibid.

machinery had been strengthened and was out of Cox's control. McAdoo was now operating from the West, an area more congenial to his progressivism than New York. There was of course talk of a third party movement, but the second meeting of the Conference for Progressive Political Action held in 1922 had failed to create a third party. This failure stemmed in part from the fact that the railroad brotherhoods, perhaps the best organized segment of the labor movement, were thinking of endorsing McAdoo if the Democrats nominated him. 117

McAdoo indeed seemed well on his way to capturing the nomination that had eluded him in 1920. Moreover, the November election returns made the Democratic nomination appear to be a very valuable prize indeed. Not all Democrats, however, viewed the party's future with serenity. Thomas Walsh gazed into the future and envisioned disaster. Walsh, forever displeased with Southern domination of the party, took occasion to warn Bryan of the dangers of that control. In particular, Walsh denounced the Ku Klux Klan and asserted that it was the product of the South and had its center there. Lashing out vehemently, Walsh prophetically warned:

You know that sixty percent of the normal Democratic vote North of Mason and Dixon's Line comes from the people who adhere to the creeds it [the Klan] proscribes, the Irish to the third and fourth generations, the

Germans, the Italians, the French and the races now and formerly subjects of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, to say nothing of the million Jews in this country. Unless this harpy organization is openly denounced by the public men of the South; unless they clearly disclose that it does not represent the intelligence or enlightenment and liberality of that section; that those who speak for it are neither sympathetic with it nor fearful of its wrath, there will not be votes enough north of the Mason and Dixon Line two years hence to justify obsequies over the Democratic Party. 118

Thus, while other Democrats were rejoicing over their party's remarkable recovery since 1920, Walsh was quite cognizant of the potential for disaster lurking within the Klan issue. The Klan question was clearly capable of tearing the party asunder. It carried the potential for arraying the Protestant, Anglo-Saxon, Dry, rural Democrat against his Catholic, immigrant, Wet, urban counterpart. Moreover, if each of these factions were to acquire a strong symbolic champion, the probability of internecine warfare would be immeasurably increased.

118 Thomas J. Walsh to William Jennings Bryan, December 20, 1922, Box 373, Walsh Papers.
Alfred E. Smith, James M. Cox, Woodrow Wilson, Samuel M. Ralston, John W. Davis, William Jennings Bryan, Carter Glass, and a host of others. ¹ While none of these men had formally committed himself, each possessed some potential source of strength. Discussion among political commentators during the spring and summer of 1923 centered chiefly around the names of McAdoo, Ford, and Underwood. ²

As early as January, 1923, political prognosticators had envisioned McAdoo as the strongest of the potential Democratic contenders. He was no longer encumbered with two of the handicaps that had burdened him in 1920. First, with Wilson out of the White House, he could no longer be charged with seeking to perpetuate a dynasty. Second, in 1920 as a resident of New York, he had been unable to command the support of his own delegation. His move to California had freed him not only from Tammany's local power but also from the charge of being too close to Wall Street. Otherwise McAdoo retained many of the same strengths and weaknesses that he had possessed in 1920. Progressives, farmers, Drys, the old Wilson following, and labor—especially the railroad workers—were viewed as potential McAdoo supporters. Nevertheless, McAdoo had strong

¹ "Who Will Be the Democratic Nominee?", *Literary Digest*, LXXVII (June 30, 1923), 5-6.

obstacles to overcome if he were to receive the nomination. The Democratic organization leaders remained implacably hostile toward him. They distrusted him because they felt he was too liberal, too radical, and too anti-organization. Moreover, at this early stage commentators saw two other possible impediments to McAdoo's nomination: the two-thirds rule, and the fact that McAdoo's following was in large measure identical with that of Henry Ford.  

Ford's possible areas of strength, like McAdoo's, lay in the South and the West. The Ford boom was in many ways similar to the Hoover phenomenon of four years earlier. It was largely nonpartisan and emanated from voter disgust with both parties. Furthermore, Ford, like Hoover, was heralded for his executive ability. Ford was particularly threatening to McAdoo because he was well liked by both farmers and laborers, especially in the crucial Midwest. He also strongly favored prohibition. The New Republic viewed the Ford movement as a legitimate one and cautioned the East against underestimating its importance. Moreover, McAdoo was well aware of Ford's

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momentum and the possible threat that it presented to his own candidacy. 4

While McAdoo and Ford were emerging as the leading contenders within the progressive wing of the party, Oscar Underwood appeared to be the strongest conservative. He had represented Alabama in national politics since 1895, first in the House of Representatives and later in the Senate. In both houses he had become floor leader for his party. He had made his first appearance as a presidential aspirant in 1912. On economic issues other than the tariff, Underwood was considered a conservative. He generally adopted the Wall Street point of view on financial matters and favored Mellon's plan of tax reduction. He had estranged himself from his party's progressive wing when he opposed both the prohibition and the women's suffrage amendments to the Federal Constitution, charging that both proposed amendments violated states' rights. Underwood, however, had merely employed the Jeffersonian argument to justify his own

personal opposition to limitations on the sale of alcoholic beverages and votes for women. Nevertheless, once the Eighteenth Amendment was ratified, Underwood favored law enforcement.  

Political commentators observed that the Democratic "old guard" leadership, which had been responsible for nominating Cox in 1920, was inclined toward Underwood. His long service and ability in Congress was deemed sufficient to counterbalance what was considered one of his outstanding liabilities--residence in the deep South. Strengthening Underwood's position further was his apparent popularity in the South, even though he opposed prohibition. Opposition to Underwood was most pronounced among the party's progressives, who often criticized him for his lack of militancy. But as a Southerner with appeal in the North and East, he appeared to occupy a strategic position.  

Although speculation centered around McAdoo, Ford, and Underwood, commentators realized that there were other possibilities. Governor Alfred E. Smith of New York was the most prominently


mentioned second-line contender in the summer of 1923. Smith, a product of New York’s East Side and Tammany Hall, perfectly symbolized the new urban civilization. He represented at once the new immigrants, the Catholics, and the Wets. Yet he, like McAdoo, exhibited to some degree the political schizophrenia that marked the age. His very being attested to his cultural liberalism; yet his economic liberalism was not viewed as particularly advanced by his contemporaries. He believed in the established order; he was no foe of property; he did not believe that society should be restructured. While Smith was a reformer, he was no foe of capitalism; he merely sought to remedy its abuses. Furthermore, Smith offered his followers no utopias. In fact, Walter Lippmann labeled Al Smith as "the most powerful conservative in urban America." Yet Smith’s following within the cities was tremendous. Lippman eloquently explained Smith’s appeal: "... they feel he has become the incarnation of their own hope and pride; he is the man who has gone, as they would like but do not quite dare to go into the great world to lift from them the secret sense of inferiority." In a decade which saw cultural


8 Lippmann, *Men of Destiny*, 6-7. Lippmann was not alone in viewing Smith as something less than an advanced economic liberal. The *World’s Work*, reporting on Smith’s legislative program in March, 1923, expressed the following evaluation: "It contains many items of a substantial character, such as a state budget, a short ballot, and the reorganization of the crazy patchwork that now make up the
issues become predominant, Smith's cultural attributes thus were to be both his greatest asset and his greatest liability.

As the political prognosticators viewed the scene in the spring and summer of 1923, they were forced to admit that Smith had outstanding qualifications. His most positive asset was his proven record as a vote getter in the largest state in the union. Moreover, he had compiled an outstanding record as a sanely liberal governor of that pivotal state. Though not recognized as a demagogue or as a radical, his appeal to the plain people was immense. Finally, Smith appealed to those throughout the country who regarded prohibition as a farce. Irrespective of these qualifications, however, in the summer of 1923, his chances were viewed as negligible at best. Smith's Catholicism was deemed sufficient to offset his other qualifications.  

executive departments into something that resembles system and order. It contains other provisions which, a few years ago, would have been regarded as 'advanced.' He would ratify amendments to the Federal Constitution by popular vote. He stands for state-ownership and state control of water power companies, a minimum wage for women and children, a legislative enactment that labor is not a commodity and a law prohibiting injunctions in strikes without prior hearing and determination of facts. These proposals were not especially startling, nor is there much apprehension that a man of Governor Smith's religious affiliation and social history will develop into a 'radical.' Naturally his interest in the masses is his first enthusiasm, and for 'welfare legislation' he had always manifested great aptitude. " "Governor Alfred E. Smith and the Presidency," World's Work, XLV (March, 1923), 464-65.

Nevertheless, even though Smith's nomination appeared to be improbable, John W. Owens realized that the Smith candidacy was potentially dangerous for the Democracy. He characterized Smith as "... a real leader of the wet Northern Catholic Democrats, one out of their own loins and capable of arousing something of the frenzied enthusiasm that Mr. Bryan evokes from the drys." Owens saw this as creating a particularly explosive situation: "The South's emotionally dry Democrats are Protestants; the North's emotionally wet Democrats are Catholics, or followers of Catholic leadership in the main. And not in decades have the Protestants of the South and the Catholics of the North been so religiously conscious in their politics as at this time, thanks to the Ku Klux Klan." Owens was well aware of the incongruous cultural mixture that passed for the Democratic party. He concluded that "for years the dissimilarity between the Democracy of the South and that of the North has been a party embarrassment, but it never has carried the peril that it does today."¹⁰

Proof of the probable controversy that Smith's candidacy would arouse came in May and early June of 1923. The New York Legislature repealed the state prohibition enforcement act and Governor Smith signed the repeal. The Chattanooga _News_ commenced

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a steady editorial barrage against what it considered to be nullification. Insofar as the paper was concerned, Smith had completely eliminated himself from any serious consideration for the presidency. The paper dismissed him with the comment that "there is little hope that . . . Smith's alliance with the liquor interests will make him president of the United States. No man has yet gone to that exalted station on a proposal to nullify the constitution." More ominous were the editorial's cultural overtones. Noting that the repeal bill was passed by a coalition of Democrats and Republicans from New York City, the paper averred that "the foreigners of New York are not superior to the law." Moreover, "the native-born population up-state was not consulted about it."12

Thus throughout the spring and summer of 1923, the possibility that Smith would be nominated was not viewed too seriously because of the cultural antagonisms such a nomination seemed sure to arouse. Smith, however, was not the only Democrat who appeared to be disqualified because of the images conjured up by his name. John W. Davis was another frequently mentioned possibility. Among public men in the United States, Davis was recognized as one of the most

11 Chattanooga News, June 2, 1923, p. 4.

12 Chattanooga News, May 9, 1923, p. 4. For other evidence of Southern outrage and concern see: Chattanooga News, May 7, 1923, p. 4; Chattanooga News, June 4, 1923, p. 4; Chattanooga News, June 5, 1923, p. 4; Chattanooga News, June 11, 1923, p. 4.
outstanding and brilliant members of the Democratic Party. In 1920 he had suffered because he was unknown. After he left his ambassadorial position in 1920, he entered law practice in New York. He took this step against the advice of friends who were concerned about his political future. Because one of his firm's clients was the banking house of J. P. Morgan, the general public now recognized Davis simply as a Wall Street lawyer. This appeared to be as great a disqualifying factor for Davis as Smith's Catholicism was for him. 13

Another possible nominee, whose chances appeared to be remote, but who was not entirely discounted, was the party's titular leader, James M. Cox. The low state of Cox's fortunes accrued from the nature of his loss in 1920. Not only was the defeat an overwhelming one, but Cox had failed to attract any measurable hard-core personal following. Even those responsible for his selection in 1920 were not inclined to back him again. Nevertheless, political commentators did consider Cox to be a remarkably astute politician. There seemed to be no doubt that Cox, could he not secure the nomination for himself, would exert considerable influence in the

final determination of the nominee. 14

The accidental factors which make for political availability had produced a presidential possibility in the person of Senator-elect Samuel Ralston of Indiana. Ralston had compiled a good record as governor of Indiana and had attracted national attention when he defeated Albert Beveridge for the Senate in 1922. Klan votes, however, had made that victory possible. 15 Ralston enjoyed the additional advantage of residence in a pivotal state. Although he was a machine candidate, nothing had been said against him. He was honest, uninspired, and well-liked. His most serious handicap was his age, for, if elected, he would be sixty-eight in the year of his inauguration. It was perceived that Ralston's chances hinged on whether or not Thomas Taggart could convince Brennan and Murphy that Ralston was the man the bosses should support. 16


15 The Klan's support of Ralston had been in the nature of a protest against Beveridge. Neither Ralston nor Beveridge had concerned himself with the Klan, but one of Beveridge's supporters, former Governor Henry Allen of Kansas, had made anti-Klan speeches during the campaign. Mark Sullivan, "Who Will Lead the Democrats," _World's Work_, XLVIII (June, 1924), 151.

The possibility who seemed most likely to be satisfactory to both the progressive and conservative wings of the party was Carter Glass of Virginia. Although his record proved him to be an economic conservative, it was felt that his loyalty to Wilson might make him acceptable to the progressives. The political commentators also realized that Glass possessed certain disadvantages. First, he came from a state already safely Democratic, and yet he could not count upon solid Southern backing because several other candidates also had substantial Southern following. Second, he was completely lacking in self-assertion and had developed no organization to advertise his availability. 17

Unknown to the political prognosticators, Glass was attempting to discourage organization in his behalf. Despite a strong movement in Virginia to advance his candidacy, Glass explained to his would-be followers that he had supported McAdoo in 1920 and planned to work for his nomination in 1924. Glass feared, however, that the forces that had blocked McAdoo in 1920 would again be successful in 1924. Insofar as his own chances for nomination were concerned, Glass believed that, in the event of a deadlocked convention, he might be nominated if he did not antagonize McAdoo in the meantime. Glass realized that McAdoo's supporters generally were

his friends as well, and he was certain that the Eastern Democrats preferred him to McAdoo. Thus Glass was ensnared in an ambivalent position throughout the pre-convention and convention period. He seemed to genuinely hope that McAdoo would be nominated; yet he realized that his own chances of nomination hinged on a deadlocked convention. 18

While other names were mentioned, most serious speculation during the summer of 1923 revolved around these eight men--McAdoo, Ford, Underwood, Smith, Cox, Ralston, Davis, and Glass. An editorial in the Wheeling Register aptly summed up the prevailing current of opinion:

McAdoo is strong with labor, has the West, and is well liked in the South; but the East is none too favorable to him, and he is poison to Big Business and Wall Street. Underwood can count on the South, is well liked by Wall Street and the East, but is weak in the West and Middle West, and is opposed by the prohibitionists. Bryan still has a following, but is too dry. Al Smith is exceptionally popular in the centers of industry, has labor with him, but is too wet for the South and West. John W. Davis very nearly harmonizes all of the factions of the party, yet exceptions would be taken to his Wall Street standing and perhaps his associations with England. Henry Ford, if he enters the race as a Democrat, would pull heavily from the West and the South, but like McAdoo would be unacceptable to the East. Ralston commands a good position, with very little to be held against him except his age and obscurity. Cox seems to have waned in

popularity since 1920, when he was defeated by 7,000,000, altho his fighting capacity is acknowledged, and also that under normal circumstances he would make a much better showing. As for Woodrow Wilson, his physical condition is considered such as to make his candidacy a mere possibility. 19

As William Jennings Bryan, the acknowledged champion of the Party's rural wing, viewed the situation in the spring of 1923, he sensed a conspiracy in the making. Bryan believed that the Wets and Wall Street would promote Underwood's candidacy in the South and Davis and Smith booms in other regions. Moreover, Underwood would merely serve as a stalking horse and his votes would eventually be diverted to Davis. While Bryan did not believe that a Wet-Wall Street coalition could nominate their candidate, he did believe that they could force a compromise. And in the event that a compromise candidate had to be selected, Bryan felt that Ralston was the most available of that genre. 20

While there were those within the party who hoped to entice Bryan into the field as an active candidate, Bryan was too realistic to seriously consider such action. A proud man in his early sixties, Bryan recognized that his influence was not as great as it once had


been. He knew that not only the Northern Wets but also the ardent Wilsonians would oppose him. Moreover, he had not actively supported Cox, a factor which he realized would weaken his candidacy.\footnote{W. J. Bryan to W. H. Thompson, February 26, 1923, Box 36, Bryan Papers; W. J. Bryan to John A. Marquis, May 4, 1923, Box 37, ibid.} But perhaps most important, however, Bryan had no desire to sacrifice his self-respect and pride. He informed a supporter that "my past nominations have come to me without a contest and it would be mortifying to have to make a contest; and whenever a contest is necessary there is a possibility of defeat, which would be still more mortifying."\footnote{W. J. Bryan to George Huddleston, March 30, 1923, ibid.} Disclaimers of his own candidacy, however, did not mean that Bryan intended to be a passive observer of Democratic politics.

The Democratic presidential outlook began to clarify somewhat during the fall of 1923. On July 31, Senator Underwood, in response to a resolution endorsing his candidacy passed by the Alabama legislature, announced that he would seek the presidency.\footnote{Washington Post, August 1, 1923, Underwood Clippings, Vol. III, 1921-29, Underwood Papers (Department of Archives, Montgomery, Alabama).} Bryan, Underwood's long-time foe, was quick to respond to the announcement. He informed the International News Service in Washington that if the Wets and Wall Street controlled the next...
government to enact legislation, or any effort by 'class or clan' to take the law in its hands, strikes at the fundamental principles of democracy and threatens the existence of ordered government in the United States." Underwood delivered the denunciation in reply to a demand by Mayfield's Weekly, an important Southwestern Klan publication, that Underwood make his position on the Order clear. Once he complied, the Weekly placed Underwood, whom it attacked as the "Jew, jug, and Jesuit" candidate, in a category with Smith and Ford as being unacceptable to the Klan. The Weekly spoke favorably of McAdoo and Ralston, neither of whom had yet committed themselves on the Klan question. Ironically, an editorial writer for the New York World, commenting on this situation, predicted that the Klan's influence on the nomination would be slight, and concluded that any candidate who openly accepted Klan support would be ruined. He postulated, therefore, that although there were a number of candidates who had not yet expressed themselves on the subject, when they did, they would be obliged to denounce the Order.

There was, however, a division of opinion in the McAdoo camp over the advisability of such a course. Early in March, 1923, Thomas Walsh suggested to McAdoo that, in light of Tom Love's activities in

29 Montgomery Advertiser, October 28, 1923, ibid.
30 Montgomery Advertiser, October 29, 1923, ibid.
31 Quoted in Montgomery Advertiser, ibid.
Roper undertook the task of attempting to lure Bryan into the campaign as McAdoo's ally. Bryan, however, was not ready to commit himself. 36

By the close of 1923, McAdoo appeared to be invincible even though no primaries had yet been held. 37 Those opposed to McAdoo's nomination in the East viewed his emergence as the leading contender with alarm. In an effort to forestall McAdoo's ascendancy, Murphy, Taggart, Brennan, and Joseph F. Guffey held several conferences at French Lick Springs, Indiana, in November, 1923. The bosses looked favorably upon both Smith and Underwood. They realized, however, that Smith's Tammany affiliation and his Catholicism would make his nomination difficult. Moreover, they felt that the Southern sponsorship of the Underwood boom would reduce the potency of Underwood's candidacy. Taggart, of course, was grooming Ralston. Unable to agree upon any one nominee, the bosses let it be known that they planned to sponsor favorite son booms all over the country in an effort to prevent McAdoo from entering the convention with too much


37 Kent, The Democratic Party, 475.
strength. Omniously, they also exhibited interest in inserting a Wet plank and a plank denouncing the Ku Klux Klan in the party's platform. McAdoo did not formally enter the race until December, 1923, when he responded to the invitation of the South Dakota Democratic convention that he become a candidate. In that convention McAdoo overwhelmed Ford by a vote of six to one. Ford had indicated earlier that he did not choose to be a candidate, and he ended all speculation.

38New York Times, November 12, 1923, p. 6; New York Times, November 13, 1923, p. 23; New York Times, November 14, 1923, p. 21; New York Times, November 15, 1923, p. 21; New York Times, November 16, 1923, p. 19; New York Times, November 17, 1923, p. 1; New York Times, November 18, 1923, pp. 1 and 8; New York Times, November 19, 1923, p. 1; New York Times, November 20, 1923, p. 21; New York Times, November 21, 1923, p. 21; New York Times, November 24, 1923, p. 15; New York Times, November 27, 1923, p. 2. Stanley Frost, writing in June and July of 1924, speculated that at these conferences a plan had been evolved to project Smith as a stalking horse for marshaling anti-Klan votes and then to swing the nomination to someone else--perhaps Ralston or Davis. Stanley Frost, "Democratic Dynamite," Outlook, CXXXVII (June 18, 1924), 266; Stanley Frost, "Nomination by Exhaustion," Outlook, CXXXVII (July 23, 1924), 464-65. While this eventually may have been the case, it is doubtful that such a plan was formulated this early. At this point, McAdoo was still an unannounced candidate and his hand had not yet been forced on the Klan issue. Moreover, Smith was not yet seriously considered as a candidate. Finally, until Ralston clarified his position on the Klan it seemed doubtful that anti-Klan votes could be shifted to him. Allen stipulates that some observers considered Underwood to be the stalking horse for the Eastern bosses. Allen, "The Underwood Presidential Movement of 1924," Alabama Review, 89. Bryan certainly considered this to be the case. And at this point in time this would appear to be the more logical interpretation. In light of Underwood's conservatism, his opposition to prohibition, and his denunciation of the Klan, he would have been very acceptable to the Eastern bosses. Moreover, as of November, Underwood was certainly a more viable candidate than Smith who did not emerge until Underwood faded.
later in December when he announced that he would not run because he was satisfied with Coolidge. Ford's withdrawal provided a boost to the McAdoo candidacy because it removed one of his most potentially dangerous opponents. Ford would have hurt McAdoo in both the West and the South. With his Western flank now secure, McAdoo could concentrate on the South, a region that had dealt him disappointment in 1920.

Thus as the year 1923 ended, the lines were clearly drawn between the two avowed candidates. On the one hand, there was the conservative Underwood who was viewed sympathetically by the Eastern machines and was opposed by the Klan and the prohibitionists. Diametrically opposed to him was McAdoo. Fashioning himself after Bryan, he appealed to farmers, laborers, Drys, and progressives, and he attacked Wall Street and monopoly. The Klan favored McAdoo, but no primaries had yet been held, and he had not been placed in a position of having to commit himself on the question. Clearly the only thing that McAdoo and Underwood had in common was that each needed the solid support of the South if he was to be nominated. Thus, it was to be the contest in the South during the spring of 1924 that would determine the fate of the two aspirants. Moreover, as

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Underwood had already denounced the Klan, the contest in the Klan stronghold would force McAdoo's hand. Three possibilities were open to him: he could denounce the Klan, condone the Klan, or tacitly accept the Klan backing. As he was already openly favored by the Klan, acceptance of their backing would be construed as tantamount to condoning the Klan.

Although by the end of 1923 the Southern primaries already loomed as tremendously important, they were to become even more significant when events early in 1924 seemed to conspire against the once promising McAdoo candidacy. Early in the spring of 1923 the New York World launched a campaign to bring the Democratic convention to New York City. The very prospect of the party's holding its convention in Wet surroundings outraged such devoted Drys as George Fort Milton. The Chattanooga News proclaimed that "as long as New York is in the act of nullifying the constitution of the United States we do not believe any political party, unless it is the anarchists, will want to meet in that state." William Jennings Bryan was also opposed to New York City's hosting the convention. He asserted that all the local papers were unfriendly to progressive Democracy and that the Democratic Party could not succeed except as a progressive party. Bryan, therefore, felt that it would be unwise to hold the convention in such a hostile environment. Tom Love,

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40Chattanooga News, May 17, 1923, p. 4.
anti-McAdoo contingent. Both the Underwood and Smith forces were jubilant. They claimed that they had defeated the McAdoo supporters. In a rare display of agreement, however, the Chattanooga News and the New York Times correctly contended that the McAdoo forces controlled the committee and could have prevented the selection of New York City had they been so inclined. But while some of McAdoo's supporters envisioned New York as the enemy country, others, such as Homer Cummings, did not. Moreover, in the opinion of many of McAdoo's followers the prospect of paying off the outstanding debt that the New York City offer afforded, was the most important consideration. The committee meeting itself had been marked by a spirit of harmony attributable in part to Hull's work as chairman. Yet, notwithstanding the rather deceptive mood of cordiality, Mark Sullivan questioned whether the McAdoo forces' failure to exert their power might not prove to be disadvantageous when the convention actually met. He pointed out that Al Smith would be stronger in New York than he would be anywhere else. 43

Another factor that no doubt contributed to the Democrats' display of good spirits at the national committee meeting was the feeling that the presidency in 1924 was to be theirs. Democratic

hopes for success in the November elections had escalated to new heights during the winter of 1923-1924. As Democrats watched in eager anticipation, the Republican Party saw its name smeared with the corruption that had permeated the Harding administration. The most flagrant violation of public trust exposed was that centering around the illegal oil leases granted by Secretary of Interior Albert B. Fall to Edward L. Doheny and Harry F. Sinclair. Late in January, the columnist Frank Kent commented, "concededly, this is the worst scandal in the government in many decades. It is an exposure directed by Democrats of a Republican Administration and forced upon a Republican Senate and... committee. The facts have been brought out by a Democratic Senator, Walsh, and the Democrats can be counted upon to make the most of it in the coming campaign." The taint of oil had made the Republican Party vulnerable. McAdoo was eager to capitalize upon this vulnerability. To Baruch, McAdoo confided: "Did you ever hear of anything so utterly rotten as the oil scandals at Washington? This thing must be probed to the bottom.... It begins to look as if the fundamental issue is to recover the Government from grafters and thieves and to put men of integrity and character in charge of public affairs." McAdoo asserted that

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44 Frank Kent, Baltimore Sun, January 27, 1924, quoted in Noggle, Teapot Dome, 87-88. For a full treatment of the Teapot Dome revelations and their impact on the politics of the Twenties, see ibid.; passim.
On February 11, McAdoo testified before Walsh's committee. Taking advantage of Walsh's earlier statement, McAdoo suggested that his name had been dragged into the controversy for partisan political reasons. He contended that he had nothing to do with the oil leases under investigation and that his legal connections with Doheny had no relevance to the matters being investigated.  

McAdoo returned to his hotel room confident that he had made a good impression before the committee. Many of his advisers, however, did not share his optimistic evaluation of the situation. Tumulty and Chadbourne greeted him with a statement similar to those proposed earlier. It emphasized his own innocence but went on to announce that for the good of the party he would withdraw. Roper was called in and he approved of the statement. Again McAdoo refused to surrender to his advisers' pleas; Long and Rockwell apparently supported their chief in this decision. Long was already aware that there was simply no one else to turn to. It would take the others longer to appreciate this fact. In an effort to conciliate his wavering supporters, McAdoo agreed to call a conference of his

54 Chicago Tribune, February 9, 1924, p. 5.

55 Chattanooga News, February 11, 1924, p. 1; Chicago Tribune, February 12, 1924, p. 3.
state leaders to discuss his availability. 56

With his back to the wall, McAdoo phrased his request for a meeting in a manner that made it virtually impossible for the conferees to deny him his chance for the nomination. McAdoo communicated with David L. Rockwell at his national headquarters in Chicago and requested him to call a conference "... to consider and determine whether or not the fact that an honorable professional service rendered by me to a client but having no relation whatever to the oil leases now under investigation by the Senate Committee, is prejudicial to my leadership in the cause of Progressive Democracy?"

McAdoo reiterated that his real concern was not himself, rather it was the cause of progressive Democracy. Like Bryan before him, McAdoo felt that there was a conspiracy directed against him because he represented progressive Democracy. McAdoo asserted:

The powerful financial influences which I had to fight for six years while Secretary of the Treasury, unscrupulous railroad officials who have filed false claims against the Government, the bosses and other sinister influences, are determined to control government at any cost. They are arrayed against me because they fear to have a man in the Presidency who knows them and their methods and who cannot be swerved from the path of duty and justice.

The most immediate and vital issue before the American people is whether these sinister and dangerous forces shall control Government or whether

56 Long Diary, February 11, 1924, Box 3, Long Papers; Long Diary, February 13, 1924, ibid.
honest and clean Government shall be restored to the people, administered in the interest of all the people and not prostituted to the service of the privileged and favored few. 57

McAdoo was desperately attempting to regain the initiative and to wage the campaign on issues of his own choosing. In his best populist-progressive rhetoric McAdoo pictured himself as the voice of the people crusading against the sinister and immoral forces of the country, forces that were conspiring against him and the moral element that he represented. The Chattanooga News faithfully and no doubt sincerely appropriated his attack. The paper lauded McAdoo: "He has raised the issues of the campaign. The sinister conspiracy against him must not succeed." 58 This theme of the people against the interests was echoed in Rockwell's published reply to McAdoo setting the date of the meeting for February 18. Rockwell announced that: "As chairman of the movement, I recognize that the success of our efforts rests entirely upon the response of the people to your candidacy. The basis of our movement has been at all times the desire of the people throughout the country for a president embodying the qualifications which you possess..." 59

57W. G. McAdoo to David Ladd Rockwell, February 12, 1924, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 295, McAdoo Papers.
58Chattanooga News, February 14, 1924, p. 4.
The outcome of the Chicago conference was never seriously in question. Mark Sullivan reported that most of McAdoo's state leaders were so loyal that they could not possibly desert a man whom they believed was being unjustly vilified. Moreover, Sullivan indicated that there was simply no one else in the party who possessed all of McAdoo's strengths. Neither Glass nor Ralston, the two most frequently mentioned beneficiaries of McAdoo's misfortunes, possessed anything approaching McAdoo's progressive credentials. McAdoo's position was further strengthened because at this point no politician associated with his candidacy was willing to take advantage of McAdoo's discomfort. Carter Glass, who realized that he might benefit from McAdoo's failure if he did not alienate him, refused to be pushed into the position of opposing McAdoo. Glass' dilemma was compounded by his apparently sincere devotion for McAdoo. Therefore prior to the Chicago meeting, Glass both reaffirmed his loyalty to McAdoo and insisted that McAdoo had not been eliminated. Moreover, Thomas Walsh, who was seen by many as McAdoo's likely successor, was not initially prepared to assert that McAdoo was unavailable. Although Walsh vacillated in the months to come, in mid-February he announced that he was still committed to McAdoo's

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60 Chattanooga News, February 16, 1924, p. 1.

61 Carter Glass to Jouett Shouse, February 12, 1924, Box 7, Glass Papers.
candidacy. Furthermore, Walsh felt that McAdoo should remain in the race if for no other reason than to hold the progressive forces together. Finally, any belief that the Chicago conferees would desert McAdoo should have been dispelled when the influential Homer Cummings arrived in Chicago and announced that:

It is a reflection upon the intelligence of the public to assume that the slanderous attacks upon Mr. McAdoo will either deceive the people or impair his availability as a candidate. He stands now, as he has heretofore stood, as the representative and the hope of the progressives of the country. We do not propose to be stampeded into any alteration of our determination to nominate and elect him.

The conference itself was a carefully staged effort to give the McAdoo candidacy some badly needed stimulus. More than three hundred McAdoo advocates representing most of the states attended, and prior to the formal meeting seventeen railroad labor organization officials adopted a resolution stating that McAdoo's availability was unimpaired. McAdoo, meanwhile, waited in his hotel room for the foreordained decision that he should remain in the race. On the convention floor Homer Cummings took charge of the proceedings and insisted that it was absurd to consider McAdoo unavailable because he

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62 T. J. Walsh to H. B. Mortimer, February 16, 1924, Box 375, Walsh Papers; T. J. Walsh to Albert D. Nortoni, February 16, 1924, Box 9a, Walsh-Erickson Papers. For the groundswell of support for a Walsh candidacy see Box 9a, Walsh-Erickson Papers.

63 Chicago Tribune, February 17, 1924, Sec. I., p. 4.
was in no way connected with the oil scandals. It was a telegram from Thomas Walsh endorsing the McAdoo candidacy, however, that raised the crowd to a fever pitch of enthusiasm. Walsh asserted:

I am committed to the candidacy of William G. McAdoo, whose character is untouched by any revelation made before the Senate committee investigating the naval oil leases. I should regard any efforts to place another progressive candidate in the field as serving the interest of the republican party to divert the public mind from the iniquities of the present administration and as a contribution to the plan of the great interests allied to defeat the former distinguished secretary of the treasury. . . .

The Walsh telegram was in harmony with the morally self-righteous fervor that pervaded the meeting. Observing the convention for the Chicago Tribune, Philip Kinsley remarked: "President Coolidge was given about as much consideration as a pickpocket. The composite picture of him given by the various delegates, would be that of a cold, mean little man, afraid to talk, waiting for a chance to barter away the resources of the United States for a few dollars." But in opposition to Coolidge "... stood the great leader, McAdoo, snatching the torch of freedom and progressivism from the dying hands of Wilson, marching with the song of Christian crusaders

64 Chattanooga News, February 18, 1924, p. 1; Chicago Tribune, February 18, 1924, p. 1.

upon the evils of Washington." 66

As anticipated the conferees adopted a resolution that declared McAdoo to be the "hope of the progressive thought of the nation."

The conferees demanded his leadership and denounced and condemned "the recent infamous conspiracy which attempted to besmirch his name..." Once this formality was completed McAdoo descended from his hotel room and addressed his assembled admirers. Appearing decisive and confident, he acknowledged that he accepted their "command." He thundered: "Let us from this time forward fight until the stars fall for honest government, for world peace, for economic and social justice, and for the undying principles of Democracy." Then McAdoo delineated his program. It was essentially an endorsement of economic progressivism and as such it presented McAdoo at his best. He announced that "the time has come when the people of this country must decide whether the wealthy few can use the government for their own special advantage while the masses must take orders from the rich." 67


67 McAdoo's program called for clean, honest, efficient government. He promised to summon an international conference to meet in Washington to consider the problems of world economic conditions, peace, arms reduction, and world stability. McAdoo declared that control of the Treasury Department and the Federal Reserve System must be transferred from Wall Street to the people. Moreover, he demanded that the Fordney-McCumber Tariff, which he indicated had robbed the people for the benefit of the privileged, be repealed. He called for railroad reforms and promised something
McAdoo, he was out of synchronization with the times. The campaign in which he was soon to find himself embroiled was not to be waged upon economic issues but upon cultural ones; McAdoo was very vulnerable on cultural issues.

Predictably, editorial comment on the success of the Chicago conference was varied. The New Republic indicated that McAdoo's followers had reached the only decision open to them. The journal asserted that "they whitewashed an innocent man, whose only crime was bad luck, the bad luck of a virtuous citizen who orders lemonade in a saloon which is raided before he finishes his drink." Nevertheless, the New Republic went on to warn that "... Mr. McAdoo's friends would be very foolish to go on insisting that he is just as good a candidate as ever. No candidate is possible for the Democrats who has any connection with oil, however blameless." George Fort Milton provided a more partisan analysis of the conference. He insisted that McAdoo had been vindicated and that the people's champion had defeated the evil influences arrayed against him in a

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other than talk for agriculture. He would enforce the Eighteenth Amendment and the Volstead Act. Furthermore, McAdoo promised tax reduction. McAdoo perhaps made his strongest bid for the labor vote. He promised "to secure legislation setting up a labor code establishing a decent living wage standard and appropriate tribunals for maintaining peace in industry." He also indicated that "the child labor and minimum wage amendments to the constitution should be adopted." Chicago Tribune, February 19, 1924, pp. 1 and 6.

68 New Republic, XXXVIII (February 27, 1924), 2.
received in Chicago and he was almost pathetic in his attempts to bolster the morale of his disheartened followers. 71

With the Chicago conference behind him, McAdoo hoped to assume the offensive. Yet within the week he came under attack again. In response to an inquiry from the New York World, McAdoo admitted that his law firm would have received a fee of $1,000,000 from Doheny had they successfully handled his company's Mexican affairs. McAdoo reiterated that this was in no way connected with the naval oil leases under investigation. 72 While McAdoo was undoubtedly telling the truth, the revelation was nonetheless damaging. It not only further tarnished McAdoo's image but it "also appeared to make mockery of the Democracy's slogan of returning honesty to government. The once sympathetic New Republic commented that:

71 Breckinridge Long to E. M. House, February 21, 1924, Box 172, Long Papers; D. C. Roper to Frank Cooper, February 20, 1924, S. C. Vol. XII, Baruch Papers; Daniel Roper to S. R. Bertron, February 21, 1924, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 296, McAdoo Papers; D. C. Roper to Bernard Baruch, February 20, 1924, S. C. Vol. XII, Baruch Papers; Bernard Baruch to W. G. McAdoo, February 27, 1924, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 298, McAdoo Papers; Unit VIII "Special Memoranda" 1924-1928, Box 2, Baruch Papers; Key Pittman to Frank L. Polk, February 21, 1924, Box 14, Pittman Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress); Key Pittman to George B. Thatcher, April 14, 1924, Box 16, ibid.; W. G. McAdoo to T. L. Chadbourne, February 27, 1924, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 297, McAdoo Papers.

72 Chicago Tribune, February 24, 1924, p. 1.
concerning McAdoo's availability, Walsh was in a quandary as to what to do. He felt that if McAdoo withdrew, one of the conservative candidates would receive the nomination. Thus Walsh remained in a state of indecision.76

McAdoo simply could not regain the initiative. On February 27, it was reported and McAdoo confirmed that his law firm had successfully intervened in a tax refund case before the Treasury Department in 1920 on behalf of the Republic Iron and Steel Company.77

This was perhaps the most damaging revelation to date. The New York Times severely censured McAdoo. The paper asserted: "No man can say that it is fitting for a former Secretary of the Treasury, only a short time out of office, to appear before his own subordinates to secure a reduction in the taxes of a large corporation..."78

Thomas Walsh confided that news of McAdoo's "employment speedily upon his retirement from the Treasury in tax claims before the department, coming immediately after the revelations made before the Public Lands Committee is, I fear, disastrous."79

As McAdoo's fortunes plummeted, Glass' chances for

76 T. J. Walsh to M. M. Duncan, February 27, 1924, Box 9a, Walsh-Erickson Papers.


79 T. J. Walsh to Miss Winifred Morrison, March 3, 1924, Box 375, Walsh Papers.
nomination rose correspondingly. Although Glass still supported McAdoo, he did so with less enthusiasm. Glass reported that: "Much as I regret to think so, it now seems to me that the prospect of Mr. McAdoo's nomination is gravely impaired, if not actually destroyed, by the Doheny episode and subsequent developments; but until McAdoo himself realizes this I shall feel obliged to refrain from doing anything that would seem to turn his confusion to my advantage."80

Glass was not the only second-line contender who conceivably would benefit from McAdoo's demise. John W. Davis also stood to profit if the top presidential aspirants became unavailable. Unlike Glass, however, Davis enjoyed no direct ties with the McAdoo camp. Moreover, because Davis was linked with Wall Street in the public mind, he realized that if he were to become the eventual nominee it would have to occur as the result of a movement in which he was not personally involved. He surmised that if he became an avowed candidate his opponents would charge that the New York interests were behind his candidacy. Davis, therefore, had determined very early to assume the same passive role he had adopted in 1920.81

Davis' West Virginia friends directed his movement, and the Democratic state executive committee, meeting in Parkersburg,

80 Carter Glass to A. W. Murphy, March 3, 1924, Box 241, Glass Papers.

81 J. W. Davis to J. Hornor Davis, January 4, 1924, Box 38, Davis Papers (Yale University).
January 10, endorsed him for the nomination. Not unexpectedly, the New York Times heralded the West Virginia action. The paper felt, as it had in 1920, that Davis' reputation and character would make him an excellent nominee. Moreover, that editorial prompted an open letter from Professor Irving Fisher who insisted that Davis was the best possible candidate in either party. While some of Davis' supporters felt that these endorsements gave his campaign added impetus, Robert Lansing remained skeptical as to their value. Lansing believed that Davis should avoid the public spotlight as much as possible. He believed that Davis' friends should direct their entire efforts toward stopping McAdoo. Once this was accomplished he felt that the delegates would logically turn to Davis. Thus, the Davis camp greeted the news of Doheny's testimony with elation. Lansing believed that, if McAdoo's fortunes had been ruined and his forces failed to unite behind another nominee, Davis' chances of nomination would be greatly improved.

The Underwood supporters, however, were those most cheered

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82 New York Times, January 11, 1924, p. 3; J. W. Davis to Louis A. Johnson, January 11, 1924, Box 38, Davis Papers.


84 W. S. Wysong to J. W. Davis, January 17, 1924, Box 38, Davis Papers; Robert Lansing to J. W. Davis, January 18, 1924, ibid.; David C. Reay to J. W. Davis, February 13, 1924, Box 39, Davis Papers; Robert Lansing to J. W. Davis, February 14, 1924, ibid.
by McAdoo's misfortunes. Optimism reigned as the Doheny testimony appeared to be the catalyst the Underwood campaign required to drive it forward. Coincident with the first primary, the Underwood high command saw McAdoo's availability "ruined" and his forces "holding together merely to wield as much influence as they can in the Convention as a bloc." As for Underwood, "either on the first ballot or after complimentary votes are cast for native sons in several of the Southern States, we expect to have the support of the delegations of all the States in the South." Nor was that all, for "if Al Smith cannot get the nomination we expect to have New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Illinois and the New England States.... Governor Smith is very strong in the North and East, and is a very fine fellow generally. There is objection to him, however, mainly in the South, because of his religion and on account of his wet proclivities."85

This expression of respect for Smith was natural. As Wets opposed by the Klan, Underwood and Smith served as regional counterparts. Neither was likely to hurt the other prior to the convention, while each could hold anti-McAdoo votes intact until the situation crystallized. The complimentary nature of their candidacies was to play an important part in the later strategy of each.

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85 Resume of the political situation throughout the country, March 11, 1924, unsigned, typed manuscript, Underwood Campaign, 1924, Speeches, Miscellaneous Drawer, Underwood Papers.
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Volume II

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by

Leah Marcile Taylor
B.A., Vanderbilt University, 1962
M.A., Louisiana State University, 1966
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CHAPTER VI

THE KU KLUX KLAN AND DEMOCRATIC POLITICS

The nature of the Democracy's Southern campaign had been determined in the fall of 1923 when Underwood denounced the Klan. That organization pursued three national objectives in 1924. It sought to prevent a platform denunciation by either party, to promote McAdoo's nomination, and, if failing in the latter, to make certain that neither Underwood nor Smith was the nominee. McAdoo had not openly sought the Klan's endorsement, nor was he affiliated with the Order. Nevertheless, Klan support of McAdoo early in the campaign was natural. Both the man and the Order were manifestations and symbols of rural America. Moreover, it did not appear that the Teapot Dome revelations significantly reduced the affinity between the two. Of the major candidates, McAdoo remained the least objectionable to the Klan. He was Protestant, Dry, and as yet uncommitted on the Invisible Empire. Neither Underwood nor Smith could meet all of these specifications. Furthermore, in light of Underwood's denunciation, the Klan had no real alternative to

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1 Alexander, The Ku Klux Klan in the Southwest, 161.
supporting McAdoo, who was the only major candidate to actively challenge Underwood in the Southern primaries. As for McAdoo, the other partner in this informal alliance of expediency, his fortunes were at their lowest ebb. It was absolutely essential that he sweep the South if he was to capture the nomination. McAdoo evidently reasoned, therefore, that he dare not chance alienating such a large segment of his following.

The first of the Southern primaries, that in Alabama, was indicative of those to follow. Although McAdoo, in accord with his policy of not opposing favorite sons, did not enter the contest, he was, nevertheless, represented. Two Alabamians, Lycurgus Breckinridge Musgrove—a prohibitionist—and Marvin A. Dinsmore—an avowed McAdoo supporter and allegedly the Klan candidate—opposed Underwood. The rhetoric of the opposition was that of rural America. In the Bryan tradition, Musgrove announced that if he were elected he would appoint as delegates to the convention "only such progressive and dry Democrats as will properly represent the good people of this state, to the end that your voting strength shall not be traded off to the Wets, to Wall Street, Tammany, Al Smith or

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any other reactionary element of the party.” Despite this opposition Underwood was able to carry his home state by a two to one margin. Ominously, however, the campaign was marked by attempts to arouse the Klan against him.  

Nationwide attention and importance accrued, however, not to the Alabama but to the Georgia contest. The Georgia primary, held on March 19, was not only McAdoo’s first, but also the first to directly pit McAdoo against Underwood. \(^5\) Initially, McAdoo had hoped to pose as an acquiescent candidate, a man who would respond to the overwhelming call of the people. But Teapot Dome had altered that strategy. His friends finally convinced him that, if he did not go into Georgia and actively seek the people’s support, he would not only lose that state but also the remainder of the South. \(^7\) Thus, the

\(^4\) Clipping from the Savannah Morning News (Dateline Birmingham, Alabama, December 29, 1923) sent from R. C. Gordon to William H. May, January 1, 1924, Underwood Campaign 1924, Letters, Underwood Papers (Department of Archives, Montgomery, Alabama).


\(^6\) Ibid., 94.

\(^7\) W. G. McAdoo to Samuel Untermeyer, March 3, 1924, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 297, McAdoo Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress); George Fort Milton, Jr. to Brice Clagett, March 3, 1924, ibid.; W. G. McAdoo to Hollins N. Randolph, March 5, 1924, ibid.; George Fort Milton, Jr. to Brice Clagett, March 5, 1924, ibid.; W. G. McAdoo to Leslie C. Garnett, March 6, 1924, ibid.; Carter Glass to W. G. McAdoo, March 7, 1924, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 298, McAdoo Papers.
Georgia contest loomed as one pregnant with implications. A McAdoo victory would be a great stride toward undermining Underwood's stance as the Southern candidate. Moreover, it would help McAdoo overcome the Teapot Dome stigma. Conversely, an Underwood victory in McAdoo's native state would aid Underwood's national cause materially and probably spell the end of McAdoo's aspirations.

With the importance of the victory clear to both antagonists, it was an acrimonious campaign. Because the Klan was so strong in Georgia, McAdoo's hand was forced on that explosive issue. While speaking in Macon, McAdoo enunciated his definitive public position on the Klan: "I stand four square with respect to this and I stand four square with respect to every other organization on the immutable question of liberty contained in the first amendment of the Constitution of the United States, namely, freedom of religious worship, freedom of speech, freedom of the press and the right of peaceful assembly." McAdoo, who knew that the Macon papers were hostile toward him, had anticipated the Klan question and had prepared his answer in advance. He was pleased with his reply and explained that he had not elaborated on the position because it seemed unnecessary. He asserted: "I do not believe that anybody can find fault with this just

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8Macon Telegraph, March 16, 1924, p. 1.
Underwood's manager declared they had proof that Klan members were ordered to vote for McAdoo in the primary. Underwood, in replying to a request by the New York World's editors that he comment on the results of the primary, was quick to assert:

The solid vote of the kl klux klan in the state of its origin, rigidly organized against me, supplied a decisive balance of power in the Georgia primary. My position on this issue is known to be determined and immovable, and the result in Georgia is a peremptory challenge to the integrity of Constitutional Government. The fight is now in the open. It will be carried to a finish. While those who place allegiance to klans and cabals above loyalty to the Constitution and the Bill of Rights will continue to vote against me, I view the final outcome with utmost confidence. . . .

In 1856 the Democratic Party in its platform went on record against organizations such as the ku klux klan. I favor a similar plank in the platform to be adopted by the Democratic National Convention in June.

In this final paragraph Underwood moved to a more militant position. He was determined to make his personal vendetta against the Klan a party fight. It was not unlikely that, even at this early date, he realized his position on the Klan might lose him the South. He was, therefore, directing an appeal to the anti-Klan North and East.

The Georgia victory brought at least temporary encouragement to the McAdoo camp. The more optimistic of his supporters

\[12\] Allen, "The Underwood Presidential Movement of 1924," 94.

\[13\] Statement by Senator Underwood in reply to a request by the editors of the New York World, March 22, 1924, Underwood Campaign 1924, Speeches, Underwood Papers.
believed that McAdoo's victory not only had eliminated Underwood but also had blunted the effectiveness of the Teapot Dome charge. Nevertheless, they realized that they still faced an uphill battle.14

The McAdoo management attempted to exploit the victory to the utmost. Frank A. Hampton, Senator Furnifold Simmons' private secretary and an active participant in the McAdoo campaign, issued a statement declaring that Underwood had been crushed. More important, however, Hampton insisted that the Georgia victory was most significant because it revealed "clearly that while the politicians became frightened by the conspiracy to destroy Mr. McAdoo the people themselves never wavered at all. It shows too that the people understand the vicious war that is being made on Mr. McAdoo by the sinister power of money and the big interests of the United States."15

McAdoo himself exuded confidence. He saw himself, or at any rate wished others to envision him, as the people's candidate, the innocent victim of a conspiratorial alliance of corrupt bosses, Wall Street, and big business. He was almost pathetically eager to

14 Daniel C. Roper to W. G. McAdoo, March 22, 1924, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 299, McAdoo Papers; Daniel C. Roper to Tom Love, March 24, 1924, Box IU-15D, Love Papers (Dallas Historical Society); Martin T. Mantonto to W. G. McAdoo, March 25, 1924, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 299, McAdoo Papers; Carl Vinson to W. G. McAdoo, March 28, 1924, ibid.

15 Statement issued by Frank A. Hampton, March 20, 1924, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 295, McAdoo Papers.
regain the confidence of his onetime staunch allies. Reporting on the progress of the campaign to Thomas L. Chadbourne, McAdoo pleaded that:

I wish you could be with me on one campaign trip and get a clear idea of the attitude of THE PEOPLE toward me. The real men and women who are going to settle this election are not the politicians. They are the ones who come out to meet me at railroad stations...and in the halls where I speak and who give a manifestation of enthusiasm and interest which is like a breath of fresh air blowing away the poison gasses of Wall Street and Washington. 16

Notwithstanding McAdoo's euphoric glorification of the people and his lieutenants' efforts to manipulate the Georgia victory, it was soon obvious to even his most loyal supporters that the triumph had not eradicated McAdoo's woes. Although McAdoo had staged a partial recovery from the effects of the Doheny disclosures, he had accomplished this only at the expense of strengthening the impression that he was the Klan's candidate. As a consequence he was encountering increasing difficulty with the Klan and Wet issues in Wisconsin where considerable spontaneous Smith sentiment seemed to be emerging. Reports from New England indicated that a substantial Smith movement was burgeoning in that area. It was obvious to most observers that McAdoo was in considerable trouble in the East. Furthermore,

16W. G. McAdoo to T. L. Chadbourne, March 28, 1924, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 299, ibid. See also W. G. McAdoo to William L. O'Connell, March 21, 1924, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 298, ibid.; W. G. McAdoo to Oscar A. Price, March 28, 1924, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 299, ibid.
he had not recaptured his earlier momentum. McAdoo had not yet reconverted such former supporters as Josephus Daniels and Pat Harrison, who intended to lead an uninstructed Mississippi delegation to the convention. Even the loyal Breckinridge Long was disheartened. Long, House, and Roper were more and more disposed to believe that McAdoo would not receive the nomination, and they were still inclined toward Glass as their second choice. Glass was growing more receptive to the idea of his own candidacy, but he was determined to remain with McAdoo until the latter realized that his candidacy was damaged beyond repair. Clearly, despite the Georgia primary victory and McAdoo's attempts to recapture the initiative, the McAdoo campaign was suffering. 17

Editorial comment on McAdoo's two-to-one primary victory spanned the entire range of the political spectrum. Commentators were not in general agreement with David Ladd Rockwell's

17 Daniel Roper to Tom Love, March 28, 1924, Box IU-15 D, Love Papers; Daniel Roper to W. G. McAdoo, March 12, 1924, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 298, McAdoo Papers; H. A. Moehlenpah to W. G. McAdoo, March 28, 1924, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 299, ibid.; H. A. Moehlenpah to W. G. McAdoo March 27, 1924, ibid.; Homer Cummings to David Ladd Rockwell, March 22, 1924, ibid.; Willard M. Kiplinger to W. G. McAdoo, March 17, 1924, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 298, McAdoo Papers; Frank A. Hampton to Brice Clagett, March 7, 1924, ibid.; Pat Harrison to W. G. McAdoo, March 10, 1924, ibid.; Long Diary, March 21, 1924, Box 3, Long Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress); Long Diary, March 26, 1924, ibid.; Long Diary, March 29, 1924, ibid.; Carter Glass to W. E. Harris, March 14, 1924, Box 241, Glass Papers (University of Virginia).
assertions that McAdoo had recaptured the lead for the nomination. David Lawrence, however, declared that the McAdoo campaign "seems to have taken a new lease on life since the victory in Georgia." Others felt that, while the victory had added vigor to the McAdoo campaign, there was nothing that could bring him back to his former position of strength. While some prognosticators saw the Georgia defeat as catastrophic for Underwood, the Alabama newspapers asserted it was natural that McAdoo should carry his native state. Frank Kent of the Baltimore Sun shared this view and failed to see the Georgia primary as indicating any great strength or popularity on McAdoo's part. First, commenting on the fact that Georgia was McAdoo's home state, Kent concluded: "He had the powerful support of the Ku Klux Klan, the S. C. T. U., and the Anti-Saloon League. Nearly all the Georgia newspapers were for him, and there was, perhaps, less printed in Georgia about the Doheny and other incidents that have hurt him than anywhere else--and what was printed was in a friendly vein." This wide divergence of opinion lends credence to the assertion made in the Wilmington (Delaware) Every Evening that "a real test between the two Southerners must be taken in some State as far away from Georgia and Alabama as possible." 18 That test would be the Texas primary in May, and the events of the interim

18 All quoted in "McAdoo's March Through Georgia," Literary Digest, LXXXI (April 5, 1924), 11-12.
would make the contest assume an even greater significance.

While the month of March was marked by McAdoo's attempts at recovery, the month of April saw the emergence of a third avowed candidate—Alfred E. Smith. Smith's growing strength would prove to be a mixed blessing for McAdoo's cause. In the short run Smith's appearance strengthened the resolve of some of McAdoo's wavering supporters; in the long run Smith would be too strong. The Wet forces had used Smith in 1920 in their efforts to deprive McAdoo of the nomination, and it is possible that as early as 1923 Smith was again being considered as merely an obstacle to be erected in McAdoo's path. Smith's campaign, begun early in 1923, had consisted of making contacts outside the state in order to prepare for any contingencies during the 1924 convention. As late as January, 1924, Franklin Roosevelt did not consider Smith to be a serious contender. He speculated that when Smith was eliminated the Tammany vote would go to some conservative, probably Underwood or Ralston. \(^{19}\) Smith did not emerge as a serious threat until after the Teapot Dome revelations and after Underwood had begun to flounder. Then his movement rapidly gathered momentum.

On April 8, 1924, the Rhode Island Democratic state

\(^{19}\) Pringle, Alfred E. Smith, 302; Handlin, Al Smith and His America, 116; Franklin Roosevelt to Andrew J. Peters, January 3, 1924, Group 11, Box 5, FDR Papers (Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park).
convention adopted a resolution endorsing Smith for the presidency. Shortly thereafter Governor Albert C. Ritchie of Maryland appeared at the Jefferson Day Dinner of the National Democratic Club in New York City and in the course of criticizing the Eighteenth Amendment praised Governor Smith highly. Finally, on April 15, the New York Democratic state convention formally placed Smith in the race for the presidency. This movement to bring Smith to the fore was an obstructionist one at the outset. With Underwood encountering difficulty in the South and McAdoo garnering Klan support in the South and the West, it appeared that Smith was the only candidate capable of attracting enough Wet and anti-Klan support to stop McAdoo. In addition, many conservative influences within the party now coalesced around Smith as a candidate preferable to McAdoo. It soon became apparent, however, that Smith's appeal to the city-dwellers made him a legitimate candidate in his own right. In mid-April he managed to win practically all the Wisconsin delegates without actively campaigning for them. Ominously, Smith was the overwhelming choice of the Wet city voters, while McAdoo, who ran well in the Dry rural districts, was hurt badly because of his alleged association with the

Frank Kent labeled the Smith movement the "real thing" and predicted that once the favorite sons were eliminated Smith could count on New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New Jersey, most of Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Delaware, Illinois, and part of Indiana and Maryland. Smith was becoming a greater obstacle in McAdoo's path than was Underwood. Papers throughout the South and West began to emphasize Smith's wetness, his connection with Tammany, his Catholicism, and the Klan's opposition to him. The Chattanooga News viewed Smith's entry into the race with horror. The paper indicated that: "The sentiment in his favor is strongest in communities where the spirit of lawlessness prevails, or where the foreign element of the population is very large." Thus, if a McAdoo-Smith rather than a McAdoo-Underwood contest should evolve, the classic lines of cleavage within

21Kent, The Democratic Party, 469-70, 483; Pringle, Alfred E. Smith, 302; Huthmacher, Massachusetts People and Politics, 95; Ernest K. Lindley, Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Career in Progressive Democracy (New York: Blue Ribbon Books, Inc., 1931), 221; New York Times, April 17, 1924, p. 3; George Fort Milton, Jr. to Brice Clagett, April 3, 1924, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 300, McAdoo Papers; David Ladd Rockwell to McAdoo Headquarters, Los Angeles, April 2, 1924, ibid.; H. H. Fuller to David Ladd Rockwell, April 3, 1924, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 301, McAdoo Papers.


23Chattanooga News, April 16, 1924, p. 4.
the party would have ample opportunity to express themselves. The possibilities that such a situation would develop began to loom large on the horizon.

An editorial writer for the Springfield Union accurately forecast the impending clash late in April: "The prospects are therefore, that, while McAdoo and Smith together may have three-fourths of the delegates, neither will have one-half and neither will allow the other to secure two-thirds of them. . . . In the natural course of events in such a situation the convention will not be able to nominate anyone till McAdoo and Smith have killed off each other."24 William Hard, in analyzing the situation for the Nation, likewise felt that Smith would be a power at the convention but would fail to get the nomination. While not willing to discount McAdoo entirely, Hard believed that the nomination would go to a compromise candidate, probably Ralston of Indiana.25 There was, however, another possible compromise candidate, John W. Davis, and he had seen his chances improve considerably in April.

Davis' greatest handicap from the outset had been his Wall Street connection. Late in March, however, Lansing indicated that the criticism of Davis as Morgan's attorney had abated somewhat in


the face of the McAdoo adherents' insistence that Doheny's lawyer was capable of leading the Democratic Party. Lansing suggested that it would be difficult for the McAdoo partisans to attack Davis for representing a capitalist whose reputation was untainted when McAdoo represented capitalists whose names were smeared with oil.  

Furthermore, in late March and early April, Theodore A. Huntley, a newspaperman and Davis supporter, sought to transform Davis' Wall Street connection into a positive asset. In February, Huntley had written Davis and suggested that it would be easier to secure his nomination if he would relinquish his New York law practice. Davis had sent a lengthy reply to Huntley on March 4. In the course of rejecting Huntley's advice, Davis had remarked:

No one in all this list of clients has ever controlled or even fancied that he could control my personal or my political conscience. I am vain enough to imagine that no one ever will. The only limitation upon a right-thinking lawyer's independence is the duty which he owes to his clients, once selected, to serve them without the slightest thought of the effect such a service may have upon his own personal popularity or his political fortunes. Any lawyer who surrenders this independence or shades this duty by trimming his professional course to fit the gusts of popular opinion in my judgment not only dishonors himself but disparages and degrades the greatest profession to which he should be proud to belong. You must not think me either indifferent or unappreciative if I tell you in candor that I would not pay this price for any honor in the gift of man.  

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26Robert Lansing to John W. Davis, March 31, 1924, Box 40, Davis Papers (Yale University).

27Quoted in Huntley, *The Life of John W. Davis*, 133-34.
Hoping to capitalize upon Davis' honesty, Huntley sought permission to publish the letter. Davis acceded to the request, and the Pittsburg Post published the letter in a Washington dispatch on March 30. Numerous other papers printed the text in full, and the reaction was for the most part very favorable. The New York Times commented editorially that: "Mr. John W. Davis has just done a bold and manly thing, apparently not caring whether it be politic or not." The Davis supporters were genuinely encouraged over the reception accorded the letter. Even Robert Woolley, who seemed determined to remain on good terms with whomever the eventual nominee might be, congratulated Davis on his honesty. Reports from Virginia, attributed to Harry Byrd, indicated that Glass would not be able to deliver the entire delegation to McAdoo. Furthermore, if Glass were eliminated some of the Virginia delegates might be available for Davis after first voting for Underwood. Thus, although Davis felt that Ralston was probably the most acceptable compromise choice, he began to believe that perhaps he might receive the nomination once McAdoo and Smith had exhausted themselves.

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*29* New York Times, April 1, 1924, p. 10.

*30* D. C. Hodgkin to J. W. Davis, April 1, 1924, Box 41, Davis Papers; J. W. Davis to Theodore A. Huntley, April 4, 1924, *ibid.*; Robert W. Woolley to J. W. Davis, April 2, 1924, *ibid.*; W. B. Cornwell to J. W. Davis, April 15, 1924, *ibid.*; J. W. Davis
Late in April, the Smith movement suffered a temporary reversal when the most powerful of the city bosses, Charles Murphy, died. There was a varied reaction as to the effect that Murphy's death would have on Smith's chances for the nomination. The preponderant immediate opinion was that the adroit politician's passing had greatly impaired Smith's candidacy. It was speculated that without Murphy's leadership the city bosses would be unable to control the convention. On the other hand, with Murphy gone, Tammany's stigma would be particularly erased from the Smith cause. Regardless of its long-term effects, Murphy's death, coupled with the choice of Franklin Roosevelt as campaign manager, neutralized the effectiveness of one prong of McAdoo's attack—the Tammany smear. The Dry, Protestant, and anti-Tammany Roosevelt, a nationally known 1920 vice-presidential candidate from rural upstate New York, added dignity, prestige, and balance to the predominantly urban, Wet, and Catholic Smith following. George Brennan of Illinois and

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Norman Mack, New York national committeeman, had conferred with Smith immediately following Murphy's death and had decided that the actual chairmanship should go to a nationally recognized figure not allied with Tammany. Thus, Roosevelt headed the pre-convention campaign and served as the chief spokesman for Smith's forces, but actual leadership of the convention fight devolved upon Brennan and Mack.34

While the month of April had marked Smith's ascendancy, it had not been a particularly fruitful period for either McAdoo or Underwood. Underwood secured only a few scattered votes in Maine, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, and Arizona. McAdoo, not faring much better, captured only the North and South Dakota delegations. Many states, earlier counted safely in his column, either boomed favorite sons or endorsed uninstructed delegations. Among the favorite sons were Jonathan M. Davis of Kansas and Charles W. Bryan of Nebraska; states sending uninstructed delegations included Iowa and

34New York Times, April 26, 1924, p. 1; New York Times, April 29, 1924, p. 1; New York Times, April 30, 1924, p. 1. Even though Roosevelt's natural allegiance logically would have placed him in the McAdoo rather than in the Smith camp, he had endorsed Smith in February. It would have been politically difficult for Roosevelt not to have endorsed his state's candidate. Moreover, he was pleased with Smith's record as governor. Finally, there seems little doubt that Roosevelt accepted Smith's offer because he was ready to resume an active role in politics. Lindley, Franklin D. Roosevelt, 221. See also James MacGregor Burns, Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc.; 1956), 91-93.
Missouri. These defections were not fatal because the majority within each of the delegations was still favorable to McAdoo. They were not willing, however, at this point to commit themselves to a doubtful cause. McAdoo was not notably successful in states such as Rhode Island, Maine, New Hampshire, Illinois or Wisconsin, but this was not territory previously considered his.\(^{35}\)

McAdoo continued to experience difficulty in regaining support that he had once taken for granted. Early in April, Thomas Walsh finally informed him that he was no longer an available candidate. Walsh saw McAdoo's law firm's handling of tax cases before the Treasury department as the disqualifying factor. Moreover, the oil issue would be lost to the Democrats if McAdoo were the nominee. While Walsh's disavowal must have been a blow to McAdoo, it seemed likely that McAdoo would, nevertheless, receive the Montana vote. Walsh refused to allow himself to be seriously considered, and there was no other suitable progressive to whom Montana could turn. McAdoo, however, was faced with other defections in the West. Key

\(^{35}\)New York Times, April 21, 1924, p. 1; Printed statement, McAdoo for President Committee, David Ladd Rockwell, Chairman; George Fort Milton, Jr., Director of Publicity, Chicago, April 12, 1924, Underwood Campaign 1924, Letters, Underwood Papers; W. G. McAdoo to B. M. Baruch, April 1, 1924, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 299, McAdoo Papers; Carter Glass to Jouett Shouse, April 7, 1924, Box 7, Glass Papers; Allen, "The Underwood Presidential Movement of 1924," Alabama Review, 225; Allen, "The Underwood Presidential Movement of 1924," Doctoral dissertation, 128.
Pittman continued to urge Nevada to send an uninstructed delegation to the convention. While Pittman was not hostile toward McAdoo, the Nevadan did think that the oil disclosures had ruined him. Pittman, therefore, wanted to enjoy a bargaining position at the convention. Furthermore, Pittman mentioned a new presidential possibility--Senator Joseph T. Robinson of Arkansas. While Pittman acknowledged that Robinson's most serious handicap was his Southern residence, he pointed out that Arkansas was west of the Mississippi River and that Robinson was really more a Western than a Southern type. 36

Indeed, throughout the month of April, the McAdoo camp was greatly concerned about the role of the Arkansas senator. Robinson was being prominently mentioned as a dark horse, and McAdoo vitally needed all the Southern support that he could possibly muster. Baruch, a very close friend of Robinson, was delegated to determine the Arkansan's position. Robinson assured Baruch that he was friendly toward McAdoo and that the Arkansas delegation would give the Californian's candidacy every consideration. It was known, however,

36 T. J. Walsh to W. G. McAdoo, April 3, 1924, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 300, McAdoo Papers; S. V. Stewart to W. G. McAdoo, April 7, 1924, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 302, ibid.; S. V. Stewart to Daniel Roper, April 16, 1924, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 301, ibid.; T. J. Walsh to S. V. Stewart, April 2, 1924, Box 375, Walsh Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress); T. J. Walsh to P. H. Callahan, May 2, 1924, Box 9a, Walsh-Erickson Papers; T. J. Walsh to W. H. Maloney, April 4, 1924, ibid.; Key Pittman to William Woodburn, April 15, 1924, Box 16, Pittman Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress).
that the Arkansas delegation would be instructed for Robinson and then vote as he indicated. Thus, Arkansas remained a question mark. Meanwhile, Baruch and Roper also worked on the Mississippi delegation, another vital Southern state that was in doubt.37

In addition to these possible defections in the West and the South, areas which McAdoo had to control if he was to have any chance at all, McAdoo was increasingly encountering difficulty on another score—the Ku Klux Klan. Confiding to Baruch in early April, McAdoo complained that his enemies had abandoned the "oil nonsense, and are trying to ring in the K. K. K. in Catholic states, and to charge me with being a Catholic in K. K. K. states."38 Because the press pictured him as the Klan candidate, the number of people willing to contribute to his campaign was diminishing.39 McAdoo


38W. G. McAdoo to Bernard Baruch, April 1, 1924, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 299, McAdoo Papers, See also Jouett Shouse to W. H. Avery, April 9, 1924, Correspondence 1911-1929, Shouse Papers (University of Kentucky).

39Frank R. Forrest to Jouett Shouse, April 17, 1924, Box IU-15D, Love Papers.
insisted that "the attempt to create the Klan issue, so far as I am concerned is purely a contemptible Underwood device to injure me if possible in states where Catholic sentiment is strong." He stood by his Macon pronouncement and added that "everyone, no matter what his private opinion may be, is entitled to exist in this nation if he obeys and respects the Constitution and laws of the land."\(^{40}\)

Of course, McAdoo could have erased the Klan issue simply by denouncing the Order. But McAdoo evidently feared that if he censured the Klan he would alienate the rural constituents upon whom he was so heavily dependent. He was to learn, however, that the expediency of the moment would in the long run prove to be inexpedient. Thomas Walsh observed later: "I urged our friend, Mr. McAdoo, to exert whatever influence he could to get the leading Southern Democrats to frown on the Klan movement, and to emulate the example of Underwood in openly denouncing it. Had he done so, Ralston would have been forced to observe a like course and the pesky thing never would have become an apple of discord in New York."\(^{41}\) But regardless of what others might advise, McAdoo obviously believed that he could not safely denounce the Klan.

The danger lurking in that issue was illustrated in mid-April

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\(^{40}\)W. G. McAdoo to Daniel C. Roper, April 14, 1924, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 301, McAdoo Papers.

\(^{41}\)T. J. Walsh to P. H. Callahan, December 4, 1924, Box 374, Walsh Papers.
when the Missouri Democratic state convention met. The Reed-McAdoo contest in Missouri had arrayed the urban Wets against the old rural Dry Wilsonians. In the March contest Reed had carried St. Louis and Kansas City but had garnered only seventy convention votes from the rural districts. While McAdoo had received 518 rural votes, he lacked a majority because there were numerous uncommitted rural delegates. Nevertheless, it seemed likely that a McAdoo-dominated delegation would be sent to the national convention. Reed, therefore, withdrew from the presidential contest. Thus, when the Missourians assembled in mid-April for their state convention, the rural-urban friction exploded into a Klan-anti-Klan fight. While the rural forces were able to defeat an amendment denouncing the Klan, the convention all but erupted into a riot.42

So the month of April ended with Smith on the upsurge and with Underwood and McAdoo at a virtual standstill. It was imperative that McAdoo begin to win instructed delegations in order to convince his straying followers that his was still the cause to follow. Underwood, likewise, needed a significant victory to remain in contention. Moreover, Underwood was bringing the Klan issue to the fore, an issue that McAdoo wanted very much to avoid. The political barometer again pointed to the South, to the state of Texas with its all important

42Mitchell, Embattled Democracy, 69-75; Breckinridge Long to D. L. Rockwell, April 17, 1924, Box 172, Long Papers; New York Times, April 17, 1924, p. 3.
convention votes and, significantly, the state in which Underwood had launched his war on the Klan.

Although the presence of Governor Pat M. Neff, a prohibitionist who denounced the Klan, complicated the Texas contest, observers viewed it essentially as a Klan-anti-Klan struggle between McAdoo and Underwood respectively. While McAdoo denied that this was the case, claiming instead that the primary arrayed the reactionaries and the Wets against the progressives and the Drys, secret orders were circulated among Klansmen instructing them to support McAdoo. McAdoo emerged from the contest as the winner. Love insisted that the leading McAdoo spokesmen were non-Klansmen, but he admitted that Klansmen composed half of the delegation that was instructed to support McAdoo at the national convention.\[^{43}\] One historian has seen

\[^{43}\] W. G. McAdoo to Daniel Roper, April 14, 1924, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 301, McAdoo Papers; Thomas Love to Thomas L. Chadbourne, May 8, 1924, Box IU-15D, Love Papers; Tom Love to A. H. McCarty, May 29, 1924, ibid.; Tom Love to W. G. McAdoo, May 31, 1924, ibid. While McAdoo undoubtedly had some non-Klan support in Texas, the Klan did actively promote his candidacy. A printed circular found in the Love Papers issued the following instructions to Texas Klansmen: "You as a Loyal Klansman see that the following resolution is passed at your precinct Convention Saturday at 7 P.M.

'Resolved:

'1. That we favor the nomination of a Progressive Dry Democrat for President of the United States.

'2. That we favor the strict enforcement of all laws, including the prohibition and bribery laws; . . .

'3. We instruct our delegates to the County Convention to vote as a unit, both for the above resolutions, and for delegates to the State Convention who favor the nomination of Wm. G. McAdoo in the National Convention, so long as he has a reasonable chance of
the Texas primary as the turning point in the McAdoo campaign subsequent to the crisis wrought by Teapot Dome. Following that primary, he won a series of new victories as compared to his earlier weak showing. Conversely, Underwood's defeat in Texas may have contributed to his loss of other Southern states, notably Tennessee and Florida, during the spring.\footnote{44} James Moyle reported that the Texas victory had strengthened McAdoo's position enormously, but ominously he indicated that the triumph was being attributed to the Klan.\footnote{45} McAdoo's Texas victory was a pyrrhic one, indeed; now he was indelibly stamped as the Klan's candidate.

Whether it was because of the Texas primary, or whether that primary was merely indicative of the Southern political climate, Underwood's campaign in that region was a failure. Underwood's collapse, however, did not transform the South into a solid McAdoo phalanx. McAdoo won the three remaining Southern primaries where he opposed Underwood—Kentucky, Tennessee, and Florida. The Carolinas went to McAdoo by default when the Underwood managers

\begin{footnotes}
\item[45] James H. Moyle to W. G. McAdoo, May 9, 1924, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 303, McAdoo Papers.
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ascertained that it would be useless to contest them. Insofar as instructed Southern delegations were concerned, Georgia, Texas, Tennessee, Kentucky, Florida, North Carolina, and South Carolina were all that McAdoo could claim. The Virginia delegation, pledged to Carter Glass, contained both McAdoo and anti-McAdoo factions. While Glass favored McAdoo, Harry Byrd did not. Moreover, Glass was viewed as the most probable legatee of McAdoo's strength. Arkansas endorsed her favorite son, Joseph T. Robinson, and this action was in part an anti-Underwood tactic. Robinson, like Glass, stood to profit if McAdoo failed to receive the requisite two-thirds votes. Mississippi's Pat Harrison was another Southerner who desired freedom to maneuver at the convention. Although friendly toward McAdoo, Harrison was noncommittal. Mississippi, therefore, chose an anti-Underwood delegation but left it uninstructed. In contrast, Louisiana selected an anti-McAdoo uninstructed delegation. Thus McAdoo, who needed the South in order to

46 Allen, "The McAdoo Campaign for the Presidential Nomina-
tion in 1924," 218.

47 Jouett Shouse to Carter Glass, May 3, 1924, Box 7, Glass Papers; Breckinridge Long to Mrs. W. E. Ewing, May 3, 1924, Box 173, Long Papers; Carter Glass to W. G. McAdoo, May 16, 1924, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 303, McAdoo Papers; Rixey Smith to John Stewart Bryan, May 30, 1924, Box 4, Glass Papers; Long Diary, May 29, 1924, Box 3, Long Papers; John Skelton Williams to William G. McAdoo, June 3, 1924, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 304, McAdoo Papers; Leslie C. Garnett to W. G. McAdoo, June 12, 1924, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 305, ibid.; Henry St. George Tucker to J. W. Davis, June 14,
supplement his Western strength, had not captured the entire region.

Underwood who had begun his campaign as the avowed Southern candidate, found his Southern support reduced to his native state of Alabama.

There was little doubt in Underwood's mind as to the reason for his failure in the South. In May, Underwood wrote to an admirer,

George F. Parker:

The Klan is Democratic in the South and Republican in the North. As most of my campaign has been in the South, I have had the burden of the fight to bear as the Klan was giving Mr. McAdoo its support and I must admit it has been quite effective in the Southern States. Not that the Klan outnumbers the other people but it is organized and always gets to the polls, and I have not had an organization that could combat it. 48

McAdoo's victory over Underwood had not been achieved cheaply, however, and Underwood planned to extract full payment. Since the time of the Georgia primary, Underwood had demanded that a plank denouncing the Klan by name be incorporated into the Democratic
platform. Having failed in his attempt to solidify the South behind him, he seized upon that issue as his only hope. Moreover, while his own fortunes had declined, Underwood had witnessed Smith's emergence. Underwood realized that his only chance for the nomination lay in falling heir to the Smith strength once it had become apparent that neither McAdoo nor Smith could win. Thus, in an effort to build up second choice sentiment in the North and East, Underwood's managers assiduously began to emphasize the issue that had lost them the South—the Klan. By such a maneuver they had everything to gain and nothing to lose. They were incredibly naive, however, in part of their reasoning. Frank Merkling wrote to R. B. Evans:

Fortunately, the New York Convention will be far removed from those baneful influences that are fastening their tentacles upon the Democracy of the South, and when the Anti-Klan plank is adopted, as we confidently expect it to be, Senator Underwood's chances of securing the nomination will be enhanced accordingly . . . if we are to be the legatee of the Smith strength, we are going to win. If we should not be the legatee of that crowd, we cannot win. Do not lose sight of another thing that makes me optimistic—that is, that when the drift to Senator Underwood commences in the North, there will be no way they can prevent the Southern delegates from joining the movement. The Klan might have dominated conventions and primaries in the South, but it will not be able to control these men personally at New York, should it ever become apparent that a Southern man can get the nomination.49

49Frank J. Merkling to R. B. Evans, June 5, 1924, Underwood Campaign 1924, Letters, March-June, Underwood Papers.
They failed to realize that they were confronted not merely by an organization but also by what that organization represented—rural America.

On May 12, the Underwood supporters announced that they would carry their fight against the Klan to the convention floor. If the platform committee did not adopt a satisfactory anti-Klan plank, they proposed to submit a minority report. The Underwood supporters desired a reaffirmation of the "Know-Nothing" plank adopted by the Democratic Party in 1856. That platform proposal had insisted upon complete religious freedom and had asserted the party's "determined opposition to all secret political societies by whatever name they may be called." Seizing the initiative, Charles Carlin followed this threat with the assertion that the Klan had made itself an issue. He took this occasion to republicize an order attributed to Nathan Bedford Forrest, Grand Dragon of the Georgia Klan. Forrest had instructed Georgia Klansmen to make every effort to select delegates favorable to Major John S. Cohen, an alleged friend of the Klan, to attend the Georgia state convention. This would assure that the Klan's voice would be heard in New York. Carlin insisted that this order made the Klan an issue and that their challenge must be met in New York without equivocation. Carlin asserted that:

Senator Underwood claims no more right than any other candidate to demand his nomination from the Democratic Convention. But Senator Underwood has a right to expect the Democratic Convention to tell the Klan in no uncertain terms that it does not delegate to the Klan the right of veto over his candidacy.

The Klan itself places the issue squarely before the Democratic Convention. If it not be met: if a plank similar to the one of 1856, when 'know-nothingism' was rampant, be not enacted into the Democratic platform, it will be--and rightly so--heralded as a Klan victory. It will mean a surrender of the most precious principles of democracy to the 'Dragons,' the 'Kleagles' and the 'Cyclops' of the 'invisible empire.'

The Klan was not slow to respond to Carlin's accusation. Forrest charged that the Underwood headquarters' statement was designed to 'obscure the real issue in the campaign,' Underwood's Wet record, and he insisted that Underwood was just as Wet as Al Smith. Incredibly, Forrest denied that the Klan was in politics but asserted that, because Underwood had gone out of his way to attack the Klan in Georgia, Klansmen naturally welcomed his defeat.

Forrest's next pronouncement not only belied his earlier assertion that the Klan was nonpolitical but also brought McAdoo's name into the controversy. Forrest claimed that 'after the primary, when it became apparent that the Underwood forces in Georgia, under Mr. Clark Howell's influence, were trying to take at the State Convention the fruits of the McAdoo victory at the polls, the klansmen were warned to be on their guard and Mr. Howell was properly

defeated for reelection as National Committeeman from Georgia.⁵²

While Underwood asserted that the Klan was the issue and the Klan proclaimed that Prohibition was the issue, it was apparent that both prohibition and the Klan were merely symptoms of the deeper affliction that plagued the party—the rural Democracy's attempts to stave off the urban challenge. The rural-urban dimensions of the struggle became very obvious when the New York World championed Underwood's cause and the Chattanooga News denounced him. The World demanded that the Democratic Party meet the Klan question squarely. It advised that, if politicians would not denounce the Klan out of deference to the principle of religious freedom, political expediency should convert them to Underwood's position. The paper insisted that the Democratic Party could win only if it carried the Northern and Eastern states. And the World warned that "a Democratic Party branded with the Ku Klux can say goodbye to New York, New Jersey, Indiana, Ohio, Illinois, Massachusetts, Maryland. Without several of those States the Democratic Party cannot win." The party, therefore, should "come clean on the religious issue" without regard to any candidacies. Then, the World averred, it would be free to make its presidential choice. "It will not be free otherwise. The party may, for example, have good grounds for not wishing to nominate Governor Smith. But unless it has first

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made its record perfectly straight on the Underwood resolution the
country will never believe that Governor Smith failed for any other
reason than the religious one."

That particular question would haunt
the party for four years to come. In conclusion the editorial asserted:
"The World, therefore, on grounds of political expediency and of
principle, joins with Senator Underwood in calling upon the Democratic
Party to reaffirm its historic position on religious freedom."

Needless to say, the Chattanooga News viewed Underwood's
proposal in a different light. Caustically bitter, the paper accused
Underwood of raising a bogus issue. The News charged sardonically
that Underwood "... has just discovered that members of the
Ku Klux Klan supported McAdoo in Georgia and is disposed to see if
there is anything in the incident whereby he may gain something for
himself." The editorial asserted that "every other expedient of his
failed to captivate the popular imagination. This latest ruse will
suffer the same fate. It will not even enable the Senator to divide
eastern foreign elements with... Smith." While the paper admitted
that Underwood had not received Klan support, it suggested that he
had not received wide endorsement from any segment of the popula-
tion. The editor reasoned, therefore, that if Underwood's "... hostility to the klan has failed to bring the opposition to the klan to
his support that is hardly a censurable fault on Mr. McAdoo."

53 The World (New York), May 14, 1924, p. 10.
McAdoo, the paper insisted, had proved to be equally strong in areas where the Klan was a negligible influence. Thus, the Chattanooga News suggested, "the Senator [Underwood] may have won the opposition of the klan by going out of his way to attack it, but it is easy to see that the klan issue has not been a dominant campaign factor."54 The two newspapers were worlds apart; therein lay the Democracy's problem.

Even though Milton might insist that the Klan issue was not a "dominant campaign factor," it obviously was hurting McAdoo. Rumblings of discontent were even emitting from the McAdoo strong-hold--the West. Although a majority of the Colorado delegation favored McAdoo's nomination, his supporters considered it unwise to seek an instructed McAdoo delegation because of the acrimonious debate engendered over an anti-Klan plank that the Colorado convention had adopted. They believed that, if the McAdoo resolution failed subsequent to the adoption of the anti-Klan plank, the resulting impression would harm McAdoo's candidacy.55 Not surprisingly, McAdoo's opponents were also effectively employing the Klan issue against him in Massachusetts. Yet McAdoo's advice to his Massachusetts supporters was of the same evasive nature as his earlier


55 Morrison Shafroth to David Ladd Rockwell, May 26, 1924, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 304, McAdoo Papers; W. G. McAdoo to Morrison Shafroth, May 26, 1924, ibid.
pronouncements. His operatives declared that McAdoo "... stands for the broad standard of Americanism that recognizes no distinctions in race or creed. ..." Moreover, McAdoo deplored "... the attempts to inject religious issues into public affairs. ..." Then came the familiar charge of conspiracy. "The coalition against Mr. McAdoo having failed to stop his progress has now entered into a conspiracy to inject this false issue into the campaign with the desperate hope of injuring the man whom the Democratic and progressive voters of the United States are determined to nominate and elect to the Presidency."  

McAdoo failed to take the one step that would have defused the issue; he refused to dissociate himself from the Klan. Thus, McAdoo, uncertain of his grip on his rural Southern supporters, was himself making the Klan an issue. This became more apparent when Smith overwhelmed McAdoo at the Minnesota state convention in one of the final primaries to be held before the national convention. Again the Klan stigma and the liquor issue worked to McAdoo's disadvantage. 57

Toward the end of May, Breckinridge Long recorded in his diary that "the K. K. K. movement--pro and anti--is becoming

56 Brice Clagett to David Ladd Rockwell, May 26, 1924, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 304, McAdoo Papers.

57 Robert C. Bell to W. G. McAdoo, June 5, 1924, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 305, McAdoo Papers; Arthur S. Mullen to W. G. McAdoo, May 26, 1924, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 304, ibid.; New York Times, June 2, 1924, p. 1.
serious." He was fully cognizant of the potential for disruption lodged in the issue. Long went on to state that "a large proportion of City Democrats are Catholics--a large proportion of our rural Democrats are Klansmen--or supposed to be--and the two do not mix well."58

This synonymity of ruralism and the Klan was the source of McAdoo's dilemma, a dilemma that was beyond the comprehension of some of his Catholic supporters. Arthur Mullen, a Catholic and an ardent McAdooite, warned McAdoo that he must dissociate himself completely from the Klan. And when McAdoo refused to unequivocally denounce the Klan, Mullen, who knew that McAdoo's sympathies were right, could not understand his hesitancy.59 McAdoo's response to another Catholic supporter, P. H. Callahan, again illustrated the studied ambiguity that McAdoo felt compelled to exhibit on this issue:

...It is a curious thing to me that if a man stands on the Constitutional guarantees, as I do, it is unsatisfactory to any part of our people. The Bill of Rights in the Constitution, if maintained, preserves to every citizen without discrimination those human rights which are the very foundation of democratic institutions. The fact that I stand strongly for the maintenance of all these rights means, of course, that I am opposed to any abridgement or impairment thereof.60

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58 Long Diary, May 29, 1924, Box 3, Long Papers.

59 Arthur Mullen to David Ladd Rockwell, May 6, 1924, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 302, McAdoo Papers.

60 W. G. McAdoo to P. H. Callahan, June 11, 1924, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 305, McAdoo Papers.
Thus, Underwood hoped to use the Klan issue to inherit the
Smith following; McAdoo was reluctant to denounce the Klan and
thereby possibly alienate his largest group of followers. Meanwhile,
George Brennan concluded that Smith should back a denunciatory Klan
plank in order to stop McAdoo. Smith was as naive about the Klan's
power as were the Underwood supporters. He failed to see that any-
thing could be gained by a resolution denouncing the Order. Smith
would not take the Klan seriously until after the balloting had begun.
But, by the time the convention arrived, he was willing to go along
with Brennan and other delegates from the industrial states in
demanding a denunciatory plank.\(^1\)

This, then, is what the primary contests in the spring had
wrought. They had marked the demise of one candidate, Underwood,
and the elevation of another, Smith. Moreover, they had produced
an issue which threatened to overshadow the candidates. Further-
more, the vigor of Smith's campaign had strengthened McAdoo's
candidacy and helped to offset some of the damage created by Teapot
Dome. Breckinridge Long indicated that "... the wet drive which
has amalgamated behind Smith and which has brought him

\(^1\) Arthur Krock, "The Damn Fool Democrats," American
Mercury, IV (March, 1925), 261; Alfred E. Smith, Up to Now: An
Autobiography (New York: Viking Press, 1929), 284; Handlin, Al
Smith and His America, 120; Warner, The Happy Warrior, 156;
New York Times, June 9, 1924, p. 1; New York Times, June 13,
considerable strength seems to have stiffened the backbone of those of our friends who had weakened, and has the effect of lining them up again solidly for McAdoo."\(^6^2\) John S. Cohen welcomed Smith's ascendancy and saw it as a boon to McAdoo's cause. It was Cohen's "... deliberate judgment that the delegates from the South and West will never vote for Al Smith." Yet for some reason Cohen believed that McAdoo could garner enough Eastern votes to secure the nomination.\(^6^3\) Thus, the Smith candidacy, which had been initiated to stop McAdoo, had blossomed into a full-fledged campaign that accentuated and toughened the rural-urban divisions within the party. Furthermore, both Smith's and Underwood's actions had reinforced the mutual dependence of the Klan and McAdoo. This relationship in turn strengthened Smith.\(^6^4\)

\(^6^2\) Breckinridge Long to C. C. Oliver, May 23, 1924, Box 173, Long Papers.

\(^6^3\) John S. Cohen to W. G. McAdoo, May 8, 1924, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 303, McAdoo Papers.

\(^6^4\) Frank Kent wrote: "The failure of Underwood in the Southern States compelled the whole anti-McAdoo opposition to center around Governor Smith, himself a Catholic. In the end the fight settled down to a tremendous duel between McAdoo and Smith, with every Ku Klux delegate from the South and West tenaciously behind the former and every Catholic delegate from the East behind the latter." Kent, The Democratic Party, 484. While this was generally the case, Kent's statement is, of course, an oversimplification. Undoubtedly, those opposed to McAdoo saw Smith as the greatest obstacle in his path once Underwood failed. The anti-McAdoo opposition, however, was never centered wholly behind Smith nor did every Klan delegate back McAdoo.
By mid-June, most observers realized that Underwood's determination to force the Klan issue was likely to cause trouble.

After commenting on the factional cleavages within the party, W. W. Jermane, Seattle Times (Indiana) journalist, asserted, "there are the makings of a very nasty mess in this situation and, unless it can be straightened out before the New York Convention meets, the country may have a genuine Klan issue on its hands this year, with the Democratic Party holding the short end of a hot stick."65

Stanley Frost warned that, if Underwood forced a debate on his Klan plank, the Democratic Party, due to its cleavages, might become so embittered and fragmented that its factions would be irreconcilable. He felt a Klan debate would preclude any hope for reason or compromise in the selection of a presidential nominee.66 The Klan, however, did not anticipate that they would be denounced. The Order released a statement, saying, in part: "What may happen is only a guess, but what seems destined to happen is that the candidates for the Presidency will go before the people blandly ignoring the Klan and anti-Klan shindig. President Coolidge has been very successful thus far in doing it, and Mr. McAdoo had pursued the same policy

65Quoted in "The Klan and the Democrats," Literary Digest, LXXXI (June 14, 1924), 12.

66Frost, "Democratic Dynamite," 266.
Neither McAdoo's opponents nor most political prognosticators shared the assumption implicit in the Klan's statement: that McAdoo would be the nominee.

During the month before the convention convened in New York City, two of that city's leading newspapers, the *World* and the *Times*, launched an editorial barrage against the McAdoo candidacy. Both pronounced him completely unavailable. The *World* scathingly asserted that "Mr. Doheny's lawyer cannot conduct a campaign against the Republicans for allowing themselves to be corrupted by Mr. Doheny's money." Furthermore, the paper insisted that McAdoo could not carry the vital Eastern states because he "... would arouse against himself most of the business community, practically the whole anti-Ku Klux strength, all the wet sentiment, and would probably divide the radical sentiment with La Follette." The *World* suggested that both Senator Carter Glass of Virginia and Senator Joseph T. Robinson of Arkansas were available and qualified candidates who would be satisfactory to all the Party's elements.

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70 *The World* (New York), May 27, 1924, p. 10.
The New York Times indicated that if the Democrats nominated McAdoo they would have to wage an apologetic and defensive campaign. Not unexpectedly, the Times felt that John W. Davis would make an admirable nominee. 71

The political prognosticators discounted the chances of McAdoo, Smith, or Underwood receiving the nomination as the convention neared. 72 Mark Sullivan forecast that once McAdoo and Smith had eliminated each other, the nominee would probably be Ralston, Glass, or Davis. 73 Insofar as the actual number of pledged delegations was concerned, McAdoo was far in the lead, yet equally far from the requisite two-thirds. Al Smith was the next largest single competitor. Innumerable favorite sons rounded out the field. 74 Nevertheless, McAdoo approached the convention confident that he would prevail. His successes in the South and West had cheered and given hope to his chief supporters. 75 While the Smith


73 Sullivan, "Who Will Lead the Democrats?," 153.

74 New York Times, June 22, 1924, Sec. VIII, p. 3.

supporters were outwardly as confident, it is probable that Smith and
his managers viewed his nomination as less likely than McAdoo's.
Smith's purpose was to stop McAdoo; if in so doing he could secure
the nomination for himself, it would be even better. Meanwhile,
the members of the Davis camp believed that McAdoo, Underwood,
and Smith would eliminate one another and that the nomination would
then go to a dark horse. In that event Davis, along with Ralston,
Glass, and Robinson, appeared to enjoy a favorable position. Davis
was encouraged when he learned that he had second choice strength
within the large Illinois, New York, and Pennsylvania delegations.

Thus, the delegates began their trek to New York City amidst
forecasts of deadlock and possible disaster. McAdoo had again

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76 Handlin, Al Smith and His America, 116-17; Kent, The
Democratic Party, 469.

77 Robert Lansing to J. W. Davis, May 20, 1924, Box 43,
Davis Papers; J. W. Davis to John J. Davis, May 26, 1924, ibid.;
Theodore A. Huntley to J. W. Davis, May 28, 1924, ibid.; J. W.
Davis to Bordon Burr, June 10, 1924, Box 44, Davis Papers; Charles
J. Faulkner to J. W. Davis, June 12, 1924, ibid.; Patrick J. Rooney
to J. W. Davis, June 23, 1924, Box 45, Davis Papers.

78 Roosevelt had flippantly written to Daniels toward the end of
May that: "...if things come to the pass of keeping us all in New
York until the 255th ballot on July 31st you and I can end the deadlock
dramatically and effectively by putting your present candidate and
mine into a room together armed with a complete Navy outfit ranging
from bean soup to 16" guns with orders that only one man can come
out alive. Probably neither will come out alive and a grateful conven-
tion will give us the nomination by acclamation. Franklin Roosevelt
to Josephus Daniels, May 26, 1924, Box 15, Daniels Papers. Unfor-
tunately, Roosevelt was to be closer to the truth than he realized.
CHAPTER VII

NEW YORK CITY: THE ISSUE BECOMES PARAMOUNT

With the specter of impending crisis hovering over the Democracy, New York City prepared to host the convention. In an internecine struggle between the rural and urban elements for control of the party, the contest was not to be held on neutral ground. The very mention of New York City conjured up images of evil to many a rural mind. The fact that New York was ardently and intensely pro-Smith only heightened the rural animosity. All the motion picture theaters exhibited pictures of the Governor; theater orchestras played "East Side, West Side;" taxi drivers expounded Smith's virtues; and the city was blanketed with Smith buttons, pictures, and posters. It was into such an atmosphere that the wary delegates from the countryside descended. ¹ Al Smith remarked that the Klan delegations "... came as though to the enemy's country."² New York City and Al Smith were the enemy. They embodied all that was reprehensible

¹ Freidel, Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Ordeal, 174-75; Eaton, Presidential Timber, 296-97.

² Smith, Up To Now, 285.
to the rural mind. In some instances the basis of this animosity was
ethnic, in others religious, in still others it revolved around prohibi-
tion. Each of these prejudices, however, constituted some part of
rural America's creed. 3

Prior to the first delegations' arrival in New York City, an
anti-McAdoo board of strategy was at work formulating plans to
withhold the nomination from McAdoo. At the outset, Brennan and
Mack (the Smith floor leaders), along with Mayor Frank Hague of
Jersey City and E. H. Moore of Ohio, constituted the board's inner
council. These were the same men who had thwarted McAdoo's
ambitions in San Francisco. The nominal leader of the anti-McAdoo
coalition, Moore, was the only one of the four who was not a Smith
supporter. Although not unfriendly to the Governor, he was advocat-
ing James M. Cox's candidacy. Pennsylvania boss Joseph F. Guffey's
arrival on June 20 bolstered the strength of the anti-McAdoo bloc.
They felt confident enough to assert that they could check any McAdoo

3 Ernest Abbot believed that the Klan merely symbolized native
resentment against the alien, and that Klan hatred of the Catholic was
not the real issue. Ernest Hamlin Abbot, "A Party Civil War," Outlook,
CXXXVII (July 9, 1924), 381-82. On the other hand, Sherwin
Cook pictured the struggle as "a little religious war." Cook, Torch-
light Parade, 258. Conversely, Mark Sullivan asserted that the real
issue was not religion but the Wet-Dry question. Mark Sullivan,
"Behind the Convention Scenes," World's Work, XLVIII (September,
1924), 534. It was obvious that religion was not the chief divisive
factor in all instances. For example, once McAdoo withdrew from
the field many Westerners supported the Dry Catholic Walsh. Thus
rather than any one factor, it was the totality of rural attitudes that
was arrayed against Smith.
offensives launched early in the convention.\(^4\) Indiana's Tom Taggart

was conspicuous by his absence from the anti-McAdoo contingent.

The McAdoo forces remained outwardly confident in the face

of the combination being erected against them. Reports from McAdoo

headquarters stipulated that he would receive 450 votes on the first

ballot. McAdoo supporters privately speculated that after the elimina-

tion of favorite sons, his strength would amount to 625 votes.

Although this was short of the necessary two-thirds majority, 732
delegates, they felt it would insure him the nomination in time. The

Smith headquarters also sounded expressions of confidence. Roosevelt

reported that Smith would receive at least 200 first-ballot votes.\(^5\)

McAdoo and Smith, however, did not have the field exclusively
to themselves. Because it was generally conceded that neither

McAdoo nor Smith could achieve the necessary two-thirds vote for

nomination, there were dark horses in abundance. Early arrivals
to the convention seemed to feel that John W. Davis, Carter Glass,

and Governor Albert C. Ritchie of Maryland were the most available

of that breed. Davis had announced on June 19 that "... I am not a

candidate for the nomination and... any decision to the contrary

\(^4\) New York Times, June 21, 1924, pp. 1 and 2; New York

Times, June 24, 1924, p. 2.

must come from the party and not from me." The announcement
won him plaudits from the New York World. The paper reasoned that
since the delegates were aware of Davis' strengths--namely, his
eminence as a lawyer and his residence in a region with numerous
electoral votes--an active campaign on his part would gain him
nothing. Thus, "in maintaining his position,... Mr. Davis is able
to reveal political sense and keep his self-respect at the same
time." The fact that Davis could avoid comment on every issue
before the convention did not seem to alarming the World. Thus, the
Davis managers hoped to remain on amicable terms with the
supporters of all the candidates in order to build up second-choice
Davis strength. Partisans of Senator Glass likewise pursued a course
of "watchful waiting." They did not wish to make any aggressive
thrusts for support and thereby risk alienating any faction until after
McAdoo and Smith had made their bids for the nomination. Howard
Bruce on behalf of the Ritchie candidacy and Thomas Taggart on
behalf of Ralston's candidacy were also avoiding entanglement in the
McAdoo-Smith contest. They, too, would wait for the chief contenders
to exhaust themselves and then hope to garner support from both sides
when the break came.  

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8 New York Times, June 22, 1924, pp. 1 and 2; New York
Times, June 23, 1924, p. 4.
Not all the serious contenders who expected to benefit from the anticipated McAdoo-Smith impasse were remaining neutral. Both the Underwood and the Cox supporters opened headquarters on June 21, and both were avidly anti-McAdoo. C. C. Carlin, Underwood's spokesman, was confident of the final outcome. Speaking of his candidate, he said: "The fact that he does not come here with the solid backing of delegates from Southern States will not be regarded as a disability when the reason is weighed and understood. He could have had all of that support but for the determined and courageous stand he has taken in the open against the Kl Klux Klan and its activities." Clearly, the Underwood forces intended to exploit the Klan issue to its maximum extent.

Meanwhile, Harry Newman reported from the Cox headquarters that Ohio was doing nothing to win delegates from the other states, but "we are in the attitude of waiting for the convention to come to Cox." Cox insisted that he had consented to Ohio's presenting his name only to withhold that vote from McAdoo. He felt that McAdoo had deserted the League of Nations cause and was conniving with the Klan. Moreover, Cox had probably not forgiven McAdoo for opposing him in the Ohio primary. Cox defeated McAdoo overwhelmingly in that contest

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even though both the Klan and the Anti-Saloon League supported McAdoo. 11

Arriving delegations advanced other names on June 21, but they were less seriously considered than those previously mentioned. Lewis G. Stevenson of Illinois boomed the candidacy of David F. Houston, a former member of Wilson's Cabinet. Houston was tendered as a candidate who could appeal to the dissatisfied Midwestern farmers. Governor Jonathan M. Davis of Kansas based his candidacy on the same type of appeal. The Kansas Governor, however, was a favorite son, not a dark horse. The Kansas delegation was preponderantly oriented toward McAdoo and intended to vote for him under the unit rule after casting complimentary votes for their governor. New Jersey's governor, George S. Silzer, was also offered as a favorite son. Mayor Frank Hague directed the Silzer campaign, and it, therefore, would not be vigorously pursued so long as Smith remained in contention. While not a serious dark horse, Senator Woodbridge N. Ferris of Michigan was slated to receive the complimentary vote of his state on the early ballots. 12

This large field of favorite sons was clearly advantageous to Smith. Even if he was not the beneficiary of any break in the ranks

11 Cox, Journey Through My Years, 324.

of the favorite sons, his interests would still be served so long as
the front-runner, McAdoo, did not receive them either. Any vote
not cast for McAdoo, the leading contender, would be, in effect, a
vote opposing his nomination. It was part of the anti-McAdoo leaders'
strategy to keep sufficient favorite sons in the field to make it
impossible to alter the two-thirds rule and to make certain that one-
third of the delegates remained opposed to the McAdoo candidacy.
On the other hand, because of the two-thirds rule, McAdoo's strategy
was to gain such an early large majority over Smith that his forces
would succumb. 13

Closely interwoven with the McAdoo-Smith contest was the
platform question. Clearly, McAdoo wished to engage Smith at his
most vulnerable spot—the Wet-Dry issue. As the leading Dry
candidate, McAdoo had the backing of the Anti-Saloon League.

13 New York Times, June 22, 1924, p. 1; Kent, The Demo-
cratic Party, 486; Roper, Fifty Years of Public Life, 219. McAdoo
realized that the two-thirds rule constituted a major obstacle in his
quest for the nomination, and he considered the possibility of abrogat-
ing it. While he believed that he controlled the simple majority vote
requisite for a rules change during the organization of the convention,
additional considerations prompted him to quietly drop his proposals
for change. The anti-McAdoo bloc threatened to demand abrogation
of the unit rule if the two-thirds rule were altered; such a change
would be disadvantageous to McAdoo. It was uncertain as to whether
the South would acquiesce in such a change. Finally, McAdoo had to
consider the possible adverse effects of advocating a rules change
after the primaries had been held. Frost, "Democratic Dynamite,"
267; Allen, "The McAdoo Campaign for the Presidential Nomination
L. B. Musgrove, chairman of the executive committee of that organization, issued a statement declaring that McAdoo's opponents were attempting to raise a smoke screen by injecting the religious issue in order to nominate a Wet candidate. A similar note was trumpeted from the "McAdoo Special," when Gavin McNab, a leader of the California delegation, proclaimed:

The spirit of the entire West is exemplified by these delegations in their stand on the great moral issue. . . . We are not going to restore the conditions of the saloon or anything approaching it. Generations to come may forget the saloon, but they will not forgive it. Personalities alone do not control. If McAdoo should suddenly drop dead the opponents on this issue would not get one more vote.

William Jennings Bryan provided another indication of McAdoo's proposed line of attack. Bryan, upon emerging from an hour and a half conference with McAdoo, stated, "I am for him. The same forces that are lined up against me are lined up against McAdoo."

Bryan had moved from Nebraska to Florida in 1922

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and represented Florida as a delegate at the convention. Underwood's and Smith's wetness had catapulted the aging leader, who still possessed a recognizable personal following, into the Dry McAdoo's camp. In the Florida and Alabama primaries Bryan had actively campaigned against Underwood and declared himself to be against any "wet and reactionary element of the party." 17 He also exerted his maximum influence in McAdoo's behalf in other Southern primaries. It is unlikely that Bryan's support for McAdoo stemmed from any great personal attachment to him. Privately he believed that McAdoo's association with E. L. Doheny had impaired his availability. McAdoo, however, most ably represented the progressives and the Drys and had materialized as the greatest impediment to the aspirations of the two leading Wets, Smith and Underwood. 18 There had been indications, however, that the Smith forces would not demand a Wet plank. 19 If this were the case, it would leave McAdoo railing at a phantom.

While his forces were denouncing Wets and reactionaries, McAdoo's opposition was preparing to raise another issue to primacy.

17 William Jennings Bryan to the editor of the Miami Herald, March 15, 1924, Underwood Campaign 1924, Letters, Underwood Papers (Department of Archives, Montgomery, Alabama).


They understood to identify McAdoo as closely as possible with the Klan, hoping to defeat him on a test vote prior to balloting for the presidential nominee. They concentrated their energies on eliciting support for a platform plank specifically denouncing the Klan. A fight over this issue would again deprive McAdoo of the initiative. Homer Cummings, perhaps not the most objective of observers, indicated that the Klan issue was raised "by a wrecking crew that supported Smith and sought to hurt McAdoo because he was dry and a progressive."20

The Klan had, of course, made itself an issue, and the Klan question, heavily overlaid with racial, religious, and emotional connotations, had become the major political issue by convention time. It was unique, however, in the sense that it was an internal subject of dispute, not one that could be employed against the Republicans. All the major Democratic contenders had played a role in elevating the whole Klan matter to its position of primacy. McAdoo's following was laced with Klan members and Klan-oriented rural Americans. It would have been politically inexpedient for him to denounce the Order. Breckinridge Long realized that "... there was no sense in denouncing the Klan and entering upon the impossible task of competing with Smith for the Catholic vote, for that is just

20 Interview with Homer Cummings quoted in Coletta, William Jennings Bryan: Political Puritan, 184.
what it amounted to." On the other hand, political expediency dictated that Underwood demand strict censure of the Klan. If the Democratic Party took such action it would make him a logical nominee. Likewise, political expediency directed that those bosses opposed to McAdoo use the emotional intensity of the Klan issue to solidify opposition to his nomination.

Whether the anti-McAdoo leaders envisioned the ultimate result of their action is indeterminable. Nevertheless, there were those in both camps who cautioned against permitting the Klan to become an issue. Franklin D. Roosevelt, realizing the question's potential divisiveness, urged futilely that the Smith forces not inject the Klan issue into the proceedings. Arthur Mullen, who had been unsuccessfully prevailing upon McAdoo to denounce the Klan since early in the spring, suggested that "if Charley Murphy of New York had lived the issue would never have been permitted to go as far as it did in the New York Convention; . . . men within and without the party promoted the Klan so high that it wrecked the Democratic

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21Long Diary, July 15, 1924, Box 3, Long Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress).


23Sullivan, "Behind the Convention Scenes," 238.

24Freidel, Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Ordeal, 178.
The anti-McAdoo coalition and Underwood's supporters showered the arriving delegations with demands that the Klan be unequivocally condemned by name. While McAdoo maintained his characteristic silence on the issue, his supporters indicated a desire either to avoid an anti-Klan declaration or to approve a condemnatory plan couched in general terms which did not mention the Order. McAdoo was well aware of his tenuous position on the Klan. In an effort to remove some of its stigma, he chose former Senator James D. Phelan of San Francisco, a Catholic, to place his name in nomination. He supported another Catholic, Thomas J. Walsh, who was acceptable to all segments of the party, for the permanent chairmanship. These maneuvers, however, had no appreciable effect in weakening his identity with the Klan. Insofar as the final determination of issues was concerned, McAdoo's greatest advantage lay in his control of the convention machinery. He could dictate the chairmanship of the all-important resolutions committee and control a majority

25 Mullen, Western Democrat, 241.


of that body. Thus, on the evening of June 21, it was not entirely clear who would eventually control the selection of the issue.

The Klan was not wont to take risks, however, and its strategists arrived in New York simultaneously with the first delegations. The Order's most competent officials comprised its board of strategy. Imperial Wizard Hiram W. Evans and Grand Dragon Nathan Bedford Forrest were the most notable of the Klan leaders in New York. Two delegates-at-large to the convention, Virgil C. Pettie of Arkansas and Senator-elect Earle B. Mayfield of Texas, also served on the board of strategy. Although the actual number of Klansmen represented in the delegations was indeterminable, the New York World estimated the number at three hundred. The actual numerical strength, however, was not of vast significance because Klan sympathy would be just as important as Klan membership in any protracted battle.

Conferences held Saturday night in attempts to frame a preliminary platform broad enough to accommodate both McAdoo and Smith were unsuccessful. Glass left one of these meetings in disgust, reporting that it would be impossible to reconcile the two men's beliefs in one platform. These preliminary discussions also revealed

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a rift in the bosses' ranks. While Brennan, Guffey, and Moore were demanding denunciation of the Klan, Tom Taggart urged moderation. This stance best served the interests of his candidate, Sam Ralston. Nevertheless, in the face of the factional bitterness that was threatening to erupt, Chairman Cordell Hull issued a statement in keeping with his position: "That the coming Democratic National Convention, in a spirit of friendly rivalry as regards candidates, will conduct its proceedings wisely and harmoniously along sound lines, and with party success as their paramount aim, is now plainly evident."31

By Sunday, June 22, it was plainly evident that there would be no harmony. The issue that was to delineate the hostile camps became clarified: would the Democratic Party denounce the Ku Klux Klan by name in its platform? The course of the entire convention hinged on the resolution of that question. It took priority over the query as to the nominee and yet was inextricably intertwined with it. Those opposed to McAdoo's nomination relegated all other issues to the background. Smith's supporters informed Bryan that they would not demand insertion of a Wet plank and would accept a law enforcement statement.32 While this action could not remove the Wet stigma from Smith, it did allow attention to be focused upon one issue: the

Klan. Once that was accomplished, McAdoo was placed on the
defensive.

The anti-McAdoo contingent planned to present a plank
denouncing the Klan by name to the resolutions committee. If that
committee reported an anti-Klan plank that failed specifically to
denounce the Order, they would then take the question directly to the
convention floor.\(^\text{33}\) Upon Brennan's suggestion Moore prepared the
coalition's plank which stated:

> We condemn, as opposed to the genesis of free
government, secret political societies of any kind
whatsoever, wherever any such society undertakes
to destroy free political action and fosters racial and
religious hatreds.

> We denounce its activities as contravening the
spirit, if not the letter of the Constitution, and as a
pregnant menace to the perpetuity of American
institutions. We declare that no members of such a
society can justly claim to be a disciple of Thomas
Jefferson.

> We pledge the Democratic Party to oppose the
activities of the Ku Klux Klan, or any similar organi-
zation which undertakes to control or interfere with
free political action or due process of law.\(^\text{34}\)

Rockwell's reiteration that McAdoo supporters would form a
majority of the convention and would control the organization of the
four major committees—resolutions, rules, credentials, and
permanent organizations—was the only statement forthcoming from
McAdoo's headquarters. He followed that assertion with one of

\(^{33}\text{New York Times, June 23, 1924, p. 1.}\)

\(^{34}\text{New York Times, June 23, 1924, p. 1.}\)
masterful incongruity, stating that the Klan issue was a matter for
the resolutions committee to settle, not the McAdoo management. 35

Although McAdoo was attempting to remain aloof from the
Klan contest, the issue had already been joined. Representative
W. A. Ayres of Kansas declared that the Klan issue was a local one,
and that the Republicans would like nothing better than to see the
Democrats make a national one of it. Less subtle in his remarks,
a member of the Texas delegation stated, "Texas is a Klan State and
we are in the saddle. If there is going to be any Klan plank, it has
got to be one without teeth in it." 36 Conversely, former United
States Senator James A. O'Gorman averred that there were five
million Northern and Western Democrats who would not support a
Klan-dictated candidate. In a statement aimed at McAdoo, he
continued, "The principles of the Ku Klux Klan are incompatible with
the principles of American liberty, and no candidate who invites
their support is entitled to the endorsement of the Democratic
Convention." 37 The New York World emphatically announced that
"the candidacy of Mr. McAdoo menaces the soul of the party, the
integrity of the party and its hope of victory... To nominate him
is to confess that the party which wrote the Bill of Rights and

established the tradition of American liberty has surrendered to
secret and organized and lawless bigotry. ³⁸

Although it appeared impossible to submerge the issue, McAdoo
attempted to regain the initiative he saw eluding him. Speaking to 600
of his supporters, McAdoo attacked the New York newspapers and Wall
Street. While never specifically mentioning the Klan, he accused the
papers of unfairness and of raising false issues. In so doing, he
played upon and deepened the existing rifts within the party. He said
in part:

. . . it would appear that some editors have the idea
that the people who come here from the South and West
and from smaller cities than New York are easily
fooled. They are wholly wrong. . . I am confident that
these clumsy attempts to becloud the issue and to
reflect upon the intelligence of the great mass of the
delegates are quite futile. . . It has been the history of
American politics that whenever special privilege is
threatened by a popular outburst of public indignation,
it sets up straw man issues to divert the people's
attention from the real problems of the day; that
deceit is being attempted now. . . . Invisible Govern-
ment has attempted to divert the public wrath by raising
racial and religious issues to prejudice popular
judgment. . . . ³⁹

The Chattanooga News, which felt that New York's opposition
was sufficient in itself to prove that McAdoo was the proper nominee,
applauded his efforts. It pictured McAdoo as the people's candidate

opposed by "the predatory reactionary interests of the east." On the other hand, McAdoo's attempts to label "New York a den of iniquity" amused the New York World. It suggested that McAdoo simply could not carry the populous regions of the country and that he, therefore, could not possibly be elected, "... for there are not enough electoral votes in the South and all the West to make a majority." The World concluded: "McAdoo's weakness is the weakness of Bryan. His nomination would repeat the disasters of Bryanism." The battle obviously was to be the classic one: pitting the West and the South against the East. Moreover, the initiative had now passed from McAdoo's hands. His opponents were successfully raising the Klan issue to prominence.

Another troublesome issue, the League of Nations, had also begun to make its way to the fore. Unlike the Klan question, the League question found the major contenders in agreement. Neither McAdoo nor Smith desired to stress the issue in the coming campaign. In contrast, both Glass and former Secretary of War Newton D. Baker were calling for immediate entry into the League. The vast majority of the party favored a proposal that would enable them to avoid the catastrophe of 1920 without appearing to repudiate Wilson. They would separate the whole issue from partisan politics by advocating a special

40 Chattanooga News, June 24, 1924, p. 4.
41 The World (New York), June 24, 1924, p. 16.
referendum to be held apart from any other election. 42 Although discussion of the League issue would consume considerable time in the ensuing days, it served merely to protract the proceedings and bore little relationship to the titanic struggle going on for control of the party. 43

That struggle continued unabated as attention focused upon the Ohio caucus. By unanimous vote the Ohio delegates instructed Baker, their representative on the resolutions committee, to insist that the platform adhere to the spirit of Moore's anti-Klan resolution. The decision was reached following Moore's vehement attack upon both the Klan and McAdoo. In addressing the Ohio delegation, Moore declared:

The Klan is rapidly becoming a political menace... and if we don't destroy the Klan it will destroy us. Already the Klan is a dominating factor in the South and it is reaching a point where it will split the Democratic Party of the North and South unless it is checked. As an indication of the strength of the Klan in the South, Mr. McAdoo has come to this convention with the approval of every Southern delegation except Alabama. 44

This statement was clearly an exaggeration and indicative of the efforts to link McAdoo and the Klan. McAdoo did not have the


43 For a full discussion of the battle over the League plank in 1924 see Taylor, "The Democratic Convention of 1924," 79-177, passim.

support of all the Southern delegations. Thus, Moore was enlarging upon existing cleavages within the party in order to stop McAdoo, just as McAdoo was behaving in similar fashion to retain support.

Even the New York World, which had been one of the earliest advocates of an anti-Klan plank, decried the tendency to use the issue for the benefit of a particular candidate. It declared that: "It is regrettable, if true, that convention leaders are reported to be showing less concern over whether the Democratic national platform contains a satisfactory anti-Klan plank than over whether, by mention or omission of the name of the Klan, the cause of one candidate or another is favored." The issue, however, was clearly moving beyond the control of those who would use it for political advantage. The Klan was after all only the most odious expression of the rural mentality. Those who attacked the Klan were also attacking the society that nurtured the Order. Likewise, those who defended the Klan were defending that same rural society. The implications of the issues were more important than the actual Klan threat, and the issue once raised would not be readily controlled. It played on men's emotions, and the passions it aroused were not easily quenched.

Although the McAdoo forces were arraying themselves in opposition to Klan condemnation by name, it became clear that they would accept a religious liberty plank framed in general terms.

45 The World (New York), June 24, 1924, p. 16.
E. H. Callahan of Louisville proposed adoption of the 1896 Democratic Party platform on religious liberty. Bryan was expected to offer Callahan's proposal to the resolutions committee. The plank merely pledged the Democratic Party to uphold the Constitution of the United States in its guarantees of civil and religious liberty. 46

Meanwhile, McAdoo continued to inveigh against the "predatory interests." Addressing his recently arrived Western supporters, McAdoo again subjected the New York newspapers to an attack in an effort to maintain his primary base of support. Stressing not harmony but division, he declared, "... the West takes the lead to blaze the path of new victories for democracy, with the great South coming along and helping in the same magnificent spirit of admiration and love for the interests of the people of America, and implacable opposition to predatory privilege everywhere." 47

As the first day of the convention dawned, both the McAdoo and the Smith camps exuded confidence. But the large field of favorite son and dark horse candidates bore testimony to numerous Democrats' beliefs that neither of the front-runners could receive the nomination. Moreover, the distribution of the votes portended the divisiveness of the predicted struggle. The Far Western states, Washington, Oregon, and California, were pledged to McAdoo. This

46New York Times, June 24, 1924, p. 3.

solidarity was almost as apparent in the Mountain states; Utah, Montana, and New Mexico were instructed for McAdoo. Although the Nevada and Idaho delegations were unpledged, they solidly supported McAdoo. Wyoming's and Colorado's first-ballot votes were scheduled to be cast for favorite sons, Senator John B. Kendrick of Wyoming and Governor William E. Sweet of Colorado. Second choice sentiment within the Wyoming delegation remained uncrystallized. After leaving Governor Sweet, a McAdoo advocate, the Colorado delegation would be badly split. McAdoo, Smith, and Davis could each claim some support. The Arizona delegation was predominantly oriented toward McAdoo, but there were Underwood supporters present.48

Elsewhere the picture was not so clear. Eastward across the country the situation became more chaotic. Of the Midwestern states, the Dakotas were instructed for McAdoo. While the South Dakota delegation seemed determined to stand behind him, there appeared to be a marked defection from McAdoo toward Smith in the North Dakota delegation. Kansas, voting under the unit rule, would cast complimentary ballots for Governor Jonathan Davis before turning to McAdoo. The majority of Nebraska's vote was likewise expected to go to McAdoo after leaving her favorite son, Governor Charles W. Bryan. Iowa and Missouri belonged to McAdoo by virtue

48 New York Times, June 22, 1924, Sec. 1, pp. 1, 2, and 3; Sec. 8, pp. 3, 5, and 6; New York Times, June 23, 1924, pp. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6; New York Times, June 24, 1924, pp. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.
of the unit rule. Both contained Smith supporters who would be submerged by that rule. The Missouri delegation, however, was very restive since one-third of the delegates were being held captive. The Minnesota and Wisconsin delegations were overwhelmingly for Smith. While Brennan could not deliver the entire Illinois delegation to Smith, he was expected to receive a majority. After leaving favorite son Woodbridge N. Ferris, the Michigan vote was expected to split between McAdoo, Smith, Ralston, and J. W. Davis. Neither Indiana, staunchly supporting Ralston, nor Ohio, solidly behind Cox, was prepared to desert its local favorite.49

The Southern states provided an equally fragmented picture. Texas, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, Florida, North Carolina, and South Carolina were instructed for McAdoo. There was, however, some dissatisfaction in both the Kentucky and North Carolina delegations. The Kentucky delegation contained a submerged Underwood minority, and there was some Davis sentiment in the North Carolina delegation. Elsewhere, the South offered a variety of dark horses: Arkansas, Senator Joseph T. Robinson; Maryland, Governor Albert C. Ritchie; Delaware, former Senator Willard Saulsbury; and West Virginia, John W. Davis. Of the Southern states, Underwood could claim only Alabama. Virginia was unified behind Carter Glass, but beyond that, there was dissension in the ranks. Senator Claude

49Ibid.
Swanson reported that the delegations would go to McAdoo if needed. Harry Byrd discounted Swanson's claim and intimated that there was latent Davis sentiment in the delegation. While the Oklahoma delegation was uninstructed and controlled by the state's anti-Klan faction, it would cast its initial ballots for McAdoo. Oklahoma, however, was not solidly committed to McAdoo. Mississippi was expected to present Senator Pat Harrison and then swing to either McAdoo or Davis. Davis was rumored to be her first choice. The uninstructed Louisiana delegation had not yet decided for whom to cast their first votes. It was expected that they would endorse Senator Underwood, although there was some reported Smith sentiment prevailing in the delegation. 50

In the Northeast, Smith was expected to have New York and Rhode Island from the first ballot. He was also reported to control a majority of the Massachusetts and Pennsylvania delegations. After leaving favorite son Governor George S. Silzer, New Jersey would also be in the Smith column. New Hampshire was slated to offer Governor Fred Brown, and then her vote was expected to split. The votes of Connecticut, Maine, and Vermont were likewise expected to be distributed among various candidates. 51

As these delegates assembled for the first session of the

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid.
convention, they did so in an atmosphere of disunity and hostility. While there were many candidates, no leader for a united party had emerged. Even the city bosses were not in accord with regard to candidates. This lack of responsible leadership was especially ominous since a potentially destructive issue had been raised. The party was poised on the threshold of destruction.

In such an atmosphere the national convention, once eagerly envisioned by the Democrats as a vehicle for launching a campaign against Republican malfeasance, opened Tuesday, June 24, 1924. At twelve o'clock, Cordell Hull, addressing the delegates and alternates assembled in Madison Square Garden, called the convention to order. The gathering he addressed was not a united one ready to engage the Republicans in battle. It was a tense and embittered body. Below the surface, ready to erupt upon adequate provocation, lay all the currents and countercurrents of cultural animosity. This atmosphere prompted William Allen White to comment that "instead of occupying itself with the deep issues that are stirring the hearts of the world of politics, the poverty of the mind of folks is evidenced by the fact that here in the hotels and in the convention halls the chief issue was not politics, but the bigotry of religion." While White's description of the situation was accurate, he failed to comprehend the

52DNC Proceedings, 1924, 3.

53White, Politics: The Citizen's Business, 57.
full significance of what he was witnessing. By emphasizing the Klan issue above all else, the Democrats, in a political convention, had abandoned the traditional politics of economics and foreign relations. They chose instead to battle over a more fundamental issue: the cultural leadership of American society.

The rather thankless task of attempting to unite the party in opposition to the Republicans devolved upon Senator Pat Harrison of Mississippi, the temporary chairman and keynoter. Harrison's record as a harmonizer had made him the unanimous choice of all the factions for the temporary chairmanship. Faithful to his reputation, Harrison, in a masterful speech, struck immediately and vigorously at Republican corruption. Referring to the Democratic convention of 1876, he said, "there was corruption then, there is a Saturnalia of corruption now." He accused the Republicans of being the guardians of special privilege and special interest. Harrison then issued a call for Democratic leadership and summoned up the great Democratic dead, saying, "would that we might once more see in that exalted position one with the courage of a Jackson, the militant honesty of a Cleveland, the matchless statesmanship, far-flung vision, and the fine fighting qualities of a Woodrow Wilson."


55 DNC Proceedings, 1924, 7-19.
The delegates had cheered wildly at the mention of Cleveland's name, but with the injection of Wilson's name, they expressed their first outburst of genuine spontaneous enthusiasm. The delegates paraded around the hall in a demonstration that lasted approximately twenty minutes. The Democrats who shared a common past obviously found escape into it a pleasant relief from the divisive present.

Turning to the realm of foreign policy, Harrison again assailed the Republicans as the party of privilege. After a plea for the farmers, a review of the Wilson program, and a declaration of what the Democratic Party could accomplish, Harrison concluded with a demand for harmony and expediency:

Victory is within our grasp if we but reach out for it. Let us remember that too much is at stake for the hideous form of friction to frown upon this Convention. Our guns and all our guns against the common enemy. Nothing must happen here to divide our councils or dampen our ardor. The fires of Democracy must not flicker. The hope of the people lies in the action of this Convention. There must be no sulking; there can be no mutiny. Winning is not wicked. Strategy is no sin. Far better it is for the American people and the future of the Democratic Party that in this Convention we deny to ourselves some vaunted expression or surrender some temporary advantage that we may succeed in this campaign than tenaciously to persist and lose.

These closing words, as well as most of Harrison's speech, fell on deaf ears. Harrison's address had been a rousing one.

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calculated to incite Democratic passions against the common foe. The assembled delegates, however, had failed to respond with enthusiasm equal to Harrison's effort. Only the mention of Wilson's and Cleveland's names had evoked a genuinely spontaneous outburst from the crowd. This absence of zeal led Elmer Davis to label it "a great day for the heroic dead. . . . McAdoo and Smith, Ralston and Underwood may have the support of these delegates, but Grover Cleveland and Woodrow Wilson seemed to have their veneration as bigger Democrats than the present generation can produce." In a similar vein, Will Rogers reported that "the whole thing looked like a sure stampede for Wilson. So there will be a terrible disappointment when the delegates find that he. . . has passed beyond and won't be able to accept." In a similar vein, Will Rogers reported that "the whole thing looked like a sure stampede for Wilson. So there will be a terrible disappointment when the delegates find that he. . . has passed beyond and won't be able to accept."59

The apathy displayed for the battle against the Republicans resulted from the impending clashes within the Democracy. Its internal conflicts had to be resolved before the Republicans could be challenged. The assembled Democrats realized that they had to reach some decision concerning the Klan and the Klan-supported candidate before they could engage the Republicans.60

Following Harrison's address, Mayor John F. Hylan officially

60 Kent, The Democratic Party, 489.
welcomed the delegates to New York City. His speech focused on metropolitan New York's greatness and was, therefore, not calculated to placate the rural mind. Hylan's opening remarks explored the opportunities that New York as host to the convention offered the party. He averred that this would allow the sections to become better acquainted and would help sweep away the barriers of distrust, suspicion, prejudice, and misunderstanding. 61

Having ostensibly prepared a foundation for understanding, Hylan then glorified those aspects of the city most repugnant to rural America. He attributed New York's greatness to the cooperative efforts of both native and foreign-born. He continued:

Genuine Americanism and an aggressive and unselfish devotion to American institutions, a spirit of tolerance among the city's varied interests and a racial and religious concord here prevail. Truly cosmopolitan is New York, counting its languages by the two score, drawing its people from the four corners of the globe, and welding and fusing all diversities of race, creed, language and custom in the cauldron of Americanism. It is here that Englishman and Irishman, the Scot and the Welshman, the Huguenot and the Hollander, the Frenchman and the German, the Italian and the Swede, the Jew and the Gentile, the Protestant and the Catholic, recognizing that over and above everything else they are American citizens, enjoying the fullest civil and religious liberties, all strive with a common hope and a common purpose to do their utmost each in their respective spheres for the city among whose inhabitants they are proud to be numbered. 62

61 DNC Proceedings, 1924, 26.

62 Ibid.
If a desire to heighten distrust and suspicion rather than lessen them had motivated Mayor Hylan, it is doubtful that he could have been more successful. Thus, Hylan's address is revealing of the Democratic dilemma. The Democracy, composed of mutually antagonistic elements, had but one common objective: the capture of the presidency. So long as the goal was foremost, they could unite every four years in quest of it. Ironically, in 1924, individual Democrats had sacrificed this consideration in the name of political expediency to a cultural one. The presidency was not so important as cultural control of the party. It was ludicrous to speak of harmony and understanding to groups whose values were diametrically opposed once the reason for their existence in the same political party had been subverted.

The day's most important actions took place off the convention floor in committee meetings. After adjournment, the resolutions committee was organized. As anticipated, the McAdoo contingent controlled the committee and selected Homer S. Cummings for the chairmanship. The committee designated Senator Key Pittman as its secretary. The full committee began considering platform proposals late Tuesday afternoon, expecting to have the document ready for presentation to the convention on Thursday, June 26. The subcommittee chosen to draft the platform included William Jennings Bryan, Florida; W. H. O'Brien, Indiana; William Ayres, Kansas; Senator David I. Walsh, Massachusetts; former Senator Gilbert M.
Hitchcock, Nebraska; Senator Key Pittman, Nevada; Joseph A. Kellogg, New York; Newton D. Baker, Ohio; Senator Robert L. Owen, Oklahoma; and Representative Finis J. Garrett, Tennessee. Cummings sat as an ex-officio member.  

The discussion of the League question consumed the earlier part of the committee's night session. Baker advocated a plank committing the Democratic Party to secure entrance into the League. The opposition, while not anti-League, was ever mindful of the 1920 disaster. For expediency's sake, they preferred to submit the question to the people after the November elections. 

Once preliminary discussion of the League ended, the committee turned its attention to the Klan. As prearranged, the most explosive issue was not broached until one o'clock Wednesday morning. If the McAdoo forces had hoped that this late scheduling would quell interest in the subject, they were to be disappointed. Representative Harry B. Hawes of Missouri immediately demanded that the committee adopt a plank denouncing the Klan by name. Directing his remarks at Bryan, Hawes asserted that Catholics and Jews had supported the Commoner on three occasions and that they deserved the Democratic Party's assistance in this situation. Hawes then threatened to leave the party and help the Republicans achieve a majority in Missouri if

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the Klan was not specifically denounced. Julius Aichele of Colorado, Senator David I. Walsh of Massachusetts, and representatives of the Wisconsin and Minnesota delegations echoed Hawes' demands for denunciation.65

E. H. Moore informed the committee that should they fail to denounce the Klan by name, a minority report signed by six to eight committee members would be presented to the convention. At that juncture, John F. Kluwin of Wisconsin requested that the committee be polled on the anti-Klan plank. Chairman Cummings declined to entertain the motion. Anti-Klan members of the committee countered by requesting that members favoring their position obtain permission from their respective delegations to renew the fight before the full committee Wednesday prior to the drafting of the platform. The full committee adjourned at one-thirty Wednesday morning, with the sub-committee on drafting scheduled to reconvene at ten o'clock that morning.66 Although McAdoo controlled a majority in the resolutions committee, the minority exhibited no signs of weakening.

While the candidates' supporters maneuvered in the committees and on the convention floor, the principles maintained their customary outward appearance of confidence. McAdoo told reporters: "We feel certain of the outcome here. Certainly the progress we are making,


as reported by our friends, could not be more encouraging. . ."67

The Smith headquarters also exuded confidence. Brennan asserted that McAdoo was beaten and could muster no more than 450 votes.68

Notwithstanding the assurance emanating from the McAdoo and Smith headquarters, Oulahan reported that nothing had altered the pre-convention opinion that the McAdoo and Smith forces must disintegrate before the convention could select a nominee. As of June 24, Oulahan speculated that when this occurred, Glass would be the legatee of the McAdoo strength and would be in a favorable position to capture the nomination.69

The supporters of two other very probable dark horses, J. W. Davis and Sam Ralston, also issued assurances of victory. Clem Shaver informed the press that there were members of nearly every delegation who favored Davis as either first or second choice. Not to be intimidated, Indiana's Tom Taggart declared: "We are not hostile to Smith and not unfriendly to McAdoo, Davis or any other candidate in the field. We are waiting for the time, if it comes, when their names are withdrawn, and we expect that when it comes eighty per cent of the delegates will come of their own accord to the support

of the grand old man Indiana is offering to the nation. 70

Taggart's independent action was not only the subject of editorial comment but was also a source of concern to his former associates, Brennan and the Tammany representatives. While Taggart sought to avoid alienating any faction in order that Ralston might secure the nomination, there was concern lest he realize that his plan was going to miscarry. If such a contingency arose, he might conceivably divert Indiana's thirty votes to McAdoo if it were to his own advantage. 71

The first day of the convention therefore ended with nothing accomplished in the way of resolving the major issues confronting the delegates. Neither the Klan question nor that of the presidential nominee was any nearer solution than it had been when the delegates first began to assemble in New York City. In fact, with each passing day the situation became more clouded and the atmosphere more bitter.

Pat Harrison called the second session of the convention to order Wednesday, June 25, and introduced Senator Thomas J. Walsh, the convention's permanent chairman, to the delegates. Although not so well prepared as Harrison's address, Walsh's speech was of a similar nature. It consisted of a scathing attack on the Republicans,

70 New York Times, June 25, 1924, p. 3.

especially on Republican corruption, and a demand for a return to Wilsonian idealism. But, just as Harrison had failed to inspire the crowd the previous day, so also was Walsh unsuccessful. He did succeed in eliciting a snicker from the Smith supporters and applause from the McAdoo contingent, when in reference to the Senate investigations he said: "If one Democratic office holder has been involved by the investigators for anything he did while in office, let him be named." The mention of Wilson's name again roused the crowd to some prolonged applause. But then, as Elmer Davis reported, Walsh "got back to recent history and the delegates had nothing to do but fan themselves and look up through the gap in the roof. . .".

A series of miscellaneous reports and resolutions followed Walsh's address. Finally, the rules committee reported to the convention. Portentously the report specifically mentioned the rule that was to plague the gathering through nine days of balloting and 103 roll calls: the two-thirds rule. In most previous conventions, it had not been referred to expressly. The convention had merely

72 DNC Proceedings, 1924, 45, 80-88.

73 DNC Proceedings, 1924, 82; White, Politics: The Citizen's Business, 61-62.


75 DNC Proceedings, 1924, 91-92.
adopted the rules of the preceding convention. With the preliminaries completed, the moment arrived for the roll call of states and the presentation of the nominees to the convention. There was perhaps nothing so revealing of the convention's lack of leadership and direction than the sixteen nominating and twenty-seven seconding speeches which consumed the subsequent two and one-half days.

The convention had been painfully dull to this moment. The first mention from the speaker's platform, however, of that issue uppermost in each delegate's mind was soon to jolt the convention from its lethargy. Nor did the delegates have long to wait; Alabama had the privilege of offering the first nomination. Forney Johnston of that state appeared on the platform to present Underwood's name to the convention. After extolling his candidate's virtues, Johnston announced that Underwood wanted his position in support of free government and human liberty clarified beyond the possibility of

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^Governor W. W. Brandon of Alabama was originally designated to place Underwood's name in nomination. Brandon, however, balked at the idea of having to denounce the Klan. He wrote to Underwood near the end of May that, "I am anxious to serve you in every possible way that I can and am perfectly willing to make any sacrifice necessary for your nomination, but, as I stated, I would not in any public utterance desire to denounce any organization, sect or creed. I feel that every man under the Constitution has a right to serve God as he pleases, and the situation in this section would not justify, in my opinion, a denunciation on my part of any organization." William W. Brandon to Oscar W. Underwood, May 31, 1924, Underwood Campaign 1924, Letters, Underwood Papers.
misunderstanding; with this announcement, the delegates and the
galleries exhibited more attentiveness than they had previously
displayed during the session. 78

Johnston's address reached its peak of intensity when, with
reference to the Democratic stand against the Know-Nothings in 1856,
he asserted:

Resolved, that we do reaffirm the principle set
forth in said resolution of the Democratic platform
of 1856, and condemn as un-American and un-
Democratic political action by secret or quasi-secret
organizations in furtherance of any political objective
whatsoever; and in particular do we condemn such
action for the purpose of proscribing the political
rights and privileges of citizens of the United States,
as is now proposed, practiced and publicly acknowl-
dged by the organization known as the Ku Klux Klan,
and as may now or hereafter be proposed or practiced
by any organization whatsoever. 79

With specific condemnation of the Ku Klux Klan, the galleries
and perhaps half of the delegates discarded their apathy and partici-
pated in the convention's second truly spontaneous demonstration.
The issue most deeply affecting the delegates' emotions had at last
been openly injected into the proceedings. While half the delegates
paraded around the hall, the strong McAdoo delegations and the
Southern delegates remained sullenly in their seats. The pro-Smith
galleries cheered the marchers and shouted derisively at the seated

78 DNC Proceedings, 1924, 95-101; New York Times, June 26,
1924, p. 2.

79 DNC Proceedings, 1924, 102.
delegates.®® When order was restored, Johnston, in an anti-climactic gesture, mentioned Oscar Underwood's name for the first time. This elicited only the customary applause. Underwood's issue had eclipsed his candidacy.®

After Arkansas placed Joseph T. Robinson in nomination, James D. Phelan appeared on the platform to offer McAdoo to the assembled Democrats.® In what was to be an exceedingly long and dull address, Phelan first referred to the praise that President Wilson had extended to McAdoo when the latter left government employment in 1919. At this juncture Walsh had to demand order so that Phelan could continue. Phelan then emphasized McAdoo's concern for the farmers and his excellent management of the railroads during World War I. Because of distractions and disorder on the floor as well as in the galleries, Walsh again had to intervene to restore order. Presumably addressing himself to the galleries, Phelan remarked caustically: "We have received much kindness from New York, but we also ask for a share of its intellectual hospitality."® The war between speakers supporting McAdoo and the Smith galleries was

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®®DNC Proceedings, 1924, 103.

®®Ibid., 103-06.

®®Ibid., 110.
just beginning. Phelan assured the delegates that McAdoo was opposed to religious discrimination. He asserted that it should not concern anyone whom McAdoo might number among his supporters.84

Phelan's speech had been delivered under very inauspicious conditions. The session had been long and it was hot. The delegates had been in no mood to listen, and it was doubtful that they heard much Phelan had said other than McAdoo's name. Prior to the opening of the session, the McAdoo and Smith managers had agreed that the roll call should progress as far as California. Elmer Davis reported that the McAdoo managers, sensing the unfavorable situation, had asked the Smith leaders to permit adjournment prior to the Californian's nomination. The Smith contingent saw no reason for yielding to the request, and the McAdoo forces did not wish to submit the question to a vote. Rockwell later denied that his lieutenants had sought an early adjournment.85

Regardless of the reception accorded the speech, once Phelan completed it, those delegates who had remained silent during the anti-Klan demonstration had an opportunity to stage one of their own. While the McAdoo demonstration was longer, it lacked the spontaneity of the anti-Klan outburst. The galleries had participated in the eruption against the hooded order. McAdoo, on the other hand,

84Ibid., 106-15.

could expect no encouragement from the alien world of the galleries. McAdoo's demonstration ran for its appointed hour and then subsided. Its artificiality prompted William Allen White to describe it as "a demonstration so evidently prearranged that the effect of what followed was badly hampered by its conspicuous mechanical contrivance. The McAdoo demonstration burst upon the convention not like a conflagration, but like a piece of fireworks in the park. . . It was apparent that the Klan, which had been taking its medicine from the Underwood orator, was having its sweet revenge in boosting McAdoo." Following termination of the McAdoo demonstration, Brennan moved for a recess. J. Bruce Kremer seconded the motion in order to show that the two major camps were in accord, and the convention adjourned until Thursday, June 26.

Agreement was not so readily obtained in the platform sub-committee on drafting. They did not adjourn their session until 2:00 A.M. Thursday. The members of the drafting committee had found it impossible to concur on the League and Klan planks. They had achieved unanimity on all the other planks, and Cummings announced that the subcommittee would subject the League and Klan planks to further discussion later Thursday. He expected that body

87 White, Politics: The Citizen's Business, 64-65.
88 DNC Proceedings, 1924, 115-16.
to reach agreement in time to present the completed platform to the
full committee late Thursday night and to the convention Friday
morning. 89

In regard to the League controversy, a majority of the sub-
committee had substantially agreed upon a plank declaring for
adherence to the League principle, subject to reservations and a
popular referendum. The reservations included the privilege of the
United States to uphold the Monroe Doctrine and preservation of the
constitutional right of Congress to declare war. As for the party's
posture in regard to the Ku Klux Klan, the subcommittee eventually
decided not to assume responsibility for formulating a definite
proposal. Rather, they chose to report two planks to the full com-
mittee. While one denounced the Klan by name, the other declared
against the organization in principle but did not specifically mention
the Order. 90 The latter was modeled after the Virginia religious
liberty plank and stated in part: "Any sect or order or creed which
assails or seeks openly or covertly to impair this inalienable right
of religious freedom is to be condemned and resisted as a menace to
organized society." 91

They had reached the decision to report two planks to the full

89 New York Times, June 26, 1924, p. 3.


91 New York Times, June 22, 1924, Sec. I, p. 3.
committee after a heated debate in the subcommittee. Patrick Henry Callahan of Louisville, a McAdoo supporter and former chairman of the committee on Religious Prejudices of Catholic Societies, assured the subcommittee that Catholics were not demanding a denunciatory plank. He felt that such a plank would engender more harm than good because the Klan seemed to thrive on attack. His argument impressed only those who required no impressing, such as Bryan and Cummings. Those demanding a denunciatory plank were just as vehement in their ultimatum as before. They still threatened to carry their fight to the convention floor if the platform committee did not comply with their demand. Moreover, Senator David Walsh of Massachusetts introduced another anti-Klan plank. It struck viciously at the Order for its racial and religious bigotry and pledged the Democratic Party to guarantee religious and civil liberties. Thus, another session of the resolutions committee came to a close with the outstanding issue before it unresolved.

The day was equally unproductive in determining the eventual nominee. Rockwell reiterated his assurances concerning McAdoo's commanding position. He predicted that the platform would be adopted Thursday night and that McAdoo would be nominated Friday night. Rockwell asserted that the convention was 'in no mood to permit a minority to block the will of a majority. Although he failed

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92 *New York Times*, June 26, 1924, p. 3.
to explain what he meant by this statement, observers interpreted it to mean that once McAdoo received a majority he would attempt to circumvent the two-thirds rule. Rockwell indicated that J. Bruce Kremer of Montana would serve as McAdoo's floor leader. Frank H. Farris of Missouri, John A. McSparran of Pennsylvania, M. T. Lively of Texas, W. W. Howes of South Dakota, and Angus McLean of North Carolina would be assisting Kremer.  

Smith's supporters were capable of matching Rockwell's extravagance. They predicted that Smith would receive 225 votes on the first ballot, 550 votes on the fifth ballot, and more than the requisite 732 votes on the tenth or twelfth ballot. Although the McAdoo and Smith supporters grew bolder each day, the prognosticators' predictions remained the same: deadlock. Oulahan reported that Wednesday had witnessed an improvement in Ralston's and Davis' positions. They appeared to be emerging as the dark horses with the best chances once the anticipated deadlock was reached. The second day of the convention ended as had the first with nothing positive accomplished.

Permanent Chairman Thomas Walsh opened the third session of the convention on Thursday, June 26. As the roll call resumed, Governor William E. Sweet of Colorado came to the platform to

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94 New York Times, June 26, 1924, p. 3.
second McAdoo's nomination. Anticipating the next speaker's purpose, the galleries were so disorderly that Walsh was again forced to interrupt a McAdoo speaker to silence them.\footnote{DNC Proceedings, 1924, 117-121.} After Sweet completed his address and Connecticut yielded to New York, pandemonium reigned as Franklin D. Roosevelt, on crutches, swung to the speaker's stand.\footnote{Ibid., 121.}

Roosevelt presented Smith as a man beloved by the masses, a man of spotless integrity, a man of principle, a man capable of instilling confidence and faith in government, a self-made man, a proven vote getter, a progressive, and most notably as "'the Happy Warrior' of the political battlefield."\footnote{Ibid., 122-29.} Both the speech and its delivery marked one of the Convention's high points.\footnote{Freidel, Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Ordeal, 175-77; Warner, The Happy Warrior, 159-61.} Roosevelt's biographer, Frank Freidel, has noted that, in retrospect, the most significant portion of the speech was its plea for party unity.\footnote{Freidel, Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Ordeal, 177.}

Anticipating a bitter battle over the platform, Roosevelt urged:

You equally who come from the great cities of the East and from the plains and hills of the West, from the slopes of the Pacific and from the homes and fields of the Southland, I ask you in all sincerity,
Roosevelt's admonition was futile in the face of the storm that was brewing over the platform. Moreover, the demonstration that followed Roosevelt's speech negated any of its beneficial aspects.

Not to be exceeded by McAdoo's supporters, Smith's followers staged a demonstration lasting for one hour and a half. Not only was Smith's demonstration longer than McAdoo's, but also it surpassed McAdoo's exhibition in terms of mechanical contrivance. Bands and fire sirens blared and screamed from the galleries while Tammany gate crashers swarmed about the floor. Even the New York Times commented on the demonstration's obvious artificiality. The paper observed that it lacked the spontaneity of the 1920 San Francisco demonstration when Smith had been but a favorite son. Elmer Davis remarked:

Yesterday's protracted outburst showed that Smith could carry New York—or more accurately that he could carry Tammany Hall. It did not show he could carry the Democratic Convention... it produced no visible effect, except to make delegates who were not already on Smith's side look sourer as they pressed their fingers in their ears to keep out the waves of sound.

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100 DNC Proceedings, 1924, 123.


There was little doubt that Tammany's misguided enthusiasm had done more harm than good. The Smith demonstration merely aggravated existing resentments.\footnote{Kent, \textit{The Democratic Party}, 294; \textit{New York Times}, June 27, 1924, p. 18.}

Once order was restored a seemingly endless number of speakers paraded before the restive delegates. Delaware offered Willard Saulsbury to the convention. Missouri contributed a seconding speech for McAdoo. The Illinois delegation perhaps best exemplified the convention's lack of leadership and direction. Brennan's state provided speeches for three candidates--David F. Houston, McAdoo, and Smith.\footnote{\textit{DNC Proceedings}, 1924, 129-39.} Michael L. Igoe, in seconding Smith's nomination, aroused the wrath of the McAdoo delegates by directing a barb at their candidate. After commenting on Smith's vote getting ability and his record as governor of New York, Igoe continued, "and more than that, my friends, no oil has touched him."\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, 137.} McAdoo delegates bolted from their chairs and began to hiss, while Smith supporters retorted: "No oil has touched him."\footnote{\textit{New York Times}, June 27, 1924, p. 3.}

Following Illinois' parade of delegates, Frederick Van Nuys presented Samuel Ralston's name to the convention. The speech,
befitting the candidate, was rather dull and uninspired. Van Nuys pointed with pride to Ralston's proven vote getting ability and his honesty, economy, and efficiency. In keeping with Taggart's policy of waiting for the convention to come to Ralston, the speech was exceptionally brief, and there was no prolonged demonstration.

Typical of the campaign Taggart was waging and of the candidate he was promoting, the convention joined with Indiana to sing "On the Banks of the Wabash" at the conclusion of Van Nuys' speech. 107

As the proceedings droned on, Iowa provided a second for Smith's nomination, and Kansas offered Governor Jonathan M. Davis to the Democracy. 108 Kentucky yielded to Oregon and Mrs. Alexander Thompson. In the course of seconding McAdoo's nomination, she remarked "...and remember that in 1916 the women proved beyond the peradventure of a doubt that we could elect a President of these great United States without the help of the State of New York." 109 Cheers and applause greeted this statement. And with the atmosphere already tense, the Smith supporters construed this as a direct slur on their candidate, and the familiar cries of "Oil! Oil! Oil!" rose from various parts of the hall. 110

107 DNC Proceedings, 1924, 139-40.

108 Ibid., 142-45.

109 Ibid., 146-47.

110 New York Times, June 27, 1924, p. 3.
In the name of the Northern Democracy, William R. Pattangall of Maine seconded Underwood's nomination, and then Howard Bruce offered Governor Albert Cabell Ritchie of Maryland to the Democrats as an excellent compromise candidate.\footnote{DNC Proceedings, 1924, 148-51.} Massachusetts, following Maryland, sent Charles H. Cole to the speaker's stand to provide a second for Smith. At the conclusion of Cole's address, the convention again erupted into a wild Smith demonstration. Walsh, whose composure had become strained by Tammany and other unauthorized Smith boosters milling around the floor, threatened to move the convention elsewhere, stating, "if the Convention cannot come back to its business in this City, the Chair will entertain a motion to go somewhere else."\footnote{Ibid., 152.} Delegates already weary of New York greeted Walsh's announcement with cheers and applause.\footnote{New York Times, June 27, 1924, p. 3.}

Indicative of the problem besetting the convention off the floor, Walsh announced that the resolutions committee would not be prepared to report to the convention before Friday. He also requested that the full committee of the resolutions committee meet Thursday evening. The roll call proceeded; A. M. Cummins of Michigan, with a dull uninspired favorite son speech, placed Senator Woodbridge N. Ferris'
name before the convention. 114

Following the completion of Cummins' address, a motion to adjourn precipitated the first floor fight between the hostile camps. While the McAdoo forces sought to have the convention reconvene Thursday evening, the Smith reporters advocated adjournment until Friday morning. The roll call on the amendment foreshadowed those that were to follow. The vote was very close, with 559 favoring adjournment until Friday and 513 opposed. The convention, therefore, adjourned until Friday, June 27. 115

Contemporaries attached a great deal of significance to this first roll call vote. Oulahan reported that the vote marked a victory for those opposed to McAdoo's nomination. Elmer Davis agreed and stipulated that the 513 votes the McAdoo forces had mustered were substantially all that McAdoo would ever receive. Davis was echoing the assertions of E. H. Moore, leader of the anti-McAdoo contingent. Not surprisingly, the McAdoo management did not feel that the vote on the adjournment motion foreshadowed their defeat. 116 Yet in retrospect, the vote on the adjournment motion proved to be a remarkably accurate gauge of the forthcoming presidential balloting.

There was also disagreement as to why a test of strength had

114 _DNC Proceedings, 1924_, 153-55.

115 Ibid., 155-64.

developed over the motion to adjourn. Oulahan reported that Kremer had approached Moore and Brennan with his recess proposal. He had coupled with it the suggestion that when nominations were completed Thursday evening, balloting should begin for the presidential nominee. Believing this to be an attempt on the part of the McAdoo forces to make an impressive showing prior to balloting on the Klan plank, Moore and Brennan had refused to agree. This was in keeping with the anti-McAdoo leaders' belief that the Klan debate would seriously weaken McAdoo's chance. Judge Rockwell, however, stated that the sole purpose in seeking the recess until Thursday evening had been to impress upon the delegates the necessity of foregoing entertainments and for proceeding with the task they had been entrusted to accomplish. 117

While the delegates were resolving very little in regard to the selection of a presidential nominee, members of the resolutions committee similarly displayed irresoluteness insofar as the League and the Klan were concerned. The subcommittee on drafting began reading the undisputed planks to the full committee at 8:30 Thursday evening. At midnight, Cummings announced that the two controversial planks on the League and the Klan would be returned to the subcommittee for further consideration Friday. This action was taken in an effort to achieve unanimity on the two planks, thereby avoiding

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potentially destructive floor fights. Cummings reached this decision after the subcommittee had divided eight to three against denouncing the Klan specifically. Baker's refusal to accept the League plank calling for a referendum also prompted Cummings' decision. Baker threatened to present a minority report favoring immediate entrance. 118

While the resolutions committee refused to assume responsibility for the explosive Klan plank, the breach between city and countryside was growing wider. Summing up this estrangement, a vice-presidential aspirant from Georgia declared:

> Time was when the hospitable gates of New York were open to anyone upon no other credentials than that he was a good American citizen. . . Times was when a Democratic Convention demanded only that a man should be a good Democrat and a good American and had no thought of denouncing any specific Protestant order and leaving out Catholic and Hebrew orders. The day the Democratic Party makes such a specific declaration that day it will rue its folly. 119

McAdoo, as usual, refrained from commenting on the Klan question. He informed his delegates publicly that they should abide by their own inclinations in regard to that issue. McAdoo was safe in making such a declaration as the proclivities of his followers were well known. While the McAdoo supporters attempted to subvert the Klan issue, the Smith supporters were pleased with the situation that


had developed. They felt that the storm that was hovering over the
Klan had completely submerged the Wet-Dry issue. 120

Thus, the delegates assembled in Madison Square Garden
Friday, June 27, for the fourth day of the convention with nominations
still incomplete and no report from the resolutions committee. Walsh
opened the fourth session and the apparently interminable roll call
of the states continued. 121 Minnesota sent William J. Quinn forward
to second Smith's nomination. While the speech was not particularly
noteworthy, it revealed the issue that had become an obsession with
the delegates. Quinn asserted:

Minnesota proclaims to the nation that it demands
in this coming campaign a candidate who will not fore­
close himself by merely pointing a finger at the First
Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, or
one who merely satisfies the whim of a cowardly
minority, which is afraid to express an honest American
concern in relation to the Constitution of the United
States. 122

Quinn drove another wedge into the widening breach within the
Democracy when he alluded to and gloried in Minnesota's large per­
centage of foreign-born who were looking to Al Smith for victory. 123

Each day the resolutions committee delayed, seeking a compromise,

121 DNC Proceedings, 1924, 165.
122 Ibid., 167.
123 Ibid., 166-68.
conditions became less amenable to solution through compromise.

Mississippi yielded to Ohio and Newton D. Baker. Ostensibly Baker came to the platform to place James M. Cox's name before the convention. Baker, however, pled more for a cause than for a candidate. His address was a moving appeal for the League of Nations. The speech, that of an idealist, was pitched on a loftier plane than most of those delivered during the 1924 convention. Baker's address was long and came after the delegates had been subjected to three days of windy orations. Nevertheless, the assembled Democrats showered Baker with applause. Almost as an afterthought, Baker placed Cox's name before the convention. There was a perfunctory demonstration; after the brief interlude of idealism, the convention settled back to its usual course.¹²⁴

After Montana provided seconding speeches for both Smith and McAdoo, three states offered their governors to the convention: Nebraska, Charles W. Bryan; New Hampshire, Fred H. Brown; and New Jersey, George S. Silzer.¹²⁵ Then from the troubled North Dakota delegation, J. F. T. O'Connor, a Catholic, assumed the platform to second McAdoo's nomination. O'Connor reiterated McAdoo's avowed position on the Klan question: adherence to the liberties and guarantees of the First Amendment to the Constitution.

¹²⁴Ibid., 168-75.

¹²⁵Ibid., 175-87.
Continuing, O'Connor presented his own opinion on the Order. He asserted: "... in the name of millions of people of my faith, that I honor and respect, the faith that I learned at a mother's knee, in the name of the intelligent Protestants of my State who by legislative act unmasked its members, I say to you as an American citizen, I condemn the order known as the Ku Klux Klan." His condemnation as those before provided a demonstration. Some observers construed O'Connor's denunciation as an attempt to remove the Klan stigma from McAdoo. Oulahan felt, however, that California's failure to join in the demonstration disproved any such theory. Rather, O'Connor's speech was probably indicative of the conflict raging within the North Dakota delegation. Although the delegation was instructed for McAdoo, seven of the ten delegates were Catholic and favored a strong anti-Klan plank.

The party seemed bent upon self-destruction, and as if to offer proof of its suicidal impulse Pennsylvania subjected the delegates to five seconding speeches for four candidates. Seconding Smith's nomination, Mrs. Carroll Miller emphasized the guarantee of religious liberty. Following Mrs. Miller, Samuel E. Shull seconded Oscar W. Underwood's nomination. Shull said of Underwood,

\[\text{126}\text{Ibid.}, 189.\]
\[\text{127}\text{New York Times, June 28, 1924, p. 2.}\]
\[\text{128}\text{DNC Proceedings, 1924, 190-91.}\]
... though we love and admire him for his ability and for his
courage, we love him most for his real red-blooded Americanism
and the enemies he has made."129 Clearly, personalities no longer
mattered. The Klan question had submerged them. Men were
important only in regard to their stance on that question. Underwood,
McAdoo, and Smith had in some fashion bound their political fortunes
to the Klan. The fate of each was inextricably intertwined in the
determination of an issue that was so emotional that it had moved
beyond the control of the politicians. The possibility of compromise
rapidly diminished as speaker after speaker drove the wedge of
disunity deeper and deeper into the heart of the Democracy.

In the face of an increasingly restive audience, speaker after
speaker assumed the platform to second either Smith's or McAdoo's
nomination. Finally, the roll call reached Virginia, and Senator
Claude A. Swanson nominated his colleague, Carter Glass. The
uninspired address did not do justice to Glass, but doubtless a more
stimulating speech would have been wasted on the battered delegates.
Swanson presented Glass as a paragon of virtue and extolled his
intelligence, patriotism, character, courage, cleanliness, honesty,
experience, and ability.130 A relatively large demonstration followed
Glass' nomination. And with deadlock almost a certainty, Glass

129Ibid., 193.

130Ibid., 204-08.
appeared to possess considerable second choice strength. 131

To West Virginia fell the distinction of placing the last name in nomination: ironically, that of John W. Davis, the man who would eventually gain the party's nomination, Judge John H. Holt of West Virginia delivered a standard nominating speech emphasizing his candidate's Americanism, progressivism, honesty, integrity, and adherence to the Constitution and its amendments. 132 A brief demonstration followed Holt's speech indicating that, like Glass, Davis had latent support. 133

With West Virginia's candidate before the convention, the roll call proceeded and Wisconsin provided a typical second for Smith. Wisconsin's speaker was the last. 134 After four days, something had been accomplished on the convention floor. Nominations were complete. Sixteen aspirants had been formally presented to the delegates. The nominees included six senators or former senators: Underwood, Robinson, Saulsbury, Ralston, Ferris, Glass; six governors: Smith, J. M. Davis, Ritchie, C. W. Bryan, Brown, Silzer; two former Secretaries of the Treasury: McAdoo and Houston; and one former presidential candidate, Cox. Before any action could

132 DNC Proceedings, 1924, 212-14.
be taken on these nominations, however, the platform had to be
adopted. E. H. Moore indicated that no platform consideration could
occur Friday night. He announced that the platform would not be
ready until Saturday morning and asked for an adjournment until that
time. With only a minimum of opposition, the convention adjourned
late Friday afternoon. 135

The irreconcilable postures assumed by the opposing sides on
the League and Klan issues accounted for the resolution committee's
inability to report to the convention. In its futile quest for unanimity,
the committee was merely allowing the pressure to build higher and
higher. At 12:30 A.M. Saturday the committee disposed of the
League question. By a vote of thirty-two to sixteen it adopted a plank
approving the League but making entrance dependent upon a popular
referendum. The committee had reached this decision after five
hours of debate pitting Baker and his demands for immediate entry
against the principal referendum proponents, Bryan, Pittman, and
David Walsh. Baker refused to accept the committee report and
announced that he would present a minority report to the full
convention. 136

Following final action on the League, the committee turned
its full attention to the Klan plank. A poll of the committee revealed

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135 Ibid., 220.

that thirty-four members favored a plank that did not denounce the Klan by name, whereas twenty committee members advocated specific denunciation. The committee considered three proposed Klan planks. Bryan prepared and presented a plank omitting the name of the Order and reaffirming the Democratic Party's devotion to the fundamental constitutional guarantees of freedom of speech, of the press, of religion, and of the right of peaceful assembly.  

Two specific anti-Klan planks were presented. The collective anti-Klan forces presented a plank that constituted a reworking of Moore's earlier proposal, and stated:

> We condemn political secret societies of all kinds as opposed to the exercise of free government and contrary to the spirit, if not the letter, of the Constitution. No member of such society can justly claim to be a disciple of Thomas Jefferson.

> We therefore pledge the Democratic Party to oppose the efforts of the Ku Klux Klan or any similar organization that interferes with political freedom or religious liberty, or which engenders racial prejudices.  

In addition to the proposal of the collective anti-Klan forces, the Alabama representatives offered Underwood's proposed plank. The rather lengthy Alabama plank reviewed the history of societies similar to the Klan with specific reference to the Know-Nothing Party. It asserted that the Democracy had openly opposed the Know-Nothings in 1856 and that there was no reason that the party should not take

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similar action against the Klan in 1924.139

Bryan, however, saw a reason for not specifically denouncing the Order. He informed the committee that he would not support any plank that set one group of men against another. Asserting that in four years the Klan would be forgotten, he implored the committee not to take any action calculated to divide the Democracy.140 The alternatives facing the Democrats were not pleasant. If the anti-Klan faction were successful, they would read a large segment of the membership out of the party. On the other hand, any fight over the issue, whatever the outcome, threatened destruction.

There were those outside the committee who felt that the damage had already been done regardless of the committee's final decision. Oulahan reported that the Klan issue had grown from a relatively minor irritant at the first of the week to one that overshadowed all else and portended possible havoc for the Democratic Party.141 Philadelphia Charles P. Donnelly sounded a similar note when he averred: "This subject [,] unless cool heads prevail in the convention when it considers the platform, may cause a schism in the party not unlike slavery. Whatever the convention does will lead to bitterness and defections. We started the convention with the brightest

of hopes and now dire troubles overshadow our deliberations.\textsuperscript{142}

In this atmosphere of crisis, several compromise suggestions came to the fore. One of these was a proposal that the resolutions committee report to the convention that it was unable to agree on a religious liberty plank. The committee should couple with this revelation the recommendation that the party's stance on the Klan issue be left to the discretion of the presidential nominee. Another proposal suggested that the committee present two alternate planks to the convention. One of these planks would denounce the Klan by name. The other would merely condemn in general terms organizations that practiced religious discrimination against American citizens. The convention's choice, however, would not become a part of the platform; it would merely be a resolution of the convention and not a declaration of party principle. These suggestions, intended to evade the issue, failed because the anti-McAdoo forces refused to agree. Those opposed to McAdoo's nomination had expended their total effort toward securing a platform denunciation. They were not interested in compromises that could aid only McAdoo.\textsuperscript{143}

Early Saturday morning the anti-McAdoo leadership began to formulate plans for the anticipated convention floor fight over the Klan plank. They did not expect the McAdoo-controlled resolutions

\textsuperscript{142}New York \textit{Times}, June 28, 1924, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{143}New York \textit{Times}, June 28, 1924, p. 2.
committee to report a denunciatory plank; they, therefore, determined to carry a minority report to the floor. Although the McAdoo forces desperately wanted to avoid the floor fight, the opposition did not appear to be weakening. On the contrary, the anti-Klan forces seemed outwardly assured that they could achieve on the convention floor what they could not attain in the committee: specific denunciation.

Representative Harry B. Hawes of Missouri reported that he had canvassed the delegations and his poll revealed 589 in favor of specific denunciation against 473 opposed. 144

Meanwhile, the Klan issue had precipitated an open rupture in the troubled North Dakota delegation. Although the delegation was instructed for McAdoo, five of those who wished to vote for the anti-Klan plank announced their intention to leave McAdoo after the second ballot and vote for Smith. The Colorado caucus was also the scene of a heated debate over the Klan plank. Governor Sweet and the McAdoo contingent controlled the meeting, however, and recommended to the resolutions committee that it not specifically mention the Klan. 145

The potential nominees were forgotten as interest centered on the anticipated platform clash. From the McAdoo headquarters, Judge Rockwell asserted that the convention would adopt a platform

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quickly and then balloting could begin. He also reported that the resolutions committee was attempting to draft a platform acceptable to all candidates. Meanwhile, the Smith leaders gloried in their refusals to accept compromises on the Klan question.¹⁴⁶

By Friday night the Klan issue was the convention's paramount concern. All else was secondary. Moreover, because the front-runners were so closely identified with either one side of that issue or the other, the outcome of the entire convention appeared to hinge on its determination. This was apparent to the McAdoo adherents as they vainly attempted to keep the question off the convention floor. As the fourth day of the convention closed, the fifth loomed inauspiciously for the Democracy. The Klan question was in reality a question of what sector of America was to control the party: the rural or the urban.

CHAPTER VIII

NEW YORK CITY: PLATFORM AND NOMINATION

Although the 1924 Democratic national convention did not officially close until Thursday, July 10, its most important session was held Saturday, June 28, one that extended into Sunday, June 29. At this meeting the delegates reached the zenith of dissension. The session witnessed a confrontation between rural and urban America over the Ku Klux Klan. The legacy of this internecine struggle was to be intractable deadlock.

Realizing the dangers inherent in a floor fight on the Klan plank, the resolutions committee conferred throughout Friday night and into Saturday morning in abortive attempts to conciliate the minority. Simultaneously, Brennan, Moore, Mack and others who desired specific denunciation met at the Biltmore Hotel to plan their strategy for the impending floor fight. When Walsh opened the fifth session of the convention Saturday morning, the committee was not yet willing to entrust the Klan plank's fate to the full convention.

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2 DNC Proceedings, 1924, 221.
A haggard Homer Cummings solemnly addressed the convention, announced that his committee was not ready to report, and explained the reasons for delay. Because everyone was aware of the problem facing the committee, Cummings' speech was in reality a plea for unity. He prefaced his comments by admonishing the delegates to be extremely attentive because the destiny of the party might well be at stake. Cummings revealed that unanimity had been acquired on all but two planks. While a difference of opinion had arisen over the phrasing of the League plank, Cummings confided that the debate had been amiable and that Newton D. Baker would present a minority report. ³

The full committee had met until six o'clock that morning discussing the religious liberty plank. Cummings confessed that the debate had been heated and acrimonious. If fifty-four representatives exhibited such feelings, Cummings wondered what might happen if the full convention engaged in a similar debate? The danger inherent in this situation, he asserted, had caused the committee to question the Democratic Party's future. The committee had then decided that it needed more time for deliberation. Cummings, therefore, requested that the convention adjourn until three o'clock Saturday afternoon. His motion carried and the morning session ended. ⁴

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³ Ibid., 223-26.

⁴ Ibid.
The recess provided a final opportunity for the proponents of a mild religious liberty plank to effect a compromise with the ardent anti-Klan contingent. The anti-Klan forces, however, would not be denied their long-sought floor fight. Thus, as the delegates began to reassemble for the afternoon session, it was with the knowledge that the full convention would determine the party's posture on the Ku Klux Klan. Indicative of the prevailing atmosphere when the afternoon session opened, not only delegates and spectators but also hundreds of policemen packed the convention hall. The delegates' anticipation of the forthcoming struggle permitted the smooth and almost uninterrupted reading of the lengthy platform. The crowd was patient, displaying little enthusiasm.\footnote{New York Times, June 29, 1924, p. 2; DNC Proceedings, 1924, 227-45.}

Finally, the committee presented the League and religious liberty planks which had so plagued their deliberations.\footnote{DNC Proceedings, 1924, 243-45.} In their final form the majority planks revealed that the committee had chosen the path of expediency. Faced with the alternatives of equivocal or unequivocal approval of the League and equivocal or unequivocal denunciation of the Klan, the committee had determined to equivocate. Ironically, in so doing the debate engendered so much bitterness that expediency was sacrificed for expediency's sake.
The League of Nations platform declaration denounced war and asserted the Democracy's confidence in the League of Nations and the World Court of Justice. The plank, however, failed to commit the Democratic Party to securing League membership. Rather, it proposed that the League question be removed from partisan politics. The plank called for a referendum election to be held apart from all other contests to determine the American people's attitude toward membership. 7

The majority's final draft of the "Freedom of Religion, Freedom of Speech, Freedom of the Press" plank was even more blatantly evasive than their League plank. In substance, the first portion of the plank merely pledged the Democratic Party to maintain and uphold the United States Constitution. The last sentence announced, in general terms, Democratic condemnation of efforts to incite racial or religious discord. The McAdoo-controlled, hence rural, resolutions committee's platform declared:

The Democratic Party re-affirms its adherence and devotion to those cardinal principles contained in the Constitution and the precepts upon which our Government is founded, that Congress shall make no laws respecting the establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech or of the Press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances, that the Church and the State shall be and remain separate, and that no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any

7Ibid., 243-44.
office of public trust under the United States. These principles we pledge ourselves ever to defend and maintain. We insist at all times upon obedience to the orderly processes of the law, and deplore and condemn any effort to arouse religious or racial dissension. 

Following the resolutions committee's majority report, the long-threatened floor fight on the two planks became a reality. Debate on the League and the Klan planks consumed the remainder of Saturday afternoon and evening and continued into Sunday morning. Newton D. Baker presented the first minority report, one that offered an amendment to the League of Nations plank. Baker's report condemned war, censured the Republicans for their lack of foreign policy, and declared for League membership. Although Baker was pleading for Democratic adherence to the Wilsonian ideal, his plank compromised Wilson's position. As Baker had indicated earlier, he was not averse to those reservations that Wilson had found so repugnant. Baker would barter reservations for entry; but, unlike the majority, he would make the 1924 presidential election a referendum on the League.

Whereas the delegates accorded Baker the dignified reception that had characterized the League controversy, they repeatedly interrupted Pattangall as he presented the minority report offering

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8 Ibid., 244-45.
9 Ibid., 246-47.
an amendment to the religious liberty plank.\(^{10}\) In addition to
Pattangall, committee members Frederick I. Thompson, Alabama;
Senator David I. Walsh, Massachusetts; P. H. Quinn, Rhode Island;
C. C. Carlin, District of Columbia; John H. McCann, Pennsylvania;
Francis X. Busch, Illinois; Joseph A. Kellogg, New York; Harry
Hehner, New Jersey; James A. Nowell, Minnesota; James P. Leamy,
Vermont; E. Brooks Lee, Maryland; and John W. Troy, Alaska,
signed the minority report.\(^{11}\) The representatives of three regions
were conspicuously absent from the list of signers. Of those signing
the minority report, none was from a Pacific or Mountain state.
Underwood's representative was the only signer from the former
Confederacy. Thus, the signatures on the minority report fore-
shadowed the vote that was to reveal the Democracy's rural-urban
cleavage.

The minority report retained the majority's declaration of
principle, but supplemented it with a short paragraph that specifically
denounced the Ku Klux Klan. The condemnatory statement, a further
refining of the original Moore proposal, asserted:

\begin{quote}
We condemn political secret societies of all kinds
as opposed to the exercise of free government and
contrary to the spirit of the Declaration of Independence
and of the Constitution of the United States. We pledge
\end{quote}

\(^{10}\)Ibid., 247-48.

the Democratic Party to oppose any effort on the part of the Ku Klux Klan or any organization to interfere with the religious liberty or political freedom of any citizen, or limit the civic rights of any citizen or body of citizens because of religion, birthplace or racial origin.  

That which McAdoo had fought so long to prevent had become reality. The convention en masse was to determine the Democracy's position on the Ku Klux Klan. Control of the party hung in the balance. Those who supported the Klan or feared its strength at the polls would be aligned against those who found the organization reprehensible. Rural values would be pitted against urban values. While politicians had overemphasized the Klan threat for political reasons, the issue was a real one. The attack on the Klan transcended the politics of the moment and struck at rural America's value structure. Final resolution of the Klan question and all that it represented, however, had to await a decision on the League plank.

Of the orators who championed one side of the League question or the other, Newton D. Baker emerged as by far the most eloquent. In the most powerful address delivered before the convention, Baker demanded a plank pledging the Democracy to seek League membership. His address was both passionate and sarcastic. In appealing for Wilsonian idealism, he made a mockery of the majority report. He attacked its constitutionality and feasibility. He condemned the

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majority for suggesting that Wilson's party abdicate its responsibility for the League. 13

One convention observer, Ernest H. Abbott, described Baker as a "prophet of a religion seeking to recall a reluctant people to the faith. . . . He spoke of Woodrow Wilson in much the same terms as an eloquent Christian mystic would speak of his master." 14 Obviously moved by the speech, William Allen White wrote of Baker: "He stood crying out his message with the ardor and eloquence of a Hebrew prophet. He closed in what may be described only as solemn and passionate magnificence. Then the throng in the galleries burst into spontaneous response like a great chorus following its leader." 15

Nevertheless, the final tabulation on the League plank revealed that Baker had won only his colleagues' esteem and not their votes. The minority had invoked the memory of Woodrow Wilson. The majority had recalled the 1920 campaign and its disastrous consequences. As politicians the delegates found more reality in the majority's vision. Baker's amendment failed of adoption by the resounding vote of 742-1/2 to 353-1/2. 16

Following final disposition of the League plank, the delegates

13 Ibid., 259-70.
15 White, Politics: The Citizen's Business, 78.
16 DNC Proceedings, 1924, 279.
and galleries tensed themselves for the battle over the religious liberty plank. Rural America was ready to defend its dominant position in the Democratic Party. The urban element sought to make its strength known by striking at the order indigenous to rural America: the Ku Klux Klan. William Allen White perceptively described the atmosphere:

Men and women were standing in the galleries. It was a queer crowd for a Westerner to see. The foreign-born were there, in a considerable majority, in the upper galleries. One understood, seeing the gallery crowd, why the signs admonishing against smoking and spitting on the floor were printed in Italian as well as English. Those bilingual signs told a real story. As the debate began upon the issue of religious liberty, interest heightened. Pulses quickened. . . . The great desire in the hearts of the delegates which they had held for five days without abating was coming to a climax in a conflict which both sides welcomed. Wicked lusts of bigotry and hate rose in the hearts of the multitude. 17

Speaker after speaker would stride into this milieu and attempt to make himself heard above the screaming and cursing delegates and spectators. 18 The Democracy's power struggle was to be bloodless, but it would not be peaceful.

Senator Robert L. Owen of Oklahoma, the first speaker to assume the platform, spoke in favor of the majority report. He defended that report's declaration for civil and political freedoms

17White, Politics: The Citizen's Business, 79.

18Eaton, Presidential Timber, 229.
and pleaded that the Democratic Party not throw away its great
opportunity for victory by becoming divided over a religious issue.19
Owen's speech provided the pattern that subsequent majority plank
proponents would follow. The majority was most persistent in its
demand that the Democratic Party not alienate such a large body of
well-meaning but misguided voters. Nor was the majority's concern
for political expediency artfully disguised. Owen asserted: "The
only issue between the majority and the minority report is this: Will
you say by the voice of this Convention that the membership of the
Ku Klux Klan, which amounts, I now am told, to something over a
million citizens of the United States, are guilty of violating the
constitutional provisions?" Owen insisted that no evidence of such
guilt had been presented before the resolutions committee. Then,
insisting that he was not defending the Klan, Owen vindicated much
of its membership by proclaiming "... there is a large number of
good citizens among them who believed, in joining the order, that the
order was committed to obey and observe and protect the Constitution
and the laws of this Country."20

Pattangall presented the minority's initial argument. He
assured the delegates that the minority found no fault with the
majority's recitation of constitutionally-protected rights. The

19DNC Proceedings, 1924, 279-82.
20Ibid., 281-82.
minority had merely supplemented it with a paragraph that applied the abstract to the concrete. After referring to Owen's assertion that it was wrong to condemn a million Klansmen without a trial, Pattangall denied that was the effect of his plank. He asserted that the minority plank did not condemn Klansmen, per se, of being guilty of any crime. It merely censured the Order's efforts "to interfere with the religious liberty or political freedom of any citizen or to limit the civic rights of any citizen because of religion, birthplace or racial origin."\(^{21}\) Pattangall insisted that since all men, regardless of their religion, race or national origin, had fought and died for their country, all men should be granted their civil and political rights. He concluded by demanding that the Democracy denounce bigotry, intolerance, and hypocrisy.\(^{22}\)

After Mrs. Carroll Miller of Pennsylvania attacked the argument that expediency demanded silence on the Klan, Governor Cameron Morrison of North Carolina assumed the platform to defend the majority report.\(^{23}\) Morrison, as had Owen, denied that he was defending the Ku Klux Klan. His words, however, belied his assertion. Like Owen, Morrison defended the rights of the good but misguided Protestants who made up the Order. In reference to the

\(^{21}\)Ibid., 283.

\(^{22}\)Ibid., 284-85.

\(^{23}\)Ibid., 286.
Klansmen, Morrison averred: "Who are they?... About one million men who profess the Protestant form of the Christian religion. That is not a preliminary to thuggism in American life. Are we without trial and without evidence, in a political convention where only basic principles should be dealt with, to try, condemn and execute more than a million men who are professed followers of the Lord Jesus Christ?" 24

Morrison declared that the Democratic Party could not prevent religious intolerance and bigotry. While admitting that this group of professed Christians had entered into a mistaken movement, he asserted that ministers should deal with the problem. The government had no role to play until those misguided souls broke the law. Morrison stated that the majority plank, calling for the enforcement of the Constitution, would exterminate the Klan. On the other hand, the minority proposal would create half a million new Klan members. He closed by invoking the Deity and proclaiming the injustice and unwisenedess of denouncing Klansmen without a trial. 25 The majority position was a paradoxical one. They did not defend the Klan, only its members. The Democratic Party could not wipe out bigotry, but the majority plank would exterminate the Klan. The majority's argument was political nonsense born from the desire for political

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24Ibid., 287.

25Ibid., 287-89.
expediency.

Following Morrison's address, the minority forces sent four speakers to the platform in rapid succession. And with each address the tensions mounted. Bainbridge Colby's attack was more vicious than those of his predecessors had been. He labeled the Klan as "un-American," "poisonous," "alien," "abhorrent," and "hateful." Colby did not envision Klansmen as misguided Christians. Rather, he pictured them as being either vicious or foolish individuals. Colby averred that the Democratic Party would betray democracy if it did not denounce the Klan.26 The next speaker, David I. Walsh of Massachusetts, called on the party to forego temporary expediency and help extirpate the Ku Klux Klan, which he likened to a cancer, from the body politic.27

The parade of minority proponents continued when E. H. Moore of Ohio assumed the platform. Moore attached the issue to a candidate and thereby intensified the bitterness. He also made reference to expediency, but in far different terms from those that the majority spokesmen employed. Moore pictured the delegates' alternatives very simply:

We have before this Convention as one of the candidates a Democrat [Smith] who, for the reason alone that I prefer another [Cox], I hope will not

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be nominated. If that man had not learned his faith at his mother's knee, a faith different from that of mine and a majority of this Convention, nine-tenths of you would admit in conversation that it would not be five ballots until, on account of his power as a vote getter, because of his distinguished public service, his unspotted public record and his private virtues, he would be the nominee of this Convention.

If you beat this minority plank for the reasons I have suggested, and do not nominate this candidate . . . I would not give a penny for the nomination of anybody. Neither would any sensible man in this Convention. It is not worth the price of a postage stamp—nay, the price of a Chinese tael.\textsuperscript{28}

While the crowd grew more restive, Andrew C. Erwin advanced from the militantly McAdoo-oriented Georgia delegation to demand specific condemnation of the Klan. Although granted only three minutes' speaking time, Erwin's address precipitated the largest demonstration conducted thus far during the Klan debate. Erwin's speech was not a notably good one, in fact, it was one of the poorer ones delivered that day. It derived its impact from the courage of a Georgia delegate's demanding unequivocal denunciation of the Klan.\textsuperscript{29}

Erwin directed his appeal to the Georgia delegation and to those of other Southern states. He pleaded:

I say to those Georgians who do not take a stand against this hooded menace, which prowls in the darkness, that dares not show its face, is\textsuperscript{sic} not worthy of his ancestry; and I call upon you my fellow-Georgians, in this Convention, to vote for

\textsuperscript{28}Ibid., 296.

\textsuperscript{29}Ibid., 297-98.
the minority report of the Committee, I call upon you my fellow-delegates from the South... I
implore my fellow delegates from Georgia to vote with other delegates in this Convention to erase the stigma that has been placed upon our State.30

At the conclusion of Erwin's address, the convention erupted into a spontaneous demonstration. Anti-Klan delegates marched toward the Georgia delegation where Erwin stood among his sulking colleagues. While Erwin had addressed his remarks to Georgia and the South, the banners that were held aloft were not those of rural America. As the crowds pressed around the grim Georgia delegation, the convention band innocently began to play "While We Go Marching Through Georgia." This prompted rage, fury, hisses, boos, and laughter. Another wedge was driven home and the breach widened.31

Contemporary observers were aware of the demonstration's significance. William Allen White commented that "from this spectacle one could forecast the result of the contest. The vote came later, much as the display for the young man from Georgia had forecast it. Industrial America was lined up against rural

30Ibid., 298.

31Elmer Davis, New York Times, June 29, 1924, pp. 1 and 2; White, Politics: The Citizen's Business, 81; DNC Proceedings, 1924, 298. The Proceedings stipulate that the Georgia delegation greeted Erwin with cheers. Davis' and White's observations contradict this. In view of the Georgia delegation's behavior throughout the convention it is safe to assume that the convention's secretary was in error.
America. Tension was mounting. By the time the next speaker ascended the platform, police had marched into the space reserved for the delegates. With the exception of the center aisle where some delegates were seated, the remainder were guarded by continuous lines of police. 33

As the debate continued, other speakers contributed little to its substance but a great deal to the mounting frustrations. Then came the final speech on the subject. The majority had reserved most of its time for one major speaker--William Jennings Bryan. Although Bryan was not a member of the Klan, the Order flourished among those sectors of America where he was most revered. Thus, the benign manifestation of the rural mind came to the defense of the malignant outgrowth of that mind. Bryan contended that prejudice grew from ignorance and that ignorance should be combated by enlightenment, not by force. He felt that specific denunciation would merely make the Klansmen martyrs and promote disunity in the Democracy. Believing that the Klan would soon perish under the weight of its own intolerance, Bryan reasoned that nothing could be gained by denouncing it and thereby giving it more prominence. 34

32 White, Politics: The Citizen's Business, 81.


If the most noble figure to emerge from the 1924 Democratic debacle was Newton D. Baker, the most tragic was William Jennings Bryan. Bryan's tragedy was that of all men who outlive the age that has tempered them and fail to realize it. Whereas Al Smith and New York represented all that was repugnant to rural America, Bryan symbolized those traits that urban America found most distasteful. In Madison Square Garden, the Great Commoner, the Peerless Leader, the Democracy's thrice nominated presidential candidate, was hissed and booed as all the wrath of the city--that alien world he had so long distrusted--was turned against him. Bryan was in the enemy's country and he was not welcome. The galleries immediately began to make their disapproval apparent. Bryan's friends tensed themselves for the battle. Feelings were so intense that, when Bryan began to speak, hundreds of police reserves arrived at the Garden.\(^{35}\)

The hostility between city and countryside manifested itself early in Bryan's address; yet the urban world could not silence Bryan. He asserted that the words "Ku Klux Klan" were unnecessary since existing laws provided redress for those whose rights were denied. The Catholic and the Jew did not need the Democratic Party's protection; they already had able defenders. Bryan argued that the Democracy did not have the "moral right" to be diverted

\(^{35}\)White, Politics; The Citizen's Business, 82.
from its great mission. Anyone could battle the Klan, but only the
Democracy could oppose the Republicans and give aid to wartorn
Europe. Primarily, Bryan opposed denunciation because he did not
want to see the Democracy divided. Then, digressing from the
political arena, Bryan harangued the convention, calling for Christians
to unite and save the world from materialism. 36 Finally, he entwined
the religious with the political and closed with an admonition: "It was
Christ on the Cross who said, 'Father, forgive them, for they know
not what they do.' And, my friends, we can exterminate Ku Kluxism
better by recognizing their honesty and teaching them that they are
wrong." 37

No great demonstration greeted Bryan on the conclusion of
his remarks. William Allen White explained that: "Perhaps those
whom he had offended by invoking the Deity too much did not care to
hiss Bryan's God, and those whose cause he would espouse felt
abashed and did not cheer."38 Bryan's speech, a plea for unity and
expediency, was the last. Walsh then submitted Pattangall's amend-
ment to a vote. Chaos reigned. Votes were switched, polls were
demanded, and challenges were frequent. As a result the roll call
consumed two hours. Walsh announced the vote as 541 and 3/20 in

36DNC Proceedings, 1924, 304-08.
37Ibid., 308-09.
38White, Politics: The Citizen's Business, 83.
favor of the amendment and 542 and 3/20 opposed. A recapitulation, however, revealed that the vote had actually been 541.85 for the amendment and 546.15 against. Thus, 4.30 votes saved the Klan from specific denunciation. At the conclusion of the roll call Roosevelt moved for adjournment until Monday morning. The motion carried, and the convention adjourned at two o'clock Sunday morning, June 29. 39

Ostensibly, Bryan had won and had thereby saved the party from disruption. Bryan, himself, felt that he had held the Democracy together. Later, he wrote of his address: "In effectiveness I think it possibly surpasses any other speech I have ever made. I do not know of any greater service I have rendered to the party." 40 While the commentators agreed that Bryan had won a nominal victory, in winning it he had lost much prestige. O. G. Villard said of Bryan:

He is now a pathetic figure, so pathetic one hates to speak of him. Age is beginning to tell upon him, and when he dragged religion, yes, even Jesus Christ himself, into the debate in order to keep the Democratic Party from saying what it meant, he was incredibly sad. Bryan hissed and booed in a Democratic Convention! Who would have thought it possible? 41


40 Quoted in Levine, Defender of the Faith, 313.

Bryan's victory was more apparent than real. The result had actually been a stalemate in what Frank Freidel has aptly termed a clash between "rural nativism and urban rowdyism." 42

The Democracy's cultural and sectional cleavages at no time more clearly manifested themselves than in the platform battle over the Klan. A vote cast for denunciation showed deference to the immigrant, the non-Protestant, the Wet--the urban world. Conversely, a vote against specific condemnation showed deference to the rural fundamentalism and native Americanism that found its most vocal proponents in the Klan. The vote on the Pattangall amendment revealed that the Klan issue was primarily one of conflicting rural and urban values. 43

As of 1924 the South and the Northeast possessed the nation's most homogeneous populations. The two, however, were diametrically opposed to one another. The South was the most rural, Protestant, and native American of all the sections. At the other end of the spectrum stood the Northeast as the most urban, Catholic, and alien. The nation's most heterogeneous section was the Midwest. It contained rural and urban, Catholic and Protestant, and alien and native populations in varying degrees. The Pacific and Mountain states were more urban, Catholic, and alien than the Southern states,

42 Freidel, Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Ordeal, 177.

43 DNC Proceedings, 1924, 309-10.
but less so than the Northeastern states. 44

The vote on the Klan plank almost perfectly reflected these potential lines of cleavage. While some states split their vote, particularly Midwestern and Mountain states, if one considers each state's majority position only, the classic pattern emerges. Only three Southern states endorsed the anti-Klan plank. Understandably, Alabama supported the Pattangall amendment. Maryland and Delaware--unique among the Southern states because of their large Catholic and urban populations--likewise voted for the anti-Klan plank. Conversely, only one Northeastern state, New Hampshire, cast its majority vote against specific condemnation. 45

As could be expected from its diversified population, the Midwestern vote was the most hotly contested. The majority in the

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45 DNC Proceedings, 1924, 309-10.
Dakotas, Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Ohio favored condemnation by name. On the other hand, the majority in the Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri, Michigan, and Indiana delegations opposed specific denunciation. The Pacific and Mountain states formed a solid phalanx against the Pattangall amendment. While the majority in none of these states supported the anti-Klan measure, Colorado and Utah split their vote evenly. 46

Thus, the Klan question decisively arrayed the South and the West against the industrial Northeast. The Midwest, containing characteristics of both alignments, was badly divided. Clearly rural and urban concepts were in conflict. The South and West deferred to the rural values, while the Northeast upheld urban values. The Midwest, part rural and part urban, paid homage to both. Although the contest was essentially one of conflicting cultural values, the controlling facet of the rural mind was not identical in all sections. The primary issue in the West was evidently not religion, but rather the Wet-Dry conflict between city and countryside. This diversity of the rural mind became apparent when the break occurred in the presidential balloting. The Pacific and Mountain states supported Thomas Walsh, a Catholic, albeit a Dry Catholic. On the other hand, the South avoided Walsh as tenaciously as it had avoided Smith. 47

46 Ibid.

The rural-urban division apparent on the Klan vote never manifested itself so clearly during the remainder of the convention. Neither wing of the party produced a leader capable of maximizing his potential source of strength. Insofar as the major candidates were concerned, the cleavage would operate more in a negative than in a positive fashion. The rural forces would staunchly oppose the chief urban contender and the urban delegates would spurn the rural champion. The legacy of the Klan fight, therefore, was the subsequent interminable deadlock. This deadlock was the product of frustration and stalemate. William Allen White captured the delegates' feelings: "When the vote was announced with a bare victory for the Klan the hate on each side was clamorous, the dissension vocal. Neither side had won a victory that could make it magnanimous. Both felt the appetite of their unsatisfied desire for vengeance still gnawing."48

In preventing denunciation of the Klan, the rural forces had won only a nominal victory. The close vote revealed that the opposing wings of the party were in equilibrium. This equilibrium, coupled with the bitterness engendered by the contest, made any compromise between the two major candidates impossible. The convention became one of opposition, not promotion. In particular, McAdoo's opponents were strengthened in their determination that he should not be

48White, Politics: The Citizen's Business, 84.
nominated. Smith had to remain in the contest to block the aspirations of the Klan-supported candidate. Moreover, there was a pronounced feeling that regardless of who received the nomination, the bitterness of the protracted battle had precluded all possibilities of Democratic victory in November.

Oulahan reported that the Klan contest had aroused so much enmity that no candidate involved with the issue could be nominated. Accordingly, he eliminated not only Smith, McAdoo, and Underwood, but also Samuel Ralston. The Indiana delegation had voted preponderantly against specific denunciation, and an Atlanta Klan newspaper reportedly was supporting Ralston's candidacy. Oulahan sensed that the defeat of the minority's League plank had reduced both Cox's and Baker's availability. He, therefore, reasoned that Glass' and Davis' chances for the nomination had been greatly enhanced. Of the two men, Oulahan reported that Davis' position had been most greatly improved.

Sunday was a day of sullen hostility and bitterness. The close vote had satisfied no one and recriminations were bitter. The


50New York Times, June 30, 1924, pp. 2 and 3; White, Politics: The Citizen's Business, 76.

party's cleavage lay naked and exposed. Few Democrats indicated any desire to heal the breach. The one conciliatory statement came from a man looking to the future, a man who spent the decade seeking to build an effective Democratic base to bolster his own aspirations--Franklin Roosevelt. Following a conference with Brennan, Hague, Smith, and Mack, where it was decided not to demand reconsideration of the Klan vote, Roosevelt announced: "We respect the verdict and know that we can confidently rely on our Southern and Western brothers for their traditional fair play. We shall go forward with them now as before with the same sympathetic cooperation in the task of choosing a candidate who can win."52

Moore's comment on the Klan vote stood in marked contrast to Roosevelt's announcement and was more indicative of the anti-Klan attitude. Moore asserted:

The convention drew a John Doe indictment which is drawn only when the criminal is not known. But they did know the criminal and failed to name him. If this convention ever nominates a candidate of the Klan they will never get done counting votes against him east of the Mississippi and north of the Ohio and Potomac Rivers.53

The rift within the party was clearly revealed at a McAdoo rally held at the Park Avenue Hotel on the eve of the balloting.

Characteristically, McAdoo charged that the liquor interests were

attempting to control the convention. Playing upon his followers' distrust of New York City, McAdoo admonished them not to partake of the City's hospitality. He warned them not to attend the parties because these were "devices put forth to assist the evil hosts to victory." Then Rockwell alluded to the rural delegates' uniqueness and purity by saying of the New Yorkers: "These people here know nothing of the life in the cities where you and I come from. We know their influences could not control there."\(^54\)

McAdoo and Rockwell spoke to an audience ready to believe the worst about New York City. The Klan battle had reinforced rural determination to combat the corrupting influences of the city. Mrs. Alexander Thompson of Oregon, speaking at the McAdoo rally, revealed the Klan contest's impact on the rural mind:

> I sat through that convention yesterday for nearly ten hours and as I listened to that crowd in the galleries I had to pinch myself to ask, are we really in the United States of America or in Revolutionary Russia?

> I wept tears of indignation and swore under my breath when those galleries, packed with people to oppose us, hissed that noble old Roman, William Jennings Bryan. Then I went home and knelt and prayed to God to give us victory over the forces of evil. It is a clear cut battle between the strongly entrenched forces of evil on one side and everything that is spiritual in the Democratic Party on the other.\(^55\)

\(^54\) *New York Times*, June 30, 1924, p. 2.

On the eve of balloting, the Democracy stood divided into two bitterly hostile camps. It seemed impossible that the rural and urban factions could be reconciled under either Smith or McAdoo. Yet neither showed any inclination to divert his support to one of the innumerable dark horses who were awaiting the inevitable. In fact, both camps issued assurances of victory. One thing seemed clear: both McAdoo and Smith were determined that the other should not win. Neither could withdraw so long as there was a possibility of the other's being nominated; the contest over the Klan had been too bitter and the cleavage was too deep. All this portended only one thing: deadlock and eventual nomination by attrition.

As the delegates assembled on Monday, June 30, for the sixth day of the convention, there was no evidence that the animosities engendered by the Klan contest had dissipated. Walsh called the convention to order, and the long-awaited balloting began. While the first ballot offered no surprises, it both reflected the past and fore-shadowed the future. McAdoo garnered 431-1/2 votes (39.37 per cent of the total); Smith received 241 votes (21.99 per cent of the total). Seventeen favorite sons, many of whom were avowed compromise candidates, received the other 38.64 per cent of the vote. Cox led the favorite sons with fifty-nine votes; Harrison received 43-1/2 and


The vote on this first ballot correlated closely with the vote on the Klan plank. Smith's vote was drawn from states that had voted to denounce the Klan; McAdoo's from states that had opposed the amendment. McAdoo also obtained the anti-Klan votes of the Southern, Pacific, Mountain, and Midwestern states where the unit rule worked to his advantage or where the delegations were instructed for him. Thus, the rural-urban conflict that had crystallized over the Klan issue was transposed in large measure to the McAdoo-Smith contest.

At the outset, the South and the Midwest were the sections least willing to commit themselves to the McAdoo-Smith struggle. The South presented seven favorite sons: Alabama, Underwood; Arkansas, Robinson; Delaware, Saulsbury; Maryland, Ritchie; Mississippi, Harrison; Virginia, Glass; and West Virginia, John W. Davis. Louisiana, offering no favorite sons of its own, cast its vote for Harrison. McAdoo received the other Southern votes.

The Midwest was more reluctant than the South to engage in

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58 DNC Proceedings, 1924, 335-46.
59 Ibid., 309-10; 338-46.
60 Ibid., 338-46.
the McAdoo-Smith contest. Over half of the Midwestern vote was granted to favorite sons, not only of its own section, but also of other sections. The Midwest initially presented five favorite sons--Indiana, Ralston; Kansas, Jonathan Davis; Michigan, Ferris; Ohio, Cox; and Nebraska, Charles Bryan. Insofar as McAdoo and Smith were concerned, the ratio was two to one in McAdoo's favor. 61

The Pacific, Mountain, and Northeastern states were the most fully committed to the essential contest. The Pacific states cast their vote solidly for McAdoo, and he received two-thirds of the Mountain states' vote. The remaining Mountain state votes went primarily to favorite sons Sweet of Colorado and Kendrick of Wyoming. On the other hand, Smith received two-thirds of the Northeastern vote. McAdoo, largely due to his strength in Pennsylvania, captured approximately one-tenth of the Yankee vote. Silzer of New Jersey, Brown of New Hampshire, and Southern favorite sons secured the remainder of that section's vote. 62

Thus, the first ballot revealed the two westernmost sections aligned behind McAdoo in opposition to the Northeast and Smith. The South, while totally rejecting Smith, had not overwhelmingly endorsed McAdoo, The Midwest was hopelessly divided. Moreover, it was evident that the McAdoo-Smith contest could never be resolved in

61 Ibid.

62 Ibid.
either's favor while there were so many favorite sons also in contention--favorite sons who at that point collectively held the veto power.

Eight more ballots were taken during the afternoon session, but they produced few significant changes. Three favorite sons--Sweet of Colorado, Kendrick of Wyoming, and Ferris of Michigan--retired from the field. Their departure, however, did not signal a stampede to either of the major contenders. Following the ninth inconclusive ballot, Swanson moved for a recess until Monday evening. Kremer seconded the motion and it passed easily. 63

McAdoo's supporters were conspicuously active during the recess. They concentrated their efforts on the Arkansas, Indiana, Kansas and Mississippi delegations, which collectively possessed eighty-eight votes that were being cast for favorite sons. McAdoo's managers were reportedly attempting to bring them all into the McAdoo column on the tenth ballot. Observers believed that the McAdoo management would endeavor to raise his total to at least five hundred votes and perhaps a majority (550) at that time. They felt that once they attained a majority, it would induce a mass movement to their candidate. 64

When Walsh reconvened the convention Monday evening, the roll call on the tenth ballot began. While the ballot witnessed the

63 Ibid., 348-85

64 New York Times, July 1, 1924, p. 2.
most significant alteration in the vote thus far, the anticipated shift to McAdoo did not materialize. His candidacy was given a boost when Kansas abandoned its governor, Jonathan Davis, and cast its twenty votes for McAdoo. The change, although not unexpected, roused the McAdoo supporters into a prolonged demonstration. Their elation was short-lived, however, since the Smith forces surpassed McAdoo's gain on the same ballot. When the roll call reached New Jersey, that delegation, as anticipated, abandoned Silzer and cast its twenty-eight votes for Smith. The delegates labored through five more repetitious roll calls before adjourning at midnight after the fifteenth inconclusive ballot. 65

The results of that ballot revealed that McAdoo had climbed to 479 votes, an increase of only 47-1/2 votes since the first roll call. Smith had supplemented his total by 64-1/2 votes and closed the day with 305-1/2. Largely as a result of Louisiana's moving into his column, John W. Davis had moved into third place with sixty-one votes. Cox had dropped to fourth place with sixty votes and Underwood remained in fifth place with 39-1/2 votes. Neither McAdoo nor Smith had advanced at the expense of the other; rather, they had made their gains at expense of favorite sons. And, even though five favorite sons had retired from the race, fourteen candidates other than McAdoo and Smith remained and these were collectively receiving

over one-fourth of the vote.  

The long-predicted deadlock was well under way with no candidate in sight of the requisite 732 votes.

Following the session, Oulahan predicted that there would probably be an effort to test the Davis candidacy during Tuesday's balloting. At the same time, another of the frequently mentioned compromise candidates, Samuel Ralston, had been thrown on the defensive. Ralston's association with the Klan could possibly jeopardize his availability. It was no secret that if McAdoo could not be nominated, Ralston was the Klan's second choice. In fact, many Klansmen had preferred Ralston to McAdoo in the first place since they felt that the Doheny revelations had ruined McAdoo's chances of securing the nomination. Ralston or Taggart, probably the latter, decided some action must be taken to counter the Klan charge. Ralston, therefore, telegraphed a statement to Taggart who circulated it on the convention floor Monday. While Ralston denied any connection with the Klan, he asserted that he had always appreciated any voters' support. It seems doubtful that Taggart gained anything by this maneuver. It did not alter Ralston's image since he did not denounce the order nor deny that he had ever received its

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66 Ibid., 407-10.


68 Rice, The Ku Klux Klan in American Politics, 81-82.

backing.

Meanwhile, despite the day's inconclusive balloting, both major candidates exuded expressions of confidence.\textsuperscript{70} Notwithstanding the assurances pouring from the McAdoo and Smith camps, the seventh day of the convention, Tuesday, July 1, witnessed an assault on their dominant positions. Tuesday's initial ballot, the sixteenth, revealed little alteration in the impasse that had developed the previous evening. Finally on the nineteenth ballot, Mississippi, after casting complimentary votes for various Southern favorite sons, moved into the Davis column.\textsuperscript{71} Mississippi's action spurred Bryan to immediate action. He rushed to the delegation and insisted that the convention should not nominate a Wall Street man. He urged, rather, that the delegates must nominate McAdoo. There was no immediate indication as to how effective Bryan's admonitions had been. It was known, however, that the Mississippi delegates were about equally divided between McAdoo and Davis and that the delegation was being held to Davis by less than a whole vote.\textsuperscript{72} Bryan later explained to reporters that he did not object to Davis personally, but Davis' "environment and employment... would be a fatal handicap to him in the States west of Pennsylvania." Bryan felt that Davis could not carry any of the

\textsuperscript{70}New York Times, July 1, 1924, pp. 1 and 4.

\textsuperscript{71}DNC Proceedings, 1924, 411-34.

\textsuperscript{72}New York Times, July 2, 1924, pp. 1, 2, and 4.
Western states and could not win with the South alone. 73

The surge toward the West Virginian continued when, on the twentieth ballot, the volatile Missouri delegation deserted McAdoo and moved into Davis' column. 74 This action signified a victory for Champ Clark's friends who held McAdoo and Bryan responsible for the Missourian's defeat in 1912. As Clark's son, Bennett, circulated among the delegates, his chief comment was: "I don't care whom they nominate as long as they defeat McAdoo." 75 With the addition of Missouri, Davis became the first dark horse to receive more than ten percent of the convention vote. Davis reached the peak of his surge on the twenty-third ballot when the restless Wyoming delegation moved into his column, thereby raising his total to 129-1/2 votes. Following the twenty-fourth ballot, the convention recessed until eight o'clock Tuesday evening. 76

When Walsh reconvened the convention Tuesday evening, the roll calls continued. As a result of the evening's balloting, both Davis' and McAdoo's positions were weakened. The Davis boom suffered its initial setback when Wyoming, apparently intent upon voting for everyone, deserted him for Walsh on the twenty-fifth ballot.

74 DNC Proceedings, 1924, 423-40.
76 DNC Proceedings, 1924, 435-63.
McAdoo, who had been losing ground steadily, was dealt another blow, when on the twenty-sixth ballot, Oklahoma left his camp for the first time and offered her own favorite son, Robert Owen. The delegates toiled through four more futile ballots before adjourning for the evening. The thirtieth ballot, the last taken Tuesday, revealed that McAdoo had fallen to 415-1/2 votes, sixteen less than he had received on Monday's first ballot. On the other hand, Smith had acquired eighteen additional votes during the day and had risen to 323-1/2. Davis' gain had been the most spectacular, and he closed the day with 126-1/2 votes. His gain had come partially at McAdoo's expense, particularly through the Californian's loss of Missouri.\(^7^7\)

While the Davis supporters were pleased with the trend toward their candidate, they were also deeply worried. They feared that it had come too soon. Davis' upsurge had exposed him to Bryan's vindictive attack and they did not wish to further antagonize the McAdoo backers. In apologetic statements, they explained that Davis' new support had been unsolicited and that they were attempting to keep him in the background.\(^7^8\)

Taggart, on the other hand, had been more successful in suppressing any potential Ralston votes. The Indiana boss was busily building support for his candidate, to be employed when it became

\(^7^7\)Ibid., 464-91.

\(^7^8\)New York Times, July 2, 1924, p. 2.
expedient. Taggart suggested that Governor Bryan would be an ideal vice-presidential nominee on a ticket headed by Ralston. The younger Bryan was reported as not being displeased with the suggestion. The elder Bryan also exhibited no displeasure, although he would say nothing that might indicate he no longer believed McAdoo would secure the nomination. 79

While the real contestants, Davis and Ralston, were attempting to remain inconspicuous, the symbolic contenders, McAdoo and Smith, continued their battle, each to save the party from the other. The Times, however, reported that for the first time since the convention opened there was evidence in both the McAdoo and Smith headquarters of less than absolute confidence in ultimate victory. Nevertheless, statements issued from both camps still expressed the belief that their candidate would ultimately triumph. The Davis candidacy, however, had obviously made an impact. McAdoo's partisans, in particular, evidenced concern over the West Virginian's strength. While the McAdoo forces had previously been railing that the Wets were attempting to dominate the convention and force Smith's nomination, Rockwell now charged that big business was endeavoring to control the convention and nominate Davis. On the other hand, the Smith headquarters commented that Davis' gains had aided Smith's cause. Assuming that Smith's primary objective was to deter McAdoo,

this was undoubtedly true. Davis' advances had not been at Smith's expense; rather he had deprived McAdoo and the favorite sons of support. 80

Wednesday morning, July 2, Walsh called the convention to order for the third day of futile balloting. 81 The gathering he addressed was smaller than it once had been, since approximately one hundred delegates and alternates, despairing of the convention's ever reaching a decision, had departed for home. 82 Although a McAdoo resurgence would mark Wednesday's balloting, the first ballot taken that day was almost identical with Tuesday's closing ballot. Indicative of the impasse was the fact that nine favorite sons or dark horses were still intent upon withholding votes from the front-runners. In the process they were, of course, prolonging the stalemate. There were still seven Southerners in the competition: Davis, Underwood, Robinson, Glass, Ritchie, Owen, and Saulsbury. David, Underwood, Robinson, and Owen were attracting votes from outside the South. The only other favorite sons remaining in the race were the Midwesterners, Cox and Ralston. 83

The McAdoo forces were desperately attempting to obtain a

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81 DNC Proceedings, 1924, 492.


83 DNC Proceedings, 1924, 494-97.
favorable break in the rapidly solidifying deadlock. Bryan and Rockwell were conspicuously active. As the balloting progressed, Bryan conducted a tour of the delegations where he felt he might possibly secure additional support. He concentrated his efforts on the closely contested Mississippi and Oklahoma delegations. Bryan's missionary activity was rewarded on the thirty-fourth ballot when Mississippi left Davis and Oklahoma abandoned Owen in order to move into the McAdoo column. While this benefited the McAdoo cause materially, their support was only conditional. Both Mississippi and Oklahoma notified the McAdoo management that they would not remain with the Californian unless his vote was pushed high enough to make them believe he might possibly attain the requisite two-thirds majority. 84

On the thirty-fifth ballot the volatile Oklahoma delegation returned to Owen, and as the balloting continued there was little action for any side to applaud. Clearly the convention was making no progress. The accumulated frustrations of two and one-half days of ineffectual balloting were soon to be released, however, as William Jennings Bryan again prepared to address the convention. Bryan's speech during the Klan debate had helped to intensify the bitter animosities that were engulfing the convention, and he was to suffer

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When the roll call reached Florida on the thirty-eighth ballot, Bryan rose and asked unanimous consent to explain his vote. Walsh asked if there was any objection? Although there were clearly discernible cries of "objection" and "no, no, no," Walsh announced that he had heard none and signaled for Bryan to assume the platform. While attempting to deliver his first address, the galleries and delegates had abused Bryan but he would remember that as a mild reception compared with the rage and resentment that was to greet him in his second formal appearance before the convention. Although Bryan was allotted thirty minutes' speaking time, he was interrupted so often from the floor as well as from the gallery, that he probably spoke for no more than fifteen. The speech itself, hardly worthy of the "Orator of the Platte," has been accurately described as the "confused outpouring of a tired old man."

Although Bryan had asked permission to speak in order to explain his vote, he began his address by naming Democrats he

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86 *DNC Proceedings, 1924*, 527.


judged to be suitable nominees. The crowd grew vocally irritated as Bryan rambled through a list of men who had little chance of being nominated. Then as Bryan began to stress the need for nominating a truly progressive candidate, the crowd sensed what was coming. When he finally injected McAdoo's name as the ideal nominee, there was so much disorder on the floor and in the galleries that Walsh ordered the galleries cleared. The Northeastern delegations, however, would not be mollified. They placed Bryan on the defensive and kept him there.89

The hostile delegates directly questioned McAdoo's oil retainers and forced Bryan to defend him on that issue—an issue heretofore largely ignored during the convention itself. In his typical fashion Bryan defended McAdoo. Bryan was still battling the foes he had fought in 1896. He was fighting to maintain the party he had molded some thirty years before. It was the voice of rural America that cried out: "If any oil has ever touched William G. McAdoo, the intense persistent, virulent opposition of Wall Street washes all the oil away." The statement prompted cheers from McAdoo's supporters and boos and hisses from the opposition. Bryan was driving the wedge of disunity deeper and deeper. When he closed his address it was again the voice of rural American that denounced concentrations of wealth, especially those in New York City. If

89DNC Proceedings, 1924, 527-33.
Bryan had intended to alienate the urban wing of the party, he succeeded. As he left the platform, the essence of the battle raging within the Democracy was clearly revealed when Charles F. X. O'Brien of New Jersey shrieked: "The same old 'Dollar Bill,' the same old 'Dollar Bill.'" The rural past was striving to stave off the urban present. 90

Bryan's speech had no practical effect other than to confuse and irritate the delegates. There was no consensus as to why he had delivered the address. Some felt that Bryan's speech indicated that his faith in a McAdoo victory was shaken, and that he believed McAdoo could only be nominated by some desperate measure. Hence, Bryan was attempting to emulate his "Cross of Gold" speech.

There were others who believed that Bryan felt McAdoo no longer had a chance and was striving to lay the foundation for some other candidate, perhaps even himself. Regardless of his motives, Bryan had clearly lost the power to persuade and charm, particularly an audience that was largely out of sympathy with him. 91

At the conclusion of the roll call Bryan had interrupted, the convention recessed until eight o'clock Wednesday evening. During the recess, the McAdoo forces redoubled their efforts to induce a

90 Ibid., 533-37.

McAdoo surge when the convention reconvened that evening. Their purpose was twofold. They had to accumulate a large vote in order to secure and maintain the restless Missouri, Oklahoma, and Mississippi delegations, who were showing no disposition to be wedded to hopeless causes. Moreover, they hoped that if they could attain the elusive majority, enough tired delegates would then rush to the McAdoo cause to give him the requisite two-thirds majority.  

When Walsh reconvened the convention Wednesday evening the roll call commenced with the thirty-ninth ballot. The McAdoo contingent's recess endeavors showed immediate success when Missouri abandoned Davis and Oklahoma left Owen to join the McAdoo camp. On the fortieth ballot McAdoo secured additional scattered votes, enabling him to surpass the five hundred mark for the first time with 506.4 votes. McAdoo was still forty-odd votes short of a majority and more than 220 below the necessary two-thirds majority, but his backers staged a demonstration perhaps hoping to secure additional support. Notwithstanding their efforts, further support was not forthcoming. McAdoo had reached his peak for the day and could not sustain his advance. The forty-second roll call, the last of the third day's ballots, revealed that McAdoo had 503.4 votes. Smith ended the day with 318.6 votes, a net loss of 4-1/2 votes, and Davis dropped back to sixty-seven. Cox maintained fourth place with

fifty-six votes and Underwood fifth with 39-1/2. 93

As Davis' gain the previous day had been largely at McAdoo's expense, McAdoo's recovery had come at Davis' expense. In reality, McAdoo had gained very little. His total at the end of the third day's balloting was only 24.4 votes higher than it had been at the end of the first day, and his only important addition had been the very unreliable Mississippi delegation. Smith's total at the end of the third day was a mere 13.1 votes above his first-day closing total. 94

At 11:20, with very little to show for three days and forty-two ballots, the convention adjourned to meet Thursday morning, July 3. As the delegates left the hall, they expressed nothing that might indicate that the end was in sight. Sensing the hopelessness of the existing situation, McAdoo began to act more aggressively. He realized that the various favorite sons still in the competition--Davis, Cox, Underwood, Ralston, Glass, Robinson, Ritchie, and Saulsbury--impeded his further progress. Following Wednesday night's adjournment, McAdoo made a desperate attempt to break the ranks of the favorite sons in order to secure the majority he was so sure would eventually bring him the nomination. 95

McAdoo and his partisans sought in particular to gain the

93 _DNC Proceedings, 1924_, 540-59.


support of the Southerners, Robinson and Glass, and the Midwesterner, Ralston. McAdoo first conferred with Robinson when Bernard Baruch brought the Arkansan to McAdoo's suite at the Madison Square Hotel. Later, Glass' representative, Swanson, visited McAdoo. Robinson, who anticipated receiving Oklahoma's vote when the delegation tired of McAdoo, refused to withdraw. Although Swanson was noncommittal, he was not empowered to deliver the entire Virginia delegation. While the delegation was sincerely pro-Glass, there all semblance of unity ended. It could not be controlled in entirety for any other nominee. Glass, himself, was pro-McAdoo, but Byrd's anti-McAdoo faction was equally strong and would never vote for the Californian. Bryan, who was delegated to convert Taggart, was no more successful. Taggart assured him that Indiana would not withdraw its senator's name and that Ralston would eventually be nominated. 96 Thus, the deadlock seemed destined to continue. The favorite sons awaited the front-runners' demise; the front-runners' appetites for vengeance had not yet been sated.

Walsh convened the convention's thirteenth session Thursday morning, July 3. He addressed a lethargic and sullen body. The delegates were irritable and the strain was apparent. 97 The roll call


droned on in dreary repetition like a record stuck on one refrain.

The restive Oklahoma and Mississippi delegations continued to scurry from candidate to candidate in a futile effort to break the stalemate. 98

After the fiftieth ballot, Smith, reportedly realizing that his own nomination was impossible, sent for Underwood. Smith then offered to withdraw and swing his support to Underwood. The offer, however, was conditional. In order to receive Smith's support, Underwood had to procure the backing of two Southern states in addition to his native Alabama. Underwood asked for twenty-four hours in which to secure the requisite Southern support. At the end of that time he had to confess that he had been unsuccessful, and Smith remained in the race. 99

The fifty-second ballot saw Ralston surpass Davis and move into third place. Missouri, as Mississippi had done earlier in the day,

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98 DNC Proceedings, 1924, 560-94.

99 Kent, The Democratic Party, 494. Neither the New York Times, Stanley Frost, nor William Allen White offer corroboration for this report, and Kent's memory seems to have been faulty at times. Nevertheless, it is highly probable that such an offer may have been made. Once McAdoo and Smith had withdrawn, Smith did initially swing his support to Underwood, and Underwood did fail to secure any appreciable Southern backing. Moreover, Smith later revealed that he would withdraw if McAdoo would agree. Withdrawal in Underwood's favor would entail no loss of face for the cause Smith represented. It is entirely feasible, therefore, that by the fiftieth ballot Smith had already realized that he had no chance for victory and that with additional Southern support Underwood could pose a more effective threat to McAdoo than he. Herbert Eaton adopted Kent's version without question. Eaton, Presidential Timber, 304.
deserted McAdoo for the Indianian. Taggart was not pleased with the steadily increasing drift toward Ralston. In fact, it was taking place in spite of Taggart's efforts to stop it. Taggart, like the Davis supporters, did not wish to offend the McAdoo contingent, and yet, like the earlier movement to Davis, Ralston was drawing his votes from the McAdoo column. On the other hand, Davis' supporters were content to see their candidate removed from the vulnerable position of appearing to be overly anxious.

After the fifty-fourth inconclusive ballot, the convention recessed until Thursday evening. The evening session produced no significant changes. Michigan joined Missouri, Oklahoma, and Mississippi in their frantic maneuvers to alter the deadlock. Their actions, however, were to no avail. Following the sixty-first ballot, the nineteenth taken Thursday, E. H. Moore moved for adjournment with a statement that undoubtedly expressed the sentiment of the entire convention: "It is evident that we are getting nowhere with this monotonous roll-call, and that we need some little time not only for sleep but for consultation. . ." Moore was belaboring the obvious. The results of the sixty-first ballot revealed

100 *DNC Proceedings, 1924*, 586-603.


102 *DNC Proceedings, 1924*, 611-41.

that McAdoo had lost 33.9 votes during the day, to close with 469-1/2. Smith had gained 16.9 votes and finished the day with 335-1/2. Davis, Cox, and Underwood rounded out the top five. The convention adjourned at 1:00 A.M. Friday, July 4, to meet again that afternoon. 104

Not only was it evident to everyone that the Democrats were hopelessly ensnared in a deadlock, but the reason for that impasse was equally apparent. Elmer Davis perceptively quipped:

The trouble with this convention seems to be that while all the delegates are desperately determined that somebody shall not be nominated, few of them are determined that somebody shall be nominated.

And the convention has attained its collective object with unusual success. They have beaten not only somebody but everybody, and nobody has got anywhere yet. 105

David I. Walsh, a Smith supporter, attested to this negativism when he asserted: "We must continue to do all that we can to nominate Smith. If it should develop that he can not be nominated, then McAdoo can not have it either." 106 Nor was there any doubt as to why this situation had developed. Stanley Frost insisted that the key to the convention was "passion inflamed till reason is dead and consequences

104Ibid., 647-50.
are of no importance, till all intelligence is fixed on a stubborn and ruthless battle to exhaustion."107 The passions Frost alluded to were religious ones, although he thought the Wet-Dry issue was also involved. Frost blamed the Ku Klux Klan for the bitterness and division that had developed. He proclaimed that, as a result of the Klan fight, Smith and McAdoo had become symbols and that their followers remained with them only because the front-runners served as the best means of checking one another. Frost accurately predicted that once it was clear one side or the other was beaten, the opposition would disintegrate. In this remarkably perceptive diagnosis of the situation, he declared that the factions behind the favorite sons were waiting either to secure the nomination for themselves or to enter on the winning side.108 The Democrats were sacrificing their party in an effort to punish one cultural group or another and there seemed to be no one capable of extricating them from their impasse.

Unable to help themselves, and with leaders intent upon protracting the deadlock, the delegates turned to Cordell Hull. They felt that the Chairman of the national committee might find some method of ending the stalemate. Hull conferred with a number of

107Stanley Frost, "Fear and Prejudice in Deadlock," Outlook, CXXXVII (July 16, 1924), 422.

108Ibid., 422-24.
leaders and consulted the candidates' managers, attempting to find a solution to the dilemma, but his efforts were unsuccessful. Neither of the major contenders would accept the most frequently mentioned suggestions. The solution most persistently recommended stipulated that the candidates should get together in a conference and effect a break in the deadlock themselves. Another suggestion, gaining currency in the press, called for both McAdoo and Smith to withdraw.109

With the major contenders determined to continue the contest, the delegates assembled for the fifth day of balloting. Walsh convened the convention's fifteenth session Friday afternoon, July 4. While the first ballot of the day, the sixty-second, did not differ significantly from the preceding day's closing ballot, the sixty-fourth ballot produced what appeared to be the most significant break in the deadlock thus far—Ralston's withdrawal.110 When the roll call reached Indiana, Taggart requested and was granted unanimous consent to read a telegram. Taggart announced that Ralston had asked the Indiana delegation to withdraw his name in the interest of party harmony. Taggart then expressed his reluctance in having to effect the mandate. He averred that when the Indiana delegation had nominated Ralston they believed he was the Democracy's logical nominee. Moreover,

he asserted, they retained that belief. Taggart read a short telegram wherein Ralston stated: "For the sake of party harmony I forego any personal ambition I may have, and request you to withdraw my name from further consideration by the convention."\textsuperscript{111} Indiana then cast twenty votes for McAdoo and ten for Smith.\textsuperscript{112}

The break, like the preceding ones, was merely illusory. Many people suspected Taggart's motives. They felt he was worried because Ralston was showing strength too early and wanted to remove him from a potentially vulnerable position. This appraisal was confirmed when Ralston revealed that he had always shown a disinterest in the contest and had sent Taggart several telegrams requesting that his name be withdrawn. Nevertheless, Taggart had not chosen to act until Ralston began to secure additional votes.\textsuperscript{113} Ralston announced that he had sent a telegram to Taggart requesting withdrawal as early as July 1. The telegram was revealing, not only because Taggart suppressed it, but also because it clearly indicated the issue that was preventing compromise. Ralston wired to Taggart:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{111}\textit{Ibid.}, 667.
\item \textsuperscript{112}\textit{Ibid.}
\end{itemize}
I reaffirm my statement, often repeated, that I do not know and never have had any relationship with the Ku Klux Klan, but in view of the persistent charges that I have some connection with it and in view of the feeling resulting from the controversy over that organization, which feeling threatens injury to our party, I wish to make whatever contribution I can toward a peaceful solution of the conditions now confronting the convention and I therefore desire my name withdrawn from further consideration by the convention. 114

The Indiana delegation empowered Taggart to cast its vote at his discretion. His decision to expediently divide it between McAdoo and Smith at a ratio of two to one also made his withdrawal of Ralston appear less than sincere. 115

The sixty-fifth ballot witnessed the withdrawal of another favorite son—Ohio's James M. Cox. Although Ohio possessed forty-eight votes, Cox's retirement did not result in loosening the solidified deadlock. From the outset the Ohio delegation had intended to vote for Cox until McAdoo had been stopped. Once the anti-McAdoo bloc had successfully thwarted the Californian, the Ohio delegates planned to support either Glass or Davis. Evidently sensing that McAdoo had been stopped, Cox permitted the Ohio delegation to withdraw his name. The delegation, however, decided to attempt to secure the nomination of another of its favorite sons, Newton D.


Baker, before endeavoring to effect either Glass' or Davis' nomination. Thus, on the sixty-fifth ballot Ohio ceased granting its forty-eight votes to the Ohioan Cox and offered them to the Ohioan Baker. 116

Following the sixty-sixth inconclusive ballot, the Smith strategists assumed the offensive. They believed that if Smith could address the delegates in a calm atmosphere he could convince them of his superiority. According to a prearranged plan, Charles Cole of Massachusetts proposed that the galleries be cleared and that each of the candidates or their representatives be invited to address the convention. Fearing that Smith might overawe the delegates, the McAdoo partisans successfully prevented Cole's resolution from receiving the necessary two-thirds vote. Immediately following the defeat of Cole's resolution, Franklin D. Roosevelt assumed the platform and requested that the rules be suspended in order that the Governor of New York might address the convention at the opening of its next session. McAdoo, after being informed of Roosevelt's maneuver, dispatched Long to the convention hall to instruct McAdoo supporters to vote against Roosevelt's resolution. Roosevelt's motion failed to receive the requisite two-thirds vote and thereby failed of passage. The convention then recessed to meet again at

8:30 Friday evening. 117

The rebuff extended their candidate rankled the Smith
supporters. They could not understand why Bryan had been allowed
to speak and Smith denied the same privilege. Thus, the antagonisms
continued to mount. Smith's leaders expressed publicly that they
were satisfied with the outcome because McAdoo had again been
placed on the defensive. He had been made to appear fearful either
of facing the convention himself or of allowing Smith to address it. 118

McAdoo, either because he was reluctant to appear to be
afraid of Smith or because he did not want to intensify resentments,
sent a communiqué to the convention that was read immediately
following the opening of the evening session. 119 McAdoo requested
that his supporters reconsider Roosevelt's motion and permit Smith
to address the convention. The tone of McAdoo's highly presum-
ptuous communication further incensed and affronted Smith's
supporters. McAdoo's letter as addressed to Walsh and read to the
convention stated:


The Convention this afternoon voted quite properly against a proposal to invite all candidates to address it. Subsequently a resolution to invite the Governor of New York to address the Convention was rejected by a vote of the Convention. I am sure that the only purpose of the Convention in these respective actions was to expedite the proceedings in order that delegates who are suffering great expense and inconvenience because of the protracted proceedings may conclude their business and return to their homes. However, I hope that it may not be impertinent for me to suggest to my friends in the Convention that they grant unanimous consent to Governor Smith to appear before it and make an address.\textsuperscript{120}

The Smith supporters did think it impertinent. They wanted no gratuities from McAdoo. Gavin McNab of California, repeatedly interrupted by objections from Brennan and Igoe of Illinois, requested that the vote be reconsidered and that the delegates unanimously suspend the rules and allow Smith to address the convention. The hostility was multiplying. Igoe, addressing the Chair, asked if California was "running the convention." Walsh, obviously ruffled, informed Igoe that he was aware of objections to the request for unanimous consent. Igoe, who would not be silenced, had to insert one last jibe. Obviously referring to Bryan's speech, he commented to Walsh: "I am glad the Chair can understand the objection to unanimous consent."\textsuperscript{121} Once Smith's supporters had defeated McAdoo's proposal to allow Smith to speak, the roll call continued.

\textsuperscript{120}DNC Proceedings, 1924, 698.

\textsuperscript{121}Ibid., 699-700.
On the sixty-ninth ballot Oklahoma again deserted Owen to move to McAdoo, and the equally fickle Michigan delegation shuffled its vote again and cast twenty-five votes for McAdoo and five for Smith. Michigan's support, like that of Mississippi, Oklahoma, and Missouri, was granted to McAdoo only on the condition that he push his vote within reach of the nomination. Although McAdoo's hold on four of his delegations was tenuous at this point, the sixty-ninth ballot saw McAdoo rise to 530 votes, only twenty short of the majority he so desperately desired. This ballot marked McAdoo's peak vote during the convention. He could push it no higher. Oulahan commented that McAdoo's failure to achieve the majority left his position weaker than it had ever been. It was now apparent that he could never attain the elusive majority. Some of McAdoo's closest advisors were also aware of the impossibility of McAdoo's cause. Sensing that McAdoo could never win, Baruch began to counsel his withdrawal before the party was irreparably damaged. McAdoo, however, insisted upon continuing the fight.122

Thus, the sixty-ninth ballot was a critical one for McAdoo. He had made an all-out effort to secure a majority and had failed. His failure on that ballot, moreover, was to seriously damage the possibilities of one of the dark horses--Carter Glass. There was

also a touch of bitter irony in the failure. McAdoo had provided his
opponents with their chief issue—the Klan—during the course of the
spring primaries in the South. He desperately needed Southern votes
to bolster his prestige after the Doheny revelations. In order to
secure these votes, McAdoo had to challenge a Southerner, Underwood.
Ostensibly, Underwood, by denouncing the Klan, had all but given the
Southern votes to McAdoo if the Californian remained silent on the
Klan issue. McAdoo had adhered to such a position and had thereby
enabled the Northeastern opposition to coalesce around Smith. Yet,
on the crucial sixty-ninth ballot, 38.69 percent of the Southern vote
was being cast for favorite sons. At the time when McAdoo was only
twenty votes short of a majority, there were 132 Southern votes being
cast for Southern favorite sons: Davis, Underwood, Robinson, Glass,
Ritchie, Saulsbury, and Daniels. Moreover, these Southerners were
also receiving a scattering of votes from other sections.123

Had McAdoo secured Virginia's twenty-four votes, he would
have attained his majority. The pro-McAdoo Glass requested that
two complimentary ballots be cast for McAdoo at the peak of the
Californian's drive. Swanson's incompetence, coupled with Byrd's
adamant hatred of McAdoo, prevented the fulfillment of Glass' request
on the crucial sixty-ninth ballot. The Virginia delegation eventually
cast ten votes for McAdoo on the seventy-eighth and seventy-ninth

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123 DNC Proceedings, 1924, 716-20.
ballets, too late to aid the Californian. It was also too late to repair Glass' political fortunes. McAdoo had become so angered with Glass' inability to produce the necessary votes that when he later issued a list of acceptable compromise candidates, the name of Carter Glass was conspicuous by its absence. Since, as previously mentioned, the Cox forces were also considering Glass as a likely compromise candidate, this alienation of the formerly friendly McAdoo forces may have appreciably affected the convention's outcome.

After the seventieth inconclusive ballot, Edward Frensdorf, a member of the Michigan delegation, one of the few states that honestly seemed interested in effecting a nomination, rose to offer a resolution. It was a very practical and realistic proposal calling for both McAdoo and Smith to withdraw. The Democrats, however, had long since abandoned practicality and political reality and were engaged in a grim contest between opposing cultures. The delegates overwhelmingly rejected Frensdorf's resolution. The convention then adjourned at 12:19 A.M. Saturday, July 5, to meet again later in the morning.

It was apparent that the Democracy was leaderless and was

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124 Carter Glass to C. A. Swanson, July 4, 1924, Box 6, Glass Papers (University of Virginia); Smith and Beasley, Carter Glass, 261-62; Coletta, William Jennings Bryan: Political Puritan, 189-90; DNC Proceedings, 1924, 787-801.

unable to manage its own internal affairs. The delegates were aware that they were presenting an unfavorable image to the electorate, but there was no one to help remedy the situation. Neither McAdoo nor Smith, who as the leading candidates might be expected to exercise some type of constructive leadership, was attempting to ameliorate the situation. There was no conciliatory talk. McAdoo declared to a group of women supporters: "I have no selfish interest in this fight. . . . I will stay in it if it takes my last drop of fighting blood because I am fighting for a great cause. Every sinister influence in America is aligned against us and the future of the Democratic Party is at stake." The New York World also felt that the future of the Democratic Party was at stake, but its reasoning differed sharply from McAdoo's. In an editorial entitled "Shall the Democratic Party Die?" the paper asserted: "If the Democratic Party is to live it must defeat Mr. McAdoo. Nothing else can save it from division and utter destruction. On the men now engaged in stopping him the whole future of the party depends. They must stand firm. They must not waver. They are performing a duty which transcends the fate of any individual." The paper averred that Smith must remain in the contest until he forced McAdoo's withdrawal.


127 New York Times, July 5, 1924, p. 3.
Then in the interest of harmony Governor Smith should withdraw. Thus, each side was still determined to save the party from the other.

As the Democrats assembled for the sixth day of balloting, the convention moved into a new phase. The next four days were to witness futile attempts at ending the deadlock and the agony of ineffectual roll calls. The delegates, leaderless, could act effectively only in opposition. By the eleventh day of the convention there were clearly three negative forces in operation: those opposed to a Smith nomination; those opposed to a McAdoo nomination; and those opposed equally to the nomination of either. Any proposal for ending the deadlock was doomed since it would work to the disadvantage of at least one of these groups. Eventually exhaustion delivered the Democrats from their impasse.

Walsh reconvened the convention Saturday morning, July 5, and the roll call began with the seventy-first ballot. That ballot did not differ significantly from the previous day's closing ballot. Following the seventy-second ballot, E. M. Semans of Oklahoma presented a resolution which would have eliminated the favorite sons and forced the delegates to choose between McAdoo and Smith. Since the favorite sons were well aware that the eventual nominee would come from within their ranks, they joined in defeating Semans' proposal.

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on a voice vote. \(^{129}\)

After the seventy-third ballot three additional plans for alleviating the situation were presented to the delegates. Gilbert Hitchcock of Nebraska offered a resolution that was similar to Semans' proposal. Hitchcock's resolution, however, would have allowed the three top favorite sons to remain in the race with McAdoo and Smith and would have proscribed the other favorite sons for one day only. Nevertheless, Hitchcock's plan suffered the same fate as had Semans'. Motivated perhaps by desperation, A. H. Ferguson of Oklahoma then proposed adjourning the convention after the seventy-fifth ballot and reconvening in Kansas City, Missouri, on July 21. Although the delegates were tired, they were evidently unwilling to admit to the rest of the country that they could not select a standard bearer. They overwhelmingly defeated Ferguson's resolution. \(^{130}\)

Although the delegates were intent upon remaining in New York until they selected a nominee, they would not be rushed into their decision. The next resolution, offered by T. H. Ball of Texas, would have insured a nomination that day. But because it contained points repugnant to all factions, the delegates summarily dismissed it with a voice vote. If adopted, Ball's resolution would not only have eliminated the favorite sons, but also would have abrogated the unit

\(^{129}\)DNC Proceedings, 1924, 731-41.

\(^{130}\)Ibid., 745-56.
rule and authorized nomination by a majority vote. The delegates, preferring the certainty of deadlock to the uncertainty of decision, dictated that the monotonous roll calls continue. 131

On the seventy-sixth ballot Smith polled 368 votes for 33.55 per cent of the total vote. This represented Smith's peak strength. McAdoo received 513 votes, a drop of only seventeen from his high mark. The percentage of votes being cast for candidates other than McAdoo and Smith reached its low point of 19.69. The seventy-sixth ballot, therefore, marked the McAdoo-Smith struggle at its height. McAdoo received 100 per cent of the Pacific vote; 71.67 per cent of the Mountain vote; 60.57 per cent of the Southern vote; 47.75 per cent of the Midwestern vote; and 14.18 per cent of the Northeastern vote. On the other hand, Smith received 80.14 per cent of the Northeastern vote; 36.23 per cent of the Midwestern vote; 15 per cent of the Mountain vote; and .60 per cent of the Southern vote. The South, which cast 38.83 per cent of its vote for favorite sons, was the section least committed to the McAdoo-Smith struggle. Thus, much as the vote on the first ballot had forecast, the two western-most sections were aligned behind McAdoo against the Northeast and Smith. The South, not altogether accepting McAdoo, was totally rejecting

131 Ibid., 756-62.
the New Yorker. The Midwest was badly divided. 132

Following the inconclusive seventy-seventh ballot, Taggart gained recognition. What Taggart had to propose was unique even for a convention as unusual as this one. Taggart, in effect, proposed that the delegates abdicate their responsibility for selecting a nominee and place that power in the hands of a steering committee. The Taggart resolution empowered Cordell Hull and Thomas Walsh, in

132 Ibid., 771-74. The vote by states at the peak of the McAdoo-Smith contest was as follows: Pacific: Washington, Oregon, and California solidly for McAdoo. Northeast: Rhode Island and New Jersey solidly for Smith; New York, Smith (88) and McAdoo (2); Connecticut, Smith (12) and McAdoo (2); Vermont, Smith (7) and McAdoo (1); New Hampshire, Smith (3-1/2) and McAdoo (4-1/2); Massachusetts, Smith (33-1/2) and McAdoo (2-1/2); Maine, Smith (4-1/2), McAdoo (2-1/2), and Underwood (5); Pennsylvania, Smith (39-1/2), McAdoo (25-1/2), Davis (6), Underwood (3-1/2), Glass (1), Ritchie (1/2). Mountain: Utah, Nevada, Idaho and New Mexico solidly for McAdoo; Montana, McAdoo (7) and Smith (1); Wyoming, McAdoo (2) and Smith (4); Colorado, McAdoo (2-1/2), Smith (4), Davis (2-1/2), Underwood (1), Walsh (1); Arizona, McAdoo (3-1/2), Davis (1), Underwood (1-1/2). Midwest: Kansas, Iowa, and Missouri solidly for McAdoo; Minnesota, McAdoo (6), Smith (15), Baker (1), Underwood (1), Robinson (1); North Dakota, McAdoo (5) and Smith (5); South Dakota, McAdoo (9) and Walsh (1); Nebraska, McAdoo (11), Smith (3), C. W. Bryan (2); Ohio, Smith (21-1/2), Davis (7), Underwood (8), Robinson (2), Glass (3), C. W. Bryan (2), Ralston (4-1/2); Indiana, McAdoo (20) and Smith (10); Illinois, McAdoo (15), Smith (30), Davis (5), Robinson (4), Owen (4); Michigan, McAdoo (9-1/2), Smith (13-1/2), David (6), Cox (1); Wisconsin, McAdoo (2), Smith (23), Underwood (1). South: South Carolina, Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Oklahoma, and Texas solidly for McAdoo; Delaware, Saulsbury; Maryland, Ritchie; Virginia, Glass; West Virginia, McAdoo (1), Smith (1), Davis (14); North Carolina, McAdoo (16-1/2), Davis (5), Underwood (1-1/2), Glass (1); Florida, McAdoo (10), Smith (1), Davis (1); Alabama, Underwood; Arkansas, Robinson; Louisiana, Davis.
their official capacities, to call a conference of the candidates' representatives "... for the purpose of reaching an understanding so as to hasten the conclusion of this Convention."\(^{133}\)

The Taggart resolution grew out of conferences that had begun late Friday evening. Taggart, Harrison, and Edward Hoffman framed the resolution and then sought to win acceptance for it from representatives of the various candidates. They contacted Hull, Walsh, and men representing Underwood, Glass, Saulsbury, and Robinson. These men agreed that the plan should be presented to the major candidates. After learning that the minor candidates had endorsed the plan, Rockwell and Kremer, who represented McAdoo, and Roosevelt and Brennan, who represented Smith, accepted the proposal.\(^{134}\)

Since the Taggart resolution had been agreed upon beforehand, the delegates passed it unanimously. The convention then adjourned at 4:00 P.M. Saturday, July 5, to reconvene Monday morning, July 7.\(^{135}\)

The adjournment provided the committee with a day and a half to discover some method for ending the deadlock. From the outset, however, it became evident that the committee would accomplish very little. It faced the same problem that confronted the convention:

\(^{133}\)Ibid., 778.

\(^{134}\)New York Times, July 6, 1924, p. 2.

\(^{135}\)DNC Proceedings, 1924, 779.
McAdoo's refusal to admit that he was defeated. McAdoo, said William Allen White, "was holding on grimly, a dead hand upon the convention, which paralyzed its motion."\(^{136}\)

Even before the conference began, a dispute arose over its purpose. The McAdoo forces contended that the conferees were to amend the convention machinery so as to effect a nomination. On the other hand, the minority forces were seeking the elimination of both McAdoo and Smith.\(^{137}\) Entering the conference room, Kremer averred that McAdoo was sure to be nominated and would not withdraw as a result of the conference. While the Smith camp issued no official statement, it was generally understood that Smith would withdraw if McAdoo could also be prevailed upon to do so. The outlook for resolution of the deadlock was, therefore, far from sanguine. Brennan doubted that the conference would be able to achieve anything. He declared that the only solution was for all those opposed to McAdoo to

\(^{136}\)White, Politics: The Citizen's Business, 106.

\(^{137}\)New York Times, July 6, 1924, pp. 1 and 2. William Allen White referred to the group who did not desire to see either Smith or McAdoo nominated as the "senatorial cabal." He asserted that this group did not feel that either of the chief contenders could win and in losing would carry several Democrats to defeat with them. White, Politics: The Citizen's Business, 107-09. While he never named the members of this cabal, he was probably referring primarily to Taggart, Harrison, and Robinson. He could, however, have intended to include all the Senators who were either dark horses or their representatives.
agree upon a single candidate to battle the Californian.\footnote{New York Times, July 6, 1924, p. 2; Kent, The Democratic Party, 494.}

It was with little promise of success that the Democracy's leaders assembled at the Waldorf-Astoria Saturday night.\footnote{In addition to Hull and Walsh, the conference began with the following representatives of the various candidates--Smith: Norman E. Mack, J. J. Hoey, George Brennan, Franklin Roosevelt, John H. McCooey, and Thomas Lynch; McAdoo: Daniel C. Roper, Homer S. Cummings, Arthur Mullen, D. L. Rockwell, J. Bruce Kremer, William O'Connell, and Thomas Chadbourne; Underwood: Forney Johnston, J. Walter Moore, C. C. Carlin, and former Governor Pannangall; Robinson: Senator Thaddeus H. Caraway; Saulsbury: Senator Thomas F. Bayard; Houston: Lewis G. Stevenson, Francis C. Caffey, and Earl Harding; Ralston: Taggart; Jonathan Davis; Fred Robinson; Ritchie: Howard Bruce and E. Brooks Lee; Ferris: W. A. Comstock; Cox: J. H. Goeke and Charles E. Morris; C. W. Bryan: W. J. Bryan and T. S. Allen; Brown: Robert Jackson; Silzer: James Kerney and Mayor Frank Hague; Glass: former Governor Stuart, H. S. Byrd, and Senator Swanson; J. W. Davis: C. L. Shaver. New York Times, July 6, 1924, p. 2.}
The conference adjourned at 1:15 Sunday morning; it was to reconvene at four o'clock that afternoon. Although several proposals had been discussed, nothing of a concrete nature had been resolved. The McAdoo leaders had continued to emphasize that their candidate would not withdraw as a result of the conference. The anti-McAdoo contingent had centered their talk around the possible candidacies of Ralston or Robinson. Bryan and the McAdoo forces discouraged any serious consideration of Davis or Glass, but they were silent on Ralston and Robinson.\footnote{New York Times, July 6, 1924, pp. 1 and 2.} As if to underline the futility of the
conference, Rockwell declared upon emerging from its first session:

"Any assertion that Mr. McAdoo has withdrawn or intends to withdraw from the race in which he is the outstanding candidate is malevolently false. Such lies are obviously uttered for political effect. Mr. McAdoo will be nominated by this convention and elected by the people in November." The 1924 convention had now become a contest between McAdoo and the remainder of the Democratic Party, and it was McAdoo and McAdoo alone who was preventing a nomination. Even though the New York World was bitterly anti-McAdoo, there was more truth than partisanship in its assertion that: "There are several men on whom the convention can agree. Mr. McAdoo, the one man on whom it can never agree, stands in the way." 

Although McAdoo's obstructionist activities seemed to preclude any possibility of success, the conferees attempted throughout Sunday to reach some solution. Before four o'clock, representatives of all the candidates except McAdoo and Smith held a preliminary conference. The minority committee finally accepted a proposal designed by B. Howell Griswold, Jr., a friend of Governor Ritchie, and presented by Howard Bruce. This "releasing resolution" called for all candidates to free their delegates from binding pledges.

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143 Kent, The Democratic Party, 495.
When the minority candidates' resolution was presented to the full conference, Brennan immediately accepted on Smith's behalf. McAdoo's representative, Kremer, Rockwell, and Chadbourne, asserted that they must confer with McAdoo and requested a twenty-minute recess for that purpose. After returning from that meeting, Rockwell and Kremer urged that the conference adjourn until ten o'clock that evening. Hoping that McAdoo would acquiesce in the wishes of the conference, that body adjourned to await his decision.

After the conference reconvened, McAdoo's representatives offered a counter proposal. The McAdoo plan called for releasing the delegates, abrogating the unit and two-thirds rule, allowing each delegate to cast his pro rata of the votes of delegates absent from his state, and eliminating the favorite sons. The conference rejected McAdoo's proposal by a vote of fifteen to one. The representatives of all the candidates obviously opposed McAdoo.

McAdoo's failure to assent to the agreement left its effectiveness in question. Hull stipulated that the delegates of the fifteen candidates who had agreed to the "releasing resolution" were, in his opinion, released. Hull's interpretation, however, was not the


prevailing one. Although Smith was willing to agree to any compromise, he stated that he was sure that his delegates would continue to vote for him until McAdoo was eliminated. McAdoo showed no signs of weakening in his determination to remain in the race. In a speech at the Hotel Commodore Sunday evening, McAdoo declared that he would not withdraw from the race. He asserted that to do so would be to abandon the trust that a majority of the Democrats in the country had imposed upon him. McAdoo's leading supporters preceded him to the platform and bitterly attacked both the Eastern bosses and the favorite sons.\textsuperscript{147} Thus a portion of the rural South and Midwest came under the same heavy attack McAdoo had consistently leveled against the Eastern urban element. The complete support of the rural wing had never been his. Now he was making its opposition final.

As Sunday evening droned to a close, it was evident that little had been accomplished. It was clear to everyone, with the possible exception of the most ardent McAdoo supporters, that neither McAdoo nor Smith could be nominated. It was equally apparent that McAdoo was frustrating the deliberations of the convention. Smith was at least giving lip service to making a graceful exit. The delegates' realization that McAdoo's stubborn resistance was precluding a nomination would reveal itself in the morrow's balloting.

\textsuperscript{147}New York Times, July 7, 1924, pp. 1 and 2.
Walsh called the convention's eighteenth session to order Monday morning, July 7. Prior to the beginning of the roll call, Hull reported on the action of the conference committee. Hull's report ignited a significant procedural debate. McAdoo, through Kremer, sought to have the conference committee's reports referred to the McAdoo-dominated rules committee. McAdoo evidently intended for the rules committee to recommend abrogation of the two-thirds rule. Such a report from that committee would have only required a simple majority for passage. Kremer's resolution, however, required a two-thirds vote, and the delegates defeated it decisively.\textsuperscript{148}

Although McAdoo was clearly vanquished, he would persist for approximately twenty more roll calls.

The first ballot taken Monday, the seventy-eighth, revealed little significant alteration in the front-runners' positions. McAdoo received 511 votes; Smith, 363-1/2; Davis, 73-1/2; Underwood, 49; and Robinson, 22-1/2. Nine hopefuls aside from the five leaders received votes on the same ballot. The eightieth ballot, however, signaled the beginning of a mass exodus from the McAdoo standard. The first states to leave the Californian were those that had never been totally committed to his candidacy. On the eightieth ballot Missouri deserted him and moved into the Glass column. The

eighty-first ballot saw Oklahoma abandon McAdoo and revert to Owen.
On the next ballot Mississippi left McAdoo and drifted back to Ralston.
Harrison engineered the Mississippi movement and became one of the
most active proponents of the Ralston candidacy. Taggart, however,
was still intent upon suppressing this vote. McAdoo had now dropped
to 413-1/2 votes, nearly one hundred less than he had received on
the day's first ballot. 149

Following the eighty-second ballot, Albert Gilchrist of Florida
proposed that the majority resolution of the conference committee be
adopted. The resolution simply stated that all delegates were released
from any pledges. Gilchrist's motion passed easily. No doubt the
resolution's likely ineffectiveness at that point accounted for its easy
passage. It produced no immediate effect. The delegations that were
leaving McAdoo, and those that would leave him in the immediate
future, were not those bound to him by state conventions. The most
ardent McAdoo supporters would not desert his cause until he person-
ally released them from their pledges. Moreover, subsequent to the
passage of the resolution, Walsh stipulated that it did not abrogate
the unit rule, thus modifying any possible effect the resolution might
have had. 150

149 DNC Proceedings, 1924, 786-814; New York Times, July 8,
1924, p. 2.
Following a late afternoon recess, Walsh reconvened the convention Monday evening, and the roll call began with the eighty-fourth ballot. That ballot saw McAdoo fall below the four hundred mark. Indiana moved back to Ralston; Michigan began to cast ten votes for Smith and twenty for Ralston; and Nevada deserted McAdoo for Smith. McAdoo continued to fall rapidly. By the eighty-fifth ballot he had lost his command of the Nebraska delegation. The eighty-sixth ballot proved disastrous for McAdoo. Iowa deserted him and presented its own favorite son, Edwin Meredith. Although on the same ballot Nevada abandoned Smith and went over to Ritchie, Smith, for the first time since the convention began, received more votes than McAdoo. McAdoo collected 353-1/2 votes; Smith garnered 360. Both lacked the veto power, and thirteen other candidates collectively were receiving 34.90 per cent of the vote. Clearly, Smith was not gaining, but he was not suffering as McAdoo was.

The eighty-seventh and final ballot of the day witnessed a further decline in McAdoo's fortunes when Kansas abandoned his cause and returned to Governor Davis. The delinquent McAdoo delegations, now in the market for another candidate to rally towards, found none. Deprived of McAdoo, the rural forces were without leadership. After eighty-seven futile ballots with no nominee receiving so much as a third of the votes, the convention adjourned to meet

151 Ibid., 826-42.
Tuesday morning, July 8. 152

Following Monday’s balloting, it was generally conceded, except by the most ardent McAdoo die-hards, that McAdoo could not receive the nomination. For the first time since the convention began, an end was in sight. The nominee would come from among the favorite sons; which favorite son, however, was open to conjecture. As Tuesday’s session opened, McAdoo was waning; Smith was merely holding his own and waiting for McAdoo to retire; the delegates were becoming more impatient. 153

Walsh reconvened the convention Tuesday morning, July 8, and the roll call commenced with the eighty-eighth ballot. The first tally of the eighth day of balloting revealed a further decline in McAdoo’s fortunes when he slumped to 315-1/2 votes. Smith, maintaining his usual strength, garnered 362 votes. Ralston was secure in third place with 98 votes. Glass had moved into fourth place with 66-1/2 votes, and Davis had slipped to fifth with 59-1/2 votes. There were eleven candidates other than the five leaders receiving votes on this ballot. 154

The Ralston candidacy became a major threat on the ninetieth ballot when Missouri abandoned Glass, Nevada deserted Ritchie, and

152Ibid., 843-51.


154DNC Proceedings, 1924, 852-57.
Oklahoma left Owen to move into the Hoosier's camp. The activity was equally fast-paced on the ninety-first ballot when Idaho left McAdoo for the first time and began to vote for Cummings; Kansas deserted her Governor and moved into the Ralston camp. The tempo slowed on the ninety-second ballot. Ralston acquired a few scattered votes and raised his total to 196-3/4.\(^{155}\)

By the ninety-third ballot, the situation had again stabilized, and no significant changes took place. Smith was still leading with 355-1/2 votes. McAdoo received 314; Ralston's gain had come at the expense of those who had earlier gained from McAdoo defections—Glass, Ritchie, Owen, and Governor Davis. Significantly, Ralston was making his greatest appeal to those sections that had initially been the least committed to the McAdoo-Smith contest—the Midwest and the South.\(^{156}\)

The Smith and McAdoo forces required time to adjust to the rapidly changing situation. Following the ninety-third ballot Brennan moved for adjournment until nine o'clock that evening, and, to signal compliance, Kremer seconded the motion.\(^{157}\) During the recess, two conferences were held that were destined to alter the convention's outcome. In a room at the Waldorf-Astoria, Taggart made final

\(^{155}\)Ibid., 864-78.

\(^{156}\)Ibid., 880-83.

\(^{157}\)Ibid., 884-85.
arrangements for the drive he was sure would effect Ralston's nomination. Harrison, N. W. Brinkley and Frank Ferris of Missouri, Angus McLean of North Carolina, and Robert Jackson of New Hampshire were with the Indiana boss. While these gentlemen were conferring, Ralston phoned Taggart and insisted that his name be withdrawn. The Indiana Senator's doctors had informed him that it would be unwise for him to accept the nomination. Taggart's pleas that he remain in the race were ineffectual. The group of disappointed politicians then decided to back Davis' candidacy.\textsuperscript{158}

Whether Ralston would have received the nomination had he not withdrawn is a matter of conjecture. Understandably, Taggart was sure that the nomination would have gone to his candidate. He later asserted: "We would have nominated Senator Ralston if he had not withdrawn his name at the last minute. It was as near a certainty as anything in politics can be. We had the pledges of enough delegates that would shift to Ralston on a certain ballot to have nominated him."\textsuperscript{159}

Claude Bowers insisted that McAdoo had promised to release all his delegates, except California, to Ralston. Pat Harrison, likewise, was equally certain that Ralston could have achieved the nomination

\textsuperscript{158}Humphreys, "The Nomination of the Democratic Candidate in 1924," 7-9; New York Times, July 9, 1924, p. 2. While Humphreys' account of the conference is the more thorough of the two, he places it on the wrong day.

\textsuperscript{159}Quoted in Burner, "The Democratic Party in the Election of 1924," 103.
but for his withdrawal. 160

On the other hand, there were several factors operating against Ralston. His association with the Klan would have undoubtedly hurt him in certain sections. After the Ralston drive had begun on Monday, a reporter asked Roosevelt if the Smith forces would invoke their veto power against the Hoosier. Roosevelt replied in the affirmative. In addition, there was a great deal of Davis sentiment in the convention. Taggart had broken with Brennan and had not cooperated with the Eastern bosses. Thus, it is not entirely clear what the outcome would have been if Ralston had remained in the race. Nevertheless, once it was revealed that Ralston would withdraw, the names of Underwood and Davis became more prominently mentioned. Of the two, Davis appeared to have the advantage. 161

The second of the major conferences conducted during the recess took place at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in the apartment of Hugh Wallace, former Ambassador to France. Hull and Walsh were successful in bringing Smith and McAdoo together in an effort to break the convention deadlock. Smith had realized for some time that he could not secure the nomination and was certain that McAdoo's


cause was equally hopeless. In the interest of party harmony, Smith suggested that both he and McAdoo withdraw. Each man then suggested compromise choices to the other. McAdoo mentioned E. T. Meredith of Iowa, T. J. Walsh, Cummings, and possibly Ralston. Smith countered with Underwood and Glass. Each man then rejected the other's proposals. At this point the conference ended; neither of the principals definitely agreed to anything.162

When Walsh reconvened the convention Tuesday evening, June 8, the decisions reached during the recess were immediately recorded. Ralston's second and final withdrawal was registered.

Then, in an uncharacteristically blunt address, Roosevelt announced that Smith would withdraw when McAdoo consented to do likewise.

Following Roosevelt's announcement, the roll call commenced on the ninety-fourth ballot. Ralston's withdrawal precipitated chaos and a momentary resurgence of McAdoo's fortunes. Many of those delegations that had deserted McAdoo for Ralston returned to the Californian. By the ninety-fifth ballot, however, a new trend was underway. Belatedly, Missouri moved from Ralston to Davis. Michigan also contributed several votes to the Davis boom. The trend toward Davis

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162 Smith, Up To Now, 288-89; Warner, The Happy Warrior, 163; Coletta, William Jennings Bryan: Political Puritan, 189-90; New York Times, July 9, 1924, pp. 1 and 3. While there is some confusion in each of these accounts as to the precise date of the conference, there is a basic agreement as to the details of the meeting.
continued to gather momentum during the ninety-sixth ballot when Oklahoma abandoned McAdoo for Davis. 163

It was during the ninety-sixth roll call that the man who had longed for the presidency for at least a decade finally admitted that he no longer had a chance. Bernard Baruch and Thomas Chadbourne were with McAdoo when he made the decision about one o'clock Wednesday morning. McAdoo summoned Rockwell and Kremer at the conclusion of the roll call and informed them that he would not continue the fight. Three more roll calls would be taken, however, before McAdoo could actually bring himself to release his delegates. He indicated that his first choice was E. T. Meredith of Iowa and that Walsh was also acceptable. 164

It was now early Wednesday morning and the delegates were obviously tiring. There were few changes recorded on the next two ballots. Restive delegates proposed scheme after scheme to end the madness only to be shouted off the floor. On the ninety-ninth ballot, Oklahoma deserted McAdoo and moved into the Davis column. This pushed Davis over the two hundred mark with 210 votes; McAdoo received 353-1/2, and Smith garnered 353. The sectional distribution of the vote on the ninety-ninth ballot reveals that Davis, like Ralston

163DNC Proceedings, 1924, 887-914.

earlier, was deriving the greatest percentage of his vote from the sections initially least committed to the McAdoo-Smith contest—the South and the Midwest. 165

Immediately following the ninety-ninth ballot, McAdoo's statement was read to the convention. Even at this point, McAdoo could not bring himself to withdraw. He merely released his delegates. This action threw the convention into absolute chaos. The one hundredth ballot revealed McAdoo's inability to control his former supporters. Although indicating that his second choice was Edwin Meredith, McAdoo's followers were reluctant to move to the Iowan. Rather, the McAdoo defection was of a sectional character. The break in the Pacific and Mountain states was chiefly to Walsh. McAdoo's former Midwestern vote, not already committed to Davis, moved more to Meredith than to Walsh. Of the Southern votes leaving McAdoo, all went to Southerners save one Kentucky vote cast for Walsh. The Smith forces remained firm while the emancipated McAdoo supporters either scattered themselves or remained with their former chief. Smith garnered 351-1/2 votes on the ballot; Davis 203-1/2; and McAdoo 190. In addition fourteen other candidates received votes on the hundredth ballot. With the field wide open and the McAdoo delegations in an obvious state of confusion, the convention adjourned at 4:00 A.M., Wednesday, July 9, to reconvene at

165 **DNC Proceedings, 1924, 914-35.**
noon that same day.\footnote{166}  

During the interim, Smith determined to swing his support to Underwood. The New York delegation considered the alternatives: if Underwood could not be nominated, the New Yorkers would drift slowly toward supporting Davis. Their shifting suddenly was out of the question since it might alarm the McAdoo forces. At the same time, Brennan accepted Davis. Brennan decided not to attempt to swing his faction of the Illinois delegation to Davis immediately, however, fearing that it would drive the McAdoo forces back to the Californian.\footnote{167}

It was in an atmosphere of uncertainty that the delegates convened for the ninth day of balloting Wednesday, July 9. The roll call commenced with the one-hundred first ballot. While the preceding ballot had revealed McAdoo's inability to control his vote for anyone but himself, this ballot indicated greater unity and direction among the Smith supporters. The greatest portion of the former Smith strength was diverted to Underwood. Glass and Davis were also beneficiaries, but to a much smaller degree. Moreover, this first ballot of the day exhibited more forcefully than ever the Democracy's complete lack of leadership. After one hundred and one

\footnote{166}Ibid., 936-47.

ballots and eight days of attempting to choose a nominee, the vote
was widely split: Davis, 316; Underwood, 229-1/2; Meredith, 130;
Smith, 121, Walsh, 98; Glass, 59; McAdoo, 52. Eleven others
whose votes varied from twenty-three to one-half followed the seven
front-runners. 168

Exhaustion, however, finally triumphed. At the end of the
one hundred third ballot, Davis had climbed to 575-1/2 votes, still
below the requisite two-thirds majority. He was receiving 75.89
per cent of the Southern vote, 55 per cent of the Mountain vote,
52.54 per cent of the Midwestern vote, 42 per cent of the Pacific
vote; and 24.11 per cent of the Northeastern vote. Before another
roll call became necessary, several delegations changed their votes,
and Davis accumulated 844 votes and the nomination. 169

After nine days of balloting, a candidate had been chosen.

William Allen White graphically described the scene:

It was deadly quiet in the hall... A great intake
of breath ran through the crowd. They were looking
at the end of a death struggle... A sigh was
exhaled. It ran over the house, low, dreadful. The
galleries were in at the death; the death struggle
which had portended for sixteen days was over.
Smith and McAdoo--the gay, prosperous, beautiful
civilization of the East; the grim, just, thrifty

168DNC Proceedings, 1924, 943-56.
169Ibid., 958-68.
civilization of the West; industrial America against rural America, the struggle dramatized by these two men was over. 170

A multiplicity of factors had accounted for the Davis nomination. From the outset Davis had clearly been the second choice of several delegations. He had remained a bystander in the rural-urban struggle that had paralyzed the convention's deliberations. Not having been identified with either of the factions that had torn the party asunder, he was in a very enviable position. Davis, therefore, was a logical compromise candidate. Moreover, Underwood's strong showing had evidently driven several Drys into the Davis camp in desperation. Further, the Davis nomination offered an honorable solution to the Democracy's problem. Davis' name was synonymous with integrity and it was felt that perhaps Davis could in some way alleviate the disfavor into which the Democracy had fallen as a result of the carnival it had just presented. 171

The convention had witnessed a titanic struggle between the rural and urban wings of the party, primarily over the issue of the Klan. The passions engendered by this contest had resurfaced during the presidential balloting in a negative way. The urban forces had

170White, Politics: The Citizen's Business, 111.

staunchly opposed McAdoo; the rural forces, while not completely united behind any one candidate, had adamantly opposed Smith. In the final reckoning neither side had emerged victorious. The Klan issue had resulted in a stalemate, and the Davis nomination was not a victory of faction. The South and the Midwest, those sections least committed to the McAdoo-Smith contest, had provided the initial impetus for the Davis nomination. While the first defections had come from the McAdoo forces, Davis' nomination would have been impossible without the aid of former Smith supporters. H. L. Mencken perceptively quipped:

"It seems to me that the essence of comedy was here. And a moral lesson, to wit, the lesson that it is dangerous, in politics, to be too honest. The Hon. Mr. Davis won the nomination by dodging every issue that really stirred the convention. The two factions had lost everything that they had fought for. It was as if Germany and France, after warring over Alsace Lorraine for centuries, should hand it over to England."

Although some historians have professed to see a Smith victory in the Davis nomination, the Dry, Protestant, conservative, Eastern Davis was truly a compromise candidate. His nomination

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173 David Burner asserted that the Davis nomination marked a victory for the Smith forces. Yet while Burner cited Davis' eastern conservatism, he neglected to mention that he was a Dry. Had the chief divisive issue been the economic one of conservatism versus progressivism, then Burner's argument might bear more weight. The delegates, however, did not wrangle for 103 ballots over
did not signal the victory of any faction. He had kept himself above the rural-urban dispute that had wracked the party. William Allen White realized this when he wrote: "State after state gave its solid vote to Davis. The Drys were winning; the thrifty civilization of the West was winning. But the conservatism of the industrial East was also winning; a fair compromise. The crowd mind understood what it could get and took it." 174

Perhaps never was a more worthless nomination tendered to any man. The party had not only ripped itself to shreds, but also it had committed this act of suicide in full public view. The Democrats completed their folly by nominating Charles W. Bryan, the brother of Davis' most severe critic, for the vice-presidency. Davis had unsuccessfully tried to lure Thomas J. Walsh, Newton D. Baker, and Edwin T. Meredith onto the ticket. Meanwhile, the delegates had grown more restless and threatened to get out of hand if Davis did not reach a quick decision. Davis and his advisers, therefore, economic issues. Even if one assumes, as did many of McAdoo's supporters, that the Klan issue was a smoke screen to cover opposition to McAdoo's progressivism, the very fact that it was so successful demonstrates that cultural issues were more important to the delegates than economic ones. And Davis had avoided commitment on the cultural issues. Burner also referred to the anti-Davis sentiment within the McAdoo camp. There was a great deal of anti-Davis sentiment particularly among the Western progressives but Davis was quite acceptable to those rural Southern delegations who had shunned Smith. Burner, "The Democratic Party in the Election of 1924," 104-05.

174 White, Politics: The Citizen's Business, 111.
reasoned that the selection of the Nebraska governor would at least have the advantage of securing William Jennings Bryan's cooperation. Consequently, Wall Street and prairie radical were joined in one of the most incongruous of political marriages. 175

While Davis was generally recognized as an able man, the Democratic Party appeared to be hopelessly mangled. For over two weeks, the Democrats had presented the country with an unprecedented spectacle of internecine conflict. Their behavior could scarcely either inspire confidence in them or enhance their prestige. The struggle had gone much deeper than a contest between two men; the opposing cultures that they represented had battled to a draw. The contest had been bitter and protracted; equilibrium was not likely to satisfy either side. On balance, McAdoo had to bear the onus for protracting the struggle; Smith had been the more willing to compromise. However, the urban forces had shown themselves to be the more cohesive throughout the contest. Only time would determine whether the rural faction could regroup to stave off the next urban challenge. Thus Davis was sent out to his thankless task of conducting a campaign, and the opposing factions began to prepare for a

renewal of the struggle. 176

CHAPTER IX

DEMOCRATS IN DISARRAY

The Madison Square Garden debacle left the Democracy completely debilitated. As a result the Davis campaign was a charade that was foredoomed to failure. Notwithstanding the apparently irreparable breach between the party's rural and urban elements, there were party leaders who, following Davis' inevitable defeat, sought to bring order out of the chaos. Franklin Roosevelt, Thomas Walsh, and Cordell Hull led a group of moderates who hoped to harmonize the party's divergent factions. Their endeavors, however, were in vain. The time was not yet ripe for harmony. The New York City convention had inflamed passions that were still too torrid to be quenched. Yet in failing, Hull, a Southerner, Walsh, a Westerner, and Roosevelt, a country squire from Hyde Park, New York, began a political association that would ultimately triumph. For the time being, however, the cultural extremists held sway and the rural-urban contest continued unabated.

Al Smith emerged from the 1924 convention as the unquestioned leader of urban America. His followers would not be satisfied until he and the urban civilization he personified captured control of the
Democratic Party. On the other hand, the rural forces had departed from the convention badly disorganized. McAdoo had not only proved incapable of welding them together behind his candidacy but also had left the convention much weaker than he had entered it. Yet despite McAdoo's diminished prestige, the rural wing possessed no other potential candidate of presidential stature. Although George Fort Milton, Jr. attempted to rally the shattered rural forces, the absence of a leader around whom to coalesce left that faction at a distinct disadvantage. Thus the interim between the 1924 and the 1928 conventions found the rural forces adrift at the very time that urban America was mounting its most aggressive thrust to date upon rural hegemony.

The fractured Democracy belonged to Davis in name only. The two major factions whose mutual antagonism had made his nomination possible remained more intent upon fighting one another than in joining forces to contest with the Republicans for the presidency. Addressing the convention in its waning moments, Smith appeared to be opening his campaign for the nomination in 1928. He first portion of his altogether self-serving speech constituted a recitation of his accomplishments as governor of New York. Almost as an afterthought Smith applauded Davis' nomination and pledged to support the ticket. Nevertheless, the Smith element, with its eye to the future, was more vocally cooperative than the vanquished McAdoo forces.

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1 DNC Proceedings, 1924, 1012-15.
The deeply embittered William Gibbs McAdoo's public response was slow in coming. He issued a terse "no comment" the morning after the convention adjourned. Finally, amid rumors that he would bolt the ticket and support La Follette, McAdoo visited Davis on July 11. McAdoo, who considered himself the guardian of progressive Democracy, presumptuously sought to determine whether Davis was progressive enough to warrant the backing of the McAdoo followers. The next day, before departing for an extended European vacation, McAdoo grudgingly endorsed the ticket and promised to speak on its behalf when he returned in September. McAdoo indicated that "the great body of progressive Democrats that supported me so strongly in the convention has been anxious to know my attitude toward Mr. Davis' candidacy, . . . I am satisfied that he [Davis] is in full accord with the progressive program outlined in the Democratic platform." McAdoo insisted that Davis, despite his Wall Street connections, would execute the party's platform if elected. Then, following a ringing enunciation of the progressives' demands, McAdoo rather belatedly asserted: "The hope of genuine reform and progress is more likely to be realized at this time through the Democratic Party than through any of its opponents. I shall therefore give the Davis-Bryan ticket my cordial support and shall take part in the

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campaign on my return in September." 3

Privately, McAdoo revealed the same disposition to see himself as the party's real leader. In a mood of injured innocence, he commented: "It is a pity that a few corrupt bosses, backed by the liquor interests and a few others, inflamed by the false religious issue injected into the campaign, should have thwarted the will of the rank and file of the Party." McAdoo was quite prepared to continue that factional warfare that had recently shattered the party. "Until the Democratic Party rids itself of the corrupt bosses, who never contribute anything to party success and who have been millstones about the neck of the Democratic Party ever since I can remember it, we have no chance of success." 4

Although McAdoo denied that he was either personally disappointed or bitter, his personal frustration was thinly disguised. He averred: "I am disappointed for the cause and for my loyal friends. It would have been a great thing for the country if those friends, composed of men and women of the highest order of intelligence, ability and devotion to the public good, could have been enlisted in the service of the country, as they would have been if I had been


4 W. G. McAdoo to Samuel Untermeyer, July 15, 1924, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 306, McAdoo Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress). See also W. G. McAdoo to Lewis C. Humphrey, July 17, 1924, ibid.
elected President." Incredibly, McAdoo seemed disposed to seek
the nomination for yet a third time. He confided to Jouett Shouse
that "we are all young and righteousness may yet prevail." As for Davis' chances, McAdoo did not regard them very highly. He
believed that the West Virginian would be particularly vulnerable in
the strongest of the McAdoo areas, the West.

The adverse Western reaction to the Davis candidacy was
underscored on July 16, when Senator Burton K. Wheeler of Montana
bolted the Democratic ticket and announced that he would support
Senator La Follette for the presidency. Wheeler explained that:
"When the Democratic Party goes to Wall Street for its candidates
I must refuse to go with it." Wheeler's comment made it very
evident that the McAdoo following could not be delivered to Davis
in masse. Later La Follette's Progressive Party tendered Wheeler
its vice-presidential nomination and he accepted it. In so doing,
however, Wheeler did not renounce his affiliation with the Democratic
Party. He supported his colleague Thomas Walsh and other progres-
sive Democrats in their bids for Congress. It was not the Democracy,
but its nominal leader, that was anathema to the McAdoo West.  

With his party visibly disintegrating about him, Davis confronted the problem of assembling a campaign organization. This was no easy task since the nomination had come to him by default and he did not enjoy extensive political contacts. Many committee members, particularly the McAdooites, hoped that Hull would continue as chairman, but the Tennessean resisted all efforts along that line. In a series of conferences held late in July, Davis, Hull, Frank Polk, Norman Davis, and George White decided that Clem Shaver, who had directed Davis' pre-convention campaign, should be made chairman. The choice was unfortunate; Shaver was as much an amateur in national politics as was Davis. Robert Woolley caustically commented that there was nothing that could make Shaver a capable national chairman, "though he was undoubtedly the best West Virginia coal operator that ever tried to be one."  

8 MacKay, The Progressive Movement of 1924, 134; Burton K. Wheeler with Paul F. Healy, Yankee From the West (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1962) 246-51. When it appeared likely that the Doheny scandals would eliminate McAdoo, labor began to look more favorably upon La Follette's nomination. With the way thus cleared for his candidacy, the Progressive Party nominated La Follette while the apparently interminable Democratic convention was in session.  


10 Woolley unpublished autobiography, "Politics is Hell," Chapter 32, Box 44, Woolley Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress).
When the Democratic National Committee assembled at Clarksburg, West Virginia, August 11, 1924, to perfunctorily elect Shaver, there were members who seemed intent upon renewing the inconclusive struggle that had raged in Madison Square Garden. In the process they further alienated the McAdoo West and illustrated that the Democrats were still more interested in fighting among themselves than against their common Republican foe. During the course of the afternoon session, Shaver appointed a subcommittee composed of Norman Mack of New York, Vincent Miles of Arkansas, Cordell Hull of Tennessee, Homer Cummings of Connecticut, George Brennan of Illinois, Mrs. William R. Pattangall of Maine, and Mrs. Frank Mann of West Virginia. Both major factions of the party were well represented. This committee was to recommend to the full committee a slate of officers including three vice-chairmen, one of whom was to be a woman. After deliberating, the committee made the following recommendations: Emily Newell Blair of Missouri, first vice-chairman; J. Bruce Kremer of Montana, Second vice-chairman; Samuel B. Amidon of Kansas, third vice-chairman; Frank Hague of New Jersey, fourth vice-chairman; Charles A. Greathouse of Indiana, secretary; Burt New of Indiana, executive secretary; James W. Gerard of New York, treasurer; Jesse H. Hones of Texas, director of finance; and Nicholas F. Reed of Iowa, sergeant-at-arms.  

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11 *DNC Proceedings, 1924*, 1215-16.
The debate that this report engendered revealed graphically that the wounds inflicted by the Madison Square Garden convention were still open and raw. Edmund Moore of Ohio, long-time Wilson foe and leader of the anti-McAdoo forces at the New York convention, led the attack. Stipulating that the subcommittee had been empowered to select only three vice-chairmen, Moore requested that J. Bruce Kremer, McAdoo floor leader in New York, be eliminated from the slate. While Moore did not cite Kremer's affiliation with McAdoo as necessitating his dismissal, this connection was no doubt a primary consideration. Rather, Moore insisted that only three vice-chairmen were to be selected and that since Amidon was from the Midwest he should be retained. It is difficult to ascertain what could be gained other than vindictive gratification from snubbing Kremer, the committeeman from Wheeler's home state. This was the first indication that the Davis campaign would adhere to an Eastern as opposed to a Western strategy in the forthcoming contest, a strategy that had proved so unrewarding for Cox in 1921. Then Moore, perhaps realizing that he was being overly aggressive, amended his own motion to provide that the committee elect the three proposed vice-chairmen with the largest number of votes and eliminate the man with the lowest number. 12

12 Ibid., 1216-19.
Homer Cummings was quick to defend the committee report and to challenge Moore's position. Cummings, a practical politician, contended that due to conditions within the party it would be unwise to oust either of the present vice-chairmen, Amidon or Kremer, and yet at the same time it was desirable to have an additional vice-chairman from the East, Frank Hague. The former National Chairman stipulated that, although the resolution provided for the election of three vice-chairmen, it was directory only and not mandatory. It only prevented the subcommittee from selecting less than three. Cummings insisted that it was in the party's best interest to retain both Amidon and Kremer and add Hague.  

Patrick Quinn of Rhode Island then challenged Cummings. Quinn asserted that enthusiasm was more important than harmony and that the committee was not obligated to elect the same vice-chairmen year after year. The New York convention seemed to be recurring in miniature form. Scott Ferris of Oklahoma joined the fray and moved that the resolution be amended to provide for the selection of four vice-chairmen. Moore and Quinn vigorously protested and denied that they harbored any ulterior motives.  

Finally Norman Mack of New York, like Cummings a former national chairman, pierced the rhetoric and went straight to the

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13 Ibid., 1219-20.

14 Ibid., 1220-23.
central issue. He inquired pointedly: "I would like to know whether this Committee is here for the purpose of trying to make votes for the Democratic Party, or of trying to drive votes away from it." He attested to Hague's strength in the East and asserted that the New Jersey leader should be added to the committee. But "the only way that Mr. Hague could be put on, . . . , was either to get the consent of this Committee to have him added, or else leave Sam Amidon or J. Bruce Kremer off. It seems to me in the face of what we are attempting to do in the States of Montana and Kansas that it would be unwise." A thoroughly disgusted Norman Mack asked: "Can anybody suggest to us the advisability of throwing Mr. Amidon off this Committee at this time, and J. Bruce Kremer, simply on a tech­nicality? It is ridiculous!" 15

It would have been ridiculous if the Democrats had been primarily concerned with engaging the Republicans in a national contest. The Democrats, however, were more intent upon battling one another for control of their party. The debate raged on and at times was bitingly personal. The whole procedure became something of a farce when Amidon, who was present, attempted to resign in the absent Kremer's favor. Even though Walsh and Dockweiler rushed to Kremer's defense, the Montanan was brushed aside on

15Ibid., 1223-24.
procational technicalities. The party, already in difficulty in the West, had not enhanced its chances by humiliating the committeeman from Walsh's and Wheeler's home state. Although Davis insisted that Kremer's removal had not affected party harmony, his assertion had a hollow ring. It was ludicrous to link the words harmony and the Democratic Party in a single utterance. The New York convention had been an exercise in dissonance and the battle begun there would not be completed for eight years.

Given its inauspicious beginning, it was not surprising that the Davis campaign never really gathered any momentum. While such McAdoo stalwarts as Jouett Shouse, Daniel Roper, and Robert Woolley assisted in the campaign, the full support of the McAdoo wing was not forthcoming. Franklin Roosevelt, Thomas Marshall, Tom Taggart, Key Pittman, George White, and Thomas Spellacy of Connecticut worked at Davis' headquarters. James Cox attested to his party loyalty by working diligently in Davis' behalf. Smith, who faced re-election himself, did enough to ingratiate himself with the party's presidential nominee. The work of these men, however, was scarcely enough to compensate for the burden of Madison Square Garden. Moreover, lack of adequate financing plagued the campaign. As usual, Thomas Fortune Ryan and Tom Chadbourne bore the brunt

\[16\text{Ibid., 1225-50.}\]

\[17\text{New York Times, August 16, 1924, p. 1.}\]
of financing the campaign. Jesse Jones, who made his political debut in this campaign as director of finance, was less successful in extracting funds from one of the party's greatest contributors, Bernard Baruch. Baruch was piqued because all the Davis management wanted from him was money and not advice. Consequently, they acquired very little money.¹⁸

Although McAdoo had indicated that he would campaign in Davis' behalf, that pledge remained unfulfilled. McAdoo's friends in the labor movement urged him not to bow to Wall Street, and he began to recoil from his earlier commitment. He indicated that he lacked the time for campaigning and that he did not believe that he could entice labor to support the ticket. George Fort Milton, Jr. advised McAdoo to restrict his activities to the minimum necessary to preserve his party regularity. At this juncture, McAdoo suffered a rather fortunate illness that required him to rest and curtail his

¹⁸Woolley unpublished autobiography, "Politics is Hell," Chapter 32, Box 44, Woolley Papers; Jouett Shouse to W. A. Ayres, September 8, 1924, Correspondence 1911-1929, Shouse Papers (University of Kentucky); Bernard Baruch to George C. Jewett, October 10, 1924, SC. Vol. XI, Baruch Papers (Princeton University); John W. Davis to James M. Cox, October 6, 1924, Box 52, Davis Papers (Yale University); James M. Cox to John W. Davis, October 7, 1924, ibid.; James M. Cox to T. T. Ansberry, October 9, 1924, ibid.; Roper, Fifty Years of Public Life, 225-26; Bascom M. Timmons, Jesse H. Jones: The Man and the Statesman (New York: Holt, 1956), 135-38; Baruch, The Public Years, 183-84; Joseph Proskauer, A Segment of My Times (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Company, 1950), 53-54.
campaign activities. Milton, who envisioned another McAdoo attempt for the nomination, was elated at the news. Milton confided: "Incidentally, I am delighted that the course of political sagacity should run parallel with that of medical foresight." Milton advised McAdoo to release a statement that indicated his support of the Democracy but at the "... same time would not tend to cause you to lose the friendship of your still incensed friends." McAdoo was inclined to follow Milton's advice. Informing Claude Swanson in the speaker's bureau that his doctor advised against his making a strenuous speaking tour, McAdoo promised that he would exert his efforts through letters and telegrams to his friends. The essence of the statement that McAdoo was prepared to make was that the Democratic Party and platform were worthy of the peoples' support. He rarely mentioned Davis except in his role as the party's leader. Notwithstanding his overwhelming defeat in Madison Square Garden, ambition was not dying easily within

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19 H. V. Reid to W. G. McAdoo, September 29, 1924, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 308, McAdoo Papers; W. G. McAdoo to Jouett Shouse, September 30, 1924, ibid.; W. G. McAdoo to George Fort Milton, Jr., October 1, 1924, ibid.; George Fort Milton, Jr. to W. G. McAdoo, October 4, 1924, ibid.; W. G. McAdoo to John W. Davis, October 4, 1924, ibid.; H. G. Hathaway to John W. Davis, October 11, 1924, Box 52, Davis Papers; D. C. Roper to H. G. Hathaway, October 11, 1924, ibid.

20 George Fort Milton, Jr. to W. G. McAdoo, October 18, 1924, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 308, McAdoo Papers.

21 W. G. McAdoo to Claude Swanson, October 18, 1924, ibid.
William Gibbs McAdoo.

McAdoo's hesitancy to participate in the contest was symptomatic of the widespread Democratic apathy in the West. Thomas Walsh, a long-time Democratic stalwart who faced re-election in Montana, was likewise eager to dissociate himself from Davis. Davis encouraged this lack of rapport between his candidacy and the West by yielding to his advisers who advocated an Eastern campaign. He was surrounded by voices which held out the alluring prospect of capturing the normally Republican Eastern states with their large electoral votes. Not only were the Easterners Spellacy and Hague active in the Davis headquarters, but also Key Pittman, who assisted Davis in his speaking tour, was a convert to the Eastern strategy. Thus the campaign was concentrated in the New England and Northeastern states and Davis did no campaigning in the West. 22

The issue that had demolished the Democracy, the Ku Klux Klan, was of no great importance in the campaign. While La Follette, Davis, and Dawes, the Republican vice-presidential nominee, denounced the Order, Coolidge completely ignored the subject. Economic issues overshadowed cultural ones, and the prosperity of

22Wheeler, Yankee from the West, 260; Woolley unpublished autobiography, "Politics is Hell," Chapter 32, Box 44, Woolley Papers; Key Pittman to S. M. Pickett, August 26, 1924, Box 14, Pittman Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress); John W. Davis to Charles W. Bryan, October 4, 1924, Box 52, Davis Papers.
the country redounded to Coolidge's benefit. Davis and Coolidge scarcely took notice of one another and both concentrated their attack upon La Follette's alleged radicalism. Coolidge profited from the conservative instincts thus aroused. Coolidge's victory was a smashing one. Davis carried only the former confederacy and Oklahoma, and La Follette captured only one state, his native Wisconsin. La Follette had siphoned more votes from the Democrats than from the Republicans both in the Eastern urban areas and the West. 23

It is highly unlikely that any Democrat could have won in 1924 following the party's mutilation in Madison Square Garden. Moreover, the prosperity of the decade, a condition for which the Republicans could take credit, made a change in administration improbable. Nevertheless, the almost five million votes that La Follette polled indicated that there was a vast reservoir of discontent amidst the decade's prosperity. 24 One is tempted to speculate, therefore, that while no Democrat could have won in 1924, McAdoo would have proved a stronger candidate than Davis. McAdoo was popular with labor and with the Western agrarians, groups which flocked to La Follette's


standard. McAdoo to a much greater extent than Davis could have capitalized upon the economic discontent of the era. The cultural warfare within the Democracy, however, rendered McAdoo's nomination impossible.

As journalists searched for the cause of the great Democratic failure, they returned to the debilitating struggle in New York. Most newspapers, both Democratic and Republican, agreed that the bitter division engendered by the convention had shattered Davis' possibilities from the outset. Weak organization and inadequate financial support also contributed to the fiasco. Finally Davis, as a conservative, offered little to differentiate himself from Coolidge in the public view. The Portland Oregonian said of Davis: "They saw him as a conservative of the most respectable and distinguished type, but he was a conservative at the head of the wrong party; they found conservatism well represented by Coolidge."²⁵

As the Democrats surveyed the wreckage, they were not of one mind as to the causes of the disaster. There was considerable bitterness in Davis' camp over McAdoo's failure to actively support the ticket. Both Josephus Daniels and Carter Glass were of the opinion that no Democrat could have won in 1924. While Daniels cited the country's prosperity as the basis for his conclusion, Glass pointed

²⁵"What Was Wrong with the Democrats?," Literary Digest, LXXXIII (November 22, 1924), 14-15.
to the New York convention. Glass also felt that the inclusion of William Jennings Bryan's brother on the ticket had deprived the Davis candidacy of much needed funding. Key Pittman voiced a widespread sentiment when he indicated that radical Democrats had voted for La Follette while conservative Democrats had supported Coolidge. 26 There was absolutely no question in Tom Love's mind as to the reason for the Democratic failure. Insofar as Love was concerned, "...the Democratic Party paid the penalty in November for the defeat of McAdoo at New York in July. He was so preeminently the choice of the Party and the country that the prevention of his nomination depressed and dispirited too large a proportion of those who intended to vote the Democratic ticket to make success possible." 27

While McAdoo had emerged as the chief loser at the Democratic convention and Davis had suffered a similar fate in the general election, Smith scored an overwhelming personal victory. Smith was re-elected governor of New York for a third term by a margin of 115,000 votes. He accomplished this in the face of Davis' loss of

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26 Joseph P. Tumulty to J. W. Davis, November 5, 1924, Box 53, Davis Papers; Robert Lansing to J. W. Davis, November 6, 1924, Box 54, ibid.; Charles W. Gregg to J. W. Davis, November 6, 1924, ibid.; Josephus Daniels to J. W. Davis, November 5, 1924, Box 53, Davis Papers; Carter Glass to Jouett Shouse, November 12, 1924, Box 7, Glass Papers (University of Virginia); Key Pittman to Norman H. Davis, November 11, 1924, Box 12, Pittman Papers.

27 Tom Love to E. T. Meredith, December 5, 1924, Box IU-9A, Love Papers (Dallas Historical Society).
the state by 850,000 votes. The nature of this victory immediately propelled Smith to the forefront in political speculation for 1928.

Former Attorney-General A. Mitchell Palmer proclaimed to Smith that: "The nation's Democracy must now look to you as its leader."

And the Brooklyn Eagle asserted that Smith's victory "gives him first claim on the Democratic Presidential nomination four years from now."

"The New Republic viewed this speculation with horror. It felt that such talk was but an invitation for the party to "repeat its near-suicide of 1924." The journal reminded its readers that the Madison Square Garden convention had revealed that a majority of the party was implacably opposed to Smith's nomination. Furthermore, this opposition was not based solely on loyalty to McAdoo. Rather, "it was South against North; country against city; drys against wets; Puritans against liberals; and Protestants against a Roman Catholic." The New Republic warned that if Smith was to seek the nomination again, "... the Ku Klux or near-Ku Klux groups would also have its candidate--probably again Mr. McAdoo; and the factions would battle themselves to exhaustion over an issue which has nothing to do with the conduct of the federal government, until the nomination would again go by compromise to a man whose political

28Quoted in "'Al' Smith as Democracy's Leader," Literary Digest, LXXXIII (November 15, 1924), 9.
As if to bear out the *New Republic*'s forebodings, the McAdoo-Bryan wing of the party began to clamor for a reorganization that would sacrifice the East and unite the South and the West in a winning coalition. The party's rural wing saw the Eastern bosses as an impediment to the creation of a liberal party, and the agrarians were certain that only a liberal reorganization could save the Democracy. George Fort Milton, Jr. argued that economic considerations accounted for the divisions within the party and that the agricultural South and West constituted a natural alliance against the industrial Northeast. Milton would greatly publicize and elaborate the position in subsequent years. Thomas Walsh was in full accord with Milton's economic analysis. Moreover, the perceptive Montanan, who had forecast the holocaust over the Klan, foresaw the type of leader who was needed to unite the Democracy. Walsh wrote to Milton:

> It seems to me too plain for disputation that the hope of success for our party lies only in concert of action between the South and the West. However seductive it may appear, I am confident that any attempt

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29 *New Republic*, XL (November 19, 1924), 282-83.

30 W. G. McAdoo to Thomas Walsh, December 11, 1924, Box 375, Walsh Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress); D. C. Roper to Brice Clagett, November 5, 1924, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 308, McAdoo Papers; Leslie C. Garnett to W. G. McAdoo, November 6, 1924, *ibid*.; George Fort Milton, Jr. to Thomas J. Walsh, December 15, 1924, Box 375, Walsh Papers.
to secure a victory through a union of our forces, in either or both sections mentioned, with those of the highly industrial northeast, would result in the future, as it has twice in the past, only in disaster. Of course some dominating figure may arise in our ranks, having his residence in that part of the country, but harboring political views approximating those entertained in the remoter sections referred to, on whom all sections might enthusiastically unite. Mr. Wilson fortunately occupied that position, but no man like him can be scanned on the political horizon to-day, search as we may.\textsuperscript{31}

Before the decade was out Walsh found such a man in Franklin Roosevelt.

William Jennings Bryan likewise looked to the agrarians to revive the Democracy. The party's only hope for success lay

"... in a union between the producers of the South and West against the predatory corporations that dominate the politics of the North-east." Bryan asserted that the Democrats could not "... possibly get between the Republican Party and Wall Street." In the style of old, the Commoner continued: "In 1916 we won without the aid of the East, and we must win without its aid in 1928 if we win."\textsuperscript{32} The battle that had wrecked the party in Madison Square Garden seemed destined to continue.

As usual, Senator Pat Harrison had attempted to avert such

\textsuperscript{31}Thomas J. Walsh to George Fort Milton, Jr., December 23, 1924, Box 375, Walsh Papers.

\textsuperscript{32}Bryan Press Release, December 4, 1924, Box 40, Bryan Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress).
intra-party dissent. He asserted: "It is not necessary for the Democratic Party to apologize for its record, change its policies or amend the principles for which it stands. All its leaders must do is cease wrangling among themselves, compose their differences, cease the promotion of selfish ambitions and fight the common enemy." Unfortunately for Harrison and the other harmonizers, many Democrats, in their hatred for one another, had lost all sight of the "common enemy." Senator Claude Swanson also attempted to analyze the Democratic defeat in the best possible light. He added the Davis and La Follette popular votes and concluded that 235 electoral votes should be considered antagonistic to Coolidge. Swanson insisted that: "A union of the forces opposed to the existing Republican administration and wisdom on the part of the Democrats at the National Convention would easily have secured a decisive victory at the polls." Democrats could scarcely take comfort in Swanson's mental gymnastics especially when the words union and wisdom were as foreign to the Democratic vocabulary as harmony and common foe.

Notwithstanding Harrison's and Swanson's efforts, the Democrats, who had wandered disunited and leaderless since Wilson had

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abdicated control, seemed destined to continue fragmenting. There was one individual, however, who was very intent upon revitalizing the Democratic Party and providing it with leadership. That man was Franklin Roosevelt. Roosevelt had emerged from the 1924 convention with his reputation greatly enhanced. While he had exhibited complete loyalty to Al Smith, Roosevelt had also maintained cordial relations with the other factions. Yet Roosevelt's role in the campaign that followed had been inconsequential. Not only had Davis operatives assumed command of the national committee, but also Roosevelt had exercised little influence in Smith's gubernatorial campaign. In fact, he had spent the last month prior to the election in Warm Springs, Georgia. Appalled by the party's condition, Roosevelt sought to revitalize its machinery and unite its rural and urban wings. He and Louis Howe carefully formulated their strategy. By late November they had prepared a circular letter to poll all the delegates to the 1924 convention in order to ascertain the reasons for the electoral disaster. Roosevelt also hoped to discover some liberal position on which all the factions could agree. Moreover, the letter would enable him to plant his own ideas in the delegates' minds and keep him in contact with the party's leaders.  

35Freidel, Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Ordeal, 201-02; Burns, Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox, 94-95; Alfred B. Rollins, Jr., Roosevelt and Howe (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), 217-18. Roosevelt's journey to Warm Springs in October, 1924, was his first trip to what would eventually be his second home. Freidel, F.D.R. and the South, 2-3.
In his letter Roosevelt indicated that the party should think in terms of principles rather than of candidates and personalities in the three years to come. He made inquiries as to what should be done to strengthen the party. Roosevelt then suggested the answers to his own question by assuring his correspondents that all Democrats were agreed upon certain fundamentals: that the national committee and its executive machinery should function continuously and not merely every four years; that the national committee should be brought into closer contact with the state organizations; that the party's publicity organization should be more fully developed; and that party leaders should meet frequently to discuss party matters. Having formulated his own program for party reform, Roosevelt asserted that "... we are unequivocally the party of progress and liberal thought. Only by uniting can we win." 36

The response, which was overwhelming, revealed just how difficult "uniting" would be. The Democracy, always a loose coalition of diverse elements, exhibited every evidence of severance into its constituent parts. The injection of cultural issues had shattered the inherently unstable alliance. A Klansman from Texas wrote: "Frankly I see very little hope for the Democratic Party. The democrats of the east are wet, the democrats of the south and west are dry, and at

36Roosevelt to Oswald West, December 6, 1924, Group 11, Box 9, FDR Papers.
the recent New York Convention, you Democrats of the East saw fit to inject religion into the Party, and you have succeeded. "37 Another correspondent confided to Roosevelt that the party would never succeed if another convention was held in New York City. Nor could there be any success until "... the party shakes loose from, and if necessary disavows the dominating influence of the Roman Catholic Church over it. "38 This fear of Catholic domination of the party was often expressed. An Iowa delegate asserted: "... the fact remains that the Catholics have tried to organize the democratic party as an adjunct to the Catholic Church." He felt that the Democratic Party would remain divided as long as the religious question was at stake. 39 Not only the religious issue but also the liquor question threatened Democratic unity. An official in the Women's Christian Temperance Union informed Roosevelt that "... the breach in the Democratic Party will never be healed until the Eastern Democrats abandon their fight for liquor and come out whole-heartedly for the enforcement of the Eighteenth Amendment. "40

Delegates also expressed deep resentment toward Eastern

37 W. D. Wilson to Roosevelt, December 12, 1924, ibid.

38 James W. Orr to Roosevelt, December 17, 1924, Group 11, Box 8, FDR Papers.

39 Thomas W. Keenan to Roosevelt, December 18, 1924, ibid.

40 Mary Harris Armor to Roosevelt, January 5, 1925, ibid.
bosses who dictated the nomination and then failed to deliver their states for the nominee. A thoroughly disgusted Pennsylvania progressive wrote: "... I am becoming exceedingly tired, and I know of a great many other progressive Democrats who are becoming exceedingly tired of having so called 'Democratic' big city machines thwart the will of progressive Democrats at the convention and then neglect to support the party candidate at the polls. ..."\(^\text{41}\) Equally bitter, Representative Charles L. Richards of Nevada observed that "... experience shows very little sympathy for the Democratic Party in the section east of the Mississippi and north of the Ohio. They play a great part in nominating our candidates, but do little towards electing them."\(^\text{42}\)

Roosevelt had asserted that the Democracy was the party of progress and of liberal thought, and implicit in many of the condemnations of boss control was the idea that these bosses were not attuned to progressivism. Westerners were especially critical of the party for having nominated a conservative. Morrison Shafroth of Colorado denounced the East for blocking McAdoo's nomination. He inquired:

\(^{41}\) J. W. Gitt to Roosevelt, December 19, 1924, Group 11, Box 9, FDR Papers (Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park).

\(^{42}\) Charles L. Richards to Roosevelt, December 15, 1924, ibid. See also Hugh V. Wall to Roosevelt, December 11, 1924, ibid.; S. F. McConnell to Roosevelt, December 18, 1924, Group 11, Box 8, FDR Papers; Leroy Springs to Roosevelt, January 11, 1925, ibid.
"I wonder if you have ever taken occasion to observe that in the three greatest defeats the Democratic Party has ever suffered the nomination was each time made at the dictation of the New York delegation." Portentously, Shafroth closed by assuring Roosevelt that: "we have always in the West considered you more or less a Westerner because your ideas seemed more nearly to match ours than to match those of Tammany Hall. Likewise Governor Sweet of Colorado condemned the Eastern leadership for being too conservative. He indicated that the La Follette movement proved that people desired to vote for a liberal candidate. Thus there was sentiment within the party in agreement with the McAdoo-Bryan scheme to unite the South and the West behind a progressive candidate.

On the other hand, there was a large element within the party who felt that the Democracy had swung too far to the left. Perhaps the most vituperative remarks in the entire correspondence were reserved for William Jennings Bryan. Outspoken as always, Carter Glass insisted that "...if the spokesmen in Congress and out of Congress who succeeded largely in attaching the Democratic Party to

43 Morrison Shafroth to Roosevelt, Group 11, Box 8, FDR Papers.

44 William E. Sweet to Roosevelt, December 30, 1924, ibid.

45 Robert C. Bell to Roosevelt, December 12, 1924, Group 11, Box 9, FDR Papers; R. L. Davis to Roosevelt, December 30, 1924, ibid.
Lafollette-ism and Bryan-ism are to continue dominant, we had as well abandon for all time any hope of winning a national election, or of deserving to win one." J. L. Travers attributed the Democracy's downfall to Bryan's nomination in 1896 and described Bryan as a "marplot" and a "charlatan." The Democracy's conservative elements demanded that Bryanism with its socialistic overtones be extirpated from the party and that the party return to the dogma of State rights. They also proposed the creation of a coalition between the conservative East and the conservative elements in the South.

Although many of these appeals to abandon Bryanism emanated from the South, it would be fallacious to assume that conservatism was confined to that region. Herbert C. Pell, Jr., chairman of the New York State Democratic Committee, asserted: "I feel very

46 Carter Glass to Roosevelt, December 17, 1924, ibid. Glass often expressed his essential conservatism and his intense dislike for Bryan. This makes his friendship with William Gibbs McAdoo early in the decade inexplicable. Perhaps Glass' unshakable devotion to Wilson for a time caused the Virginian to support the man who seemed to be his idol's logical successor. Bernard Baruch, for whom Glass also had a great deal of respect, also may have influenced Glass in his advocacy of McAdoo.

47 J. L. Travers to Roosevelt, January 26, 1925, ibid.

ongly that if the Democratic Party is to gain anything it must first rid itself of Bryanism—of the cheap and dishonest appeal to discontent." Pell called for a return to the party of Tilden and Cleveland, to men who "... appealed not to the coward anxious for government assistance or subsidy, but to the citizen proud of his independence and confident in his own strength and character, willing to accept responsibility." While Mrs. N. Taylor Phillips, a member of Tammany, agreed that the party should be progressive, she cautioned Roosevelt that Americans would not tolerate such things as government ownership and pandering to the desires of various dissatisfied groups. She indicated that the mass of the people wanted safe and cautious progress. The party, therefore:

... should plead for what Governor Smith calls 'the humanizing influence' in Government, within of course, proper restraints, always remembering that while the people may not desire an ultra-conservative or reactionary Government as those terms go, they do demand a safe, sane and cautious Government, and are willing to sacrifice a good many forward looking things they would very much like to see put into effect for the sake of securing it.50

The Democracy was obviously badly fractured and its members seemed imbued with little sense of common purpose. While there

49 Herbert C. Pell, Jr. to Roosevelt, February 17, 1925, Group 11, Box 5, FDR Papers.

50 Mrs. N. Taylor Phillips to Roosevelt, December 24, 1924, Group 11, Box 9, FDR Papers.
were economic differences, they had been present since Bryan assumed command in 1896. As the 1924 convention had demonstrated, the cultural conflicts within the party were potentially more disruptive. Historically "the party of the people," the Democracy was now confronted with the problem of defining who "the people" were. Representative Henry T. Rainey of Illinois, who envisioned a very dark future for the Democracy, saw this problem very clearly. He remarked: "There are more members of the Klan in the Democratic Party than in the Republican Party, and there are more Catholics in the Democratic Party than in the Republican Party. Therefore the deliberate injection of this issue into National politics assumes the proportions of a political crime, ..." Looking at the Eastern bosses Rainey indicated that they were primarily interested in their local tickets. And to insure their success locally, they were compelled to be Wet, pro-Catholic, anti-Klan, and anti-immigration restriction. Rainey queried: "Can we ever win under leadership which is compelled to accentuate these propositions?" Rainey answered his own question in the negative, and asserted that the Democrats could do nothing but wait for the Republican Party's policies to have an adverse effect upon the country. As long as cultural issues remained paramount, there seemed to be little hope for either Democratic unity or victory.

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51 Henry T. Rainey to Roosevelt, December 30, 1924, ibid.
Notwithstanding the overwhelming evidence of bitter divisiveness within the party, Roosevelt was determined to pursue his program of reorganization and revitalization. He hoped to summon a national conference that would develop a permanent national organization. This body would conduct a full-time campaign waged upon national as opposed to local issues. At the same time the national headquarters was to be more fully coordinated with the state organizations. Roosevelt would learn through experience that Democrats were intent upon making their so-called "local" issues national in scope. In fact, the very term "national Democratic Party" was a misnomer. A national Democratic Party existed only in Roosevelt's dreams and ambitions.

In February, Louis Howe in collaboration with Thomas Walsh worked out the details for calling the conference. Howe believed that he had secured Davis' support for the meeting. Davis' concurrence was essential if Shaver was to be cooperative. Then on February 28, Roosevelt formally informed Shaver of the proposed conference and requested that Shaver as the chairman of the Democratic national committee summon such a gathering. Roosevelt suggested that the conference should be composed of state party leaders rather than national committee members and that it should make recommendations to the national committee. Finally, Roosevelt

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52 Rollins, _Roosevelt and Howe_, 219.
insisted that he harbored no ulterior motives and that he represented no candidate or group. The conference was not engineered to promote Smith's candidacy. Had that been its purpose Roosevelt would never have received Walsh's full cooperation. Roosevelt no doubt sincerely desired to strengthen the party, probably for his own future benefit.

The carefully orchestrated scheme continued to unfold when Roosevelt dispatched a letter to Walsh on February 28. Roosevelt referred to his circular letter and summarized the prevailing party opinion as disclosed through the responses. The points he enumerated, quite naturally, were those that he had assured the delegates they would all agree upon. Roosevelt vigorously asserted that "... my correspondents are overwhelmingly agreed that the Democracy must be unqualifiedly the Party representative of progress and liberal thought." Such a statement was an exaggeration to say the very least. Again taking the cue from his own letter, Roosevelt insisted that the Democratic rank and file demanded that the party

53 T. J. Walsh to A. V. Howard, February 2, 1925, Box 376, Walsh Papers; Louis Howe to Roosevelt, February 27, 1925, Correspondence with FDR, 1921-1928, Howe Papers (Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park); Roosevelt to Clem Shaver, February 28, 1925, Group 11, Box 6, FDR Papers.

54 Rollins implies that the conference was to benefit Smith. Rollins, Roosevelt and Howe, 218-19. The correspondence he cites, however, does not directly relate to the proposed conference. Nor is there other evidence to indicate that the admittedly pro-Smith Roosevelt was intimately associated with the Smith pre-convention maneuvering.
deal with national rather than local matters and with principles rather than personalities. He reiterated his suggestions for strengthening the party organization and indicated that many of his correspondents desired that the national chairman call a conference of representative Democrats to make recommendations to the national committee.  

Walsh was ready with his prearranged reply. He acknowledged that there was a "remarkably similarity" between the opinions Roosevelt expressed and those that Democrats around the country had mentioned to him. Walsh was in "entire harmony" with Roosevelt's idea for a conference of state representatives. Then, perhaps to prod Shaver, Walsh stated that he was sure that the chairman of the national committee would call a conference if representative Democrats requested one.  

The Roosevelt-Walsh correspondence was released to the press on March 8, and the immediate reaction seemed to portend a favorable outcome. Comments from Washington and New York appeared to indicate that Roosevelt's proposal had general backing among party leaders. Joseph T. Robinson, the Democratic leader in the Senate, heartily endorsed the plan. Significantly, however,  

55Roosevelt to T. J. Walsh, February 28, 1925, Group 11, Box 7, FDR Papers.  

56T. J. Walsh to Roosevelt, March 7, 1925, Box 376, Walsh Papers.
Shaver made no public response. Roosevelt took this opportunity to again impress upon Shaver the need to summon a meeting of representative Democrats to perfect the party's machinery. Roosevelt also felt that this conference should outline a brief statement of national principles upon which the entire party could agree. He reiterated that there would be no discussion of potential presidential candidates. Apparently Roosevelt's enthusiasm had eclipsed his judgment. It was highly questionable whether any group of Democrats representing the entire country could come together in a harmonious gathering.

Not surprisingly therefore, once enunciated, the Roosevelt-Walsh proposal began to encounter serious obstacles. While Walsh and Howe continued their manipulations in the hopes of bringing their plan to fruition, Shaver was increasingly reluctant to call the meeting. He feared that such a conference might precipitate a renewal of the confrontation that had manifested itself in Madison Square Garden. Walsh and Howe threatened to proceed without him, a plan that would have further disrupted the already shattered party. The conference encountered even more stringent opposition when William A. Oldfield, chairman of the Democratic national congressional campaign


58Roosevelt to Clem Shaver, March 10, 1925, Group 11, Box 6, FDR Papers.
committee, voiced his doubts about the Roosevelt-Walsh proposal.
Commenting that holding a conference necessitated deciding both whom to invite and whom to omit, Oldfield suggested that such a situation was fraught with danger. He doubted that a large Democratic gathering was capable of the harmony that Roosevelt predicted. 59

Oldfield had in fact read the party's pulse more accurately than Roosevelt and Walsh. Their harmony proposals were generating quite the opposite effect from that intended. The call for a conference to unify the party on national principles threatened to raise dissonance to new heights. The Nation cynically wished Roosevelt and Walsh well while commenting upon the futility of their endeavor. It was the Nation's judgment that: "... it is impossible to reconcile the elements which now go to make up the party--the progressive Westerners, the conservative anti-Catholic South, and the Catholic Irish-American voters in our Northern cities." 60 William Hard saw the "prologue to the Presidential struggle of 1928" in the animosities being engendered by the proposed conference. 61

59Louis Howe to T. J. Walsh, March 11, 1925, Box 376, Walsh Papers; Louis Howe to George White, March 11, 1925, Group 11, Box 7, FDR Papers; Roosevelt to T. J. Walsh, March 18, 1925, Box 376, Walsh Papers; William A. Oldfield to Roosevelt, March 21, 1925, Group 11, Box 5, FDR Papers.

60Nation, CXX (March 18, 1925), 279.

In the face of this steadily mounting opposition, Walsh and Howe proceeded with their plans. In order to bring pressure upon the National Chairman, they prepared a letter to be signed by prominent Democrats directing Shaver to call the meeting. Shaver, however, continued to vacillate. Moreover, while Davis wished to create the impression that he supported the conference, he was much less than enthusiastic. Many representatives and Senators who had initially greeted the Roosevelt-Walsh proposals with apathy were now stridently opposed to any conference. They felt that the party required time for the wounds inflicted in Madison Square Garden to heal. A conference held at too early a date, regardless of its stated purpose, would merely exacerbate those wounds. 62

In an effort to suppress this growing contention, Howe and Roosevelt sought to convert Oldfield to their cause and to recapture John W. Davis. Howe assured Oldfield that the party's rank and file was thoroughly in accord with the proposed conference. Howe dismissed the fear that the Democrats could not assemble peacefully as Republican propaganda, and he indicated that the Democratic leadership should not succumb to such tactics. Howe employed this same

62 T. J. Walsh to Louis Howe, April 1, 1925, Box 376, Walsh Papers; T. J. Walsh to Boetius H. Sullivan, April 3, 1925, ibid.; Louis Howe to T. J. Walsh, April 3, 1925, ibid.; T. J. Walsh to W. J. Hannah, April 6, 1925, ibid.; T. J. Walsh to Louis Howe, April 8, 1925, ibid.; New York Times, March 22, 1925, p. 20; New York Times, April 5, 1925, p. 5.
argument in a futile attempt to sway Davis and through him Shaver.

As part of a coordinated effort Roosevelt followed up Howe's pleas with a letter to Oldfield couched in similar terms—the party was divided only in the minds of Republican propagandists who were attempting to prevent concerted Democratic action. Although Howe reported that Roosevelt's letter had made a definite impression on Oldfield, Howe's political antennae were remarkably insensitive. The conference Roosevelt envisioned was never held and the picture of Democratic divisiveness as something spun out of Republican imaginations was ludicrous in the extreme.

Historians have offered varying interpretations to account for Roosevelt's failure. As might be anticipated from an advocate of responsible party government, James MacGregor Burns indicts Democratic congressmen whose strength lay in their own local areas and who did not desire to see any national policy formulated that might jeopardize local interests. Rollins indicates that there were other factors at work. Many Democrats suspected Roosevelt's motives from the outset. Moreover, party members were simply in accord on too few issues. Freidel suggests that conservatives around 

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63 Louis Howe to W. A. Oldfield, April 8, 1925, Group 11, Box 5, FDR Papers; Louis Howe to John W. Davis, April 8, 1925, Correspondence with FDR, 1921-1928, Howe Papers; Roosevelt to W. A. Oldfield, April 11, 1925, Group 11, Box 5, FDR Papers; Louis Howe to Roosevelt, April 15, 1925, Correspondence with FDR, 1921-28, Howe Papers.
Davis, who had no desire to help Roosevelt build a political reputation, blocked the conference. While Burner points to Shaver's opposition, he also implicates the Bryan-McAdoo wing of the party because of their strident demands for a Southern and Western alliance.\(^\text{64}\) Roosevelt attributed his defeat to some party leaders' fears that "... it was too soon after the factional spirit stirred up at the last Convention, and might result in a re-opening of party wounds which were being slowly but surely healed."\(^\text{65}\)

In retrospect, Roosevelt's plan was foredoomed to failure. It would have been impossible for the completely factionalized Democrats to confer amicably and agree upon fundamental principles. Antagonism and disagreement constituted the essence of the party. Furthermore, Roosevelt's plan gave every appearance of being a conference for Roosevelt's benefit; it was, therefore, not likely to possess universal appeal. The artful politician from New York had, however, established contact with a broad spectrum of the party's rank and file. Perhaps equally important, he had formed a close working relationship with a powerful symbol of Western Democracy, Thomas J. Walsh.

\(^\text{64}\)Burns, Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox, 96-97; Rollins, Roosevelt and Howe, 220-222; Freidel, Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Ordeal, 212; Burner, The Politics of Provincialism, 153.

\(^\text{65}\)Roosevelt to Charles Hammond, July 20, 1925, Group 11, Box 3, FDR Papers.
By summoning a conference that could not be held because of the divisions in the party, Roosevelt had exposed, intensified, and publicized the dissension within the Democracy. This lack of cohesion was further revealed in April, 1925, when a proposed Jefferson Day dinner in Washington had to be cancelled. Both William Jennings Bryan and Franklin Roosevelt declined to attend or address the gathering. In refusing the invitation, Bryan indicated that he had other speaking engagements. Nevertheless, he took advantage of this opportunity to acknowledge that he agreed with those Democratic senators and representatives who felt that the Roosevelt-Walsh proposal was ill-advised. Stating that he intended to remain in Warm Springs throughout April, Roosevelt reiterated his belief that "most of the so-called discord relates to local and personal matters as distinguished from national principles." He insisted upon "the laying aside of personal ambitions." Unable to secure a nationally known speaker, the organizers of the dinner called off their plans. Although they denied that a lack of harmony had prompted the cancellation, Democrats in general were pleased that there would be no opportunity for any type of friction to be exposed.  


67 New York Times, April 9, 1925, p. 1; New York Times, April 14, 1925, pp. 1 and 6. Bryan's rejection of the invitation to speak at the dinner was among his last political actions. The Commoner died late in July, 1925. Bryan's tragedy, insofar as his reputation was concerned, lay not in his death but in that he had lived
Nevertheless, by refusing to meet for fear of jeopardizing what remained of the party, the Democrats tacitly admitted that they were hopelessly divided. The cancellation of the dinner merely exposed the party to the press' ridicule. W. W. Jermane commented:

"Considered by itself alone, the failure of the Democratic leaders to hold their traditional banquet on April 13 is not important, but it is very significant when considered in the light of the admission of failure it implies, namely, that the discords created during the campaign last year are still so great as to make it dangerous for party chieftains to foregather in honor of Jefferson."

This failure, following as it did on the heels of Roosevelt's abortive conference,

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too long. The Nation commented: "The lapse of time leaves heros stranded. Bryan was stirring as a boy orator, pleading for the people against the powers of capital; he was splendid preaching democracy to an imperialist age; he was magnificent when in 1912 he made the Democratic convention nominate Wilson in spite of itself; there was something noble in his lonely gesture of serving grape juice to the foreign diplomats, taking his convictions seriously even in public office--but it is pathetic to think of the hero of such crusades spending his last years selling real estate and attempting to keep science out of the schools." "William Jennings Bryan," Nation, CXXI (August 5, 1925), 154. The New Republic sounded a similar note: "From Bryan's own point of view, it is fair to say, his career ended at its climax, in a blaze of glory; though from the point of view of many others, including the New Republic, it had long been on the downgrade. Viewing the hidebound fundamentalist, the Florida realtor of recent years, it was difficult to remember that as a young man Bryan had been the leader of a movement of political revolt on which millions pinned their faith; . . ." New Republic, XLIII (August 5, 1925), 273.

"The Dinner That Was Not," Literary Digest, LXXXV (May 2, 1925), 14.

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left the party quite vulnerable to Republican sarcasm. With tongue in cheek and obviously reveling in the Democrats' discomforture, the Springfield Union proclaimed:

It is comforting to learn, from no less an authority than Franklin D. Roosevelt, that there is no discord in the Democratic Party. How the notion got abroad that there was discord is a great mystery. Perhaps some practical joker started the rumor. Or it may have originated in the mind of some enemy of the Democracy, possibly a low, depraved Republican. . . . Anyhow, Franklin Roosevelt says it isn't true, and if he doesn't know, who does?

'As a matter of fact,' Mr. Roosevelt says, 'this so-called discord relates to local or personal matters as distinguished from national principles.' So you see, there's nothing to it. If Governor Smith and William G. McAdoo are brandishing hatchets at one another, that isn't discord, and anyhow, it is a local and personal matter and has nothing whatever to do with national principles. Why, bless your heart, it isn't at all different from the local and personal conflict between the Ku Klux Southern Democrats and the Anti-Ku Klux Northern Democrats in the Madison Square Garden convention last July.

If the wet Northern and Eastern Democrats are at odds with the dry Western and Southern Democrats on the question of Prohibition, doesn't that show on the face of it that it is local and personal? If Tammany, McAdoo, Bryan, Brennan and Taggart are each seeking to control the Democratic party, and are ready to knife one another to the handle, it is a purely personal matter and local as well.

Anybody with half an eye can see that the Democratic party was never more personal and local than it is to-day. And as for discord over national principles, well, you can search the party from head to foot and not find a single national principle anywhere. The truth is that the party is suffering from an overdose of Democratic harmony, and it has been deemed wise to omit the annual Jefferson day dinner because the leaders might get together and kiss one another to death. 69

69 Ibid., 16.
The Springfield Union had seized upon the Democracy's great dilemma; for all practical purposes it had ceased to function as a national party and had fragmented into its natural sectional components. As if to prove the Republican press correct, George Fort Milton, Jr. took this occasion to attempt to read the East out of the party. In the May, 1925, issue of Century, Milton announced:

"To-day we really have three Democratic parties bearing identical name, but antagonistic in several basic doctrines, programs, and ideals. To unify all three is apparently impossible: to join any two of them is difficult, but practicable. Failure to secure a satisfactory synthesis of two of the three spells party disaster; . . ." For Milton the answer lay in a union of the South and the West.  

Milton described the Southern Democracy as traditional, racial, and often economically conservative. The Southern Democrats were largely Protestant, Anglo-Saxon, and Dry. He pictured the Western Democracy as differing from its Southern counterpart in that it had its basis in economic issues rather than in tradition. The Western Democrats were economically progressive. Turning to the Eastern Democracy, Milton saw "religious intolerance, dense masses of newly naturalized immigrant voters, and boss-ridden cities." He censured Eastern Democrats for being ". . . directed

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70 George Fort Milton, Jr., "Can We Save the Democratic Party?" Century, CX (May, 1925), 94.
by the city bosses, who are commonly charged with being tools of the corporate interests." For Milton logic demanded combining those two regions where the party was based upon an agrarian economy, the South and the West. 71

Seeking to buttress his arguments by referring to history, Milton reminded his readers that Western influence had accounted for Bryan's candidacies and Wilson's presidencies. Then scornfully he pointed out that "the East's victorious moments have been signalized by the mortification of Judge Parker, the repudiation of Governor Cox, and the crashing disaster of Mr. Davis." 72 Milton suggested that the two-thirds rule be abolished. Such action would deprive the bosses of their veto and enable the South and the West to nominate a progressive candidate capable of achieving victory. 73

So the self-defeating internal power struggle continued. Wilson's party had begun to fragment while he still occupied the presidency. The centrifugal forces at work during his administration had steadily intensified and showed no evidence of abating. There seemed to be no leader on the horizon capable of welding the party into a strong cohesive organization. Neither McAdoo nor Smith, the party's two outstanding personalities, could possibly hope to assume

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71 Ibid., 95-96.
72 Ibid., 96.
73 Ibid., 100.
leadership of a truly national party. Davis, whose very nomination symbolized Democratic failure, was a leader in name only. Although Roosevelt was willing to lead, not many cared to follow. Cordell Hull, a man whose plans and ambitions were much less grandiose than Roosevelt's made the next attempt at infusing vigor into the moribund organization.

Clem Shaver not only had done nothing to strengthen the party but also he had permitted the national headquarters to become dormant. He apparently hoped that the factional differences within the party would miraculously disappear. This complete inactivity was particularly disturbing to Shaver's predecessor as national chairman, Cordell Hull. Hull advised Shaver that at the very least some publicity work should be undertaken. As month after month passed and Shaver did nothing to shore up the deteriorating party apparatus, Hull became increasingly restive.74 His concern over Shaver's inadequacies as a chairman and over the health of the party eventually brought Hull into collaboration with Roosevelt and Walsh, a working relationship that held significant portents for the future.

Since the National Chairman refused to take any initiative,

individual Democrats felt compelled to attempt to provide concerted action for their party. Early in February, 1926, Hull, Roosevelt, and the party's congressional leaders attended a special dinner at Walsh's Washington residence. They desired to achieve party solidarity in Congress on fundamental issues prior to the 1926 congressional elections. By such action they hoped to rid the country of the idea that the Democratic Party possessed no definite program. Roosevelt, the party's chief booster, upon emerging from the conference buoyantly announced: 'It seems almost inevitable that there will follow a meeting of the National Democratic Committee in the spring for the definite purpose of planning an active campaign of education throughout the country on party policies and the reasons therefore. This is the first step in the Congressional campaign.'

Notwithstanding Roosevelt's optimism, the Democratic press was not of one mind on the probable effectiveness of Walsh's dinner. Some columnists saw the dinner as a positive step toward bringing unity to the Democratic ranks, at least insofar as action in the House and Senate was concerned. The Brooklyn Eagle commented that


76 "Wanted: A Democratic Program," Literary Digest, LXXXVIII (February 27, 1926), 10.
"out of the gathering at Senator Walsh's home comes a hope that the Senate Democrats and the House Democrats will begin to work in harmony. The Walsh move is a step forward." On the other hand, the Boston Globe asserted that the future of the Democratic Party "seems to depend upon three conditions: The elimination of the rival cliques that disrupted the Madison Square Garden convention; the formation of real issues that will reveal to the voters a different set of principles from those represented by the Republican party; and emergence of effective leadership." Viewing the Democratic situation most realistically, the Louisville Herald-Post counseled: "The truth is, the plight of the Democratic party remains almost exactly as it was the day John W. Davis was nominated for President. In the Democratic party today there are two strong men--McAdoo and Smith. They fought each other to death in New York in 1924; they are strong enough to do the same thing in 1928. Unite these two men and their followings, and there is a Democratic party; keep them divided, and the Republicans will win without exerting themselves. That is the whole story, and no Democratic conference can alter it."77

Confer as they might, the harmonizers could not infuse unity into a party that gave every appearance of being irreparably shattered. Walsh was forced to admit that much more importance had been

77Ibid., 11.
attached to the conference than it warranted. Nevertheless, Cordell Hull took up the cudgels in an effort to find some way to unify the Democratic party. Throughout the winter of 1926 and the spring of 1927, Hull attempted to draft a statement of principles that would bring unity out of diversity. He feared that the failure to formulate such a program would result in bitter factional fighting both before and during the 1928 convention. Norman H. Davis, a Tennessean transplanted to New York who had held numerous positions in the Wilson administration, served as the original sounding board for Hull's proposals. Baruch and Owen Young were also part of the movement in its early stages.

Upon Norman Davis' suggestion, the platform drafters invited Roosevelt to participate in their deliberations. Throughout the early months of 1927, Hull, in collaboration with Norman Davis, Baruch, Young, and Roosevelt, sought to work out a program to avert

78 T. J. Walsh to B. W. Wagner, February 10, 1926, Box 376, Walsh Papers.

79 Cordell Hull to Norman H. Davis, December 30, 1926, Series I, Container 14, Hull Papers; Norman H. Davis to Cordell Hull, January 3, 1927, Series I, Container 15, Hull Papers; Cordell Hull to Norman H. Davis, January 5, 1927, ibid.; Norman H. Davis to Cordell Hull, January 8, 1927, ibid.
the threatened party disruption in 1928. 80 When completed, Hull's manifesto was little more than a lengthy appeal for morality in government. In an attempt to discover a ringing declaration upon which all Democrats could agree, Hull inadvertently disclosed that there were very few specific programs that found Democrats in accord. Hull denounced corruption in government, called for the adoption of a constructive foreign policy, demanded that something be done for agriculture, branded the Republicans as the party of entrenched interests, and pointed with pride to the achievements of the Wilson administration. Finally, he appealed to his party to adhere to the true Jeffersonian faith. 81

Hull and Roosevelt addressed a luncheon of leading Democratic senators and representatives in an effort to prevail upon them to endorse the manifesto and use it as the basis for the 1928 campaign. Their efforts, however, were of no avail. While senators such as Pittman, Robinson, and Harrison approved of the subject matter—it was so vague that it would have been difficult for anyone to disapprove—they were largely indifferent. Others felt that the

80 Cordell Hull to Norman Davis, January 10, 1927, ibid.; Cordell Hull to Norman H. Davis, January 24, 1927, ibid.; Cordell Hull to Norman H. Davis, January 25, 1927, ibid.; Cordell Hull to O. K. Holladay, February 2, 1927, ibid.; Louis Howe to Cordell Hull, March 2, 1927, Series I, Container 16, Hull Papers; Cordell Hull to Roosevelt, March 9, 1927, ibid.

81 Cordell Hull to Roosevelt, March 9, 1927, Group 11, Box 3, FDR Papers.
platform would be beneficial only if it were discussed in a series of local meetings. And since these meetings were likely to be either pro-McAdoo or pro-Smith, Dry or Wet, their result would doubtless be dissonance rather than harmony. Congressional leaders such as Senator Bruce decried the manifesto because it did not deal with the prohibition question, the overwhelming issue in Bruce's mind. Prohibition with its attendant cultural overtones was of course the very type of issue that Hull feared and hoped to avoid. Thus Hull's efforts at unity foundered on the same rock of dissension as had Roosevelt's and Walsh's. Given the Democracy's diverse cultural composition, it was impossible to unite the party as long as cultural issues remained paramount. The Madison Square Garden battle was still raging, and Hull, Roosevelt, and Walsh would have to bide their time.

The specter of the rural-urban confrontation staged in New York was destined to haunt the Democracy like Banquo's ghost. Not only did that confrontation appear likely to repeat itself in 1928, but also at the outset it seemed that McAdoo and Smith would again be the chief contenders. Their potential strength relative to one another, however, had definitely changed. Whereas McAdoo had

82 Cordell Hull to T. J. Walsh, March 23, 1927, Series I, Container 16, Hull Papers; T. J. Walsh to Ewing Cockrell, March 3, 1927, Box 376, Walsh Papers; T. J. Walsh to Hollins N. Randolph, March 8, 1927, ibid.; T. J. Walsh to Cordell Hull, March 22, 1927, ibid.
emerged from the 1920 convention as the most promising aspirant for 1924, Smith enjoyed that position following the 1924 convention. Not even the McAdoo inner circle remained intact. Bernard Baruch, McAdoo's chief financial backer, vowed never again to take part in Democratic pre-convention politics. Although he retained his friendship with McAdoo, Baruch was no longer available as a source of either money or influence. While Baruch adopted a stance of neutrality, Thomas Chadbourne, another large McAdoo contributor, deserted to the Smith camp vowing that it was time to settle the prohibition question. With some of his moderate supporters abandoning him, McAdoo, if he chose to seek the presidency again, would find himself relying more and more heavily upon the rural cultural purists such as George Fort Milton, Jr. Nevertheless, in his trips to the East in the spring of 1925, McAdoo gave every appearance of being a man who still desired the nomination.

The year 1925, however, was to belong to Smith and not to McAdoo. Although Smith as yet had no active campaign organization, there were numerous people ready to begin work in his behalf. Despite his lack of organization, Smith dominated the headlines, and

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83 Baruch, Baruch: The Public Years, 184, 203-04; Roper, Fifty Years of Public Life, 230.

84 New Republic, XLIII (June 17, 1925), 98.

85 Roosevelt to Stephen F. Chadwick, July 29, 1925, Group 11, Box 2, FDR Papers.
with his increasing prominence came increasing fears that the 1924 nightmare would be repeated. In the fall of 1925, James J. Walker decisively defeated Mayor Hylan for the Democratic mayoralty nomination in New York City. Smith, in the face of Hearst's opposition, had vigorously supported Walker. The victory, therefore, accrued to Smith's benefit and enhanced his already considerable prestige. Commenting upon Smith's triumph, Senator William E. Borah announced: "We now have the Democratic candidate for President in 1928." 86 Not all Democrats looked with equanimity upon Smith's growing eminence. The Norfolk Virginian-Pilot believed that Smith's ambitions "unless sidetracked into a Senatorship, must lead him into the Presidential arena—with inevitable disaster to Democratic harmony as long as the party retains its present acute sensitiveness to creeds and klans." 87

On the heels of this New York triumph, Smith embarked upon a highly publicized visit to Chicago. The New York Times pictured Smith's trip to the Midwest as an attempt to provide him with exposure outside the environs of New York. Smith's journey was carefully staged. His aides were quick to point out that Smith had been invited to visit Chicago and that the invitation had been

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86 "Smith's Triumph over Hylan and Hearst," Literary Digest, LXXXVI (September 26, 1925), 8.

87 Ibid., 9.
unsolicited. With his eye to the future, George Brennan invited delegations from other Midwestern states to hear Smith speak. The Chicago boss and his entourage then went to New York to escort Smith to Chicago. When Smith arrived to speak, he addressed an overwhelmingly large crowd. Despite the elaborate staging, however, Smith failed to generate as much enthusiasm as had been anticipated. He did not mention national issues, not even prohibition. Rather, he confined his remarks to his efforts to bring harmony, order, and efficiency into the New York State government. 88

Smith's Chicago address was one of the earliest indications of his provincialism, of his inability to see beyond the borders of New York, of his failure to realize that seeking the presidency differed from running for governor of New York. Even more ominous from the standpoint of Smith's aspirations was a sermon delivered at the Chelsea Methodist Episcopal Church in New York City. The Reverend Doctor Christian F. Reisner strongly disapproved of Smith's conduct. Reisner proclaimed: "Governor Alfred Smith did not dignify his candidacy for President to the church-loving Protestants of the West by traveling to Chicago for a Sunday political picnic which turned a worship day into a noisy demonstration and political

conference. It may go with the 'East Side-West Side,' but not with Sunday-loving Americans. It does not show the moral evolution we expect from one who aspires to be Chief Executive of the greatest nation in the world."89 The cultural chasm that this sermon revealed would grow ever wider.

Nevertheless, the Smith movement appeared to be irresistible. Smith continued to compile victory after victory. Early in November, his candidate, Walker, was elected mayor of New York City. At the same time the electorate passed several amendments that the Governor had sponsored against heavy Republican opposition. One of these amendments provided for the reorganization of the state administration and concentrated greater power in the governor's hands. The passage of this particular measure seemed to portend that Smith, despite his protestations, would be a candidate for a fourth term as governor in 1926. It could be argued that it was Smith's duty to complete his reorganization efforts and not take the chance of allowing reorganization and concentration of power to fall into Republican hands. And a fourth term as governor would be more advantageous in a race for the presidency than election to the United States Senate.90

Although Smith was the acknowledged master of New York


state, what type of reception would his candidacy receive in the bastion of the Democratic Party--the South? One of the most remarkable political trips of the 1928 pre-convention period provided a preliminary sounding of Southern opinion in the fall of 1925. During the course of a Southern vacation, Mayor-elect Walker was scheduled to speak at a dinner in his honor in Atlanta. Political pundits viewed Walker's invasion of Atlanta as an obvious effort to "sell Tammany to the South." The New York Times judged Walker to be an excellent emissary to persuade the South that Tammany was no longer to be feared. The paper pictured the Mayor-elect as "suave, polished, extremely likable, . . . as far away from the type Democrats in other sections of the United States have been apt to associate with Tammany Hall as anyone possibly could be."91

Notwithstanding Walker's outstanding personal attributes, the New York Times admitted that his task would not be an easy one. The 1924 convention had confirmed many Southerners' hatred for and dread of Tammany. Moreover, the paper indicated that Puritanism had ". . . found its last refuge in the South." And the Times continued "Tammany is not exactly Puritan." Furthermore, there was the South's anti-Catholicism to contend with. Yet the paper did recognize a factor that might induce the South to reconcile herself with Tammany--that was the Southern craving for political power.

The *Times* averred:

...Whatever else the South likes or hates, it does love political power. Its most austere prejudices might be expected to give way before the prospect of getting hold of the offices. For eight years under President Wilson it had at least its share of official appointments, and enjoyed a political prestige such as it had not had since the Civil War. To that proud and happy estate it would undoubtedly be pleased to return; and if Tammany can show it a sure short-cut back, it is probable that the South would not long permit Puritanic scruples, or outward devotion to prohibition, to stand in the way of restored peace and plenty at Washington.  

In making this analysis, the New York *Times*, as the Smith coterie later would do, revealed that it completely misjudged the temper of the South. Cultural antagonisms ran deeper in the South than the Northeasterners imagined.

Addressing prominent Georgia Democrats, Walker made only a brief reference to Smith's achievements and then eulogized Tammany Hall. He described the society as a remarkably effective lay charitable organization. Pleading for cooperation between Tammany Hall and the Democrats of other sections, Walker insisted that the New York organization wanted to contribute to the national Democracy. The Mayor-elect denied that he was an advance agent for the Smith candidacy, avowing that Smith needed no one to speak for him. Rather, Walker asserted: "My mission is to have you understand

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92 *New York Times*, November 9, 1925, p. 18.
Tammany Hall as we understand you." 93 While it is doubtful that it was within the province of any one man to bring about such understanding, Walker himself made a very favorable impression upon the South. 94

The Atlanta Constitution took advantage of Walker's visit to admonish the South to adhere to an Eastern as opposed to a Western strategy. The paper advised:

While Mayor-elect Walker did not come south to say it, the Constitution's repeated contention that the democratic party cannot win in the next national election without the vote of New York is emphasized by his presence.

The sooner that fact is realized, and the sooner the democratic party quits flirting with the wild radicalism of the far west in the hope of converting hide-bound republicans who cannot and who will not be pulled away from their affiliation, the better it will be for its welfare.

So, apropos of the visit of New York's mayor-elect, we venture the suggestion that the democratic party can do no better than to keep its eye on New York next time. 95

Yet notwithstanding the Constitution's ringing declaration and Walker's own personal magnetism, Walker had apparently failed to sell either Tammany Hall or Smith to the South. In stark contrast to


94 New York Times, November 12, 1925, pp. 1 and 2; Atlanta Constitution, November 11, 1925, pp. 1 and 7; "'Selling' Tammany to the South," Literary Digest, LXXXVII (November 21, 1925), 8.

95 Atlanta Constitution, November 11, 1925, p. 6.
the New York *Times'* earlier assertion that the South would trade her principles for political power, the Tampa *Tribune* announced: "He [Smith] will not have the support of a Southern State in the next convention. We do not know the road the Democratic party of the South will take between now and 1928. But it will not be the road that leads to Tammany Hall. Southern Democrats are not given to such complete and sudden changes. They are not willing to sell their convictions for the electoral vote of New York." Nor had Walker's efforts impressed the Birmingham *Age-Herald*. It emphatically asserted: "Al Smith. . . can not be acceptable to the South because of his affiliations with Tammany, because at the last convention he was willing to destroy the party for the sake of his own ambition, because he is a wet, and because of his religion."96

In referring to Smith's Tammany connection, his wetness, and his religion, the *Age-Herald* had enunciated the classic rural objections to Smith. It was not Smith's policies but the urban culture he represented that was so repugnant to the rural mind. Contemporary analysts realized that the cultural leadership of the party was at stake and they viewed the Democracy's future with foreboding. Recognizing that a new Democracy, composed largely of the foreign born, had grown up in the cities, the *New Republic* warned that this new Democracy would meet ". . . with an embittered and prolonged

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96""Selling' Tammany to the South," 8-9.
resistance from its small-town indigenous enemies which will split the common people into two hostile groups." Although the Klan was recruited from this small-town class, the New Republic cautioned its readers against merely dismissing the class as intolerant. The journal indicated that 'they are the victims of circumstances, and they possess certain moral qualities which their opponents lack. They have little left to live upon except cherished traditions. They fear for the future of their own culture.' Nor was this fear unjustified. The New Republic averred: 'They have reason to be afraid. The new Democracy of which Al Smith is the present political leader does foreshadow an America curiously and radically different from their America.' Since this new Democracy was on the offensive and determined to nominate Al Smith, the New Republic forecast '... one of the bitterest contests which have ever occurred in American national politics.'

The fact that the Democratic Party stood at the brink of disaster seemed indisputable. Gazing out at the shambles that was the Democratic Party, Arthur Krock announced: 'Prohibition began the ruin of the Democratic party. First, it is wholly opposed to all the founding principles. Second, the chief dissenters from it are found in the cities, where the nominal Democratic party has its only

strongholds outside the South. "98 Since the 1920 convention prohibition had threatened to pit the party's rural and urban wings against one another and as Al Smith came to the fore he brought that explosive cultural issue with him.

Unlike the Republicans, the Democrats could not avoid the prohibition issue. The coexistence of Tammany and the South in the same party rendered any such avoidance impossible. Krock raised the query: ". . . how can a party endure half dry and half wet, half fanatical and half materialistic, half rural and half urban, undedicated to a single principle save congressional opposition, beset with ill fortune and selfish, personal leadership?" 99 Krock believed that the Democracy's salvation lay in a return to Jeffersonian principles, principles which he saw the South and West as having abandoned for prohibition. Krock indicated that in their opposition to prohibition and the Klan the Northeasterners had revealed themselves as the true disciples of Jefferson. Like the New Republic, Krock foresaw a bitter cultural battle taking shape. He concluded:

If Al Smith lives and maintains his supremacy as a party leader, the issues he, more than any other, personifies, must be met, or the Democratic party will have no fighting vitality in a national contest. . . . Smith arises from the class which for many years,


99 Ibid., 133.
and without shining reward, has fought the party battles in the East and North and has done the odd jobs of society. It would be less than human if this class did not demand the banner when it has raised up a leader strong enough to deal with statecraft, yet familiar by the common lot with the aspirations of the lowly.  

While observers looked upon the impending struggle with dread, George Fort Milton, Jr. seemed to welcome it. While McAdoo continued to assess his position, vowing only that he would do what was right for his country and the party, Milton again assumed the offensive. In the May Century, Milton demanded that the two-thirds rule be abolished. Weary of compromise candidates, he wanted the Democracy to determine whether it was to be the party of the progressives or of the bosses. His pen dripping with venom, Milton described the party as being divided into three parts. First he singled out: "The Tammany group, dripping wet, little concerned with the problems of national government, ignorant of agriculture if not unfriendly to it, and thoroughly dominated by shibboleths and

\[\text{\textsuperscript{100}}\text{Ibid., 135. Krock's emphasis on the state rights side of the Jeffersonian dogma did not go uncontested. George Fort Milton, Jr. interpreted Jeffersonianism in an altogether different light. The Tennessean preferred the Jeffersonian insistence upon equality. Thus, he would use the government to insure that the benefits of society were allocated to the many and not to the few. Moreover, he would use that government to enforce prohibition. George Fort Milton, Jr., "Democracy--Whither Bound?," Virginia Quarterly Review, II (January, 1926), 28-30.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{101}}\text{W. G. McAdoo to Bernard Baruch, March 3, 1926, SC. Vol. XVI, Baruch Papers.}\]
bosses." Next he distinguished the "...progressive Democrats of the South and West." This segment of the party not only favored taxation, tariff reduction, agricultural problems, and problems of transportation, power, and fuel control. With thinly disguised scorn Milton indicated that a "...third and much smaller grouping desires compromise, conciliation--cancellation is necessary--between the opposing wishes of the two major divisions of the party." Milton noted, however, that since 1924 the compromisers had been forced to realize that the party was inevitably headed toward a confrontation between Tammany and the progressives. 102

Far from destroying the Democracy, Milton viewed the imminent conflict as a means of strengthening the party. "For if the conflict be avoided and averted, it will only result in the continuance of the present course of nullity... The continuance of the one-third rule in future conventions means the continuance of nomination by cancellation. It means political sterility, canditorial impotence." With the fervor of a political purist, Milton demanded that the Democrats decide who was to control their destiny:

...If the majority of the delegates to a national convention should prefer the domination of Tammany Hall, by all means make the rules such that the sachems of Fourteenth Street can sit in the seat of Woodrow Wilson. If on the other hand the majority of delegates to the next national convention do not

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cherish the idea of Brennans and Hagues and Olvanys as party masters, but prefer a liberal leadership in the public interest, the progressives are clearly entitled to the right to direct the course of democracy. Which-ever of the two groups shall have a majority it does not deserve to be thwarted by the one-third rule.\textsuperscript{103}

Events were to prove that Milton was not willing to follow a majority that preferred Tammany control, and indeed he indicated that, if the party wished to voluntarily submit to boss domination, the progressives within it could seek more congenial associates elsewhere. Milton's chief hope, however, was to make the Democratic Party the liberal party by effecting an alliance between its progressive elements and the progressive Republicans of the West. He did not think that this latter coalition was possible until the Democratic party rid itself of the Eastern bosses. Turning his attention to possible candidates, Milton admitted the power of the Smith candidacy, but the Tennessean proclaimed that no Tammany Wet could hope to carry the solid South. Insofar as Milton was concerned, McAdoo remained the outstanding progressive candidate, but McAdoo had not indicated that he would seek the nomination again. According to Milton there were other progressive possibilities. These included Senator Thomas Walsh of Montana, Edwin T. Meredith of Iowa, Governor Victor Donahey of Ohio, and Homer S. Cummings

\textsuperscript{103}Ibid., 85.
of Connecticut. 104

Milton had inadvertently revealed the rural wing's greatest area of vulnerability in any contest with the urban element. Aside from the battered McAdoo, there was simply no outstanding figure to pit against Smith. This leadership vacuum undoubtedly accounted for Milton's increasing pressure upon McAdoo in the coming months to again take up the challenge. For the time being, the rural forces concentrated upon grooming Edwin Meredith as the McAdoo successor in the West. In surveying the Western states, Raymond R. Angell discovered considerable Meredith sentiment. On the other hand, Smith labored under the same handicaps in the West that plagued him in the South: his Tammany connection, his wetness, and his religion. 105

Smith's opponents, however, could take little comfort in pointing to the New Yorker's liabilities insofar as rural America was concerned. While the rural forces were floundering in a morass of apathy, Smith continued to dominate the political stage throughout the summer of 1926. During the course of a Western tour in June, Judge Olvany, the Tammany leader, reportedly uncovered a great deal of Smith sentiment. Smith again captured the headlines when he

104Ibid., 86-91.

was the most prominent layman who attended the Eucharist Congress at Chicago. This publicity, however, was a mixed blessing since it further emphasized his religion. Visiting with President Coolidge in July, Smith precipitated speculation as to whether it would be "'Cal' against 'Al'" in 1928. Early in August, Senator Caraway had announced that Smith's Catholicism would make it difficult for him to be elected. Caraway's remarks stimulated more publicity and controversy. There could be no doubt that Smith, judging by the amount of editorial comment and concern his name generated, was the leading Democratic contender. 106

Nevertheless a gnawing doubt about the Smith candidacy began to find expression. This uncertainty rose above the usual concern about Smith's Tammany connection, his wetness, and his religion, yet it was not unrelated to these factors. Although Smith was unquestionably attuned to the New York political environment, was he too provincial? Could he see beyond the boundaries of New York? While William Allen White admitted that Smith had compiled a splendid record, the Kansan indicated that the New Yorker had dealt only with local issues, that is, urban issues. White explained:

Al Smith is of national size mentally and spiritually, but he does not comprehend his nation or think in national terms. He is a borough leader now, and no amount of advertising, no amount of propaganda in his behalf, will

106 "Smith Against the Field," Literary Digest, XC (August 28, 1926), 5-7.
expand him into a national figure until he finds some stage whereon he may dramatize himself in terms of the national statement of his cause, which means that he must study national politics, know the truth about national issues, and by his stand upon these issues win a national following. He has only a local, indeed a most provincial, following now. 107

The World's Work voiced a similar concern over Smith's appeal as a national candidate. Commenting on Smith's proven ability as an executive, the World's Work, nevertheless, indicated that:

"On national issues Governor Smith has made no pronouncements, except on prohibition. He has not yet appealed to the country by discussing other national questions. His opinions on foreign affairs, farmers' relief, the Federal Reserve System, and the tariff are not generally known." The journal indicated that "some time soon in his candidacy for the Presidential nomination Governor Smith ought to give the public his views on national issues." 108 If Bryan's vision had been limited to the prairies, was Smith's confined to the sidewalks of New York? This question would find its ultimate resolution in the 1928 national campaign.

If Smith was not to be the nominee in 1928, it was growing increasingly obvious that the party's rural wing must soon coalesce behind some champion. Tom Love had no doubts as to whom that

107 Ibid., 6.

108 "A First Term for Governor Smith?", World's Work, LII (September, 1926), 488, 90.
leader should be. He was certain that McAdoo was the only man capable of defeating Smith. McAdoo had staged something of a political revival in the fall when he had led the opposition to and defeated the Dockweiler or Wet element in the California primaries. Since McAdoo was not willing to commit himself, Milton busily attempted to stimulate a demand for the Californian's nomination. In mid-September, Milton declared that McAdoo would be a candidate for the Democratic Presidential nomination in 1928. Yet Milton equivocated. While he declared that McAdoo was the progressive wing's most outstanding candidate, the progressives could also support Walsh, Meredith, or Cummings. Later in the fall as the rural position continued to deteriorate, Meredith announced that McAdoo was the choice of the South and the West. Yet McAdoo, emulating Wilson prior to the 1920 convention, remained silent.

Smith's re-election as governor of New York in the fall of 1926 made his nomination appear even more likely, and as the year ended a repetition of the 1924 debacle loomed on the horizon. Yet

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111 Baruch, Baruch: The Public Years, 206; "Smith and McAdoo Sharpening Their Battle-Axes," Literary Digest, XCI (December 4, 1926), 8-9.
oddly, both the projected antagonists, McAdoo and Smith, had maintained relative silence. Smith had emerged from the 1924 convention with his reputation enhanced and his two gubernatorial victories since that time had merely added to his momentum. The most outspoken of the rural advocates had not been McAdoo, who was licking his wounds, but George Fort Milton, Jr. As the year closed, Milton was still carrying the battle to the enemy country. Labeling Smith the "Nation's leading nullificationist," Milton declared that the New Yorker could not possibly win the presidency. The Dry, anti-Tammany South and West simply would not tolerate him.  

In the two years following the Madison Square debacle, the party had done little to recover from that disaster and sat almost in a stupor expecting history to repeat itself. The harmonizers had failed because the animosities were so bitter as to preclude any

112George Fort Milton, Jr., "Why 'Al' Smith?" Outlook, CXLIV (December 15, 1926), 496-98. Milton's repeated threats that the South would bolt the Democratic Party if Smith was nominated did not go uncontested. Former Arkansas governor George Washington Hays indicated that Smith's Catholicism would not cause a breach with the South. Hays' statements were not illustrative of tolerance; rather they exemplified the relativity of intolerance. Why would the South not bolt the party? For Hays the answer was simple: "The white man must maintain his political ascendancy in the South to protect his own social and racial interests. Is it conceivable, then, that a Southern Democrat would vote against these interests in favor of a party that tried at the point of a bayonet to force through the opposite?" George Washington Hays, "The Solid South and Al Smith in 1928," Forum, LXXVI (November, 1926), 698. Smith and his lieutenants, of course, relied on this mental attitude to hold the South in line.
meetings of the Democrats. Smith's popularity had grown without
his having openly to seek the nomination and enunciate a program.
The rural faction of the party was completely demoralized and
leaderless. Its most outspoken advocate, George Fort Milton, Jr.
had spent two years attempting to complete the devastation wrought
at Madison Square Garden. By the end of 1926 it was clear that
Smith would win the nomination by default if the rural forces did not
soon coalesce around a champion. But the best known of the ruralites,
McAdoo, refused to either place himself in or out of the race. This
paralysis of decision on his part was reflected in a corresponding
lack of will on the part of the party's rural wing. Could it stop Smith
in any case, and was it worthwhile to chance destroying the party by
withstanding the nomination from him? As the year 1927 opened, these
questions one by one would be resolved.
CHAPTER X

RURAL DISINTEGRATION

During the eighteen months preceding the 1928 Democratic national convention Smith's lead mushroomed to virtually insurmountable proportions. The alluring possibility of capturing the always elusive Northeastern electoral votes attracted some Democrats to Smith's standard. Perhaps fear propelled more Democrats to acknowledge Smith's claims to leadership. To deny Smith the nomination might irretrievably alienate those urban voters whose aspirations he singularly embodied. There were other disquieting considerations associated with Smith's candidacy. Would anyone believe that Smith had been denied the honor for any reason other than his Catholicism? Could the party survive another bloodletting like Madison Square Garden? Many rural moderates reasoned that Smith should receive the nomination and that his subsequent defeat would forever rid the party of his divisive presence. These moderates were not prepared to indefinitely repeat the horror of Madison Square Garden.

Smith's march toward the nomination, however, did not go completely uncontested. Early in 1927, McAdoo attempted to rally the rural forces to the prohibition standard. Smith's probable
nomination had relegated all economic issues to the background and cultural questions had emerged as paramount. Failing to generate any enthusiasm, McAdoo withdrew from the fray. His departure brought other rural champions, such as Thomas Walsh and Cordell Hull to the fore. Both of these men were rural moderates who viewed Smith's chances to win the presidency as negligible. Neither, however, was willing to decimate the party to prevent Smith's nomination. Consequently, there was a growing divergence between the rural moderates and the rural purists. The latter would destroy the party rather than have it become the political vehicle for Smith and the urbanism that he represented. With Smith's nomination virtually assured by the eve of the convention, one of the major unresolved questions concerned the probable impact that his nomination would have on the party's future.

Whereas both Smith and McAdoo had remained relatively quiet about national politics during the first two years following the 1924 election, the year 1927 witnessed a quickening tempo on the part of the mutual antagonists. As the year opened, Smith publicly admitted for the first time that he was a receptive presidential aspirant. At the same time he vowed that he would not personally conduct a pre-convention campaign. Rather, he would demonstrate that he deserved the honor by serving the people of his state. Although such a policy was undoubtedly a high-minded one, it in no way prepared Smith for a national campaign. His New York constituency
was scarcely America in microcosm. Roosevelt advised Smith to nationalize himself, but Roosevelt exercised very little influence upon the Governor. Smith, therefore, shunned Roosevelt's practical advice.¹

Although Smith refused to campaign, his supporters had to be coordinated in some manner. Smith acquiesced in the formation of an "unofficial volunteer" organization of New Yorkers to handle his correspondence and promote his candidacy. This group included James W. Gerard, John Curtin, John F. Gilchrist, Norman E. Mack, Henry Moskowitz, George Olvany, Robert Wagner, George Van Namee, James J. Hoey, Herbert H. Lehman, William F. Kenny, Joseph M. Proskauer, James J. Reardon, James A. Foley, Mrs. Henry Moskowitz, and Franklin Roosevelt. Although immediately prior to the convention a few non-New Yorkers joined this group, Smith, through his choice of political confidants, had again isolated himself from that party of America that was not New York.²

Notwithstanding his urban provincialism, Smith was indisputably the front-runner. McAdoo's base of power had been vastly

¹New York Times, January 2, 1927, p. 1; Roosevelt to A. J. Berres, November 22, 1927, Group 11, Box 1, FDR Papers (Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park).

Frank Kent noted that Baruch's and Chadbourne's exodus from the McAdoo entourage had greatly weakened the Californian. Equally unfortunate from McAdoo's perspective, some Dry Democrats, who earlier had been unalterably opposed to Smith and who for reasons of political expediency condemned him still, secretly hoped that the New Yorker would get the nomination. The New Republic dismissed McAdoo with the terse comment that he was no longer to be seriously considered as a Democratic possibility. The journal predicted that, while McAdoo would engage in the preliminary fighting, Edwin T. Meredith of Iowa was the real Dry candidate.

Unquestionably McAdoo suffered a loss of prestige because of his close association with George Fort Milton, Jr. and the rural purists. Confiding to Breckinridge Long, W. R. Hollister commented: "I do not favor and cannot bring myself to entertain with any degree of favor the idea that George Milton and some of the extreme McAdoo people seem to have of making the Democratic [sic] an ultra-dry, fanatically Protestant organization, and making the fight along that line." Hollister viewed such a proposal as diametrically opposed to the Jeffersonian philosophy. He contended: "The South already is responsible for the most drastic step involving the abandonment of these so-called Jeffersonian principles, through its support of

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national prohibition, and now for us to drive hence all of our Catholic Democrats and join the anti-evolutionists of Tennessee and Mississippi together with the three K's in a religious crusade would seem to me the last straw. "4

Breckinridge Long, who had been among the most resolute of the McAdoo supporters in 1924, repeatedly urged McAdoo to remove himself from consideration for the 1928 nomination. The Missourian insisted that McAdoo could better serve the party by withdrawing and acting as an adviser rather than by pursuing a candidacy that could only terminate in disaster. McAdoo, however, was not yet prepared to eliminate himself completely.5 George Fort Milton, Jr. was among those chiefly responsible for advising McAdoo not to renounce precipitously all ambition. Late in January, 1927, on the eve of McAdoo's proposed visit to New York City, Milton reiterated his assertion that a Southern and Western coalition could elect the Californian. Delineating what was to become the Democratic battle line for 1928, Milton announced that Governor Smith would not be a suitable nominee because "the country is 70 per cent dry and no wet can be nominated for or elected to the Presidency."6

4W. R. Hollister to Breckinridge Long, January 10, 1927, Box 86, Long Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress).

5Breckinridge Long to W. R. Hollister, January 20, 1927, ibid.

When McAdoo arrived in New York, he held extensive conferences with Eastern Democrats in order to canvass the political situation. With Milton hovering in the background, the press was informed that McAdoo was being prevailed upon to lead the "dry and progressive" elements of the party. Although McAdoo would make no firm commitment, his callers came away with the definite impression that he would consent to be a candidate. In fact, Claude Bowers, who dined with McAdoo during this New York visit, found him eager to seek the nomination. As was McAdoo's custom, he needed to be assured that he was responding to the people's call for his service. The particular cause he now proposed to serve was prohibition.

McAdoo brushed aside Bowers' observations that his strength as a candidate lay in his progressivism and not in his prohibitionist views. Cultural issues had defeated McAdoo in 1924; he obviously hoped to employ cultural antagonisms to thwart Smith's ambitions in 1928.

On January 28, in Toledo, Ohio, McAdoo assumed the offensive. Addressing the Ohio Bar Association on the subject of "Prohibition, Nullification, and Lawlessness," he appeared to launch a bid for the Democratic presidential nomination. The Democracy he would lead, however, was not a national one. In one of the most caustic and divisive addresses of his career, McAdoo, without

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specifically naming them, assailed Tammany Hall and Al Smith.
McAdoo, a man who had once denounced economic inequities and
trained his fire against the Republican opposition, now viciously
turned against elements of his own party. 8

Seeking the source of corruption and crime in America,
McAdoo singled out the liquor traffic. He indicated that the way to
curtail this evil was through honest and vigorous enforcement of the
liquor laws. 9 Such enforcement, however, would not be easy because
of a conspiracy that existed between city machines and the liquor
interests. The conspirators' purpose was to capture control of the
federal government. McAdoo declaimed: "The long, hard road
which lies before us and the long, hard battle for which we must gird
ourselves is to break down the power of the corrupt political machines
and rings which form the connecting link between crime and politics;
and which, not content with holding so many of our large cities in
their grip, are now insolently reaching out to control the politics of
some of our great States and even of the National Government itself."

Going further, McAdoo enlightened his audience as to the method that
the criminal element was employing to gain control. "Behind the
cloak of the liquor question, behind the propaganda against the


Eighteenth Amendment, corrupt municipal politics is making a concerted and nation-wide drive to encompass with its fatal embrace the national politics of this country. "

Although McAdoo admitted that many honest and sincere people opposed prohibition, "the campaign as a whole is like a great smoke screen under which a concerted advance upon the National Government is being made by the forces which, since the days of Tweed and Croker, have been mainly responsible for selling protection against the law to crime and criminals." McAdoo warned that "entirely apart from the prohibition question, this is the sinister campaign which Americans who love their country must meet if law is not to be turned into ridicule and if public order is not to give place to a reign of anarchy and violence." McAdoo insisted that: "The problem before us is to resist the debasement of our civilization at the hands of machine politicians, whether they come in the guise of Republicans or Democrats." It required precious little imagination to identify both the individual and the organization which McAdoo envisioned as the greatest potential debasers of civilization.

For McAdoo the solution was clear:

10 Ibid., 100.
11 Ibid., 101.
12 Ibid., 102.
The method to be adopted by good citizens who do not wish to see law and order undermined and popular government destroyed is to obey the law and to demand that the Federal Government shall do its duty in States [New York and Maryland] which refuse to do theirs, and to that end take care that the Federal Government itself never falls into the hands of machine politicians who place the profits of the liquor traffic above the Constitution and the laws of the land. 13

Reaction to McAdoo's scathing attack upon his party's Wet wing was not slow in developing. The following day, January 29, Senator Bruce of Maryland savagely berated McAdoo from the Senate floor. Taking offense at McAdoo's intimation that Maryland was in rebellion against the United States, Senator Bruce read a letter he had written to the Baltimore Sun when McAdoo had leveled similar charges earlier. Bruce referred to McAdoo's indictment as "... mere claptrap; just another shrill little Mackadoodledo." Bitingly personal, Bruce vowed that "the 'rebellion' that excites the ire of Mr. McAdoo is really, I suspect, not rebellion against the United States but rebellion against his candidacy for the presidency." After denying that McAdoo had ever been qualified for the presidency, Bruce closed: "...there are some persons who are dead but do not know that they are dead, and ... Mr. McAdoo is one of them." 14 Republicans could only observe with glee as the Democrats again publicly resorted to warring among themselves.

13 Ibid., 104.
14 Congressional Record, 69 Congress, 2 Session, 2522-23.
Bruce's tirade was not allowed to pass unchallenged. Senator King of Utah rose to defend McAdoo's service during the Wilson administration. Under questioning from Senator Bruce, however, King acknowledged that he did not feel that Maryland and New York were constitutionally obligated to enact state prohibition laws as McAdoo had insisted. Senator Copeland of New York then joined the debate and assured his colleagues that Governor Smith desired that the Volstead Act should be enforced as long as it was on the statute books. The New York Senator indicated that the Mullen-Gage Act had been repealed only to prevent citizens from being placed in double jeopardy. Copeland's efforts to portray Smith as an advocate of prohibition enforcement brought Senator Caraway of Arkansas to his feet. Soon Copeland and Caraway were engaged in a full-scale Wet-Dry debate.15 If McAdoo had intended to rend the party on the prohibition question, seemingly he had succeeded admirably. On the other hand, if he had hoped to enhance his own chances for the nomination, he was not destined to enjoy the same degree of success.

The immediate response of the press to McAdoo's speech was to picture his extreme Dry posture as insuring a repetition of the 1924 fiasco.16 Not surprisingly, the New York Times was highly

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15 Ibid., 2524-27.

16 "The Democratic Wet-and-Dry Donnybrook," Literary Digest, XCII (February 12, 1927), 5-7.
critical of McAdoo's address. The paper made him the object of the
same derisive comments that it had once reserved for Bryan. It
characterized McAdoo's Ohio speech as "...a sword thrust in the
very vitals of the Democratic Party." 17 Stigmatizing McAdoo as a
"mischief-maker and a marplot," the New York Times suggested
that "...the glad tidings which he is preaching cannot fail to sound
in Democratic ears as a return to the rule-or-ruin policy of the
Democratic Convention of 1924. If the McAdoo program were to be
taken up by his party, the result would be very little rule and a great
deal of ruin." 18

The New Republic also saw McAdoo's speech as an exercise
in divisive politics. The journal indicated that McAdoo could not
possibly be nominated and that he was only interested in preventing
Smith's nomination. As for the Democratic Party, the New Republic
envisioned it as being "...cleft in twain by the sharp and irrepress-
sible issue of national prohibition." 19 George Fort Milton, Jr.,
likewise, recognized McAdoo's Toledo address as being a divisive
maneuver. Rather than decrying it, however, Milton welcomed it.

For two years Milton had advocated a final decisive struggle between

the party's rural and urban wings. He suggested that the Toledo speech had "...simmered the field down until there will be only two candidates--McAdoo and Smith." Milton was sure that McAdoo would emerge victorious from such a confrontation. 20

Milton summoned rural America to engage in a crusade of righteousness against the forces of evil. While to modern ears Milton's appeals have a sanctimonious ring, they expressed the sentiments of a people who perceived a threat to civilization as they had known it. Milton characterized McAdoo's address as a "...challenge to the forces of organized lawlessness..." and as a "...summons of the decent elements of the citizenship to do battle." Milton averred: "It is a call for which God-fearing people have been listening. It is heartening to know that the Edges and the Edwardses, the Bruces and the Jim Reeds, the Ritchies and the Al Smiths, and their following of outlawry are not to go unrebuked. America declines to acknowledge the rule of a criminal minority." 21

Neither Milton's moral exhortations nor McAdoo's exertions seemed likely to revive the old McAdoo following. McAdoo's remarks had generated far more fear than favor. While Milton and the extreme


prohibitionists might desire a repetition of the 1924 convention, their more level-headed colleagues did not. McAdoo now seemed to represent the Prohibitionist rather than the Democratic Party. Moreover, he had projected the rather unfavorable image of being motivated primarily by vengeance and of being intent upon engaging in a personal vendetta. Ominously, his endorsement by the Board of Temperance, Prohibition, and Public Morals of the Methodist Episcopal Church raised the specter of religious warfare. With the exception of Senator Furnifold Simmons, McAdoo's former confederates failed to rally around his new standard. Unquestionably McAdoo's debut in the 1928 campaign had been a failure. Although he still declined to state publicly whether he would be a candidate, he revealed to Breckinridge Long that he did not want to participate in that capacity. Despite McAdoo's denial, Long was convinced that McAdoo might enter the race if by so doing he could stop Smith. All reports, however, seemed to indicate that the Smith surge was irrepressible. 22

Throughout February and March, McAdoo's position continued to deteriorate while Smith's candidacy gathered momentum. Will King, national committeeman from Oregon, announced that, while he

had supported McAdoo in 1924, he would endorse Smith in 1928.

King expressed a widely held opinion when he indicated that he saw Smith as the only Democrat who might possibly win the presidency.

From Georgia, Roosevelt reported that McAdoo's following in that state had evaporated. Although Georgians opposed Smith, Roosevelt sensed that, if Smith's strength continued to grow, Georgians would grudgingly acquiesce in his nomination. Former Governor George W. Hays of Arkansas acclaimed Smith to be the party's outstanding figure and asserted that the South would support him. Although the New York Times made much of Albert S. Burleson's endorsement of Smith, Milton and Long hastened to indicate that Burleson had supported Underwood, not McAdoo, in 1924. It was obvious that the South was not of one mind either as to the probable effect of Smith's candidacy upon their region or as to a way to cope with Smith's burgeoning strength. 23

As the possibility of Smith's nomination grew so also did discussion of two potentially disruptive issues—prohibition and religion.

Early in April, Senator Bruce, a supporter of Maryland's quadrennial

hopeful Governor Albert C. Ritchie, assumed the offensive in a letter to the editor of the New York Times. Bruce insisted that it was the Democracy's duty to delineate those issues with which the masses of voters were most vitally concerned. In short, the party should demand modification of the Volstead Act and denounce religious intolerance. Bruce believed that such a platform would attract not only Republicans but also conservative Democrats who had been alienated by Bryan's "fallacies." According to the Maryland Senator, efforts to suppress the prohibition issue would fail because "it and the cognate issues of religious bigotry are the only issues in which the American people are really interested now, except the farm relief issue, and that is too regional in its nature to be made an inter-party issue." In demanding that modification of the Volstead Act be made the issue in 1928, Bruce represented the party's extreme Wet element.

A rather significant number of rural moderates were wholly opposed to elevating the prohibition question to a position of primacy. A thoroughly disgusted Thomas Walsh indicated that he had spent two years attempting to dispel "...the idea that there is an irrespressible conflict within the ranks of the party between the wets and the drys." Despite his efforts the extreme Wets seemed determined to force through a Wet platform. Of all the Wets, Walsh considered

Bruce to be the most "unreasoning" and "hysterical." Walsh, however, was optimistic "...that the forces insisting that no declaration on the subject be made will be overwhelmingly in control." Although he saw little hope for Democratic success, the Montana Senator would have the party stress the issues of tariff revision and corruption. Another rural moderate, Joseph T. Robinson, charged that "Bruce's proposal to make the next national campaign on anti-prohibition and on the religious issue is comparable to Caraway's ill advised and futile attacks on Smith, ..."26

Not surprisingly, Senator Carter Glass of Virginia was among the most outspoken of the rural moderates. Speaking in Asheville, North Carolina, Glass warned: "If the Democratic Party tries to ride into the Presidency by making the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment a party issue, it will make such a wreck out of itself that there will not be enough of it left to hold a good town meeting." Glass did not discuss the relative merits of the prohibition question, but confined his remarks to the inadvisability of attempting to make it a party issue. He reminded his listeners that prohibition had never been a partisan issue, rather it had received bipartisan support. Although denouncing the Wets' efforts to force a Wet declaration upon the party,

25 T. J. Walsh to H. T. Scudder, April 28, 1927, Box 376, Walsh Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress).

Glass did not condemn Wets per se. He announced: "I believe Al Smith could be elected President of the United States despite the fact he is a Roman Catholic. I believe that he could be elected President despite the fact that he is a wet. But unless I am badly fooled I do not believe he could be elected President of the United States on a platform pledging the Democratic Party to a repeal of the Volstead Act." Rather than emphasizing prohibition, Glass suggested that the Democrats should focus upon Republican corruption. 27

Those who would consign the prohibition question to a minor role had not only the extreme Wets to contend with but also the extreme Drys. McAdoo, who had grown impatient with Baruch's emphasis on harmony, insisted that "the Democratic situation does not, I fear, admit of harmony." 28 As if to prove his point, McAdoo proceeded to promote as much dissonance as possible. While Bruce demanded that modification of the Volstead Act be made the issue, McAdoo considered nullification of the Constitution to be the real question at stake. He insisted: "This is a great issue, and neither of the major political parties should be permitted to evade it in 1928." 29


If the extremists had their way the 1928 Democratic national convention would be a repetition of the 1924 affray.

Potentially as destructive as the prohibition issue was the question of Al Smith's Catholicism. Interest in the "Catholic Question" had grown steadily since the summer of 1926, and it reached a new intensity in the spring of 1927. In April of that year Charles C. Marshall addressed an open letter to Smith through the pages of the Atlantic Monthly. Citing an inherent conflict between Smith's loyalty to the Catholic Church on the one hand and his loyalty to the Constitution on the other, Marshall challenged the New Yorker's fitness for the presidency. Given advance notice of the article, Smith initially declined to reply. Finally, on the advice of Joseph Proskauer and with the aid of Father Francis Duffy and Cardinal Hays, Smith prepared an answer. In essence Smith's retort denied the existence of any conflict between his loyalty to the Church and to the State; he was both a good Catholic and a good American.  

The significance of the Atlantic Monthly exchange is not altogether clear. One historian has hypothesized that, while it raised

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the general tone of discussion about the "Catholic Question," it reinforced the opposition of the intolerant. After reading Smith's reply in the newspaper, Bernard Baruch found it completely satisfactory.

Baruch, however, had never considered Smith's religion to be his greatest handicap. Rather, the financier felt that Smith's Tammany connection was the most damaging aspect of his candidacy. George Fort Milton, Jr. discerned a clever piece of Smith strategy in the Marshall letter. The Chattanooga editor noted that the New York newspapers had repeatedly insisted that only Smith's Catholicism stood between him and the Democratic nomination. These same papers subsequently threatened that if Smith was not nominated, every Catholic would desert the Democratic Party. As a consequence the party would die. According to Milton, once the New York Governor answered Marshall's charges, the New York papers would then claim that the way was open for Smith's nomination. Milton suggested that to demand someone's nomination because he was a Catholic revealed just as much bigotry as to deny him the nomination because of his Catholicism. Furthermore, Milton insisted that it was not Smith's religion but his wetness and his connection with Tammany Hall and Wall Street that were objectionable. To prove his point, Milton

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31 Moore, A Catholic Runs for President, 78-79.

32 Bernard Baruch to Joe T. Robinson, April 8, 1927, SC. Vol. XIX, Baruch Papers.
indicated that he would gladly support Thomas Walsh. 33

Milton's charge that the Smith strategists instigated the Marshall correspondence so that it could subsequently be demolished by Smith was completely unfounded. But the Chattanoogaan's inference that the religious question was being employed as a straw man contained a modicum of truth. This is not to deny that religious intolerance was quite prevalent, but it was scarcely accurate to charge, as Smith proponents were wont to do, that religious bigotry constituted the sole basis for the opposition to their candidate. Moreover, Milton's implication that Democrats were being coerced into supporting Smith by threats of a Catholic bolt was not a mere flight of the imagination. While there is no way of measuring the extent of this fear, Josephus Daniels, who felt that Smith could not be elected, confided to Roosevelt: "It looks like the supporters of Smith--I do not mean Smith as a man--but the thousands of his supporters, feel that if he were not a Catholic he would be nominated, therefore, the large majority of them would be alienated by the nomination of anyone else." 34 W. R. Hollister indicated that: "If he [Smith] is beaten again after the religious issue has been raised, we will drive the

33 Chattanooga News, April 11, 1927, p. 4; Chattanooga News, April 12, 1927, p. 4.

34 Josephus Daniels to Franklin Roosevelt, July 19, 1927, Box 15, Daniels Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress).
Catholic vote out of the Democratic party permanently."\textsuperscript{35} Likewise Breckinridge Long declared: "I would not lift my hand to oppose the only outstanding figure in the party today, and if he is not nominated his proponents will have just cause to desert us in the future."\textsuperscript{36}

The party's other well-known personality, William Gibbs McAdoo, was intent upon opposing Smith, but the Californian had not determined in what role he could most efficaciously express his opposition. While privately vowing that he did not want to become involved in national politics again, McAdoo sallied forth to honor some speaking engagements in June.\textsuperscript{37} Addressing audiences in Greeneville, Tennessee, and Macon, Georgia, McAdoo once again lashed out at the alliance between corrupt city machines and the liquor interests. Although Glass objected to the speeches, Milton indicated that in general the response was good. Nevertheless, tiring of McAdoo's indecision, Milton informed him that such addresses could have little effect until he made clear what his course of action would be in 1928. Milton denied the validity of the rather general assumption that McAdoo could no longer be seriously considered as a viable

\textsuperscript{35}W. R. Hollister to Breckinridge Long, April 29, 1927, Box 86, Long Papers.

\textsuperscript{36}Breckinridge Long to W. R. Hollister, May 4, 1927, \textit{ibid}.

\textsuperscript{37}W. G. McAdoo to Marshall Hicks, May 9, 1927, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 335, McAdoo Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress).
candidate.\textsuperscript{38}

Receiving no succor from McAdoo, Milton continued his strident educational campaign. In the July \textit{Outlook}, the Chattanoogan vigorously denied that the Smith candidacy was making any important inroads into the South. Furthermore, Milton insisted that the primary objections to Smith were not religious. Rather, "the main Southern dislike of Smith's nomination proceeds from his dripping wet views, his Tammany origin, background and environment, and his general Manhattan point of view, . . ."\textsuperscript{39} It was Smith's urbanism that offended Milton, and the chasm between their two worlds appeared to be unbridgeable. Far from the South's accepting Smith, Milton indicated that proof of Southern hostility toward the New York Governor could be found in the growth of a number of favorite son booms. These movements had begun to develop because of McAdoo's hesitancy to enter the race. Milton suggested that if McAdoo finally determined not to enter the contest, Southerners would willingly support Thomas Walsh, a Catholic who was neither a "Tammanyite" nor a "nullifying

\textsuperscript{38} McAdoo, \textit{The Challenge}, 23-38, 159-80; Chattanooga \textit{News}, June 7, 1927, p. 1; Chattanooga \textit{News}, June 9, 1927, p. 1; George Fort Milton, Jr. to W. G. McAdoo, June 18, 1927, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 335, McAdoo Papers; George Fort Milton, Jr. to W. G. McAdoo, June 29, 1927, \textit{ibid.}

\textsuperscript{39} George Fort Milton, Jr., "Smith's Southern 'Gains,'" \textit{Outlook}, CXLVI (July 27, 1927), 405.
Behind the scenes Milton vainly attempted to prod the reluctant McAdoo into action. Milton warned McAdoo that politicians who ordinarily would have flocked to his cause were making alliances with favorite sons because of the general impression that he was out of the race. The longer McAdoo hesitated, the more difficult it would become to regain the allegiance of these errant politicians. Milton cautioned that, unless some figure arose around whom the Drys and progressives could coalesce, Smith would win the nomination easily. The Chattanoogan confessed that the Southern favorite son booms were acts of desperation and that they were clutching at straws.  

Importune as he might, however, Milton could not force McAdoo into the race. After conferring with Milton early in August, McAdoo indicated that he would definitely issue a withdrawal statement. Milton made a final attempt to dissuade McAdoo from this course of action. Whereas McAdoo had indicated that his withdrawal would prevent a repetition of the 1924 fiasco, Milton insisted that it would only insure Smith's nomination. Milton argued that McAdoo's withdrawal "...registers the surrender of the generalissimo of the progressives, and leaves them leaderless and dismayed, ready to be

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40 Ibid., 405-06.

41 George Fort Milton, Jr. to W. G. McAdoo, July 13, 1927, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 335, McAdoo Papers; George Fort Milton, Jr. to W. G. McAdoo, July 19, 1927, ibid.
captured by Tammany Hall. " Playing upon McAdoo's sense of duty, Milton beseeched:

"There is an army of progressive democrats who selected you to lead them. How are these people going to feel when they see the announcement that McAdoo has quit? How can they help but feel that their leader has deserted them, that he has gotten tired of the fight and is not sufficiently interested in the principles for which he and they were fighting to continue the battle.

... Such a decision as yours would force us to make a choice between remaining as democrats in a party engulfed by the underworld of politics, or going over and supporting a party coldly and selfishly controlled by special privileges. This is a frightful position to be forced upon us... Will you feel right in taking away from us this alternative between special privilege and the underworld?"  

More realistic than Milton, McAdoo would not be swayed from his decision. McAdoo suggested that Milton's letter proceeded "... upon a fundamentally erroneous assumption, namely, that I am the recognized leader of an army which I am now proposing to desert. But I am not the recognized leader... As a matter of fact, my leadership has been resisted by a large body of those whom I might naturally have looked to for support." McAdoo advised Milton that the progressive Democrats were completely apathetic, discouraged, and seemed disposed "...to let things go by default." Further, McAdoo proposed that it was time for new leadership to be developed.

42George Fort Milton, Jr. to W. G. McAdoo, August 17, 1927, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 336, McAdoo Papers.
As might have been anticipated, McAdoo's letter bore the marks of injured innocence and of self-sacrifice. "I have for years made sacrifices of time, energy and money for the cause of democracy and I really feel that I cannot afford to continue them." Perhaps being more honest with himself, McAdoo conceded: "If I thought there was any chance to lead effectively, even though defeat was certain, I would do it unhesitatingly, . . ." In truth, the only segment of the party that was clamoring for McAdoo's leadership was Milton's militant Dry wing. Their insistence upon rule-or-ruin politics would soon place them outside the party's mainstream.

With his decision made, McAdoo played out the drama. In the form of an open letter to George Fort Milton, Jr., McAdoo issued a formal withdrawal statement published in the Chattanooga News on September 17. The public withdrawal lacked the honesty of the private correspondence and was completely self-serving. Although McAdoo might withdraw, he could not bring himself to do it graciously. But perhaps no man as convinced as he of his own qualifications and righteousness could hide the bitterness of never having received the recognition that he felt was rightfully his.

In the first portion of his statement, McAdoo recounted his unstinting service to the country during Wilson's administration. Following this exercise in self-adulation, McAdoo indicated that even

43W. G. McAdoo to George Fort Milton, Jr., n.d., ibid.
though he had refused to become a candidate for the nomination in 1920, there had been a widespread demand for his nomination. He had sought the nomination in 1924 "...because it was urged upon me that the progressive element of the party relied upon me for leadership." Since, according to McAdoo's rendition of his own past, service to his party rather than personal ambition had motivated him, he had decided to step aside in order to avoid a repetition of the 1924 contest. A recurrence of that confrontation could only destroy the party. Furthermore, his withdrawal would open the way for new leadership. Notwithstanding his decision to renounce his ambition for the presidency, McAdoo made it very clear that he did not intend to remain silent. McAdoo warned:

...the struggle for the preservation of the constitution in its integrity, for the defeat of nullification, for obedience to law and for the stern suppression of crime, for incorruptible government, for impartial justice, social and economic, for orderly progress and for wider human opportunities, must be carried on and every earnest patriot must see that it is carried on. In an effort to achieve these things, I shall, as a private citizen, be glad to cooperate with all those who deem them essential to the public welfare.44

If McAdoo had expected that his renunciation would generate an overwhelming demand that he remain in the race, he was to be disappointed. His withdrawal came as a surprise to no one; it had

44Chattanooga News, September 17, 1927, pp. 1 and 2.
been anticipated for some time.\textsuperscript{45} The \textit{New Republic} referred to his statement as being "...merely a public recognition of an accomplished fact."\textsuperscript{46} The \textit{Nation} indicated that McAdoo's...was, of course, completely out of the race long before he made this gesture, ..."\textsuperscript{47} While some commentators viewed McAdoo's decision to retire from the contest as a noble gesture, derision was the more common response.\textsuperscript{48} One of Walsh's correspondents suggested that McAdoo's "...loyalty to the party and the sacrifice that he made is rather amusing when you reflect that he could not have had the nomination had he stood for it."\textsuperscript{49} The Birmingham \textit{News} characterized McAdoo's withdrawal as an "act of supererogation," and the \textit{New Mexico State Tribune} averred that McAdoo's renunciation came "when he had little left to renounce."\textsuperscript{50} McAdoo, like Bryan before him, was subjected to the scorn reserved for those who fail to realize that their national influence is no longer what it once was.

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\textsuperscript{45}\textit{Chattanooga News}, September 17, 1927, p. 1; \textit{Washington Post}, September 18, 1927, pp. 1 and 15. \\
\textsuperscript{46}\textit{New Republic}, LII (September 28, 1927), 132. \\
\textsuperscript{47}\textit{Nation}, CXXV (September 28, 1927), 299. \\
\textsuperscript{48}\textit{Washington Post}, September 18, 1927, p. 5; "Mr. McAdoo Also Chooses Not to Run," \textit{Literary Digest}, XCV (October 1, 1927), 8-9. \\
\textsuperscript{49}David S. Rose to T. J. Walsh, September 22, 1927, Box 376, Walsh Papers. \\
\textsuperscript{50}"Mr. McAdoo Also Chooses Not to Run," 9.
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Although McAdoo's withdrawal had been anticipated and his influence had been greatly diminished, his decision was, nevertheless, significant. Unquestionably McAdoo's departure greatly enhanced Smith's prospects for the nomination. While the Dry opposition would not evaporate, it would be badly fragmented without a strong leader around whom to rally. Mark Sullivan reasoned that "it is probable there will be no greater organization among the dry democrats in the future than in the past. If they did not organize when it was possible to get McAdoo to lead them, they are even less likely to organize now. Under these circumstances Smith would have a walk-over if he wants the nomination."

Although McAdoo's withdrawal undoubtedly eased Smith's progress toward the nomination, political prognosticators doubted that the Californian's actions had automatically insured party harmony. Even though deprived of their best known leader, those segments of rural America that were unalterably opposed to Smith would find him repugnant still. Thus McAdoo's retirement might be temporarily advantageous to the party's urban wing, but it could not cure the Democracy's fatal disease--division into two mutually

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51 *Chattanooga News*, September 17, 1927, p. 1; *Washington Post*, September 18, 1927, p. 15; *Nation*, CXXV (September 28, 1927), 299-300; "Mr. McAdoo Also Chooses Not to Run," 9.

hostile cultural camps. The Washington Post warned:

Mr. McAdoo expressed the hope in his letter of retirement that the Democratic party would be able to avoid a repetition of the 'inconclusive and disastrous fight in the New York convention of 1924,' . . . . The absence of Mr. McAdoo from among the list of active candidates may do much as he suggests to 'clear' the field. It will not if he merely transfers his mantle as the leader of the anti-Smith forces to some other shoulders. The Democrats must abandon the causes and not merely the men who led them in 1924, in order to avoid just another such stalemate as occurred then.

Even if Smith was nominated and a crisis averted at the convention, the party had still another hurdle to clear--the election. Admitting that McAdoo's withdrawal insured Smith's nomination, Mark Sullivan pondered: "...it remains to be seen if the disaffection that may follow Smith's nomination is any less great than the disruption that would attend another deadlock. Nearly everybody thinks that many of the more ardent dry democrats will not vote for Smith for president, they will refrain from voting or vote republican."55

Despite such doubts, the nomination now seemed to be Smith's for the taking; yet he personally had done nothing in the way

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53 Chattanooga News, September 17, 1927, pp. 1 and 2; Washington Post, September 18, 1927, p. 1, Editorial Section, p. 1; New Republic, LII (September 28, 1927), 132; "Mr. McAdoo Also Chooses Not to Run," 9-10.


55 Chattanooga News, September 17, 1927, p. 2.
of campaigning to attain it. Although his lieutenants had been very active, Smith had remained above the fray.\textsuperscript{56} This aspect of the Smith phenomenon troubled the \textit{New Republic}. It pictured Smith's growing stature as symptomatic of the weakness, not of the strength, of the Democratic Party. Commenting upon Smith's enhanced position, the \textit{New Republic} averred that "... he [Smith] has done nothing to deserve his improved prospects. He remains utterly unknown as a national political leader. He has not begun to focus and build up the effective political alternative to Republicanism which alone would give him power and meaning as a candidate."\textsuperscript{57} Nevertheless, the \textit{New Republic} conceded that Smith would receive the nomination because numerous Democratic Drys feared that a repetition of the 1924 fiasco would signify their party's death as a national institution.\textsuperscript{58}

With political commentators prophesying their inevitable defeat, the Drys attempted to rally their disintegrating forces. Around whom they would coalesce, however, remained a subject of speculation. Although many names were mentioned, George Fort Milton, Jr. particularly favored Senator Walsh of Montana, Governor Donahey of Ohio, former Secretary of Agriculture Meredith of Iowa, and Congressman Cordell Hull of Tennessee. Stressing Walsh's

\textsuperscript{56}\textit{Chattanooga News}, September 17, 1927, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{57}\textit{New Republic}, LII (September 28, 1927), 132.

\textsuperscript{58}\textit{Ibid.}
progressivism, Catholicism, and Dry views, Milton indicated that Walsh's "... candidacy would completely disprove the sneers of the frantic wets that the south is a bog of religious bigotry, which no Catholic could overcome." The Chattanoogan praised Governor Donahey for having three times been elected governor of Ohio without the aid either of the Wets or of the city machines. Milton reminded his readers that Wilson had achieved victory in 1916 when he had carried Ohio. Wilson had not needed New York's electoral votes, and insofar as Milton was concerned the party did not need them now. The Chattanooga editor heralded Meredith as a man capable of dealing with the country's outstanding economic problem--the plight of agriculture. And finally, Milton applauded Hull for his sound economic views. Hull had consistently championed low tariffs, a taxation system which took into consideration social as well as revenue-producing factors, and a federal inheritance tax. Milton obviously hoped to counter McAdoo's withdrawal by presenting a group of regional favorite sons. While no one of these four had a realistic chance of being elected, Milton was much more concerned with stopping Smith than with electing a Democratic president. In this negativism, Milton differed but little from the urban bosses, who, in 1924, had been primarily intent upon thwarting McAdoo and only secondarily concerned with capturing the presidency. In short, the Democratic

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Party had ceased to function as an effective vehicle of opposition to the Republicans.

Iowa's Edwin Meredith was the first of the new Dry saviors to step into the breach. He urged the Dry progressive Democrats to call a conference within thirty days and select a leader to replace McAdoo. The Iowan believed that disaster could be averted only if the Dry progressives coalesced around a single champion. He could not, however, prevail upon either McAdoo or Roper to endorse this scheme and his plan did not generate an enthusiastic response.

Although some lower echelon Democrats approved of the strategy, most prominent Democratic Drys, while opposed to Smith, did not care to initiate any action that might rend the party as it had been rent in 1924. 60 Vehemently opposed to Meredith's proposed conference, former Senator Robert Owen of Oklahoma explained that "such a meeting would merely accentuate the very issue that we should do our utmost to shut out in the interest of party harmony. To pick a dry candidate for the nomination, to be pitted against Governor Smith in the convention, would be a grave mistake, unless those who are promoting such a move are willing to see our party

hopelessly split."61 These were strange words indeed from a man who would bolt his party shortly after Smith's nomination. For the time being, however, the Dry Owen pledged that the Oklahoma delegation would attend the convention un instructed and work to avoid mention of the prohibition issue in the platform.62

Owen had momentarily sided with Glass and Walsh in their plea that the party relegate the divisive prohibition issue to the background. Likewise Josephus Daniels joined the chorus urging moderation and harmony. He announced: "The Democratic Party can not win if a faction that wants a glass of beer or a faction that doesn't want a glass of beer gets in control of the convention. This talk of alcoholic content must stop." Rather, Daniels suggested: "...the Democrats should center their attack on the houses of Morgan and Mellon, who control the international and taxing policies of the Government respectively."63 If the rural moderates had their way, cultural issues, which could only divide the party, would not come to the fore.

While there was a growing division in the rural camp between the extremists and the moderates, the Smith campaign continued to gather momentum. Late in September, a group of Democrats


62 Ibid.

63 Washington Post, September 29, 1927, pp. 1 and 5.
representing the Pacific Coast and Rocky Mountain states gathered in Ogden, Utah, and endorsed Smith's candidacy. For the most part, the delegates attending the conference were politically Dry and had supported McAdoo in 1924. Although the participants were not nationally known Democrats and the endorsement was not passed without some dissent, there could be no question that the Smith movement was growing.\textsuperscript{64} By November, 1927, the \textit{World's Work} had concluded that Smith's nomination was all but inevitable. The journal speculated that, although the opposition would hold out against Smith in the convention, their inability to find a standard bearer would deprive them of any hope of success.\textsuperscript{65}

George Fort Milton, Jr. concurred in part with the \textit{World's Work} 's judgment. He warned that unless those who were hostile to Smith translated their purely negative opposition into a positive program, Smith would be nominated. And as the probability of Smith's nomination increased, Milton's attacks grew proportionately more vehement. Describing Smith's main source of support as "the

\textsuperscript{64}New York Times, September 15, 1927, p. 3; New York Times, September 23, 1927, p. 1; New York Times, September 24, 1927, pp. 1 and 2; New York Times, September 25, 1927, p. 1. There was considerable controversy as to whether the participants truly represented Democratic sentiment within their respective states. For conflicting editorial comment on this subject see "Al Smith's Sun Rising in the West," \textit{Literary Digest}, XCV (October 8, 1927), 7-9.

underworld of politics," Milton announced that "wherever one finds a slimy boss, there one discovers an ardent ally of Tammany Al."

In addition to the "underworld" figures, Smith could count among his followers "...the wets, dripping, moist and merely damp. To them Al Smith is the symbol of alcohol, the very embodiment of booze, either through a restoration of the open saloon, or the free and unhampered bootlegging of booze." Furthermore, Catholics had been manipulated into supporting Smith through a campaign alleging that religion constituted the sole basis of opposition to the Governor.

Although Milton saw bosses, Wets, and Catholics as forming the nucleus of the Smith constituency, the Chattanoogan indicated that the New York Governor was attempting to attract two other segments of the party. Smith's promoters were presenting the Governor as a liberal and a progressive, and, more importantly, as a man who could win. Milton reserved his greatest scorn for those of his colleagues who were attracted by the latter of these two appeals.

"...those Democratic politicians who look upon victory as the goal of combat, and who prefer a chance to win to a chance to be right and honest and sincere, are hearing siren songs that Smith is a man who will win. Such men practice politics for revenue only, and involve themselves in public affairs because of their fondness for the plums on the tree." Since Milton obviously preferred being "right"

66 Chattanooga News, November 8, 1927, p. 4.
to winning, it became highly questionable whether the rural extremists he represented would remain in the party if Smith was the nominee. For many rural Democrats, Smith's nomination would pose the choice between purity and party regularity. And as 1927 blended into 1928, there were indications that there were numerous purists in the party's heretofore most regular region--the South.

One of the first warnings that some rural Democrats were prepared to engage in rule-or-ruin politics came late in 1927. Lacking any candidate to pit against Smith, Tom Love of Texas, former McAdoo stalwart, began to promulgate a program of negative instructions. If adopted by a state, these instructions would prohibit its delegates from voting for any Wet. Love was convinced that his proposal could be enacted in Southern and Western states and in such key pivotal states as Ohio and Indiana. As applied to Texas, Love's proposed referendum stipulated:

Resolved, that we believe that the success of the proposal to align the democratic party with the liquor forces of the nation would render certain its defeat in 1928 and seriously hazard its continued existence as a moral force in national affairs, and we hereby instruct the delegates from this precinct...to support resolutions which will conclusively bind the delegates from Texas in the national convention to vote as a unit, first, last and all the time against the nomination of Senator

67 Thomas Love to Charles Hay, October 26, 1927, Box IU-9B, Love Papers (Dallas Historical Society); Thomas Love to Ernest Cherington, October 27, 1927, ibid.
Reed of Missouri, Governor Smith of New York, Governor Ritchie of Maryland or any other candidate known to be out of sympathy with the thorough and efficient enforcement of our liquor laws, both by the federal and state governments, in full compliance with the provisions of the constitution of the United States. 68

Totally bereft of leadership, portions of the party's rural wing had now sunk to the very depths of negativism and destruction. Love's strategem failed to materialize but the fact that it was seriously considered both revealed the tremendous cultural tensions at work in the Democracy and forewarned of bolting in significant numbers if Smith was the nominee.

The growing clamor of the Ku Klux Klan provided another gauge of mounting rural discontent. In the January, 1928, issue of the World's Work, the Klan's Imperial Wizard, Hiram Wesley Evans, hurled a defiant challenge at Smith. Admitting both that the Klan's numerical strength had diminished and that Southern Democratic political leaders felt a revulsion toward the Order, Evans stipulated that the Klan spoke for masses of people not counted among its members. 69 The Order was girding itself for the coming battle between "... alienism and Americanism in the Democracy."

According to Evans, the Democratic Party was endangered by four

68 Chattanooga News, November 8, 1927, p. 4.

sets of ideas: "...alienism, Roman Catholicism, 'wet' nullification, and the boss system." These traits were all embodied within the same constituency. Most foreigners were Catholic, Wet, and under boss control. Evans had no difficulty in identifying Al Smith as the leader of these "alien forces." Moreover, the Klan did not intend to sit idly by and allow these alien influences to capture their country. In the coming campaign the work of the Order would be "...that of an evangelist: to spread the truth." The "truth" that they would spread would not be comforting to rural ears. Evans announced: "We shall show how Smith is inextricably allied with bossism, with nullification, with alienism, with priest-rule."71

Just how effective the Klan campaign would be remained open to speculation. Unquestionably Klan membership had fallen drastically since 1924. Nevertheless, columnist Stanley Frost insisted, no doubt correctly, that vast numbers of people were in sympathy with the Order's ideals while detesting their methods. Frost, therefore, reasoned that the Klan could prevent Smith's nomination unless it decided that its purpose would better be served by allowing the New Yorker to receive the nomination and then crushing him in the general election.72 Threats had already been issued from Klan

70Ibid., 250.

71Ibid., 252.

circles in Albany, New York, that if Smith received the nomination, Klan-influenced delegates would lead a bolt and break the solid South. Insofar as hopes for victory were concerned, the Democrats were caught in an inescapable dilemma. The urban faction insisted that if Smith was not nominated, Catholics would forever eschew the party. On the other hand, rural extremists threatened that if Smith was nominated, the party would be shattered in its traditional bastion--the South.

Despite such warnings of disaster, the Smith candidacy received additional bolstering when, at the turn of the year, Ohio's Governor Donahey declined to be a candidate for the presidential nomination. Donahey had been one of the Drys' last hopes and his refusal to cooperate left them still searching for a standard bearer. The Ohio delegates formally aligned themselves behind favorite son Atlee Pomerene. It was no secret that, at the first opportunity, the Ohio delegation would cast its votes for Governor Smith. With each passing month, Smith's position became ever more impregnable.

Smith's preponderant strength was quite apparent when the Democratic national committee assembled early in January to hold a harmony dinner and to select a convention site. Secure in their


growing numbers, the Smith supporters exercised restraint and made every effort to avoid any type of confrontation. As an added safeguard against dissent, Smith did not attend. Although there had been concern lest McAdoo's presence provoke a controversy, all factions made a conscious attempt to avoid anything calculated to ignite contention. Their efforts were successful; there was no repetition of the 1924 fiasco. When the committee members turned their attention toward selecting a convention site, the Smith supporters initially divided their strength between Houston and San Francisco. Eventually enough of the New Yorker's adherents switched their votes to Houston to send the convention south. Although George Fort Milton, Jr. claimed that the selection of a Southern city constituted a defeat for the Smith forces, his analysis was mere wishful thinking and did not correspond with the facts. Many Smith supporters felt that the decision to opt for Houston might help reconcile the South to the New Yorker's candidacy. Furthermore, the decision was in large part a personal tribute to Jesse H. Jones. As chairman of the finance committee, the Texan had performed admirably in clearing away the party deficit. 75

In commenting upon the apparent harmony exhibited at the gathering, Mark Sullivan warned against accepting it at face value. He suggested that the rapport was contrived in that both sides had exercised remarkable self-restraint. Sullivan insisted that the opposition to Smith remained as strong as it had ever been. 76 The opening months of 1928 bore out Sullivan's forebodings and revealed that the Democratic harmony gathering had been a sham. Indeed, within a week following the meeting, Senator Thomas Heflin of Alabama viciously attacked the Catholic Church and Al Smith from the Senate floor. Rising to challenge Heflin was another Southerner, Senator Joseph T. Robinson of Arkansas. The ensuing debate was clearly a contest between rural extremism and rural moderation.

The Democratic fray erupted January 18, when Senator Heflin rose to defend his actions in preventing "...the Roman Catholics from using the United States Army to fight the battles of the Roman Catholic Church in Mexico." 77 Heflin launched into a lengthy harangue against the Knights of Columbus and the Catholic Church for their


76 The News and Observer (Raleigh), January 16, 1928, pp. 1 and 2.

77 Congressional Record, 70 Congress, 1 Session, 1649.
alleged efforts to besmirch his name. He denounced the Catholic Church for its political activities and pointed out what he perceived to be a Catholic menace to American institutions.\(^78\) Toward the conclusion of his seemingly interminable tirade, Heflin elaborated upon his censure of Smith. Branding Smith the Catholic Church's candidate, Heflin called upon his countrymen to ready themselves for battle. He saw behind the Smith candidacy a plot to make America a Catholic country and to wipe out Protestantism. Heflin declaimed:

> God deliver this Nation from the rule of Al Smith and all that that means to this country. Go look at the corrupt record of Tammany and hang your heads in shame. Pillage and plunder and graft, a Roman Catholic political machine. Al Smith now its candidate for President of these United States. . . . Tammany now comes forth with a soaking wet Tammanyite, a nullifier of the Constitution and a Roman Catholic for President of the United States. I warn my party against nominating him. If they put the nomination of my party on him the Republicans can and will defeat him by from fifteen to twenty million votes.\(^79\)

At the conclusion of Heflin's diatribe, the Democratic leader in the Senate, Joseph T. Robinson, took the floor. Robinson denied that there was any proof of Heflin's allegations that the Catholic Church was responsible for forging documents with which to humiliate the Alabama Senator. Thoroughly angered, Heflin charged that Robinson could not retain his position as Democratic leader in the

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\(^{78}\text{Ibid.}, 1649-58.\)

\(^{79}\text{Ibid.}, 1658.\)
Senate if he intended to side with the Catholics every time the
question was raised. Robinson accepted the challenge to his leadership and continued his attack upon Heflin. The exchange between the Southerners at times became very heated.\textsuperscript{80} Thoroughly exasperated, Robinson declared: "I have heard the Senator from Alabama a dozen times during the last year make what he calls his anti-Catholic speech. I have heard him denounce the Catholic Church and the Pope of Rome and the cardinal and the bishop and the priest and the nun until I am sick and tired of it, as a Democrat."\textsuperscript{81} Then Robinson took up Heflin's earlier challenge and announced that he would call a meeting of Democrats. Robinson challenged Heflin to come before it and demand the selection of a new leader. Robinson asserted:

"We will take a vote on the subject there and find out whether the Senator from Alabama is entitled to discredit millions of good citizens of the United States in the name of the Democratic Party because of their religion."\textsuperscript{82}

Heflin tried to withdraw his challenge, but Robinson would not permit it and the acrimonious debate continued. Growing more impatient, Robinson stipulated:

\textsuperscript{80}Ibid., 1659-60.
\textsuperscript{81}Ibid., 1661.
\textsuperscript{82}Ibid.
The Senator from Alabama has said that Al Smith, because he is a Catholic, can not be nominated for President by the Democrats. He said that every Democrat ought to hang his head in shame when the name of Al Smith is mentioned. I never have been classed as an Al Smith supporter, but I have not been one of that class who believed that Governor Smith should be excluded from the list of candidates because he is a Catholic. I do not believe in excluding a candidate on account of his religion, nor do I believe in nominating a candidate on account of his religion. . . .

On the morning of January 19, the Senate Democrats, with Heflin absent, met in conference and by a vote of thirty-four to one expressed their confidence in Robinson as Senate leader. Southerners in general, and Senators Simmons of North Carolina, Harris of Georgia, Trammell of Florida, and Smith of South Carolina in particular, indicated, however, that the vote of confidence bore no relationship to the merits of the particular controversy between Robinson and Heflin. While they had endorsed Robinson in his capacity as minority leader in the Senate, they did not necessarily approve of his attack upon Heflin. Certainly Heflin did not consider himself as having been rebuked. Speaking from the Senate floor on January 20, Heflin announced that he had not expected Robinson to be removed and that, in the main, he endorsed Robinson's leadership.

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83 Ibid.

84 The News and Observer (Raleigh), January 20, 1928, pp. 1 and 8.
Denying that he had been personally repudiated, Heflin continued his attacks upon Smith.85

It is an almost inescapable conclusion that Heflin's rantings were beneficial to Smith insofar as his securing the nomination was concerned. The more it appeared that the Democrats' real objection to Smith was his religion, the more difficult it became to deny him the nomination. George Fort Milton, Jr. was deeply concerned "...with the blithering idiocies of Heflin, which put those of us who are against Tammany and against nullification in a very awkward position because of Heflin's bitter speeches on religious lines and the position we are in of being forced in the same boat with Heflin in the minds of the unreflecting many. I certainly wish there was some effective way of muzzling the wild bull of Alabama."86 A. J. Berres confided to Roosevelt: "My personal opinion is that Heflin's attack is making friends for Al Smith, rather than enemies."87 In retrospect, Robinson's response to Heflin's attacks was also significant. Although not a Smith supporter at this point, Robinson was firmly opposed to proscribing any aspirant for office for religious reasons.

85Congressional Record, 70 Congress, 1 Session, 1700-03.

86George Fort Milton, Jr. to Cordell Hull, February 9, 1928, Ser. I, Con. 19, Hull Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress).

87A. J. Berres to Roosevelt, January 26, 1928, Group 11, Box 1, FDR Papers.
His stirring appeal for religious toleration, coupled with his Southern origin, undoubtedly was a factor in his eventual nomination for the vice-presidency.\textsuperscript{88}

January not only witnessed Heflin's assuming a more stridently anti-Smith posture, but also the belated appearance of several candidates who hoped to challenge Smith's hitherto virtually unimpeded march toward the nomination. On January 20, 1928, the members of the Tennessee congressional delegation issued a statement endorsing Cordell Hull for the presidency. The resolution praised Hull's congressional record and his service to the party. Hull's colleagues also indicated that they expected other Southern states to follow their lead and to endorse Hull.\textsuperscript{89} Hull, who had grown increasingly concerned as to the effects of Smith's nomination upon the continued existence of the Democracy as a national institution, permitted the use of his name to avoid a disruptive fight in Tennessee over the selection of delegates to the national convention. Moreover, his colleagues feared that if they sent an uninstructed delegation to Houston, Tennesseans would believe that their local politicians were not actively opposing Smith. George Fort Milton, Jr. immediately sought to line up support for Hull outside of Tennessee. Hull, however, was primarily interested in harmony and in protecting the State

\textsuperscript{88}Neal, "A Biography of Joseph T. Robinson," 238-43.

\textsuperscript{89}Chattanooga News, January 21, 1928, p. 1.
party. Although he feared the disruptive effects of a Smith nomination, Hull, unlike Milton, was certainly not prepared to destroy the party in order to save it. 90

Another last minute attempt to thwart Smith's progress was made on January 21, when the Georgia state Democratic executive committee endorsed Senator Walter F. George for the presidency. 91 While both the Hull and the George booms were of the favorite son variety, the announcement on January 25, that Senator James A. Reed was opening campaign headquarters in Washington, constituted a more potent national threat to the Smith candidacy. Lee Meriwether of St. Louis commanded the Washington headquarters, and Edward G. Glenn, who had conducted Champ Clark's campaign in 1912, was in charge of the Missouri headquarters. Samuel Fordyce, chairman of the Missouri state Democratic central committee, held the top


command position in the Reed organization. 92

The vitriolic James Reed's emergence as a presidential contender in 1928 was one of the strangest ironies of Democratic politics in the Twenties. Because of his virulent opposition to Wilson and the League, Reed had been denied his seat at the 1920 national convention. He had then sought the presidential nomination in 1924 only to be rebuffed by the voters of his own state who preferred McAdoo. Since that time, however, the Reed and Wilson factions within Missouri had joined forces and elected Harry B. Hawes to the United States Senate. 93 By mid-summer, 1927, political columnists Charles C. Ross and Frank Kent had labeled the vituperative Reed the outstanding figure in the United States Senate. Kent noted that while Reed was usually found on the losing side of any controversy, he had no equal in debate. Two events in particular had catapulted Reed into the spotlight. His cross-examination of Dry witnesses before the Senate Judiciary Committee had constituted a potent attack upon the effectiveness of the Volstead Act. Consequently, Reed had emerged as the most powerful Wet in Congress. Furthermore, his probe of slush funds and primary elections had marked him as the outstanding foe of corruption. 94

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93 Mitchell, Embattled Democracy, 104.
Reed had begun to be mentioned for the presidency early in 1927, and by February of that year movements were already under-way to secure financing for his campaign. Reed's early campaign was low-keyed since he hoped to succeed by falling heir to the Smith strength. As a Wet, albeit a Protestant, representing an urban constituency, Reed was a logical legatee for the Smith support. But for Reed to fall heir to that vote, Smith had to be stopped, and Reed was evidently counting upon McAdoo to perform that task. In a Washington dispatch to the Seattle Times, W. W. Jermane pointed out that "the Reed candidacy can not make headway until after Governor Smith has retired from the contest. And Smith will not retire as long as such a move would aid in the nomination of William G. McAdoo." Reed's hopes for success, therefore, seemed to be dependent upon a repetition of the 1924 deadlock between McAdoo and Smith.

McAdoo's withdrawal forced Reed to alter his strategy and plan a more active campaign. In a speech at Sedalia in mid-October, 1927, Reed pronounced what were to become his major themes: limited federal programs and the restoration of honesty and frugality to government. Reed carefully avoided any potentially divisive

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95 New York Times, February 2, 1927, p. 27.

96 "Senator 'Jim' Reed as Presidential Timber," Literary Digest, XCII (February 5, 1927), 12.
issues. In late October, the New Republic commented upon the Reed candidacy and speculated that he was "... quite the best losing candidate whom the Democrats could nominate." In a statement that revealed the essential weakness of the Democracy, the New Republic pictured Reed as the only Democrat who waged war against the Republicans. Alone among the Democrats, Reed acted as if the Democracy were a national party whose purpose it was to serve as a viable substitute for the Republican Party. Although the New Republic did not feel that Reed could win, it suggested that he would conduct a more interesting campaign than Smith. 98

Reed decided to conduct a national campaign early in January, 1928, and Senator Hawes summoned Lee Meriwether to Washington to manage the national headquarters. 99 Mark Sullivan, rather

97 Mitchell, Embattled Democracy, 106-07.

98 New Republic, LII (October 26, 1927), 245. The New Republic was growing increasingly disenchanted with Smith because of his failure to enunciate a program. The journal did not believe that he could successfully transfer the strategy that he had employed in New York to national politics. They charged that Smith had fought a personal battle with Republicans in which personality had counted for much and issues had counted for little. Aside from prohibition and water power, Smith did not differ significantly from the Republicans. Like the Republican opposition, Smith believed that the existing relationships between government and industry were sound. He had accepted the Republican structure of government and merely sought to make it more efficient. "Governor Smith and the Progressives," New Republic, LII (February 1, 1928), 285.

99 Lee Meriwether, Jim Reed: Senatorial Immortal (St. Louis: Mound Grove Press, 1948), 159.
inaccurately, heralded Reed's decision as a turning point in the Democratic presidential race. The columnist noted that Reed's candidacy was predicated upon the assumption that Smith could be stopped. Sullivan suggested, however, that Reed operated under two distinct handicaps—his Wet record and his past opposition to Woodrow Wilson. Even though Reed might attempt to submerge the Wet-Dry controversy, the Drys could not help but realize that any delegates he won would be Wet, and, therefore, not hostile to Smith. Thus, Sullivan reasoned that Reed's candidacy was a sign of encouragement to the Drys in that it signaled that Smith's nomination was not assured. But the fact remained that the Drys as yet had no candidate of their own. 100

Although the Drys possessed no champion, they became increasingly militant as the months wore on and Smith continued to dominate the field. After conferring with Daniel Roper, Bishop James Cannon of the Methodist Church arranged for McAdoo to address a law enforcement conference in Richmond, Virginia. The meeting was held on February 1, under the auspices of the Anti-Saloon League of Virginia and the Women's Christian Temperance Union of Virginia. Delivering the opening address, Bishop Cannon predicted a calamitous result if the Democrats should nominate a

100 The News and Observer (Raleigh), January 30, 1928, pp. 1 and 2.
It was reserved for McAdoo to strike the major blow against Smith.

McAdoo's address was primarily directed against New York's failure to enforce the Eighteenth Amendment and the consequences of that inaction. Stating that the Eighteenth Amendment "expressly places the obligation of concurrent enforcement on the States,"

McAdoo indicated that if a state did not perform its duty, the Amendment was virtually dead within that state. In repealing the New York enforcement act, Smith had averred that state agencies were available for enforcement of prohibition. McAdoo labeled Smith's statement as deceptive. The Californian pointed out that, while the Eighteenth Amendment was part of the laws of every state, it was not self-executing and that the Volstead Act could only be enforced in federal courts. Thus, in the absence of a state enforcement statute, the New York state courts were closed to enforcement. Much to the moderates' discomfiture, McAdoo declaimed:

This then is the issue: Shall disobedience to the supreme law of the land, as practised by New York and Maryland, be permitted to establish a doctrine which carried to its logical conclusion, means the destruction of constitutional government and the disappearance of those guarantees of life, liberty and property which are essential to the security and

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well-being of the people and to the continuation of our form of government? The issue cannot be evaded. It must be fought to a conclusion in the forthcoming national campaign. 103

Striking more directly at Smith, McAdoo warned that the Eighteenth Amendment would not be enforced by those hostile to it. "The supreme need is to put law enforcement in the White House; . . ." Warning that neither the Constitution nor the federal laws were self-executing, McAdoo labeled the idea that a Wet president could not imperil enforcement as an absurdity. 104 Much to the moderates' chagrin, the extreme Drys had no intention of submerging the prohibition issue. Indeed, it was difficult to conceive of a way that the question could be relegated to the background as long as Smith stood in the foreground.

Smith did not allow McAdoo's Richmond challenge to pass unnoticed. Foregoing his usual reticence, the New York Governor stated flatly that McAdoo did not understand the Constitution. Smith simply read the supremacy clause and announced: "That disposes of Mr. McAdoo's argument that the provisions of the Volstead Act are not binding upon the state of New York without the additional enactment of a state prohibition enforcement law." 105 In reality, Smith had not

103Ibid., 259.
104Ibid., 264-68.
replied to McAdoo's argument, and George Fort Milton, Jr. was quick to proclaim that: "Al is very clever, but hardly candid at all." Milton agreed that no state could pass a law in violation of the Constitution nor could any state court deny the supremacy of the Constitution. Nevertheless, the Constitution was not self-executing and it required statutory enactments to put it into operation. In the absence of state enforcement acts the state courts could not try violators of the Volstead Act. 106

McAdoo replied to Smith in the March installment of the Review of Reviews. 107 McAdoo reiterated his Richmond address and again warned that: "The White House in the hands of the liquor interests would be a veritable Gibraltar of offensive operations; and the doom of the Eighteenth Amendment would be written boldly upon the face of the Constitution." 108 Smith, retreating to his customary aloofness, refused comment. He declared that he did not intend to engage in a debate or a newspaper controversy with McAdoo on the subject of prohibition. The New Yorker indicated that his earlier reply covered his position sufficiently. 109

108 Ibid., 253.
While Smith's overwhelming lead in the presidential contest made it easy for him to maintain his attitude of detachment, his more militant opponents could scarcely emulate his indifference. As Smith's nomination became more probable, those most bitterly opposed to him grew more frantic and frustrated. Meeting in Washington on February 29, representatives of over thirty national temperance organizations demanded not only that both parties declare for rigid prohibition enforcement but also that they consider only Drys as legitimate presidential contenders. Some Southern representatives to this conference threatened to bolt the Democratic Party if it nominated Smith. 110

As a contributor to the March issue of the Review of Reviews, Bishop Cannon underscored the threat of a Southern bolt. With obvious disgust, Cannon stipulated that Dry Southern Democrats were being asked to support a Wet who proposed to be elected president by retaining the party's Dry Southern nucleus and grafting to it the Wet East. The Methodist Bishop shuddered at this suggestion that Dry Southerners should sacrifice their moral principles for partisan political gains. Cannon warned that: "...there are multiplied thousands of 'dry' Southern Democrats who hold openly that they prefer that the Democratic party shall never elect another President, rather than to succeed by such an unholy alliance, such a betrayal of their moral

principles, to the damage of their children, their homes and the communities in which they live."111

George Fort Milton, Jr. echoed Cannon's threat. The Chattanoogan testified that the nomination of Ritchie, Reed, or Smith would imperil the solidarity of the heretofore dependable South.112 In addition to his public utterances, Milton frantically was working behind the scenes to coordinate the Dry opposition to Smith. He urged Hull to extend his efforts into other Southern states, and Milton was confident that, if Hull and Walsh pursued vigorous campaigns, Smith's nomination could be prevented. Yet, despite the aid of former national chairman Vance McCormick and some encouraging reports from the Southern and border states, by the end of February it was clear to any objective observer that the uncoordinated Drys were no real match for the better organized Smith forces. The Dry position was weakened in part because its adherents shared no singleness of purpose. Significantly, while Hull maintained cordial relations with Milton, the Tennessee congressman warned his advisers that Milton, like Smith, represented an extreme faction and that his ideas, therefore, might not always be acceptable. Hull was


scarcely the ideal candidate for Milton's purposes.\textsuperscript{113}

Notwithstanding the apparent hopelessness of the Drys' situation, they were not yet ready to concede defeat. In what gave every appearance of being an act of desperation, Thomas J. Walsh early in March announced that he would enter the Democratic primaries in California, Wisconsin, and South Dakota in pursuit of his party's presidential nomination. It was widely assumed that McAdoo and Milton were the prime movers behind Walsh's candidacy, and McAdoo promised to lead Walsh's fight in California. Milton had urged Walsh to enter the race early in the fall of 1927, and McAdoo and Cannon had decided in February, 1928, that, since Walsh was the party's outstanding Dry, the Drys should coalesce around him. Because Walsh was a Catholic, his candidacy would have the added advantage of eradicating the charge of religious bigotry from the Dry, anti-Tammany Smith opposition. Cannon denied, however, that Walsh's name was being advanced merely to stop Smith. Walsh himself viewed Smith's chances of winning the presidency as hopeless. The

Montanan was firmly convinced that Smith's Tammany connections and his Wet proclivities would make it impossible for him to carry the West.\(^{114}\)

Although Walsh considered himself to be a genuine presidential contender, his candidacy bore all the marks of being primarily a stop-Smith maneuver.\(^{115}\) Secondarily it seemed designed to remove the blight of religious intolerance from the South and the West.

Charles Michelson revealed that Walsh was being commonly referred to as the "alibi candidate;" that is, rural Democrats were urging his candidacy so that they could escape the charge of religious bigotry.\(^{116}\)


\(^{115}\)While Walsh was undoubtedly being used by those who had no motive other than to stop Smith, Walsh's subsequent bitterness both toward the South's failure to rally to his candidacy and toward those Drys who had merely acquiesced in Smith's nomination indicate that he thought of himself as a genuine presidential possibility. T. J. Walsh to J. E. Swindlehurst, November 20, 1928, Box 377, Walsh Papers; T. J. Walsh to Oswald West, February 4, 1929, ibid. Furthermore, in April, 1928, Walsh wrote an open letter to the state central committee in Montana asserting that: "It is needless to assure those who know me as well as you do that I could not be prevailed upon to participate in any contest to help wreak vengeance on any other man." Quoted in Paul A. Carter, "The Other Catholic Candidate: The 1928 Presidential Bid of Thomas J. Walsh," Pacific Northwest Quarterly, LV (January, 1964), 6. There seems little reason to doubt Walsh's sincerity in this instance.

\(^{116}\)Charles Michelson, "The Man from Montana," North American Review, CCXXV (February, 1928), 149. There was considerable evidence to substantiate Michelson's allegations. Milton
Although the New York Times indicated that it had the greatest respect for Senator Walsh, the paper suggested that "...it is not necessary to discuss in detail a candidacy which is obviously intended not to succeed except in the sense that it may help to head off another man. The Southern Democrats cannot be expected to be very enthusiastic for one who, though a Dry, is also a Catholic." Likewise the New Republic dismissed Walsh's candidacy as being merely a tactical move on the part of the anti-Smith forces to halt the New Yorker's progress in the Far West. The New Republic averred that if the Democratic Party "...is going to take the risk of nominating a Catholic, it must obviously nominate the Catholic candidate who is strong in those neighborhoods in which Catholicism is strong. Walsh might carry some western states which Smith could not, but he would not be popular in the border states, and he would not have a chance in

had repeatedly insisted that the South could support Walsh. In addition, late in February, 1928, Mark Sullivan urged Walsh to enter the race because it would show that not all Catholics were behind one candidate and "...it would provide those drys in the South, who are not actuated by religious prejudice, with an opportunity of demonstrating that they are willing to get behind a Catholic, ... provided he is dry." Quoted in Moore, A Catholic Runs for President, 95-96. In proclaiming Walsh acceptable, Josephus Daniels quoted from the North Carolina Christian Advocate: "Some of the friends of the New York Governor have seemed quite eager to bring to the front the religious issue in order that the liquor issue might not be so conspicuous. But these men might as well be informed now as later that a great Roman Catholic citizen and statesman like Senator Walsh would be an acceptable candidate to Protestants, ..." The News and Observer (Raleigh), March 5, 1928, p. 4.

117 New York Times, March 5, 1928, p. 22.
Maryland, New Jersey, and New York. "Frank Kent described Walsh as "a good man misled" by "a certain element" anxious to divide Smith's support. Furthermore, Catholic journals were not particularly hospitable toward Walsh's candidacy. Ironically, they pictured Walsh as permitting others to use him in order to prevent the nomination of a Catholic.

In short, numerous political commentators refused to consider Walsh a legitimate presidential aspirant. Innumerable reasons existed for viewing Walsh's bid as something less than bona fide. The Montana Senator was nearly sixty-nine years old. He had entered only three primaries, and his home state possessed only four electoral votes. Moreover, Walsh was not entirely in command of the situation in Montana. Although he was an outstanding Dry, his state had recently declared itself Wet in a referendum. His support of McAdoo in 1924 had alienated both Catholics and Wets in Montana. Finally, J. Bruce Kremer, once a stalwart McAdoo supporter, had been re-elected national committeeman and had endorsed Smith.

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118 New Republic, LIV (March 14, 1928), 108.

119 Quoted in Carter, "The Other Catholic Candidate," 108.

120 Ibid., 6.

Despite the uncertainty surrounding Walsh's candidacy, his decision to enter the race momentarily bolstered the spirits of those who viewed the prospects of Smith's nomination with foreboding. This elation, however, was short-lived. The anti-Smith forces were soon to be dealt a reeling blow from an unexpected quarter. The insistence that Smith could not carry the South had been one of the strongest arguments in the anti-Smith arsenal. Milton had reiterated this threat in the March issue of the North American Review. Yet from Arkansas and Mississippi came disquieting rumors that their delegations not only would be uninstructed but also would be pro-Smith. These rumors were partially borne out when, on March 22, at Robinson's insistence, the Arkansas delegation was left uninstructed. Although Robinson denied that the delegates were pro-Smith, no one accepted his protestations at face value. Commenting on the

122Cordell Hull to George Fort Milton, Jr., March 17, 1928, Ser. I, Con. 20, Hull Papers; George Fort Milton, Jr. to Cordell Hull, March 19, 1928, ibid.; Cordell Hull to George Fort Milton, Jr., March 28, 1928, ibid.


result in Arkansas, Cordell Hull asserted: "This is the worst single thing that has happened." Reflecting upon the result, Hull speculated that: "If this callous indifference and unconcern can take place in Arkansas, we can all the better understand conditions in other states and localities, especially when on the other side a highpowered thoroughly financed organization has been functioning for twelve months." Milton was in full accord with Hull's analysis and by late April, the two Tennesseans agreed that the outcome in Arkansas had taken the heart out of the anti-Smith people and that inertia and inactivity pervaded their ranks. The most important remaining contest was the California primary to be held in May. If Smith could not be stopped there, he probably could not be denied the nomination.

Writing on the eve of the California primary, Mark Sullivan pointed out its significance. Smith had gained his almost insurmountable lead without subjecting himself to the voters in any state. State conventions and state committees, unrepresentative of the party's rank and file, had delivered numerous delegates to him. California,

125 Cordell Hull to George Fort Milton, Jr., April 6, 1928, Ser. I, Con. 20, Hull Papers.

126 Cordell Hull to George Fort Milton, Jr., April 7, 1928, ibid.

127 George Fort Milton, Jr. to Cordell Hull, April 9, 1928, ibid.; Cordell Hull to George Fort Milton, Jr., April 21, 1928, ibid.; George Fort Milton, Jr. to Cordell Hull, April 23, 1928, ibid.
therefore, would be his first real test. If Smith won, his opponents' cry that he was repugnant to the West would be demolished, and his opponents would be deprived of part of their rationale for holding out against him to the end. If, on the other hand, he lost, their arguments would have some validity.\footnote{Chattanooga News, April 21, 1928, p. 13.}

When the votes were tallied in California, Smith had won a tremendous victory over Walsh and Reed. To any objective observer, Smith's decisive victory seemed to leave little doubt that he would be his party's nominee.\footnote{New York Times, May 2, 1928, p. 1; New York Times, May 3, 1928, pp. 1 and 26; Houston Post Dispatch, May 2, 1928, p. 1; Houston Post Dispatch, May 3, 1928, p. 6; The News and Observer (Raleigh), May 3, 1928, p. 4.} Walsh gracefully accepted the inevitable and withdrew. His method of departing from the contest left little comfort to those who still dreamed of stopping Smith. Walsh announced:

> The result of the primary Tuesday in California quite clearly indicates that the Democrats desire Governor Smith as their candidate. So decisive is it, following like action in States that might be expected to send delegates to the convention out of harmony with his candidacy, as to demonstrate to my mind the futility of advancing the claims of any other to party leadership in the ensuing campaign.\footnote{New York Times, May 5, 1928, p. 1.}

Walsh had not only removed himself from consideration, but also he implied that it would be useless for anyone else to attempt to wrest the nomination away from Smith. Although Reed refused to withdraw,
his cause seemed hopeless. Both Governor W. W. McDowell of
Montana and Senator Burton K. Wheeler of Montana announced that,
with Walsh out of the race, they would support Smith. 131

Since many political commentators saw Smith's nomination as
assured, they turned their attention to other matters. The Houston
Post Dispatch stipulated: "The withdrawal of Senator Walsh has added
impetus to the Smith candidacy and made the New Yorker's nomination,
in the eyes of a majority of observers, a foregone conclusion." The
paper suggested that attention would now focus on the vice-presidential
choice and the party's platform pledge on prohibition. 132 Likewise
the Nation asserted: "Al Smith will be the Democratic candidate for
President--after the California primary vote there can be no further
doubt on that point." The Nation believed that "the only remaining
question is whether the Houston convention will go off whooping for
Al on the first ballot or will give the delegates from the Dry and anti-
Catholic sections an opportunity to cast at least one ballot against
the Governor of New York State." 133 The journal discounted the
danger of a Southern bolt and prophesied that when the votes were
counted the solid South would be found in the Democratic column. It

131 New York Times, May 5, 1928, pp. 1 and 2; Chattanooga

132 Houston Post Dispatch, May 6, 1928, p. 2.

133 Nation, CXXVI (May 16, 1928), 551.
also expressed the hope that once the Republicans had selected Smith's opponent, the New Yorker would forego his silence and venture an opinion upon national issues. \[134\]

The extreme Dry wing of the party, however, was not yet ready to concede defeat. Milton admitted that the news from California was not good. In a mood of despondency he confided that "it begins to look as if the rank and file of our party is completely apathetic to the present campaign, and the larger part of the leadership is determined to turn the party over to the present day heirs of Tweed." Having said that, however, Milton could not bring himself to accept it. He asserted: "I think too that the California outcome ought to arouse the fears of our friends in other southern states, . . ."\[135\]

Blinded by his intense hatred for Smith and the urban civilization that he represented, Milton had lost contact with political reality. One by one his candidates had faded. McAdoo had seen the hopelessness of the situation and had withdrawn. Both Meredith and Donahue had failed to arouse any enthusiasm whatsoever. Walsh had been humiliated. Cordell Hull remained in the race, but he was little more than a favorite son and his purposes were far different from Milton's. Milton was pursuing a course that could only lead him out of the party.

\[134\]Ibid.

\[135\]George Fort Milton, Jr. to Cordell Hull, May 2, 1928, Ser. I, Con. 21, Hull Papers.
The question yet to be resolved concerned the number of Democrats who shared Milton's convictions.

With Smith's nomination virtually a foregone conclusion, attention focused on that issue which moderates had hoped to avoid from the outset--prohibition. Extremists on both sides now seemed determined to bring it to the fore. On May 16, the New York World announced that, with Smith's nomination virtually assured, the Democrats should frame a platform upon which he could run. The paper insisted that it would be absolutely impossible for Smith to campaign upon a Dry platform. While it admitted that there was room for compromise in politics, it denied that Smith could compromise on that issue with which he was primarily associated.\(^{136}\) For once, George Fort Milton, Jr. found himself in absolute agreement with the World. If Smith was to have the party, Milton obviously wanted the party destroyed. The Chattanooga News replied to the World: "It is not often that we find ourselves in agreement with the New York World... But on the subject of a proper platform for Al Smith, should he be nominated, the World and the News feel exactly alike." With no attempt to hide his contempt, Milton asserted: "If the Democratic Party should nominate Al Smith, it will have stultified itself enough. There could be no excuse for further stultification and stupidity by running this notorious wet on a platform staunchly dry." Milton had

\(^{136}\)The World (New York), May 16, 1928, p. 10.
obviously passed beyond the point of return to party regularity. He intoned: "The time has come for a certain amount of honesty in Democratic politics. If Al Smith is nominated, let him run on a platform that represents him--let him run as a dripping wet. And let the nation decide." 137

Milton was well aware that a Wet platform would cause havoc for the party in the South. Not all Southerners, however, were as ready as he to destroy the party. Responding to the World's demand, the Houston Post Dispatch charged the New York paper with being guilty of "Eastern Anti-Volstead Provincialism." The Houston paper reminded its New York counterpart that Democrats in the South and West were preponderantly Dry and that to "... commit the Democratic party to modification or repeal of the prohibition act would invite a disastrous party split and destroy the organization as a national agency." Indicating that the party could emphasize issues that did not endanger its existence, the Post Dispatch warned: "The World and a few other Eastern newspapers need to look beyond the canyons of Manhattan and remember that the East is not the whole of America." 138

In the midst of this acrimonious debate, Josephus Daniels, a rural moderate, strove to prevent his party from disintegrating.


138 Houston Post Dispatch, May 20, 1928, p. 2.
In regard to the continuing warfare between the *World* and the *News*, Daniels pronounced a plague on both their houses. He warned that "these extremes invite humiliating defeat." Daniels declared: "Both are wrong, *The World* for its contempt for the views of millions of Democrats and *The News* for accepting the New York demand and virtually predicting disaster. Such talk with Privilege and Corruption enthroned in Washington sounds like indifference to clean government. Both are the admonitions of unwisdom."  

Prohibition—the Democrats' obsession with this question is difficult for the modern mind to grasp. It is only comprehensible in terms of the cultural conflict that it represented. The party's moderates realized that elevating the question to prominence would only tear the party asunder. Thus, they would opt for a simple enforcement plank and fight the campaign on issues that were not internally divisive. Whether those who pictured the Democracy as existing primarily to serve either the Anti-Saloon League or the Association Against the Prohibition Amendment would allow the issue to be muted remained open to question.

There were still those who hoped that Smith's nomination might yet be averted. Among these men was Senator Furnifold Simmons of North Carolina who, along with Dan Roper and former Senator Owen, was working in a desperate attempt to stave off the

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139*The News and Observer* (Raleigh), May 24, 1928, p. 4.
inevitable. On May 23, Simmons delivered a heated anti-Smith tirade from the Senate floor. In so doing, Simmons exhibited the same predilection for destruction as had Milton earlier. Damning his party's probable nominee for his Tammany connections, Simmons harangued:

What does Mr. Smith know about national politics? Has anybody ever heard any utterance from him on national questions? Tammany leaders have never been interested in America. Their vision is confined to local affairs in New York City. All we know is that the New York World, his chief champion, says that if he is nominated the main issue will be 'wet or dry.' Upon that he will stand or fall. Upon that he will be elected or defeated. The other great issues which Jeffersonian Democracy presents to the country, the great questions which divide the two major parties of this country with reference to finance and economy, and every other conceivable thing that connects itself with politics--they are to be thrown into the background. If we attempt to discuss the scandals that grew out of the Harding administration, the prostitution of justice by Daugherty, the robbery of the poor, decrepit veterans of the World War by Forbes, the bribery of Fall--if we attempt to discuss all those things, the answer will be, 'Look at Tammany'--Tammany! That is the answer.  

While there was a great deal of truth in much that Simmons said, the time, the place, and the tone of the address were counter-productive insofar as the party's future was concerned. Simmons' attitude was

140 Fairfax Cosby to F. M. Simmons, May 9, 1928, Box XII A, Simmons Papers (Duke University); F. M. Simmons to Fairfax Cosby, May 9, 1928, ibid.; Daniel C. Roper to F. M. Simmons, May 19, 1928, ibid.; F. M. Simmons to Frank A. Hampton, May 31, 1928, ibid.

141 Congressional Record, 70 Congress, 1 Session, 9545.
not constructive, but vindictive and destructive. Simmons had no viable alternative candidate to offer in Smith's place.

Late in May, the Drys won bitterly contested delegations in Texas and North Carolina. Although Simmons declared that Smith was now stopped, the New York World scoffed at the idea. The paper doubted that the Smith opposition controlled as much as a third of the vote. But, queried the paper, what if it did? "... even if they have the bloc, how long can they hold it, and to what purpose can they vote it, without a candidate of their own who is capable of gathering strength as the convention runs along?" The World, quite accurately, pointed out that the pre-convention campaign had produced no formidable challenger to Smith.143

In the year and one-half prior to the convention, Smith had built an overwhelming lead even though he had exhibited a remarkable indifference toward national politics. While the rural moderates had indicated that they would acquiesce in his nomination, the rural extremists seemed intent upon battling to the end. They had not, however, been able to find a suitable nominee to pit against Smith, and their bitterness was increasing with each passing day. Moreover, the prohibition issue threatened the party's very existence. On the


143 The World (New York), May 29, 1928, p. 10.
eve of the convention, while it appeared quite obvious that Smith would receive the nomination, several peripheral questions remained un-resolved. How bitterly would the rural extremists contest Smith's nomination in Houston? What would be the party's stand on prohibition? What effects would Smith's nomination have upon the party's future, particularly in the South?
DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL POLITICS: 1918-1932

Volume III

A Dissertation

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by
Leah Marcile Taylor
B. A., Vanderbilt University, 1962
M. A., Louisiana State University, 1966
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CHAPTER XI

HOUSTON AND AFTER

Although Smith's opponents made a final futile gesture to prevent his nomination, the Houston convention, in sharp contrast to the New York imbroglio four years earlier, reached its foreordained decision with dispatch. The greatest debate centered not around the candidate, but around the wording of the prohibition plank. Even the prohibition controversy remained low-keyed due to the desire on the part of both the rural moderates and Smith's adherents to conduct a harmonious convention. Yet the convention's tranquility was deceptive. Following that gathering, the much threatened disaffection of the rural Democracy was not slow in manifesting itself. Al Smith's attitudes and actions exacerbated the already potent rural-urban stresses within the party. As a result of indifference, ignorance, or arrogance, Smith revealed nothing but contempt for his party's rural wing. Thus the campaign of 1928 pitted Democrat against Democrat. Not only were the rural Democrats at odds with the urban Democrats, but also the rural Democrats fell to warring among themselves. In the South and in the border states party regularity contested with party purity, and in terms of electoral
votes party purity won. Achieved at the party's expense, however, the purists' victory was at best a pyrrhic one. With both the party's extreme Wets and extreme Drys discredited, the way was open for those moderates who wished to submerge cultural issues to take control.

As Smith's nomination grew more imminent, a flurry of editorial opposition erupted from the South. John S. Cohen's Atlanta Journal was the largest Southern newspaper engaging in this last minute act of desperation. Cohen was cooperating with North Carolina's Furnifold Simmons who, by convention eve, had emerged as the chief coordinator of the anti-Smith activity. Following Simmons' lead, the Journal argued that Smith represented nothing but opposition to the Eighteenth Amendment and that there were other issues with which the party should be concerned. The paper implored the South to oppose Governor Smith and thereby to save the party from domination by a clique concerned only with aiding the liquor interests.¹

Notwithstanding the pleas of Simmons and Cohen, early in June, Mississippi, like Arkansas before her, selected an uninstructed delegation. The Mississippi convention, dominated by Senator

Pat Harrison, refused to instruct either for or against Governor Smith. This action dealt a blow to those who relied on the South to act as a unit to block Smith's nomination.\(^2\) Quite in character, Harrison delivered a powerful address stressing harmony and party regularity. Harrison concentrated his fire not upon his party colleagues, but upon the Republican opposition. Except for one veiled reference, he ignored the prohibition question altogether. Referring to the record of the Democratic Party, Harrison commented that:

"Its sympathy toward the toiling millions, its equality of treatment toward every class, its rigid enforcement of all laws, its fair dealing to the humblest as well as the mightiest grows brighter with each passing day."\(^3\)

After predicting that the Democratic Party would sweep to victory in 1928, Harrison pleaded: "On this day and throughout in the national campaign, let us not lose our heads, let us not become stampeded, . . . let us follow through in the interest of the Democratic Party that we love and the welfare of the State and Nation." While Milton might prefer party purity to party regularity, Harrison made it clear that he did not. Harrison asserted: "Party loyalty is not found in threats of Party desertion, but in anxiety and counsel for

\(^2\)Houston Post Dispatch, June 6, 1928, p. 1.

\(^3\)Speech delivered by Senator Pat Harrison at the Democratic state convention in Jackson, June 5, 1928, Harrison Papers (University of Mississippi).
party cooperation. The principles of the Democratic party are too broad and imperishable to be sidetracked. We are in a hunt for elephants, not chipmunks. " There could be no misunderstanding of Harrison's position. "I may not agree as to the wisdom of the choice of the Houston convention in the selection of our party standard bearer, but I shall abide by its action." It was equally clear that Harrison knew full well who that standard bearer would be. He warned his colleagues: "This year we cannot be tripped at the door by bigotry, prejudice or intolerance. We must invoke a statesmanship that can sweep the stretches of the west, of our own beloved land of the south, the shores of Superior and the sidewalks of New York. "4 The rural extremists would find no solace in Mississippi.

On June 18, the Smith opposition was dealt another blow when Ritchie withdrew his candidacy and announced that the Maryland delegation would cast its votes for Governor Smith. Although the Wet Maryland delegation would have gone to Smith eventually, the anti-Smith forces were relying heavily upon favorite sons to prevent Smith's acquiring the requisite two-thirds vote. The Smith forces, who desired as harmonious a gathering as possible, hoped that Ritchie's action would influence other states to declare for Smith prior to the convention. Smith was already very close to a first

4 Ibid.
ballot victory.  

Despite the apparent hopelessness of the situation, Simmons persisted in his efforts to deny Smith the nomination. He refused to concede even when Gilbert Hitchcock of Nebraska indicated that while he could control the Nebraska delegation for himself, he would not enter into a movement to defeat any particular candidate. Simmons arranged for conferences to be held in Houston to coordinate the Smith opposition. He convinced Dan Roper to attend the convention even though Roper thought that further opposition would be futile. Simmons communicated with Thomas Taggart who was too ill to attend the convention. The North Carolina Senator relied upon the Indiana delegation to stand firm behind its favorite son, Evans Woollen. Likewise Simmons hoped to control the vote in Ohio and Texas. After conferring with Jim Reed, Simmons counted upon the Missourian to attract votes from delegations in states that normally went Republican.  


6F. M. Simmons to J. S. Cohen, June 16, 1928, Box XII A, Simmons Papers; Gilbert Hitchcock to F. M. Simmons, June 18, 1928, ibid.; F. M. Simmons to Frank A. Hampton, June 19, 1928, ibid.; Thomas Taggart to F. M. Simmons, June 19, 1928, ibid.; Roper memorandum, June 19, 1928, ibid.; F. M. Simmons to Robert R. Ray, June 19, 1928, ibid.; F. M. Simmons to Frank A. Hampton, June 19, 1928, ibid. For a complete treatment of Simmons' position, especially as it related to North Carolina politics, see Richard L.
Simmons' reliance upon Reed revealed the utter bankruptcy of the Smith opposition. That the anti-Wilson, anti-Bryan, Wet Jim Reed should loom as the Dry progressives' savior was utterly incongruous. Of course, Reed and the Drys were merely using one another in an effort to stop the front-runner. Neither would have been likely to accord the other positive support. Their collaboration, therefore, bore no promise of success. Had they succeeded in stopping Smith, there was simply no viable alternative candidate to whom to turn. With undisguised scorn, the New York World averred:

"Senator Reed's function at Houston is to rally what is left of the irreconcilable opposition in order to provide alibis for some local leaders in the South who want to go home and say that they did not consent willingly to the nomination of ... Smith. From the point of view of the Governor and of the party it is an excellent thing that Senator Reed is the leader of this irreconcilable opposition. For it shows what the opposition amounts to. ... It shows that there are prejudices but no principles which unite this opposition. The Southerners who are loyal to Wilson can't follow Reed. The Drys can't follow Reed. Only those who don't like ... Smith for reasons they do not dare avow can follow Reed."

The tacit alliance between Reed and the Drys had again given the World the opportunity to imply that religious prejudice constituted

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the primary basis for the opposition to Smith.®

It was not this futile opposition to Smith, however, that constituted the real threat to disrupting the convention. That role was reserved for the prohibition question. Shortly before the convention opened, a petulant Carter Glass insisted that he had labored for a year to prevent the prohibition issue from being discussed. He reminded Baruch that: "I held that, if Smith was to be nominated at all, he should be nominated as a Democrat, and not as a wet or a Catholic. Now those who insisted upon nominating him as a wet will have to take the responsibility of defending their position. They cannot escape the question which they insisted upon raising."9

® Franklin Mitchell stipulates that Reed refused to lead a movement to stop Smith and that consequently no such operation materialized. Rather, Reed hoped that the Dry Protestant South would turn to him as a more palatable candidate than Smith and that the Smith forces would then accept him as well. Mitchell, Embattled Democracy, 108. While the Smith opposition had no formal leader, there is no denying that Simmons and Reed conferred, as did Roper and Reed, and that they shared the common objective of stopping Smith. See New York Times, June 3, 1928, p. 1; New York Times, June 23, 1928, pp. 1 and 2; F. M. Simmons to Frank A. Hampton, June 19, 1928, Box XII A, Simmons Papers.

9Carter Glass to Bernard Baruch, June 16, 1928, Box 1, Glass Papers (University of Virginia). Baruch was already at work attempting to reconcile Southerners to Smith's nomination. While Baruch had taken no part in the pre-convention maneuvering, he was convinced of the inevitability of Smith's nomination and was ready to work for the candidate once he was nominated. Key Pittman to Mrs. Henry Moskowitz, June 18, 1928, Box 12, Pittman Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress); Key Pittman to Judge Joseph Proskauer, June 18, 1928, Box 14, ibid.; Bernard Baruch to Carter Glass, June 15, 1928, Box 423, Glass Papers.
Smith forces were to demand a Wet platform, Glass obviously would oppose it.

The New York World's insistence on a Wet plank likewise continued to alarm Josephus Daniels. He informed his friend Roosevelt that such a plank would be a fatal handicap to the party in the South. Daniels indicated that it was going to be exceedingly difficult to carry North Carolina for Smith and that a Wet plank would make it an impossible task. He implored Roosevelt to deliver this information to the Smith platform drafters. Then wistfully, Daniels added that he wished conditions were such that Roosevelt could be the party's nominee. 10 There was little that Roosevelt could do to help. Although Roosevelt was associated with Smith politically, their visions of the party differed radically. While Roosevelt envisioned a national party, Smith saw a provincial one centered in the cities. Consequently Roosevelt's advice was generally ignored. 11

Growing increasingly more arrogant and dictatorial, the New York World proclaimed editorially on June 19, that "The Democratic Party Should Not Nominate Governor Smith If It Wants Volsteadism." The paper insisted that there was no way to reconcile Jeffersonianism and Volsteadism. Declaring that the Volstead Act was a clear case

10 Josephus Daniels to Roosevelt, June 18, 1928, Box 15, Daniels Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress).

11 Bowers, My Life, 177-78.
of federal interference in local self-government and in the personal tastes of individuals, the paper saw Smith's candidacy as presenting the issue in its clearest terms. Like Milton, the World wanted no compromise. It proclaimed: "Let there be a vote. If the party decides to support the Volstead Act let it nominate a candidate who believes in the Volstead Act. If it decides to advocate a revision of the Volstead Act let it nominate... Smith. Either course will be self respecting, but the middle course of straddle will almost certainly be disastrous." Going further, the paper asserted that Smith "... ought not to accept the nomination unless he can have it on a platform which is consistent with his own position in public affairs." 12

Josephus Daniels recoiled in horror from the World's latest demands. He queried editorially "Do They Demand Defeat?" Daniels warned that "if the New York World speaks for the responsible leaders of the Smith movement, they are not only inviting but demanding that the New York Governor, if nominated at Houston, will go down to a humiliating defeat." 13 The prohibition issue placed the Democrats in a virtually untenable position. Clearly Smith could not run on a

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12 The World (New York), June 19, 1928, p. 12. The Nation likewise believed that the Houston convention should adopt an unequivocally Wet platform so that the country could have a nationwide referendum on prohibition. The journal felt that this constituted Smith's only hope for success. "The Democracy and the Liquor Problem," Nation, CXXVII (July 4, 1928), 4.

13 The News and Observer (Raleigh), June 22, 1928, p. 4.
platform denouncing efforts to repeal the Volstead Act. On the other hand, Southern and Western Democrats, involved in local and state races, could scarcely accept a platform advocating repeal. Since theoretically any Democrat could stand on a plank pledging enforcement, the moderates demanded such a plank.

With a potential storm brewing over the prohibition question, the Smith leaders arrived in Houston, Wednesday, June 20. George R. Van Namee led the coterie of New Yorkers which included Franklin Roosevelt, George Olvany, Norman Mack, Senator Royal S. Copeland, Senator Robert F. Wagner, James Hoey, John H. McCooey, and John Curtin. Intent upon courting good will, Van Namee announced that the Smith forces would not push for a victory on the first ballot. They would permit the various states to honor their favorite sons. Yet within a few hours Norman Mack shattered the calm engendered by Van Namee's statement.  

Mack announced that he believed the convention would adopt a prohibition plank that would be satisfactory to Governor Smith. Mack assumed the responsibility for defining Smith's position. He indicated that Smith had consistently championed personal liberty and states rights. While Smith favored temperance, he was opposed to prohibition. Finally, Mack stipulated that Smith advocated each

state's determining the permissible alcoholic content of beverages sold within that state. Not surprisingly, Mack's statement elicited a storm of protest. Later that evening, visibly disconcerted, Mack hastened to assure reporters that he spoke only for himself and that he had not conferred with Smith. Nevertheless, Mack had injected an element of uncertainty into the proceedings. In response to a query by the New York World as to whether he had changed his opinion about the need for modification, Smith tersely replied that he had not. While he refused to elaborate, Smith's reply was interpreted as an endorsement of Mack's remarks. \(^{15}\) Yet if the Wets should demand a modification plank, they would alienate not only the rural extremists but also the rural moderates.

The Smith opposition saw an opening in Mack's and Smith's comments and they hoped to exploit it. Furnifold Simmons, who was ill and could not attend the convention, declared that in light of the Mack and Smith statements, it would be disastrous for the party to nominate Smith. Reed's supporters prophesied a Southern bolt as a consequence of Mack's statement. They declared that Reed's nomination would provide salvation for the party since the Missourian did not view the prohibition question as a party issue. Governor Dan Moody of Texas joined the fray and threatened to carry the prohibition

fight to the convention floor. Meanwhile, claiming that Smith had unfairly withheld his statement until after delegates were selected, Roper and Milton sought to rally the Dry forces. Much of this flurry of opposition was terribly exaggerated. Everyone knew that Smith was an avowed Wet. At question was whether he would demand a Wet plank. While the New York World had been vociferously demanding such a plank, Smith had remained relatively silent on the subject.

The rural moderates' attitude, however, was more significant than the hue and cry raised by the rural extremists. While the moderates made it clear that they would not endorse a Wet plank, it was equally apparent that they would demand no more than an enforcement plank, that they still desired harmony, and that they did not intend to disrupt the convention. Senator George, Senator Harrison, and Cordell Hull provided little succor to those Southern Drys who hoped to utilize Mack's utterances to avert Smith's nomination.

On arriving in Houston, Hull admitted that, while he opposed any modification of the prohibition measures, he did not consider the prohibition question to be a political issue. He saw other issues as being of more vital importance. Hull championed integrity in government, agricultural relief, and tariff reform. Furthermore,

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Hull made it abundantly clear that he would not participate in a stop-Smith movement. He was very much interested in party unity. Above all, Hull wanted no repetition of the 1924 convention. Pleading for harmony, Hull averred: "In 1924, the people of the country had about made up their minds and had their attention riveted on the Republican record of corruption, ... and were ready to vote them out, when the Democrats managed to stumble on something to divert the attention and minds of the voters with the result that we lost. We do not want another experience of this kind." Taking his cue from Hull, Senator George of Georgia, another of the Southern favorite sons, announced that he was committed to the enforcement act and that he was opposed to weakening it. He indicated that since Democrats had an honest disagreement on the matter, he did not feel that prohibition should be made the dominant issue. While he suggested that Mack's statement had been unwise, George insisted that Georgia Democrats would support the convention's nominee. Those who wished to hold out against Smith to the bitter end could derive little consolation from George's remarks.

But it was reserved for Pat Harrison of Mississippi to deliver

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17 Houston Post Dispatch, June 22, 1928, p. 1 and 5; Houston Post Dispatch, June 23, 1928, pp. 1 and 2.

18 Houston Post Dispatch, June 23, 1928, p. 2.

the sharpest blow to the extreme Drys. He predicted that the convention would conclude its business with dispatch and that there would be no repetition of the 1924 disaster. Moreover, while the platform should insist upon strict enforcement of all laws, Harrison did not deem it necessary to expressly mention the Eighteenth Amendment. He did not believe that an enforcement plank would interfere with Smith's candidacy or with that of any acknowledged Wet. Harrison suggested that since it was the president's duty to enforce the law, "any man who says he will not enforce the law ought not to be nominated by any political party."20 Insofar as Harrison was concerned the prohibition issue posed no problems. He frankly admitted that he was interested "primarily in harmony."21

Yet despite the utter futility of opposing Smith, the opposition persisted. In a final move of desperation, the extreme Drys began to rally around James Reed. After conferring with Roper, who was organizing the Dry forces, Reed announced that he opposed modification of the existing prohibition laws. This gesture, however, was really meaningless. For at the same time Reed informed the Missouri delegation that they were not to attack Smith and that Missouri would support the party's nominee. Thus the extreme Drys had failed in their efforts to forestall Smith's nomination. Nor were

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21Houston Post Dispatch, June 23, 1928, p. 2.
they likely to be much more successful in the resolutions committee where Governor Dan Moody of Texas was their champion. Not satisfied with a mere enforcement plank, Moody demanded a bone-dry platform that would pledge the party against modification. Again the moderates seemed to have the upper hand. Only Dan Roper applauded Moody's plan. Daniels, Hull, George, and Glass were known to favor an enforcement plank that would not mention the party's attitude on modification. With such a plank the moderates could satisfy their constituents that they had won a victory. More significantly, a mere enforcement plank could accommodate both Wets and Drys. Notwithstanding the efforts of the extremists, harmony was to be the order of the day in Houston. 22

Thus, just prior to the formal opening of the convention, the only major question yet to be resolved centered on the precise language of the prohibition plank. If the moderates continued to control the situation that problem would be disposed of in the resolutions committee and not on the convention floor. Senator Key Pittman of Nevada was slated to chair that sensitive committee. 23 For some time, Pittman had been working with two of Smith's closest advisers,

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23 Houston Post Dispatch, June 25, 1928, pp. 8 and 11; Houston Post Dispatch, June 26, 1928, p. 3.
Mrs. Moskowitz and Judge Proskauer, in an effort to complete a working draft of the platform. On the subject of prohibition, Smith had accepted Pittman's enforcement plank with only slight modifications. While the New York delegation planned to offer a Wet plank in the resolutions committee, they knew that it would be voted down. Pittman's enforcement plank would then be substituted and New York would not carry the fight to the floor. Apparently, Smith did not intend to disrupt the harmony he hoped would surround his nomination by demanding a Wet plank.

With all signs pointing toward a harmonious gathering, the convention formally began its proceedings Tuesday, June 26. Temporary chairman Claude Bowers' address provided the highlight of the opening session. Earlier, Bowers had discussed his proposed draft with Norman Mack and James Gerard. Neither of these Smith stalwarts had been particularly pleased with the speech. They saw little need for referring to the deplorable plight of agriculture, and Gerard looked askance at Bowers' emphasis on the traditional Democratic low-tariff position. Providing a preview of the upcoming campaign, Mack and Gerard indicated that nothing should be said that might frighten business. Not surprisingly, Walsh and Hull praised the

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24 Key Pittman to William Woodburn, May 14, 1928, Box 16, Pittman Papers; Key Pittman to Joseph T. Robinson, June 18, 1928, Box 15, *ibid.*; Key Pittman to Mrs. Henry Moskowitz, June 18, 1928, Box 12, *ibid.*
proposed address, and Proskauer, Roosevelt, and Wagner found little fault with it. As delivered, Bowers' speech was more in accord with the Democracy of Walsh and Hull than with that of Al Smith. Bowers made no mention of that issue with which Smith was overwhelmingly identified—prohibition.

Pleading for a return to Jeffersonian principles, Bowers pilloried the Republicans as the party of privilege and pillage. Disregarding Gerard's advice, he chastised the Republicans for a tariff policy that resulted in entrenched privilege. It was when Bowers turned to the plight of the farmer, however, that he aroused the greatest enthusiasm. Vividly, he called attention to the depression affecting agriculture. What had the Republicans done to ameliorate this condition? Bowers contemptuously indicated that "...for eight long years they [the Republicans] have stood in the midst of the wreckage of the farms and have done nothing—nothing to decrease the cost of transporting the farmer's produce to the marts; nothing toward rehabilitating his lost markets across the sea; but they have added a billion a year to the cost of things the farmer has to buy." Bowers suggested that "...we do not ask paternalistic privilege for the farmer, but we do demand that the hand of privilege shall be taken

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25 Bowers, My Life, 185-86.

26 DNC Proceedings, 1928, 8-21.

27 Ibid., 8-12.
out of the farmer's pockets and off the farmer's throat. " These remarks, scarcely aimed at the sidewalks of New York, precipitated a demonstration that lasted for about twenty minutes. 28

Denying that the Democracy was the enemy of business, Bowers asserted that it fought only dishonest business and business that profited through governmental privilege. After striking hard at Republican corruption, Bowers turned his guns on Republican prosperity, citing unemployment figures, agricultural distress, and bank failures, and implying that it was a sham prosperity. He concluded his address by attacking Republican foreign policy and demanding a return to Jeffersonian fundamentals. 29 His keynote speech was entirely in keeping with the moderates' wishes that issues other than prohibition be made paramount. Bowers, however, inhabited a dream world where Democrats contested with Republicans over a broad range of public policies. Away from the artificial harmony of Houston, Democrats, in the real world, battled with one another over prohibition and for the cultural leadership of the party.

Senator Heflin, who did not attend the convention, dispatched a lengthy telegram to the Alabama delegation and advised them to fight Smith's nomination to the end. Chanting a familiar refrain, Heflin insisted that "the Democratic party must not and will not be

28 Ibid., 13-14.

29 Ibid., 14-21.
used to further the interests of the Roman Catholic hierarchy and political machine in the United States." Further, Heflin warned that Southerners who supported Smith would be repudiated in their home states. 30 From Washington, Senator Simmons threatened that Smith's nomination would shatter the heretofore solid South. Simmons reminded the delegates that, although the South had never demanded anything from Democratic conventions, it had always voted solidly for the Democratic ticket. Nevertheless, Simmons cautioned that "this time the South has made it perfectly plain to the delegates to the convention from the Republican states that the forced nomination of Governor Smith over their protests would be obnoxious to them and undoubtedly fraught with what they regard as serious consequences to the heretofore stable political attitude of that section." 31

The South, however, spoke with many voices. Did Simmons and Heflin represent the sentiment of that section? Or did Harrison and Robinson reflect the Southern mind? On June 27, Joseph T. Robinson, the convention's permanent chairman, addressed the delegates as they began their second day of deliberations. 32 In sharp

30 Houston Post Dispatch, June 27, 1928, p. 9.


32 The Smith forces had originally asked Key Pittman to serve as permanent chairman. Pittman had suggested that Robinson would be a more suitable choice. Not only did Robinson admire Smith, but also since any potential disruption would emanate from Southern
contrast to Heflin’s invective, Robinson’s speech constituted an appeal for harmony and unity. Echoing Bowers, Robinson delineated those issues best calculated to insure Democratic success. He recalled the Democratic heritage of concern for the welfare of the masses. Emphasizing the depressed condition of agriculture, Robinson lashed out at the Republicans’ "sham prosperity." He then decried Republican corruption and criticized Republican foreign policy.

Unlike Bowers, Robinson did not ignore the prohibition question. The Arkansan attempted to explain the moderate position to the delegates. He suggested:

There are too many subjects of vital interest, about which Democrats agree, to justify breaking up over the questions about which there have always been differences of opinion. . . . Prompted solely by the desire to promote harmony and concerted action, I respectfully suggest that it is my opinion that no wet plank should be incorporated in our platform. . . . The Democratic Party is not a prohibition party, and neither is it an anti-prohibition party.

Robinson indicated that while party members might honestly disagree over the merits of prohibition, Democrats stood "... as one in favor

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33 *DNC Proceedings, 1928*, 71-76.


of the enforcement, in good faith, of the Constitution and all laws."

In its simplest terms, here was the moderate demand for a mere enforcement plank. Robinson cautioned his fellow Democrats that "we must demonstrate willingness to enter into honorable compromise and to make personal sacrifices. In no other way can the best interests of this nation and the Democratic Party be promoted."

Having attempted to put the prohibition issue to rest, Robinson turned his attention to religious toleration. He thundered: "Jefferson gloried in the Virginia statute of religious freedom. . . . He rejoiced in the provision of the Constitution that declares no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification for office of trust in the United States." 36

The remainder of Wednesday's session was devoted to presidential nominations, a mere formality in light of Smith's impending victory. The nominating process did, however, afford an opportunity for Smith's opponents to indicate to their local constituents that they had offered at least token resistance. Senator Walter F. George of Georgia was the first aspirant to be offered to the delegates. Charles R. Crisp's nominating speech was unusual in that it made specific reference to the prohibition question, an issue that most speakers studiously avoided. Significantly, while Crisp indicated that George would never support any weakening of the prohibition

36 Ibid.
laws, he also assured the delegates that Georgia would support the party's nominee. The harmonizers were indubitably in command. George had been squared with his constituents, but there were no violent threats of bolting.

Arizona yielded to New York, and for the third time Franklin Roosevelt stood before a Democratic national convention to urge Al Smith's nomination. Roosevelt's address was noteworthy only in that he avoided the mention of anything the least bit controversial. In nominating the country's foremost Wet, Roosevelt never alluded to prohibition. Rather, he praised Smith's leadership, experience, honesty, and ability to make popular government function properly. Finally, Roosevelt stressed Smith's rapport with and sympathy for the masses.

With the Smith supporters and the rural moderates in control, the comparatively bland convention moved toward its inevitable conclusion. California, Kentucky, and Pennsylvania provided seconding speeches for Smith. In quick and harmonious fashion Florida seconded George's nomination, Indiana presented favorite son Evans Woollen, and Kansas offered her favorite son, William A. Ayres. At the conclusion of Louisiana's second for Smith, the convention adjourned for

37 Ibid., 93-98.

38 Ibid., 98-104.
the day.\(^{39}\) In marked contrast to the New York fiasco, the Houston
convention had survived for two days without any acrimonious re-
marks issuing from the speaker's platform.

The bitterness was reserved for the resolutions committee
where the party's prohibition plank was being debated. Taking
exception with Bishop Cannon's repeated assertions that Maryland,
which had no state enforcement law, was flooding her neighboring
states with liquor, Senator Millard Tydings initiated a heated
exchange that almost resulted in physical violence. When Glass
came to Cannon's defense, onlookers had to restrain the Maryland
Senator who was advancing on the pair of Virginians with upraised
arms. This near-violent verbal confrontation erupted in the course
of a debate between the extreme Drys and the extreme Wets. Moody's
Dry faction demanded a plank that not only endorsed enforcement but
also opposed any attempts to destroy or weaken the existing prohibi-
tion laws. The Tydings Wet group supported a plank that advocated
repeal of the Volstead Act.\(^{40}\)

With Glass leading the way, the moderates gained mastery
of the situation. Following a lengthy debate between Glass and
Moody, Glass' simple enforcement plank passed the committee with
only Moody dissenting. Wagner of New York then requested that the

\(^{39}\text{Ibid.}, 104-23.\)

\(^{40}\text{Houston Post Dispatch, June 28, 1928, pp. 1, 3, and 6.}\)
plank be reconsidered. He felt that it might stultify Governor Smith, whose views on the need to modify the Volstead Act were well known. Glass assured Wagner that the proposed plank in no way committed the Democratic Party to the principle of prohibition. It merely bound the candidate to enforcement as long as the laws were on the books. With this clarification, Wagner withdrew his motion.41

In the dream-like atmosphere of the convention hall where divisive issues were ignored, the delegates moved into their third day of deliberations on Thursday, June 28. As the formality of the nominating procedure continued, Maryland, Massachusetts, and Minnesota sent speakers to the rostrum to second Smith's nomination. Largely ignoring prohibition, these speakers stressed Smith's appeal to the common man.42 When Missouri was reached, Charles M. Howell rose to offer Senator Reed to the assembled delegates. Although never specifically mentioning prohibition, Howell alluded to that issue on numerous occasions. He presented Reed as a national candidate, a candidate who did not embody any one idea that was opposed by a large segment of the party. Howell warned that the campaign should be waged upon inter-party, not intra-party, issues.

41Key Pittman to J. M. Proskauer, July 2, 1928, Box 14, Pittman Papers; Key Pittman to Oscar Underwood, July 6, 1928, Box 16, ibid.; Key Pittman to J. H. Bankhead, July 27, 1928, Box 12, ibid.

42DNC Proceedings, 1928, 125-30.
Directing an appeal toward the Drys, he announced that Reed believed that all existing laws should be strictly enforced until the people repealed or modified them through their representatives. Significantly, however, Howell stipulated that regardless of whom the convention nominated, Reed would support the party's choice. The Dry extremists could derive little comfort from Howell's remarks.⁴³

Nor were they to find any solace in the remainder of the day's proceedings. While there were many addresses, they lacked either rancor or discord. Amid numerous seconding speeches for Smith, favorite sons Gilbert M. Hitchcock of Nebraska, Cordell Hull of Tennessee, Atlee Pomerene of Ohio, Jesse H. Jones of Texas, and Huston Thompson of Colorado were placed before the convention.⁴⁴ The only discordant note was sounded at the conclusion of the afternoon's session when Robinson read a petition that had been placed before the chair. The petition dealt with the subject which most speakers had studiously avoided—prohibition. While the politicians might be able to conduct a harmonious convention, it remained to be seen whether they were truly representative of the party's rank and file. The petition stated:

We, the undersigned, legal Democratic voters of sixteen southern states, do hereby record and respectfully submit to you this, our solemn protest against the nomination, by the Democratic Party, for the

⁴³Ibid., 130-36.

⁴⁴Ibid., 137-81.
presidency or vice-presidency of the United States, of any candidate who has declared himself in favor of the repeal of the eighteenth amendment or the Volstead Act, enacted thereunder; as also any candidate who is not fully committed to the principle of the complete prohibition of the liquor traffic, and the enforcement of all laws enacted to that end, which is now the established policy of the American people and nation. 45

The petition's reading precipitated no demonstration among delegates who were determined not to repeat the suicide of Madison Square Garden. The convention peacefully adjourned until the evening. 46

When the convention reconvened later Thursday, Key Pittman rose to present the party's platform. In his prefatory remarks, Pittman stressed harmony and unity. Aware of the potential destructiveness of the prohibition issue, Pittman devoted the major portion of his address to a careful explanation of the resolutions committee's position. He admitted that the platform drafters had disagreed over the prohibition plank. Those who felt that there were more important issues than prohibition, and who, therefore, had no desire to rend the party over the question had gained the upper hand. Both extremes had yielded to this moderate point of view. 47 Pittman revealed that Glass had come forward in the emergency and had provided the compromise plank. In so doing, Glass had stated: "I don't ask to

46 Ibid.
47 Ibid., 184.
make the Democratic Party a prohibition party; I don't think that anyone should ask to make the national party a wet party. Let us only pledge our officers to support the Constitution and the laws of this country so long as the people allow them to be the laws of this country.48

Pittman then indicated that some members of the committee feared that such a plank might prohibit them from expressing their dislike for the Eighteenth Amendment and the Volstead Act. But Glass extinguished their fears when he had stipulated that a pledge to enforce the laws did not preclude even the president from recommending repeal or modification. Following this elaborate clarification of the prohibition plank, the platform was read to the delegates.49 That portion of the platform pertaining to prohibition was labeled "Law Enforcement," and declared simply:

The Republican Party, for eight years in complete control of the government at Washington, presents the remarkable spectacle of feeling compelled in its national platform to promise obedience to a provision of the federal Constitution, which it has flagrantly disregarded and to apologize to the country for its failure to enforce laws enacted by the Congress of the United States. Speaking for the national Democracy, this convention pledges the party and its nominees to an honest effort to enforce the eighteenth amendment and all other provisions of the federal Constitution and all laws enacted pursuant thereto.50

48 Ibid., 185.
49 Ibid., 185-86.
50 Ibid., 197.
Once the reading was completed, Governor Moody of Texas addressed the delegates. He frankly admitted that he constituted a minority of one on the resolutions committee. Since Glass had authored the prohibition resolution and Cannon and Daniels had approved it, Moody indicated that he accepted defeat and that he would not fight for a bone-dry plank. Albert Ritchie followed Moody to the speaker's platform and added his voice to the plea for unity. He insisted that the party was too great to permit a difference of opinion on one issue to divide it. 51 Then the plank's author, Carter Glass, rose to defend his handiwork. He asserted:

It is a declaration of such simplicity and of such clarity that any patriotic citizen, be he of whatever political faith, be he wet or dry, can stand upon, and the platform declaration upon which the nominee of this convention must stand, if he shall conscientiously take the oath of President of the United States. . . .

It does not commit anybody to the theory of prohibition. . . . It does not constrain or restrain anybody of the opposite opinion. It simply recognizes the fact that the eighteenth amendment is as much a part of the Constitution of the United States as any other provision of the Constitution, and requires that the law enacted in pursuance thereof shall be honestly and uncompromisingly enforced. 52

In truth, Glass' plank simply pledged the party's nominees to enforce the prohibition laws. The moderates' purpose in demanding such a plank, however, had been to prevent prohibition from

51 Ibid., 200-03.

52 Ibid., 204.
becoming the paramount issue. Yet the platform had not forbidden the candidates to express their opinions on the merits of prohibition. Time would prove that the moderates' victory was very ephemeral indeed.

Following the perfunctory acceptance of the platform, the balloting began for the presidential nomination. In sharp contrast to the protracted proceedings four years earlier, the Houston convention required only one ballot to select Al Smith as its standard bearer. Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia were the only states in which Smith failed to garner a plurality of the vote. 53 To underline the conscious harmony that had marked the convention's proceedings, John W. Davis came forward and issued an appeal for unity. Davis was followed by Senator Reed who congratulated Smith on his nomination and delivered a harangue against the Republican Party. After Reed completed his address, the convention adjourned until the following day. 54

Smith's nomination occasioned no great surprise; it had been a foregone conclusion. When McAdoo had faded, there had been no one to assume his place. As Smith continued to emerge upon the national stage, it had become apparent that if he was not tendered

53 Ibid., 205-218.

54 Ibid., 218-25.
the nomination, his partisans would see to it that it was worthless to anyone else. In this situation, the rural moderates had merely acquiesced in Smith's nomination. If his partisans' claims about his ability to carry the Northeast were correct, perhaps the Democrats might achieve a victory. If these claims were incorrect, the party would not again be faced with Smith's divisive presence. These were the thoughts of some of the moderate politicians. What of the people they represented? Dixon Merritt reported that he had found a great deal of apprehension among the politicians at Houston. They were uncertain as to how the voters in their local areas would react to Smith's nomination. And the New Republic warned that although the divisions within the party had been momentarily concealed, they existed still. Smith had the nomination; it remained to be seen whether he had the party.

Friday's session was devoted to the selection of a vice-presidential nominee. That decision held as little suspense as had the choice of a presidential candidate. In keeping with the spirit of conciliation that had characterized the convention, Joseph T. Robinson, Dry, Protestant, Southern, was tendered the vice-presidential nomination. Pittman had suggested to the Smith leaders that Robinson

would be the ideal choice. Pittman felt that Robinson's addition to the ticket would strengthen the party in the border states. Moreover, Robinson's early pleas for religious tolerance and his timely delivery of Arkansas to the New Yorker certainly made him a strong contender for the vice-presidential post. Although Smith denied that he personally had anything to do with Robinson's selection, newspaper accounts indicate that Smith had chosen Robinson before the convention formally opened. And during the course of the convention, Robinson was the only person prominently mentioned for the position. 56

Thus far the convention had been a model of harmony. This conciliatory mood had been achieved by deliberately suppressing the prohibition issue. The party's rural moderates had carried the day in the platform committee, and a compromise plank had been

56 Key Pittman to Mrs. Henry Moskowitz, June 18, 1928, Box 12, Pittman Papers; Key Pittman to Joseph Proskauer, June 18, 1928, Box 14, ibid.; Smith, Up to Now, 378-79; Neal, "A Biography of Joseph T. Robinson," 253-54; New York Times, June 19, 1928, p. 12; New York Times, June 27, 1928, p. 1; Houston Post Dispatch, June 27, 1928, p. 15; Houston Post Dispatch, June 28, 1928, p. 1; Houston Post Dispatch, June 29, 1928, p. 1; Houston Post Dispatch, June 30, 1928, p. 1; DNC Proceedings, 1928, 244-52. Franklin Roosevelt suggested Cordell Hull for the second place on the ticket, but apparently Hull's low-tariff views were offensive to those New Yorkers who hoped to attract the business vote. Roosevelt to George R. Van Namee, March 26, 1928, Group 17, Box 18, FDR Papers (Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park); Bowers, My Life, 186. Although their respective biographers each claim that James Reed and Jesse Jones were offered the vice-presidential nomination and turned it down, there is no evidence to substantiate their statements. Meriwether, Jim Reed, 175; Timmons, Jesse H. Jones, 147.
formulated. In order to insure a harmonious gathering, Smith's supporters had been a party to that compromise. Smith, himself, had maintained his customary air of indifference. Then in the convention's waning moments, Smith chose to speak. In so doing he revealed either a callous disregard for, or an ignorance of, the problems with which the rural moderates would have to contend in their own regions. With the delegates preparing to leave Houston, Smith addressed a telegram to the convention. The rural moderates had hoped to keep prohibition in the background; Smith now pulled it to the front. He seemed intent upon making it the paramount issue. The major portion of his telegram dealt with that explosive question. Smith asserted:

... The equal and even enforcement of the law is the cornerstone upon which rests the whole structure of Democratic government. If it is the will of the people of this nation that I am to take an oath as President of the United States to protect and defend our Constitution and laws, I will execute that oath to the limit of my ability, without reservation or evasion. . . . It is well known that I believe there should be fundamental changes in the present provisions for national prohibition, based, as I stated in my Jackson Day letter, on the fearless application to the problem of the principles of Jeffersonian democracy. While I fully appreciate that these changes can only be made by the people themselves through their elected legislative representatives, I feel it to be the duty of the chosen leader of the people to point the way which, in his opinion, leads to a sane, sensible solution of a condition which I am convinced is entirely unsatisfactory to the great mass of our people. . . . Common honesty compels us to admit that corruption of law enforcement officials, bootlegging and lawlessness are now prevalent throughout this country. I am satisfied that without returning to the old evils that grew from the saloon,
which years ago I held and still hold, was and ought always to be a defunct institution in this country, by the application of the Democratic principles of local self-government and states' rights, we can secure real temperance, respect for law, and eradication of the existing evils.\(^{57}\)

Smith announced that he would fully explain his position on all the issues of the campaign in his formal speech of acceptance. On this dramatic note, the convention adjourned.\(^{58}\)

In later years Smith explained that since he had been unable to get his modification views incorporated into the platform, he did not want the convention to adjourn until he had made his position absolutely clear. He indicated that he was unwilling to accept the nomination if the convention would not aquiesce in his views.\(^{59}\)

Smith neglected to mention that the telegram was not read until the closing minutes of the convention when many of the delegates had already departed the hall. Nor did his telegram suggest that the delegates should select another candidate if they were not in accord with Smith's convictions concerning prohibition.

Nevertheless, Henry F. Pringle described Smith's action as courageous, and Dixon Merritt characterized it as heroic.\(^{60}\)

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\(^{57}\)DNC Proceedings, 1928, 258-29.

\(^{58}\)Ibid., 259.

\(^{59}\)Smith, Up To Now, 378.

\(^{60}\)Henry F. Pringle, "Harmony and a Man of Courage," Outlook, CXLIX (July 11, 1928), 412; Dixon Merritt, "History is Made at Houston," Outlook, CXLIX (July 11, 1928), 416.
The Nation, although adopting a wait and see attitude in regard to Smith's campaign, did applaud him for his refusal to accept a straddle on prohibition. The journal averred: "Had he said nothing about it he would have made it clear that his silence of the past winter was merely opportunism. Governor Smith has now brought the Wet and Dry issue to the front, and the country is surely convinced as to his integrity and courage. It is the wisest tactical move that he could possibly have made." 61

With his telegram, Smith had definitely cleared away any suspicion that he was a hypocrite. But whether it was a courageous, heroic, or wise action is debatable. In order to create a harmonious atmosphere for Smith's nomination, his followers had been a party to suppressing the prohibition issue. He had released his statement only after the desired effect had been achieved. Moreover, in bringing the prohibition issue to the fore, Smith had ignored the warnings of the rural moderates. Yet Smith's action, if debatable, was, from his point of view, understandable. The whole course of Smith's campaign indicated that he believed that the South would remain solidly Democratic regardless of his actions. Thus he chose to direct his entire appeal to the industrial Northeast. He obviously felt that a Wet appeal was one of the keys to garnering those Eastern electoral

61 "Governor Smith the Nominee," Nation, CXXVII (July 11, 1928), 30.
votes. Whether he had to emphasize his own wetness to capture the Wet vote, however, is questionable. Everyone knew that Smith was an acknowledged Wet and that the platform had not bound him to approve prohibition. By the same token, had he not mentioned prohibition, the Drys might have been just as strenuous in their opposition. Nevertheless, Smith's telegram was an early indication of his unwillingness to or lack of awareness for the need to assuage rural fears. It made the rural moderates' task more difficult and eased the way for the rural extremists to bolt the party.

Joseph Tumulty praised Smith for his refusal to accept the nomination under false pretenses and Pat Harrison called Smith's action courageous. Harrison indicated that Smith's views were not in conflict with the party's law enforcement plank. Publicly, Carter Glass expressed a similar opinion. He insisted that the platform had not pledged anyone either to favor or to oppose prohibition. It had only guaranteed enforcement, and Glass expressed confidence that Smith would abide by that pledge. Privately, Glass was furious. He believed that his plank had provided the only key to holding the South. But the convention's plank "...was instantly nullified, as far as its psychological effect was concerned, by Governor Smith's telegram to the chairman of the convention." Glass

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frankly admitted that he did not know what was going to happen. Writing to Baruch, a clearly piqued Carter Glass recited his repeated efforts to prevent prohibition's being made an issue. Despite his repeated warnings, Smith had insisted upon making prohibition, a question about which the president could do little, the supreme issue of the campaign. As for the consequences, Glass warned: "Should this result in alienating many life-long Democrats in all sections of the country I shall greatly deplore the fact; but I do not think, in such circumstances, that you gentlemen in New York will be justified in ascribing the trouble to those who warned you against it." Josephus Daniels publicly decried the telegram. In a dispatch to the News and Observer, he characterized Smith's telegram as "unnecessary and ill timed." Daniels declared that "time was needed for healing wounds. Instead, before the disappointment of those who doubted the wisdom of his nomination could be lessened, the Smith letter irritated the situation." Despite his misgivings about Smith, Daniels issued an appeal for party regularity. He admitted that while Smith's telegram had complicated the situation, only a radical change in the complexion of Congress could alter the prohibition law.

63 Carter Glass to R. Walton Moore, July 2, 1928, Box 244, Glass Papers.

64 Carter Glass to Bernard Baruch, July 3, 1928, Box 1, Glass Papers.

Daniels suggested that there was nothing to be gained from party wrecking. There were too many vital issues that required Democratic attention. 66

There were those Democrats, however, who were very much intent upon party wrecking, and they made their position clear before all the delegates left Houston. On Friday, June 29, the final day of the convention, Bishop James Cannon, Jr. of the Methodist Episcopal Church South and Arthur J. Barton, chairman of the Board of Temperance of the Baptist convention, issued a call for Dry Southern Democrats to assemble later in July in Asheville, North Carolina. The conference's purpose was "to organize at once for the election of dry Democratic senatorial, congressional and state nominees for public offices and for the defeat of the wet Tammany candidate for president, Governor Smith." While the two religious leaders applauded the Democrats for their enforcement plank, they announced that "...we deeply regret that the pro-liquor wing of the party led by Tammany Hall has disregarded all warning and has challenged, indeed defied, the dry Democracy of the South by the nomination for president of Governor Alfred E. Smith, the openly declared foe of existing prohibition laws, as revealed by his repeated utterance and his life-long record and re-affirmed by his telegram of acceptance

66 The News and Observer (Raleigh), July 3, 1928, p. 4.
There was other evidence that the long-threatened disaffection of the South was becoming a reality. Within three days following Smith's nomination, Tom Love, Texas state senator and one-time McAdoo leader, and Mrs. Edith Williams, Democratic gubernatorial hopeful in the state primaries, bolted the national ticket. They would not be the last to make this decision. Love proclaimed that even if there were no liquor question involved, he could not vote for a Tammany candidate. He asserted: "As between chronic corruption and acute corruption I prefer the acute." While Love intended to remain within the Democratic Party, he announced that he would vote against Smith. With a classic example of rule or ruin reasoning, Mrs. Williams declared that "it would be better for the Democratic Party to fail than to succeed in forcing upon the good citizens of the United States a man who by his acts as Governor of New York has nullified the prohibition amendment in the State of New York."  

Love's defection constituted only the tip of the iceberg of Southern discontent, and as the Smith campaign continued to unfold that disaffection would become magnified. Initially, both Furnifold Simmons and George Fort Milton, Jr. were inclined toward preserving

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their party regularity. Milton's wrath was directed as much against his party's rural moderates as against Smith. Turning against his one-time colleagues, Milton caustically predicted that "such men as Carter Glass and Josephus Daniels will seek to dull their moral sense by an opiate of party loyalty and the will of the majority of the convention, with a further dose of laudanum of the inequities of the Republican corruption, Hoover's silence thereunder and the Hoover negro order." In Milton's view, it was worse still that "such men as Joe Robinson and Pat Harrison and Scott Ferris and Haskell, of Oklahoma, the active conspirators in the theft of Southern delegates, will be very vociferous and active in their support of Smith. 'Religious tolerance' will be their major theme, and 'Smith can win' their minor." Milton suggested that a third segment of the Southern leadership, while not actively opposing Smith, would do nothing to help him. This would leave them in a position to lead in reorganizing the party following Smith's inevitable defeat. Milton initially identified himself with this group. At the outset he could not bring himself to join the faction that was actively opposing Smith

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69 Frank A. Hampton to J. O. W. Gravely, July 9, 1928, Box XIIA, Simmons Papers; George Fort Milton, Jr. to W. G. McAdoo, July 9, 1928, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 339, McAdoo Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress).
because Tom Heflin led it. Events would soon force both Simmons and Milton to assume positions of active opposition to Smith. There could be no question that Smith's nomination had shattered the solidarity of Southern political leadership.

The disruptive effect of Smith's nomination upon the party's rural wing was best illustrated in the conflicting pressures being brought to bear upon the party's most prominent rural leader, William Gibbs McAdoo. In the months following Smith's nomination, McAdoo found himself caught in a withering crossfire from his former supporters. Some of them advocated complete silence, others demanded that McAdoo denounce Smith, and still others urged him to support his party's nominee. McAdoo, a man still consumed by political ambition, was caught in a dilemma. He could not possibly satisfy all his former adherents. To early pleas that he support the ticket, McAdoo replied that he would like to maintain his party regularity if, in view of all that he had fought for, he could do so with some consistency and honor. Still assessing the situation, McAdoo's immediate reaction was to announce that he would not comment on the political situation until after the Democratic nominees

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70 George Fort Milton, Jr. to Frank E. Gannett, July 7, 1928, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 339, McAdoo Papers. Daniel Roper was among those who did not plan to actively aid Smith but who would preserve their party regularity and thereby their futures in the party. Daniel C. Roper to W. G. McAdoo, July 5, 1928, *ibid.*
had delivered their acceptance speeches. 71

With the party’s rural wing in considerable disarray, the Democrats prepared for their national committee meeting to be held in New York City on July 11. The committee members were to assemble to ratify Smith’s choice for the national chairmanship. For days prior to the meeting, speculation centered around the name of Senator Peter Gerry of Rhode Island. It was rumored that Tammany opposed the Rhode Islander because they wanted a businessman to head the committee. 72 Smith shared Tammany’s opinion. Courting the business vote, Smith felt that it would be sound strategy to select a corporation executive. At a meeting with his campaign associates prior to the meeting of the Democratic national committee, Smith suggested the name of John J. Raskob. Like Smith, Raskob was a self-made man and a Catholic of immigrant extraction. As a director of the Association Against the Eighteenth Amendment, Raskob had advocated repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment. Perhaps most

71 S. R. Bertron to W. G. McAdoo, June 25, 1928, ibid.; W. G. McAdoo to S. R. Bertron, July 2, 1928, ibid.; Brice Clagett to W. G. McAdoo, July 9, 1928, ibid.; W. G. McAdoo to Brice Clagett, July 17, 1928, ibid.; W. G. McAdoo to Mark Sullivan July 2, 1928, ibid. McAdoo may have been retreating his close identification with the party’s rural extremists. Confiding to Sullivan, McAdoo indicated that he believed that the prohibition cause had lost considerable ground during the past few years.

important from Smith's point of view, Raskob was chairman of the finance committee of the General Motors Corporation. Finally, shortly after his designation as Democratic national chairman, it was learned that Raskob had previously been affiliated with the Republican Party. 73

When Smith asked his associates if anyone objected to Raskob, only Roosevelt, who was to find himself largely excluded from Smith's inner circle of advisers, and Robinson dissented. Roosevelt suggested that Raskob's wetness and Catholicism could only hinder Smith's cause in the South and West without significantly adding anything to it in the Northeast. Roosevelt also indicated that the corporation with which Raskob was associated was too big. Smith and his advisers brushed Roosevelt's criticisms aside. Since Smith was a Wet and a Catholic they saw Raskob's selection as being inconsequential insofar as those attributes were concerned. On the other hand, since prosperity was likely to be a crucial issue, they saw a strategic advantage to be gained from elevating such a prominent businessman to a position of power. 74 Unable to alter the decision, an apologetic Roosevelt confided to Daniels that the


74 Freidel, FDR and the South, 25; Lindley, Franklin D. Roosevelt, 229.
appointment was a bold stroke to try to end the 99% of business (big and little) preference for the Republican Party. I told Smith quite plainly that it would make the situation far more difficult for the Democracy of the South, but Smith felt that we should take our chance on this as we would lose any way if we did not carry the big industrial states. "75

With Smith's decision made, the members of the Democratic national committee perfunctorily accepted Raskob. 76 In addressing that body, Raskob indicated what was to be the main thrust of the Smith campaign. After a few prefatory remarks, Raskob stressed the prohibition issue. Briefly noting that Smith felt that enforcement of the Constitution was important, Raskob suggested that once Smith had illustrated the real conditions that existed under the prohibition laws and had evolved a plan for regulating liquor that would prevent the return of the saloon, "... then all fair-minded men must admit his right, if not his duty as President, to promulgate such a plan, and to advocate such changes in our laws and Constitution as may be necessary for its adoption."77 If Raskob's remarks on prohibition were likely to offend the Drys, his statements on the tariff were not

75Roosevelt to Josephus Daniels, July 20, 1928, Box 630, Daniels Papers.

76DNC Proceedings, 1928, 437.

77Ibid., 439.
calculated to enthrall either low tariff advocates or anti-business progressives. Raskob stipulated: "The tariff plank in the Democratic platform is reassuring to business. Governor Smith is a strong advocate of less government in business and of more business in government. He believes in no disturbance of honest business and his career demonstrates his fairness to labor."\(^78\)

In conclusion, Raskob indicated that Smith was aware of the plight of agriculture and would work to alleviate the farmers' desperate condition.\(^79\) In terms of Raskob's priorities, the country's most glaring economic problem was to be overshadowed by the party's most divisive cultural issue.

In rapid order the committee selected its other officers and then adjourned.\(^80\) The Nation suggested that by selecting Raskob, Smith had again emphasized prohibition as the major issue of the campaign. While the journal applauded Smith for his frankness and sincerity upon this issue, it saw something else in Raskob's

\(^78\)Ibid., 440.

\(^79\)Ibid.

\(^80\)The remaining committee officers included: James W. Gerard of New York, treasurer; Charles A. Greathouse of Indiana, secretary; Edwin A. Halsy of Virginia, sergeant at arms; Herbert H. Lehman of New York, chairman of the finance committee; Senator Peter Gerry of Rhode Island, chairman of the advisory committee; Nellie Tayloe Ross of Wyoming, vice-chairman; Frank Hague of New Jersey, vice-chairman; Florence Farley of Kansas, vice-chairman; Harry F. Byrd of Virginia, vice-chairman; and Scott Ferris of Oklahoma, vice-chairman. Ibid., 441-43.
appointment that was disturbing. The *Nation* described Smith's action as "...an abandonment of the progressive elements which have given Governor Smith a large part of his popular backing." The journal continued: "Raskob is head of one of the greatest open-shop, anti-union corporations in the country. To name him may prove that Wall street need no longer fear the Democratic Party; but it seems also to mean that progressives need not look to Smith for support." The *Nation* suggested that liberals who took economic policy seriously would vote for Norman Thomas. 81

Indisputably, by selecting Raskob, Smith appeared to have turned the party over to the Wets and to business. 82 As in the case of Smith's telegram to the Houston convention, whether Raskob's appointment altered the election outcome in any significant way is debatable. Nevertheless, it was another indication of Smith's lack of appreciation for the fears his nomination had aroused among his party's rural wing. It provided another stimulus for those not favorably disposed to his candidacy from the outset to translate that hostility into active opposition. Publicly, Robinson, Pittman, and Shouse applauded Raskob's selection. Privately, however, Robinson

81 *Nation*, CXVII (July 25, 1928), 73.

82 *New Republic*, LV (July 25, 1928), 249. Another of the *New Republic*'s editors suggested that Smith's action was merely a clever tactical move that would later enable him to soft-pedal prohibition and to make some anti-business statements. *New Republic*, LV (July 25, 1928), 235.
believed that Raskob's speech had been unnecessary and had harmed the party in the South. Robinson warned Raskob that his attitude on prohibition would meet with an unfavorable reaction in the South. Likewise, Mark Sullivan reported that, in the South generally, Raskob's appointment had only exacerbated an already serious condition. 83

Sullivan's statement was not idle speculation. In the pages of the News and Observer, Josephus Daniels roundly condemned Raskob's appointment. He labeled it as "...worse than a blunder. It was a positive blow at prohibition Democrats." 84 While Daniels made it clear that he would maintain his party regularity, there was obviously no communication between the party's rural and urban wings. Recalling Smith's telegram to the Houston convention, a clearly distraught Josephus Daniels asserted: "It is a still further appeal to attract the Republican wet vote, with no consideration to the large element in the party which, while regular, will not sacrifice its resolve to block any and every attempt by Smith, Raskob or anybody else to beat a retreat on prohibition." 85

Glass was also determined to maintain his party regularity,

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84 The News and Observer (Raleigh), July 15, 1928, p. 4.

but like Daniels, he was scarcely enthusiastic. The Virginian labeled Smith's selection of Raskob as "insulting." Glass was appalled that a Republican, who had contributed to the Harding and Coolidge campaigns, had been placed in charge of the Democratic national committee. Furthermore, Glass resented the fact that the South was being taken for granted. He suggested: "The fact seems to be that the Tammany crowd not only had distaste, but an actual contempt, for the South. Everything done was done on the presumption that the South might be relied on to support the ticket regardless of all circumstances. This notion was based on the supposition that to do otherwise would threaten this section again with negro rule, which is utter nonsense." Nevertheless, seeing no real alternative to supporting Smith, Glass would swallow his distaste and work for the ticket. 86

If the Raskob appointment had infuriated Daniels and Glass, though not to the point of deserting the party, it had pushed Milton and Simmons closer to a break. Although Milton had previously favored silence to active opposition, he now seemed to be changing his mind. He pondered: "I do not see now how Democrats who are interested in the principles of the party rather than its plucking of plumbs [sic] can follow the party when drunk and demented it deserts

86 Carter Glass to George Fort Milton, Jr., August 3, 1928, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 339, McAdoo Papers.
its fine old faith."\(^{87}\) For the time being, however, Milton maintained public silence. Like Milton, Simmons was not yet ready to make any public declaration. But there was a great deal of resentment building in the Simmons camp, particularly concerning the treatment being accorded the South. Simmons' secretary, Frank Hampton, who had attended the national committee meeting, reported: "Everywhere rather contemptuous confidence was expressed that the South would swallow everything so long as it bore the Party name and that no particular need existed for regarding the South's professed principles."

Hampton cautioned, however, that there was a growing revolt within the Democratic ranks in North Carolina and throughout the South. \(^{88}\)

Joseph T. Robinson, the party's vice-presidential nominee, was fully cognizant of the trouble brewing in the South. Prior to the national committee meeting, Robinson had indicated that the party must carry its national campaign into the South in order to counter the organized efforts to defeat Smith in that region. Smith and his advisers had rejected Robinson's proposal. They felt that to admit

\(^{87}\)George Fort Milton, Jr. to W. G. McAdoo, July 19, 1928, ibid.

\(^{88}\)Frank A. Hampton to Santford Martin, July 17, 1928, Box XIIA, Simmons Papers. For other evidences of the Democratic unrest in North Carolina see Josiah W. Bailey to Josephus Daniels, July 20, 1928, Box 626, Daniels Papers, Max Gardner to Frank Hampton, July 16, 1928, Box XIIA, Simmons Papers. Ironically, Hampton had originally approved of Raskob's appointment. Frank A. Hampton to E. B. Jeffress, July 12, 1928, Box XIIA, Simmons Papers.
Democratic discord in the South would only encourage the Republicans and demoralize the Democrats. They did not believe that the situation in that traditionally Democratic area was as dark as Robinson painted it. The campaign in the South, therefore, was to be left to Smith's friends within the Southern states.  

That Robinson's forebodings were no mere figments of the imagination was attested to later when the conference summoned by Cannon and Barton assembled in Asheville, North Carolina. Dry Democrats from fourteen Southern and border states gathered for the conclave. The delegates, numbering approximately 250, were primarily ministers and women. Their purpose was not to launch a third party, but to urge Dry Southern Democrats to vote for Hoover. Dixon Merritt cautioned his readers against taking their movement lightly. These were the same people who had forced Congress to act upon the prohibition question.

Whether its delegates were motivated primarily by religious prejudice or by moral outrage, the Asheville convention constituted a rural protest against Smith's urbanism.  

This rural antipathy


91 In his biography of Cannon, Virginius Dabney indicates that the vast majority of the delegates opposed Smith primarily
toward Smith's urbanism was best expressed when Bishop Mouzon of the Methodist Church asserted: "The nomination of Governor Smith is the uprising of the lawless elements of the big cities against American civilization. The danger to American civilization today is in the big cities with their alien population, their lack of moral principles and their ignorance of American history and traditions."92

On July 19, the conferees adopted the "Declaration of Principles and Purposes of the Conference of Anti-Smith Democrats." While these delegates could not support Smith, they pledged themselves to work for the election of Democrats to all state and local offices. Denying that they were bolting the party, the conferees suggested that it was Smith who had deserted the Democracy. Their indictment of Smith was based upon four specific grievances. They charged that in his telegram to the Houston convention, Smith had repudiated the Democratic platform. Smith's Wet record, his selection of a Republican to chair the Democratic national committee, and his Tammany connection completed the Dry's bill of indictment.

because of his Catholicism and only secondarily because of his Wet views. Virginius Dabney, Dry Messiah; The Life of Bishop Cannon (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1949), 179-80. On the other hand, Dixon Merritt, while admitting the presence of religious prejudice, denied that it was the primary motivating factor. Rather, "these men and women felt that Governor Smith's political principles outrage their own religious principles, that his political practices would vitiate their moral achievements." Merritt, "The Asheville Convention," 543.

Accordingly, since Smith had deviated from the true Democracy, they felt no misgivings in recommending that Dry Southern Democrats vote for Hoover. The delegates chose Bishop Cannon chairman of their executive committee, and he departed for Richmond to open central headquarters. Local organizations were to be established in the Southern and border states. The battle that the moderates had hoped to avoid was now a reality. While they had insisted that the Democracy was neither a Wet party nor a Dry party, Smith seemed determined to transform it into the Wets' political vehicle. The Dry extremists were equally convinced that the Democracy was their property.

In retrospect, there can be no question that the South was genuinely in turmoil. Contemporaries, however, were not certain that the protests emanating from the South constituted legitimate threats to that region's solidarity. Numerous newspapers simply refused to take the Asheville conference seriously. S. F. Bertron, endeavoring to persuade McAdoo to support the ticket, brushed aside the Californian's fears of a break in the South. Bertron insisted that "a few Methodist Bishops, who are trying to inject the religious issue


94For the divergent editorial opinion on this subject see "Looking for a Split in the 'Solid South,'" Literary Digest, XCVIII (August 4, 1928), 8-9.
in our country, will not get far. The Solid South will go for Smith and probably enough other States to elect him. 95

The drift away from Smith, however, was not confined to Methodist bishops. On July 25, former Senator Robert L. Owen of Oklahoma, one of the most prominent Democrats of the Wilson years, announced that he would support Hoover for the presidency. Owen denounced the leader of his party for his wetness and his Tammany connection. Shortly thereafter, Vance McCormick, a former Democratic national chairman, declared his opposition to Smith because of the New Yorker's position on prohibition. Without offering any public explanation, Senator Simmons submitted his resignation from the Democratic national committee to Chairman Raskob. 96 While not yet ready to publicly denounce Smith, Senator Simmons was obviously gravitating in that direction. The North Carolinian felt that Smith had betrayed the party by turning it over to Tammany, Wall Street, and big business. Like other Southerners, Simmons resented the Smith leaders' taking the South for granted. 97

95S. R. Bertron to W. G. McAdoo, July 30, 1928, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 339, McAdoo Papers.


97F. M. Simmons to Frank A. Hampton, July 30, 1928, Box XIIA, Simmons Papers; F. M. Simmons to O. M. Mull, July 25, 1928, ibid.; F. M. Simmons to W. G. McAdoo, August 1, 1928, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 339, McAdoo Papers.
Not unnaturally, George Fort Milton, Jr. applauded Simmons' decision to resign from the Democratic national committee. And it is in Milton's hatred and despair that one discerns most clearly the rural antipathy toward the city. Observing that the party's executive committee was composed of six residents of New York and Gerry of Rhode Island, Milton asserted: "There is a fine executive committee for you isn't it? Not the United States, but Manhattan Isle!" While Smith's wetness offended Milton, it was not the Wet appeal alone that alarmed the Chattanoogan. Rather, he was also concerned with what it implied:

Such an appeal would have collateral aspects. It would be primarily to appetite, and secondarily to every sort of group complex, inferiority attitude, and resentment to American standards and ideals which could be contrived. To the aliens, who feel that the older America, the America of Anglo-Saxon stock, is a hateful thing which must be overturned and humiliated; to the northern negroes, who lust for social equality and racial dominance; to the Catholics who have been made to believe that they are entitled to the White House, and to the Jews who are likewise to be instilled with the feeling that this is the time for God's chosen people to chastise America yesteryear.

...If the dominance of such groups represent the new America which Smith is seeking to arouse, the old America, the America of Jackson, and of Lincoln and of Wilson, should rise up in wrath and defeat it.

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98 George Fort Milton, Jr. to Frank A. Hampton, July 26, 1928, Box XIIA, Simmons Papers.

It is my hope however, that as the campaign progresses, the eyes of the Southern people will be opened to its enormity, and that each further step Smith takes to win the anti-Americans of the East will cost him his chances in the South. 100

Smith was indeed proceeding with his plans to capture the Eastern vote. Returning from a visit with the New York Governor late in July, Key Pittman reported that Smith intended to emphasize prohibition modification in his acceptance speech. Smith planned to announce that he was opposed to the saloon and that he favored temperance. At the same time he would suggest that conditions existing under the current laws were unsatisfactory and that steps should be taken to remedy them. He would propose an amendment to the Eighteenth Amendment. This amendment would grant the states the exclusive power to manufacture and sell liquor, and would also specify that such liquor could not be imbibed on the premises where sold. According to Smith, the latter provision would effectively eliminate the return of the saloon. 101

Smith's proposed course of action greatly alarmed the Southern moderates. Carter Glass warned Pat Harrison, who as usual was working at national headquarters, that if Smith persisted in his efforts to advocate modification of the Eighteenth Amendment,

100 Ibid.

101 Key Pittman to S. M. Pickett, July 21, 1928, Box 14, Pittman Papers.
not only Virginia but also other normally Democratic states would be
lost to the Democracy. In an effort to mollify the moderate Drys,
Smith invited Glass, Daniels, George, and Walsh to Albany. They
conferred with Smith prior to the delivery of his acceptance speech.
The conference was a gesture only. Smith's speech had already been
written and printed by the time the conferees arrived, and there was
nothing that they could say to dissuade Smith from launching an attack
upon the Eighteenth Amendment. 102 Carter Glass, still grumbling
that the electoral votes of the South were mistakenly being taken for
granted, disgustedly insisted that "Governor Smith seems determined
to make the Democratic party the tailend of 'The Association Against
the Eighteenth Amendment to the Federal Constitution'..." 103

Indisputably, Smith was trapped in an awkward dilemma. His
predicament reflected the plight of the Democratic Party. The
party's composition was such that it simply could not unite upon
cultural issues; yet Smith chose to emphasize those issues. From

102 Carter Glass to Pat Harrison, August 10, 1928, Box 4, Glass Papers; Carter Glass to Harry F. Byrd, August 16, 1928,
Box 1, ibid.; Carter Glass to Pat Harrison, August 16, 1928, Box 4,
ibid.; Josephus Daniels to M. L. Ham, August 13, 1928, Box 628,
Daniels Papers; Josephus Daniels to Dr. Cary Grayson, August 21,
1928, ibid.; George Fort Milton, Jr. to Josephus Daniels, August 22,
1928, Box 629, Daniels Papers; Josephus Daniels to W. H. Bagley,
August 21, 1928, Box 626, ibid.; O. Max Gardner to Josephus
Daniels, August 21, 1928, Box 628, ibid.

103 Carter Glass to Harry F. Byrd, August 16, 1928, Box 1, Glass Papers.
his perspective, the South would be of little benefit without the Northeast. By the same token the Northeast alone could not elect him.

But Smith, evidently convinced that in the final analysis the South would remain solid, chose to ignore the warnings of the moderate Drys and to launch an all-out effort to capture the Northeast.

The rumblings of protest from the South continued to grow in intensity. Two days before Smith delivered his acceptance speech, Furnifold Simmons bolted the national ticket. In a conversation with L. B. Homan, editor of the New Bern Times, Simmons announced that he would vote neither for Al Smith nor Herbert Hoover. Simmons charged that Smith had turned the party over to Tammany Hall, big business, and the predatory interests. In view of these circumstances, Simmons felt that each Democrat should be allowed to exercise his conscientious convictions with regard to the national ticket without fear of proscription. 104

In the face of this growing challenge within his own party, Smith delivered his acceptance speech in Albany on August 22, 1928. 105 Although the address ranged over a wide variety of topics, it was that section dealing with prohibition that was awaited with the

104Press release, August 20, 1928, Box XII A, Simmons Papers; The News and Observer (Raleigh), August 21, 1928, p. 1.

105DNC Proceedings, 1928, 266-86.
greatest anticipation. Smith opened his remarks on the sensitive liquor issue with a ringing declaration that in accord with the presidential oath of office, he would enforce the Eighteenth Amendment. He admitted that the prohibition issue cut across party lines and that the Democratic platform was silent on the question of changes in the law. Nevertheless, Smith announced that he believed that the liquor laws should be changed and that as president he would advise Congress of that fact. He suggested that the present laws had not only failed to secure temperance but also had bred disrespect for the law. Smith, therefore, proposed two remedies. First, after Congress had established an accurate and scientific definition of the alcoholic content of an intoxicating beverage, each state should be allowed to fix its own standard within that definition. In effect, Smith demanded modification of the Volstead Act. Second, Smith recommended that the Eighteenth Amendment be amended in order to allow each state, after approval by a popular vote of its citizens, to import, manufacture, and sell alcoholic beverages. Since this liquor was not to be consumed in any public place, there would be no return of the saloon. Smith insisted that the Dry states would be entitled to federal enforcement within their borders. 107


Walter Lippmann lauded Smith's address. Lippmann indicated that the prohibition question had rendered the Democratic Party impotent and that only a settlement of it on the basis of state option could restore the party to usefulness. Lippmann, therefore, commended Smith for demanding "...the settlement of the issue which has confused the whole political life of America and has ruined the Democratic Party."108 Whereas Lippmann viewed Smith's proposal as merely a means to an end--the restoration of the Democracy as an effective vehicle of opposition to the Republicans--others envisioned it as an end in itself. Consequently, Smith's proposed settlement seemed more likely to result in further ruin than in restoration.

Smith's declaration on prohibition, although not unexpected, drew immediate fire from the South. Through their respective newspapers, both the moderate Daniels and the extremist Milton attacked Smith's address. On the whole, Daniels characterized Smith's speech as one calculated to rally progressives to his standard. Unfortunately, the effectiveness of an otherwise excellent address had been diluted "...by unwisely injecting into the campaign a moral question upon which he [Smith] says his party is divided." According to Daniels, Smith would not only lose the support of many Dry

Democrats but also the prohibition question would obscure the more important issues that the Democrats could rally around to oust corruption and privilege from Washington. Likewise, George Fort Milton, Jr. admitted that Smith had made many admirable statements in his acceptance speech. He had, however, chosen to emphasize prohibition. In so doing, Milton charged that Smith had assumed a stance not authorized by the Houston convention. Yet while both Daniels and Milton deplored Smith's actions, they were not of one mind as to the proper course to pursue in the upcoming election. Following Glass' lead, Daniels suggested that the Dry Democrats should support Smith in spite of his hostility toward prohibition. Glass had indicated that the president could not modify the Eighteenth Amendment and that Congress and the states were in no mood to ratify Smith's proposals. Moreover, Smith's record as an executive was superior to Hoover's, and the Democracy's principles were more appealing than the Republicans'. Glass, therefore, intended to maintain his party regularity, and Daniels suggested to his readers that he was in accord with Glass' reasoning.

109 The News and Observer (Raleigh), August 23, 1928, p. 4.

110 Chattanooga News, August 23, 1928, p. 4.

111 The News and Observer (Raleigh), August 24, 1928, pp. 1 and 4.
George Fort Milton, Jr. most decidedly was not. The Chattanooga editor finally took the step that he had long threatened. He bolted the party. Milton asserted: "The News has always been deeply and sincerely opposed to the most important issues for which Governor Smith stands, and, in all sincerity, we cannot stultify ourselves by supporting this wet scion of Tammany Hall. On the subject of party regularity, William Jennings Bryan once wrote that 'a man's duty to his country is higher than his duty to his party.' Mr. Bryan's words were wise." Milton's country, like Bryan's, did not include Smith's urban constituency. It remained to be ascertained whether the moderates or the extremists spoke for the rural Democracy's rank and file.

The Democracy's rural wing was obviously badly fractured, and all sides brought increasing pressure to bear upon their former leader, William Gibbs McAdoo. Milton and Simmons reminded McAdoo that in light of his oft repeated statements in defense of prohibition, he could not possibly support Smith. Claude Bowers suggested that McAdoo should maintain absolute silence. The Californian could thereby preserve himself for the party reorganization that would be necessary once the campaign was concluded.

Arthur Mullen, a Wet Catholic who had indefatigably labored for McAdoo in 1924, urged him to endorse Smith. Franklin Roosevelt

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112 Chattanooga News, August 28, 1928, p. 4.
and Bernard Baruch, working through S. R. Bertron and Byron
Newton, made a concerted effort to secure McAdoo's support for
Smith. In response to the pressure from Roosevelt and Baruch,
McAdoo tentatively agreed to endorse Smith. McAdoo's proffered
endorsement was made conditional upon Smith's publicly stating that
as president he would guarantee federal enforcement of prohibition
in New York state. Roosevelt, however, lacked sufficient power
within the Smith organization to effect a rapprochement between
McAdoo and Smith, and Smith made no such specific pledge. An
insatiably ambitious man, McAdoo obviously wanted to maintain his
party regularity, but he felt compelled to justify his action by
reference to some lofty principle. Otherwise, he could not face such
former colleagues as Milton and Simmons. As August faded into
September, McAdoo had reached no decision. 113

113 S. R. Bertron to W. G. McAdoo, August 1, 1928, McAdoo
General Correspondence, Box 339, McAdoo Papers; W. G. McAdoo
to S. R. Bertron, August 6, 1928, ibid.; George Fort Milton, Jr. to
W. G. McAdoo, August 7, 1928, ibid.; Arthur Mullen to W. G.
McAdoo, August 7, 1928, ibid.; W. G. McAdoo to Arthur Mullen,
August 13, 1928, ibid.; Claude G. Bowers to W. G. McAdoo, August
13, 1928, ibid.; Byron Newton to John J. Raskob, August 22, 1928,
ibid.; W. G. McAdoo to Bernard Baruch, August 25, 1928, ibid.;
George Fort Milton, Jr. to W. G. McAdoo, August 28, 1928, Box
XIIA, Simmons Papers; Furnifold Simmons to George Fort Milton,
Jr., August 29, 1928, ibid.; Roosevelt to S. R. Bertron, August 29,
1928, Group 17, Box 13, FDR Papers; W. G. McAdoo to Bernard
Baruch, August 29, 1928, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 339,
McAdoo Papers; Byron R. Newton to W. G. McAdoo, November 19,
1928, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 341, ibid.; Byron R.
Newton to W. G. McAdoo, December 1, 1928, ibid.; W. G. McAdoo
Throughout September and October, McAdoo continued to reassess his position. It was scarcely an enviable one. McAdoo had always professed to be motivated by principle, not by political expediency. How could McAdoo the man of principle, who had spent the last year and one-half extolling the virtues of prohibition and denouncing Smith as prohibition's greatest foe, support Smith for the presidency? On the other hand, could the politically ambitious McAdoo expect to have any future in the Democracy if he did not maintain his party regularity? In the war between McAdoo's principles and McAdoo's ambitions, ambition was destined to be the victor.

A few days prior to the election, McAdoo announced that while he was opposed to Smith's position on prohibition, he intended to preserve his party allegiance. In making his statement, McAdoo acted against the advice of Milton, Roper and Simmons. They insisted that McAdoo had nothing to gain by such action.  

114 Indeed,
McAdoo's announcement had come too late to have any effect upon the election's outcome. His failure to publicly state his position earlier had considerably lowered his already diminished prestige.  

McAdoo was not really concerned with the effect that his statement would have on Smith's candidacy. It was anxiety about his own political future, not Smith's, that prompted McAdoo to act. He insisted that he had been motivated by only one consideration, "...namely, the preservation of any potentialities I may possess (and I may have none) for future usefulness to the cause in which you and I believe and in the Democratic Party itself." McAdoo suggested that "...it seemed to me that I could render a greater service to the country, if I could render any at all, by preserving my party membership, and especially under circumstances which would not affect the result one way or another."  

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115Early in September S. R. Bertron, who had been urging McAdoo to support Smith, announced that McAdoo had waited too long for any declaration to be effective. Furthermore, Bertron stipulated that he had "...finished talking politics..." with McAdoo. S. R. Bertron to W. G. McAdoo, September 10, 1928, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 340, McAdoo Papers. By mid-October, a disillusioned George Fort Milton, Jr. was suggesting that "...the thing which I had expected of a man of McAdoo's attitude of mind to do, would have been to come out firmly against putting the Tammany Tiger in the White House." Milton indicated that: "Hundreds of thousands of Democrats who were convinced by McAdoo's gallant fight before are now looking with a good deal of scorn upon his silence in the critical moment of the fight." George Fort Milton, Jr. to Furnifold M. Simmons, October 18, 1928, Box XIIA, Simmons Papers.  

116W. G. McAdoo to F. M. Simmons, November 14, 1928, Box XIIA, Simmons Papers.
More politically astute than his friend Milton, McAdoo saw that the party's future would belong to the regulars. McAdoo, however, would not shape that future. While he would remain a force in California politics, McAdoo was finished as a national political leader. He had one last dramatic role to play upon the national stage, but he was no longer the recognized champion of the rural Democracy.

While McAdoo had procrastinated, others had acted. Whereas Smith's nomination in Houston had precipitated the Asheville Convention, his acceptance speech prompted the formation of another anti-Smith Democratic organization. Politicians rather than preachers formed the nucleus of the National Constitutional Democratic Committee. Under the direction of Frank P. Stockbridge, M. D. Lightfoot, and George Fort Milton, Jr., this organization came into being at a meeting in Memphis, Tennessee, early in September.

Among the most notable people associated with the National Constitutional Democratic Committee at one time or another were: Vance McCormick, Tom Love, Furnifold Simmons, Mrs. Clem Shaver, former Governor O. B. Colquitt of Texas, former Senator Robert L. Owen of Oklahoma, former Governor William E. Sweet of Colorado, former Governor Eugene N. Foss of Massachusetts, Willard M. Kiplinger of Washington, D. C., and Cato Sells of Texas. Significantly, McAdoo refused to commit himself to the organization. And while Roper offered the group advice, he refused to associate himself
publicly with them and thereby preserved both his party regularity and his party future. 117

Like the delegates to the Asheville convention, the participants attending the Memphis conference did not picture themselves as bolting the Democratic Party. Rather, they were its self-appointed saviors. In their eyes it was Smith who had bolted the party. Affirming their loyalty to Democratic principles, they vowed determination "...to do all in our power to take the party out of the hands of Tammany Hall." The participants contended that if Smith was decisively defeated, it would "...serve to rebuke the unauthorized attempt he has made to make ours a wet party and will contribute significantly to a rededication of the party of Andrew Jackson to battle for the preservation of the Constitution and the maintenance of the integrity of the federal laws." The conferees recognized no obligation to support their party's presidential nominee because he had "...conspicuously bolted the Houston democratic platform on

117 W. M. Kiplinger to W. G. McAdoo, September 6, 1928, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 340, McAdoo Papers; W. G. McAdoo to W. M. Kiplinger, September 7, 1928, ibid.; Frank Stockbridge to George Fort Milton, Jr., September 7, 1928, Box XII A, Simmons Papers; M. D. Lightfoot to George Fort Milton, Jr., September 9, 1928, ibid.; George Fort Milton, Jr. to M. D. Lightfoot, September 10, 1928, ibid.; George Fort Milton, Jr. to Furnifold Simmons, September 10, 1928, ibid.; Daniel C. Roper to Furnifold Simmons, October 13, 1928, ibid.; Bernard Baruch to W. G. McAdoo, November 14, 1928, S. C. Vol. XX, Baruch Papers (Princeton University); Daniel C. Roper to Hugh A. Locke, November 20, 1928, Box IU-9B, Love Papers (Dallas Historical Society); M. D. Lightfoot to Tom Love, November 21, 1928, ibid.
prohibition and on immigration restriction, and by his own act has released democrats as such from obligation to accord him support. "118

With a ringing declaration, the Democrats attending the conference asserted: "For the sake of democratic principles, which. . . Smith has abandoned and transgressed, we appeal to the millions of democrats of the Union who revere the Constitution and respect the law to cooperate with us in wresting democracy from the unclean hands of Tammany Hall by defeating the candidate for president of prohibition's most dangerous foe. "119

With his party's rural wing visibly disintegrating around him, Smith began what was destined to be a futile campaign. 120 He had

118 Chattanooga News, September 13, 1928, p. 1. In a brief declaration on immigration, the platform had approved the existing limitations on immigration and by implication the existing quota system. In his acceptance speech, Smith had opposed restriction based on census figures that were thirty-eight years old and clearly designed to discriminate against particular nationalities. DNC Proceedings, 1928, 196-97, 286. This dispute over immigration policy represented another clear clash of rural and urban values. Daniels had warned Smith not to deviate from the Houston platform because people would charge that he desired a greater immigration of Russian Jews and Southern European Catholics. Josephus Daniels to O. Max Gardner, August 27, 1928, Box 628, Daniels Papers.


120 Bolting was not confined to Democratic ranks. Smith was the beneficiary of some Republican desertions, especially on the part of big businessmen and of representatives of Mid-western agricultural discontent. See "The Bolters' Heyday," Literary Digest, XCVIII (September 29, 1928), 7-8; Charles Willis Thompson, "Who is Bolting and Why," World's Work, LVI (October, 1928), 587-91.
made it very clear that the main thrust of his campaign was to be
directed toward the urban centers of the Northeast, areas where
presumably he was already strong. Smith had exhibited a cavalier
disregard for the fears his name aroused in rural America. Dis­
trusted in those regions because of his Catholicism, his wetness,
and his Tammany connection, Smith had, nevertheless, chosen to
accentuate his urban image. In his telegram to the Houston conven­
tion, his selection of Raskob, his choice of an executive committee,
and his acceptance speech, he had shown no disposition to assuage
rural fears. In myriad other ways Smith seemed intent upon flouting
his urbanism in rural America's face. Within a week of his nomina­
tion, Smith, knowing full well that Tammany was viewed with horror
in America's hinterland, had accepted an invitation to speak at
Tammany's Fourth of July celebration. During the course of the
campaign he not only refused to alter his dress or mannerisms, but
also he insisted upon exaggerating his use of Bowery slang. 121

While one is tempted to admire Smith for his honesty, there
can be no question that Smith failed to grasp a fundamental political
reality--New York City was not the United States of America. Smith
aspired to be president of a country that he did not comprehend. He

121For an excellent discussion of Smith's provincialism see
Burner, The Politics of Provincialism, 179-216. For a contempo­
rary appraisal of Smith's provincialism see Ray T. Tucker, The
made no more attempt to understand the countryside than Milton had
to understand the city. In the final analysis, neither Milton nor
Smith was able to transcend his environment. In retrospect it is
clear that there was nothing Smith could have done to win the election.
His urban image may have been so deeply engraved in the rural mind
that he could not possibly have relieved rural anxieties. The point
was, however, that Smith not only made no attempt to ease cultural
hostility but also he actually seemed intent upon heightening it.

Smith's failure to assuage rural fears assumed added significance because to a large degree the campaign centered upon cultural
questions. Smith had eschewed Bryanism. Consequently, insofar as
economic questions were concerned, it was only on the question of
public power that Smith appeared to be more progressive than Hoover,
and even this distinction became blurred as the campaign pro-
gressed. The Nation saw little difference between the two parties on economic questions. Terribly disappointed with Smith, the Nation
commented that: "He [Smith] does not go the whole distance on water
power; he does not use the words 'government operation,' which are
the crux of the problem; he does not say that he will take corrupt big
business by the throat as Wilson promised to do. The millionaires
who are flocking to him ostensibly because he is an honest Wet would
not do so did they not feel sure that he is satisfactorily safe and

Although Smith courted the Midwest farm vote, he was unwilling to move far enough to the left to distinguish his position from Hoover's. Hoover dismissed the McNary-Haugen plan as unworkable, and Smith announced that he endorsed the principle. But since Smith condemned the equalization fee, there was no clear-cut difference between the two men's appeals. Smith's equivocation on the farm issue enabled many Republican McNary-Haugenites to support Hoover with no qualms of conscience.  

In the absence of any real economic differences between the parties, cultural animosities found full expression. Since the Republicans were not greatly divided on these cultural issues, it was within the Democratic Party that they wreaked havoc. Smith's Catholicism, his connection with Tammany, his stand on prohibition, and his entire urban demeanor were all anathema to the rural mind. While this violent rural antagonism toward Smith was by no means confined to the South, it was in that region that rural hostility was most openly expressed. And when the Republicans and anti-Smith Democrats attacked Smith on cultural grounds, many loyal Southern Democrats found a most convenient cultural counter-attack: white

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123 "Should Liberals Vote for Al Smith?," *Nation*, CXXVII (September 26, 1928), 284-85.

supremacy. If Mississippi and Alabama can be accepted as being representative of the deep South, then many Southern Democrats were asked to choose between voting for Hoover and the preservation of native, Protestant, Dry America or voting for Smith and the preservation of white supremacy. 125

125 Both the loyalists and the bolters in the South attempted to employ the race issue to their own advantage. The bolters claimed that Smith was pro-Negro, a charge that the Democratic national headquarters attempted to dispel. The loyalists countered with Hoover's friendly attitude toward the Negro and summoned up memories of reconstruction. In the final analysis, the loyalists reaped the advantages of the race issue. For detailed treatments of the cultural clash in the South see Hugh D. Reagan, "Race as a Factor in the Presidential Election of 1928 in Alabama," Alabama Review, XIX (January, 1966), 5-19; and Donald B. Kelley, "Deep South Dilemma: The Mississippi Press in the Presidential Election of 1928," Journal of Mississippi History, XXV (April, 1963), 63-92.

Race was also a factor in North Carolina. On the eve of the election, Josephus Daniels penned a front page editorial with a very self-explanatory caption: "The Democratic Ticket Is The White Man's Ticket, Stand By The White Man's Party." The News and Observer (Raleigh), November 6, 1928, p. 1. Ironically, Furnifold Simmons, champion of the North Carolina grandfather clause, asserted that those Southerners, like Daniels, who supported Smith, ignored his stand on prohibition. Rather, they merely shouted "Nigger! Nigger! Nigger!" Speech delivered at Raleigh, North Carolina, October 25, 1928, printed in Furnifold M. Simmons, Memoirs and Addresses, ed. by J. Fred Rippy (Durham: Duke University Press, 1936), 175-217. The rural mind, with its suspicion of Tammany, its fear of foreigners, its aversion to Wets and Catholics, was by no means confined to rural America in a geographic sense. A rural mind transplanted to the city often remained a rural mind still. For example, John Roach Straton, pastor of the Calvary Baptist Church in New York City, bitterly assailed Smith's personification of urbanism. Hillyer H. Straton and Ferenc M. Szasz, "The Reverend John Roach Straton and the Presidential Election of 1928," New York History, XLIX (April, 1968), 200-17. For a complete picture of the cultural attacks upon Smith's urbanism, especially the expressions of anti-Catholicism, see Moore, A Catholic Runs for President, 107-94.
The irony involved in employing racial prejudice to counter religious prejudice was apparently lost on many contemporaries. Bernard Baruch strove diligently to hold the South in line for the Democracy. He dismissed Southern opposition to Smith's wetness as being a false issue. Baruch, a Jew, was certain that anti-Catholicism formed the real basis of Southern opposition to Smith. Fearing that the South would succumb to this religious prejudice, Baruch intoned: "The real question for the South is to decide whether they are going to secede from the protecting folds of the Democratic Party." He warned that "if the South votes the Republican ticket, it will have to face the problem it has been struggling against ever since the slaves were freed. As a matter of fact, it was a Tammany Congressman who stood with us against the Force bill." Baruch charged that the Republicans, under the guise of the Anti-Saloon League and anti-Catholicism, were attempting to lure the South away from her only protection. Baruch expressed confidence, however, that such a strategy would not work. He asserted: "I don't believe our people will finally be led astray by intolerance and false issues to destroy themselves." Consciously or unconsciously, Smith undoubtedly relied upon Southern fears of "Black Republicanism" to hold that region in line. W. E. B. DuBois severely chastised Smith

for pandering to Southern racial prejudices. 127

When the votes were tabulated, Smith had been decisively defeated. His strategy of grafting the urban Northeast to the rural South had failed in two ways. He had not succeeded in capturing the Northeast, and, as Milton and the Dry extremists had warned, the heretofore solid South had been shattered. Smith had managed to carry only eight states: Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina. Yet at the same time, he had recorded the largest popular vote in his party's history. When the press viewed the Hoover landslide, they attributed it to three factors: prosperity, prohibition, and prejudice. Most papers indicated that prosperity was the most important of the three. The Republican Party was the majority party and as such was associated with the country's prosperity. Moreover, Hoover enjoyed enormous personal prestige, and the electorate viewed him as more capable of handling the presidency than Smith. 128

The Republican Party, however, was not the majority party in the South, and it was the break in that heretofore solidly Democratic bastion that the contemporary press found most significant. While prosperity appeared to be the overall key to Hoover's success,


they attributed the Southern defection to prohibition and to religious bigotry. Contemporaries also indicated that Texas, North Carolina, Florida, and Virginia, as the most industrialized of the Southern states, were quite amenable to Republican doctrines. Even in these states, however, aversion to Smith's wetness and his Catholicism had hastened the break. Clearly, the conflict between the Southern aversion to Smith's urbanism and the Southern desire to maintain either party regularity or white supremacy had rent that region's political solidarity. While Smith's urbanism had obviously hurt him in the South, it had won him innumerable converts in the North-east.


130 V. O. Key, Jr., indicates that those Southern areas with the largest Negro populations failed to react adversely to Smith's urbanism. Whites in these areas obviously felt that the threat of Negro rule posed a more imminent danger than Smith's urbanism. On the other hand, the Southern areas free of the fear of Negro rule expressed their contempt for Smith's urbanism. An exception to this general rule was found in Southern urban areas which cast more Republican votes proportionally than rural areas with equivalent Negro populations. This deviation was to a large degree merely a continuation of past tendencies. Furthermore, city life freed whites from the urge toward political solidarity found in the rural areas. V. O. Key, Jr., Southern Politics in State and Nation (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), 318-29. It should not be assumed, however, that every Southern white who supported Smith did so out of a concern for white supremacy.

131 Contemporaries did not attach as much significance to Smith's gains in the Northeastern urban centers as have later historians. Samuel Lubell offers what has become the most celebrated comment on the 1928 election when he suggests that a "Smith
Smith's defeat came as no surprise to William Gibbs McAdoo who attributed it to the "New York" element's failure to comprehend the remainder of the country. McAdoo was convinced that Smith's Wet record, his connection with Tammany, and his position on immigration had been insurmountable handicaps. Although McAdoo failed to emphasize the religious issue as working to Smith's Revolution" had preceded the "Roosevelt Revolution." By breaking the Republican hold on the nation's urban centers, Smith had paved the way for Roosevelt's election. Lubell, The Future of American Politics, 34-35. Indicating that the 1928 election had brought about a realignment of the urban voters in the New England states, V. O. Key, Jr., characterizes it as a "critical election." He too concludes that a "Smith Revolution" had preceded the "Roosevelt Revolution." V. O. Key, Jr., "A Theory of Critical Elections," Journal of Politics, XVII (February, 1955), 3-18. Carl Degler adds his voice to the chorus when he points to the year 1928 as the beginning of the urban swing toward the Democratic Party. Carl N. Degler, "American Political Parties and the Rise of the City: An Interpretation," Journal of American History, LI (June, 1964), 41-59.

Recently, the concept of a "Smith Revolution" has come under heavy challenge. In a study of the 1928 election in California, John L. Shover demonstrates that no "Smith Revolution" occurred. In fact, the Smith vote in urban areas constituted a loss of Democratic strength. John L. Shover, "Was 1928 a Critical Election in California?" Pacific Northwest Quarterly, LVIII (October, 1967), 196-204. Although David Burner sees the election of 1928 as significantly strengthening the party in urban areas, he indicates that in many cases immigrants were either returning to the Democracy after deserting it in 1920 or increasing a trend that had been building up during the decade. Burner, The Politics of Provincialism, 228-43. It was left for Jerome Clubb and Howard Allen to deal the most damaging blow to the Lubell thesis. Using municipal election data for off-year as well as presidential elections, they suggest that the 1928 election may have been a deviating rather than a realigning election. That is, urban voters were merely responding to Smith's personality and not to the Democratic Party. Moreover, since no one has suggested that Hoover's gains in the South constituted a realignment, why should Smith's gains in the urban areas be treated differently? Clubb and Allen, "The Cities and the Election of 1928," 1205-1220.
disadvantage, others were not so hesitant. Both Robinson and Baruch felt that the religious question constituted the primary reason for Smith's defeat. This opinion was not shared by Herbert Hoover, who speculated that Smith's Catholicism had probably attracted as many voters as it had repelled. While Hoover admitted that religion may have been a factor in the Southern states, he believed that Tammany and prohibition had played the larger role in that region. In retrospect, it is obvious that no Democrat could have defeated Hoover and Republican prosperity in 1928. Furthermore, it was the whole range of urban values that Smith represented, rather than either his Catholicism or his Wet views, that was repugnant to the rural mind.

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133 A great deal of controversy has swirled around the relative importance of the factors responsible for Smith's defeat. Richard Hofstadter has convincingly demonstrated that Republican prosperity, Hoover's prestige, and the disarray of the Democratic Party made it impossible for any Democrat, regardless of his religion, to be elected in 1928. Richard Hofstadter, "Could a Protestant Have Beaten Hoover in 1928?", The Reporter, XXII (March 17, 1960), 31-33. As to the relative significance of the prohibition and the religious issues, David Burner ranks the religious question as the more important and tends to see prohibition as being largely a cloak for anti-Catholicism. Burner, The Politics of Provincialism, 220-22. On the other hand, Paul Carter contends that prohibition was a real issue and a part of that larger complex of urbanism that Smith
In this election that had pit Democrat against Democrat, it was not only the Republicans who were rejoicing. Furnifold Simmons announced that Smith's defeat "was necessary in order to save the integrity of the party and its principles." An equally ebullient James Cannon insisted that Smith's defeat had constituted an "overwhelming repudiation of the proposal by the people of our country to place the national Government in the hands of representatives of the wet sidewalks of our cities, aided and abetted by a selfish, so-called liberal element of high society life." In the eyes of these rural extremists the Democratic Party had suffered no defeat; the real party had been vindicated. Former Representative W. D. Upshaw of Georgia announced: This is not a Republican victory in the South. It is the triumph of the anti-Smith Democrats who have determined to reclaim represented. It was Smith's total urban complexion that so frightened the rural mind. Paul A. Carter, "The Campaign of 1928 Re-examined," Wisconsin Magazine of History, XLVI (Summer, 1963), 263-72.

Carter would appear to have the better of the argument. To dismiss support for prohibition as a mere cover for anti-Catholicism would be contrary to all that is known about Democratic politics in the Twenties. While one might contend that the Democrats' concern for the prohibition question illustrated the intellectual bankruptcy of their party, they were nonetheless obsessed with the issue. Not only was the issue a very real one but also it existed apart from the Catholic-anti-Catholic controversy. There was no more pronounced Dry than Thomas J. Walsh, a Catholic. Earlier in the decade, Protestant William Jennings Bryan and Protestant Oscar Underwood had engaged in a tremendous struggle over prohibition. Attempting to determine whether Smith's Catholicism or his Wet views were more repugnant to rural America is perhaps less beneficial than recognizing that both these attributes contributed to his overall urban image.
and redeem the party of their fathers." \textsuperscript{134} George Fort Milton, Jr. sounded a similar note: "In this campaign, the people of the United States did not reject the Democratic Party. They rejected Tammany Hall. . . . It was not Democracy which the voters repudiated. It was the Tammany Tiger, which the American people patriotically and properly ordered to remain confined to Manhattan Isle." \textsuperscript{135}

George Fort Milton, Jr. was particularly pleased that North Carolina and Virginia, the home states of Daniels and Glass respectively, had supported Hoover. Milton suggested that when the time came to reorganize the party, "... the dry Democrats like Glass and Daniels and Shepherd should not and will not be permitted to take a lead in the reorganization." Milton's logic was intriguing. They were not qualified to reorganize the party because "... they had conspicuously failed to put principle ahead of party regularity, and thus have shown their unworthiness to lead." \textsuperscript{136} In helping to deliver Texas to Hoover, Tom Love was also certain that he had rendered a great service to the Democratic Party. Love felt that the election result had conclusively demonstrated that the party would not

\textsuperscript{134}New York Times, November 8, 1928, pp. 20 and 60.

\textsuperscript{135}Chattanooga News, November 7, 1928, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{136}George Fort Milton, Jr. to W. G. McAdoo, November 9, 1928, McAdoo General Correspondence, Box 340, McAdoo Papers.
tolerate either Wet or Tammany domination. The bolters' victory was a pyrrhic one. In order to save the party from Al Smith, they had placed themselves outside the party. Thus, their plans for leading in the party reorganization were a bit premature. The party that would emerge from the Democratic convention in 1932 would not be dominated by the rural extremists.

On November 7, Smith announced that he would never again seek public office. While this must have been gratifying to the rural extremists, Raskob's simultaneous statement that he intended to serve his full four years as chairman seemed to portend a furious struggle over reorganization. More immediately important, however, was the question of whether there was anything left to reorganize. The World's Work indicated that while the Democratic Party had offered the voters a good candidate, "it did not give the voter a choice between two political philosophies. Except for prohibition, which was made an issue by Governor Smith after his party had side-stepped it, the Democracy of 1928 was little more than a diluted Republicanism." The journal concluded: "The party is in confusion; it is losing its hold even on the formerly solid South. The time is approaching when it must either disintegrate and yield to a

137 Tom Love to W. G. McAdoo, November 16, 1928, ibid.

new major party or effect a decisive reorganization."139

The Nation was even more pessimistic. It reported that "the Democratic Party is smashed--of that there is no doubt."140 The Nation discounted Smith's large popular vote and asserted: "The campaign has brought out again that the party is composed of utterly discordant elements which at bottom can never be reconciled. The Southern wing has now proved that it will never support a Catholic Wet, although the bulk of the party's urban vote in the North is largely Catholic or Wet." Furthermore, "as for the masses of the Democratic voters in the North who are not Catholic or Wet, the party has done its very best to alienate the thoughtful among them by throwing overboard most of its principles and, apparently with deliberation, has set about to wipe out as many of the distinctions between it and the Republican Party as it possibly can." The Democrats' courting of the big business vote had particularly distressed the Nation. It stipulated: "The campaign was waged on personalities and not on issues, except insofar as Governor Smith in his person called up prohibition and the issue of intolerance. Otherwise principles were forgotten, or deliberately abandoned. The radical social and economic program once urged by Mr. Wilson was sunk without trace. The Democracy revealed itself as being without fixed

139World's Work, LVII (December, 1928), 118.

140Nation, CXXVII (November 14, 1928), 507.
principles, as purely an opportunist organization." Thus, the Nation suggested, as it had on other occasions, that it was time for the Democratic Party to die and thereby permit the formation of a truly honest, progressive, and liberal party. The journal was convinced "...that as long as the Democratic Party represents the reaction and intolerance of the Protestant, Dry South and the Catholics and the Wets of the North, its possibilities of usefulness as a strongly welded and united opposition are nil."\footnote{"What of the Democracy?", "Nation", CXXVII (November 21, 1928), 536.} Indisputably, the cultural conflicts within the party had rendered it impotent as an effective vehicle of opposition.

Likewise, Thomas Walsh could derive no comfort from Smith's large popular vote. Walsh saw nothing to be gained "...by overlooking the fact that the result was a rout, the most serious feature of which is that we were in disfavor in every section of the country, except in Massachusetts and Rhode Island." Thoroughly despondent, Walsh indicated that the Southern Democracy had been factionalized and that the Southern Democrats' bitterness toward one another might seriously affect the future of the party in that region. He feared that Northern Catholics would desert the party because of their erroneous belief that religious bigotry was the prime cause of Smith's defeat. Walsh simply could discover no basis
for Democratic optimism. The country was indifferent to Republican corruption, indifferent to the issue of public power, indifferent to the misdeeds of the power trust. Millions of people had become investors and believed that their financial futures would be imperiled by Democratic success. Moreover, Walsh felt that the election had proved that the country was overwhelmingly Dry, and the Democrats would have to bear the onus of having waged a Wet campaign. In short, the Democratic position was hopeless. Walsh felt that only time was on the Democracy's side. "It has happened before, and it is sure to happen again, that some turn in events quite unexpected will overthrow a ministry or government, and we must hope something of the kind will transpire as we proceed." 142

Despite the Democracy's shattering defeat, the New Republic was not ready to compose an obituary for a party that had polled a larger proportion of the popular vote in 1928 than it had in either 1920 or 1924. The journal felt that it was too soon to gauge what the situation might be in 1932. 143 By far the greatest promoter of Democratic optimism was the newly elected governor of New York--Franklin Roosevelt. Scoffing at the claims of disaster, Roosevelt declared that the party had a "bright outlook for the future." He

142 T. J. Walsh to Roosevelt, November 27, 1928, Box 377, Walsh Papers.

143 New Republic, LVII (November 21, 1928), 2.
suggested that "a vote nearly twice as large as that cast for any other Democratic candidate for President is another evidence of the come-back of the party." For the present, however, Roosevelt's voice was drowned in the flood of despair.

Pointing to Smith's defeat and to the defeats of Senators Bruce of Maryland and Edwards of New Jersey, Mark Sullivan proclaimed that the future of the Democratic Party definitely did not lie in the Wet Eastern urban centers. Had the South remained solid, he felt that control automatically would have reverted to that region. The South, however, had not held firm, and Sullivan was unsure about the future leadership of the party. Clearly, future leadership lay neither with the Miltons nor with the Smiths. The Democracy could not succeed nationally as a party that catered solely to the cultural needs of either Chattanooga, Tennessee, or New York City. Those needs were entirely antithetical. If Smith's future as a party leader had been destroyed, so also had those of the rural extremists who had left the party. While Bruce and Edwards had been repudiated in 1928, Simmons and Heflin would be defeated in 1930. Although the battle over prohibition had not yet run its course, the future was to belong to those moderates, primarily associated with the party's rural wing, who did not see the prohibition question

144 Quoted in "What of the Democracy?," 536.

as the be all and the end all of the Democratic Party's existence.

Moreover, these moderates would rally around the gentleman from Hyde Park who had managed to carry New York at the same time the representative of the sidewalks of New York had lost it.
CHAPTER XII

THE FIRST ROOSEVELT COALITION

Smith's nomination in 1928 had not marked an irrevocable victory of the city over the countryside within the Democratic Party. The agrarians, dazed and leaderless, had lacked both the will and the way to deprive Smith of the nomination. Between 1928 and 1932, however, the party's rural wing discovered a formidable new champion, Franklin Roosevelt. Roosevelt proved to be more successful in uniting the Southern and Western Democrats against their Eastern counterparts than had McAdoo, and, with some exceptions, the old Wilsonians rallied to Roosevelt's cause. Eventually, Franklin Roosevelt would forge a new Democracy with the city as its nucleus. Ironically, in order to create this new party he first had to reforge internally the old Bryan-Wilson-McAdoo coalition of Southern and Western agrarians and to defeat the ido' of the city masses, Al Smith. Roosevelt's nomination in 1932 signaled a victory for the rural moderates.

Roosevelt's relations with Smith throughout the Twenties had been very cordial. Although aware of Smith's liabilities as a national leader, Roosevelt admired and respected the "Happy
Roosevelt not only had labored assiduously to promote Smith's candidacy throughout the South and the West but also he had determined to hold his own ambitions in abeyance until Smith's had been gratified. Roosevelt's resolve in this latter instance was based both upon his personal loyalty to Smith and upon his realization that Smith held the key to his own political fortunes in New York. Yet, while Roosevelt took Smith very seriously, Smith did not reciprocate that feeling. Smith, a self-made man, was rather contemptuous of the country squire from Hyde Park. Notwithstanding his feeling of disdain for Roosevelt, Smith had been aware of Roosevelt's usefulness. After Charles Murphy's death in 1924, Smith had selected Roosevelt to serve as his campaign manager. Roosevelt was valuable to Smith because of the dissimilarity of the two New Yorkers' images. The Dry, Protestant, anti-Tammany, nationally known 1920 vice-presidential candidate from rural upstate New York added dignity, prestige, and balance to the predominantly Wet, urban, and Catholic Smith following.

Roosevelt had again rallied to Smith's standard in 1928 when he placed the "Happy Warrior's" name before the Houston convention. Smith, under pressure from his state leaders, desired Roosevelt to

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1 Freidel, Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Ordeal, 214-29.

play a still more active role in 1928. In dominating New York's Democracy since 1918, Smith had failed to develop a successor.

The state organization feared that it would lose the governorship in 1928 unless it could locate a suitable legatee for Smith's strength. The organization felt that its best hope for success lay with a nominee who could attract both rural and urban voters. They wanted a candidate with a record of public service, a pleasing personality, an ability to sway listeners, and a straddling position on the prohibition question. Since Smith needed New York's electoral votes if he hoped to win the presidency, a Protestant gubernatorial candidate would insure balance and help place New York in the Democratic column. 3

Concluding that strength lay in diversity, Smith and his lieutenants decided that Roosevelt would make the strongest gubernatorial nominee. Yielding to Smith's petitions over the strenuous objections of Louis Howe, Roosevelt refused to say that he would not accept a draft for the gubernatorial nomination. After Raskob had promised to help with the Warm Springs Foundation, Roosevelt's loyalty to Smith compelled him to submit to the "Happy Warrior's"

3 Proskauer, A Segment of My Times, 63; Lindley, Franklin D. Roosevelt, 12; Freidel, Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Ordeal, 250; Rollins, Roosevelt and Howe, 233-35; Burns, Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox, 100-1; Bernard Bellush, Franklin D. Roosevelt as Governor of New York (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), 6-10; Edward J. Flynn, You're the Boss (New York: Viking Press, 1947), 67-69.
pleas. Although Howe and Roosevelt were certain that 1928 would not be a Democratic year, Smith had won the governorship in 1924 in the face of a Republican sweep. Roosevelt could rely upon Smith's strength in the urban centers and buttress it with his own upstate following. His rural background and independence from Tammany appealed to farmers. If successful in capturing the New York governorship, Roosevelt's political stature would be enhanced immeasurably and his presidential aspirations bolstered considerably.4

Since Smith had relied primarily upon New York City's votes to win his gubernatorial campaigns, the Democratic organizations in the upstate counties had become practically nonexistent. It became James A. Farley's task to revitalize the New York Democracy's rural wing in order to cut into the normally heavy Republican upstate vote. The wisdom of this strategy made itself apparent immediately. When the election results were tallied, Smith not only had been repudiated nationally but also he had failed to carry New York. On the other hand, Roosevelt had captured the governorship. Significantly, even though Roosevelt had run behind Smith in the urban

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4 Proskaufe, A Segment of My Times, 63; Lindley, Franklin D. Roosevelt, 12; Freidel, Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Ordeal, 250; Rollins, Roosevelt and Howe, 23-35; Burns, Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox, 100-1; Bernard Bellush, Franklin D. Roosevelt as Governor of New York (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), 6-10; Edward J. Flynn, You're the Boss (New York: Viking Press, 1947), 67-69.
areas, he had outdistanced Smith enough upstate to salvage a victory.
Roosevelt achieved a plurality of 406,505 votes over his Republican opponent, Albert Ottinger, in New York City--32,000 votes less than Smith's plurality over Hoover in the city--and trailed Ottinger by only 80,841 votes upstate. Roosevelt's large upstate vote was essential to his victory. Smith had achieved a plurality of 450,000 votes over Hoover in New York City but lost the state by 103,000 votes as a result of Hoover's rural strength. 5

The implications of his own victory, coupled with the nature of Smith's shattering defeat, dictated the policy that Roosevelt must follow if he was to win the presidency. The Southern Democracy's defection revealed all too clearly the breach in the party. To secure national victory, the rural areas had to be reinstated. At the same time, the Democracy required more than rural votes to elect a president. The city had to be tied to the countryside. Thus, to insure success, Roosevelt would have to depend both upon inheriting Smith's urban strength and upon developing independent strength in the rural areas that had rejected Smith. This was essentially the same formula that Roosevelt had followed to win the governorship. He would have to dissociate himself from Smith and

appeal to traditional Democratic voters along traditional lines: aid to agriculture and opposition to business rule in the Bryan-McAdoo tradition. Above all, he must not appear to be Smith's stooge. To adopt Smith's image would be to share his fate. At the same time Roosevelt must not completely alienate Smith and his following. A key part of the strategy lay in inheriting Smith's urban strength.

Smith was not only the party's titular leader and very popular in the urban areas, but also his supporter, Raskob, controlled the Democratic national committee. The path that Roosevelt, or any moderate, would have to follow was a very tortuous one indeed.  

As a consequence of his victory in the face of the overwhelming Republican sweep, Roosevelt was suddenly catapulted to a position of party prominence. As Roosevelt journeyed to Warm Springs to rest and to prepare for his first term as governor, Southern supporters hailed him as the heir apparent to Democratic leadership. While

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it was clearly too early to predict what circumstances would prevail in 1932, Roosevelt now occupied center stage. Exuding confidence concerning the party's future, Roosevelt immediately launched a survey of Democratic leaders. He hoped to lay the groundwork for party unity. While he denied that he was seeking to advance his own fortunes and insisted that he was merely following the precedent that he had established in 1924, Roosevelt was strengthening his ties with those local Democratic leaders whose confidence he had so assiduously cultivated throughout the decade. 7

Roosevelt's letters were political masterpieces. He congratulated the local winners and invited important Democratic leaders to attend his inauguration in Albany. Always the optimist, Roosevelt refused to exhibit any despair over the outcome of the election. He cited Smith's large popular vote as evidence of Democratic strength. Roosevelt reiterated his long-standing suggestion that the party must function continually rather than just before national elections. He would soon learn that Raskob shared this opinion. Roosevelt and Raskob, however, differed radically as to whose purposes that revitalized organization should serve. As a master stroke Roosevelt

invited the county leaders to respond to his suggestions. 8

The responses to the survey must have been personally
gratifying to Roosevelt. He was hailed as "the outstanding figure
in the Democratic Party," "the logical leader of the party," "our
strongest Democrat," and "the candidate of the party in 1932." 9

Significantly, the geographic distribution of statements such as these
revealed that Roosevelt was preponderantly the choice of the Southern
and Western Democracy; the Eastern wing of the party was not so
willing to designate him as the party's new champion. 10 The distri-
bution of the favorable attitudes toward Roosevelt's aspirations was
merely one of several indications that the party was still rent by
tremendous cleavages. These fractures must either be healed or
be reduced in significance before any Democrat could lead the party

8Roosevelt to Cordell Hull, November 30, 1928, Ser. I, Con. 22, Hull Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress); Roosevelt to W. Hottell, December 8, 1928, Group 17, Box 6, FDR Papers (Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park); Mullen, Western Democrat, 254.

9Leslie C. Hardy to Roosevelt, December 5, 1928, Box 14, Democratic National Committee Papers, hereinafter cited as DNC Papers (Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park); George White to Roosevelt, November 13, 1928, Group 17, Box 23, FDR Papers; Key Pittman to Roosevelt, November 13, 1928, Group 17, Box 12, ibid.; Urban A. Lavery to Roosevelt, November 8, 1928, Group 17, Box 5, ibid.; See also Charles G. Colquitt to Roosevelt, November 10, 1928, Group 17, Box 1, ibid.; Jesse Graham to Roosevelt, November 12, 1928, Group 17, Box 3, ibid.

to national victory.

From the South and the West came demands that Raskob be ousted from control of the party and that prohibition repeal never again be made an issue. Roosevelt's correspondents from these sections suggested that the party must divorce itself from Eastern leadership. They insisted that the election had proved that the South would not tolerate a Wet or a Tammany candidate and that if this mistake was repeated the South might be lost forever. 11 On the other hand, from the East and from portions of the Midwest came pleas that the Simmonses, the Heflins, and the McAdoos be read out of the party. These correspondents viewed the South's conduct in the election as treasonous. 12 Congressional leaders, while agreeing in principle with the need for an aggressive national organization, indicated that passions were too high and that a cooling-off period was

11 Leslie J. Steele to Roosevelt, December 14, 1928, Box 132, DNC Papers; I. S. McQuitty to Roosevelt, December 26, 1928, Box 356, ibid.; John W. Haw to John J. Raskob, January 12, 1929, Box 583, ibid.; Jed Johnson to Roosevelt, January 7, 1929, Box 613, ibid.; E. B. Howard to Roosevelt, December 15, 1928, Group 17, Box 23, FDR Papers; C. C. Dill to Roosevelt, December 7, 1928, Group 17, Box 25, ibid.

12 Walter M. Cook to Roosevelt, November 9, 1928, Group 17, Box 13, FDR Papers, E. C. Grady to Roosevelt, Group 17, Box 5, ibid.; Frank M. Sheridan to Roosevelt, December 1, 1928, Box 223, DNC Papers; John T. Sullivan to Roosevelt, December 4, 1929, Box 209, ibid.
required before any organizational work could be undertaken.  

In his public pronouncements concerning the survey, Roosevelt mentioned neither the personal acclaim accorded him nor the cultural battle still raging within the Democracy. Rather, he insisted that the Democrats throughout the country were optimistic. They felt that the party would enjoy greater success in the future than it had in the past if it waged an active educational campaign for four years rather than organizing just prior to the election. Furthermore, Roosevelt stipulated that the recent defeat had aroused the Democrats' fighting instincts. In the past the Democrats' fighting instincts had been directed primarily at fellow Democrats. It remained to be seen whether the party would once again be torn by fratricidal strife.

While Roosevelt was strengthening his ties with local Democratic leaders, he also delicately moved to establish his independence from Smith. Roosevelt had to maneuver warily; he could not afford an open rupture with urban America's champion. Roosevelt retained most of Smith's department chiefs, but, to Smith's bitter disappointment, he dispensed with the services of Robert Moses and Belle

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13. Thaddeus H. Caraway to Roosevelt, December 11, 1928, Box 19, DNC Papers; W. A. Ayres to Roosevelt, December 21, 1928, Group 17, Box 7, FDR Papers.

Moskowitz. In formulating his legislative program, Roosevelt turned his attention to the subject of farm relief. His first message to the legislature was devoted primarily to the agricultural problem. Aware that farmers were suffering in the midst of plenty, Roosevelt was motivated both by political considerations and by a real concern for the farmers' plight. Roosevelt distributed this speech widely to political leaders throughout the country. In the years to come, Roosevelt strove to accentuate this rural image.  

While Roosevelt laid the groundwork for his presidential bid,

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15Handlin, Al Smith and His America, 144; Freidel, Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Triumph, 11-19; Rollins, Roosevelt and Howe, 248-51; Flynn, You're the Boss, 76-81; Franklin D. Roosevelt, The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt: Volume I; The Genesis of the New Deal, 1928-1932, comp. by Samuel I. Rosenman (New York: Random House, 1938), 80-86. For favorable out-of-state reaction to Roosevelt's inaugural address and his first message to the legislature see John Sharp Williams to Roosevelt, January 28, 1929, Group 17, Box 11, FDR Papers; Hoke Smith to Roosevelt, January 29, 1929, Group 17, Box 4, ibid.; Vic Donahey to Roosevelt, February 7, 1929, Group 17, Box 22, ibid.; J. Phelan to Roosevelt, February 9, 1929, Group 17, Box 1, ibid. During the years prior to the 1932 convention Roosevelt very carefully endeavored to present himself as a candidate sympathetic to rural problems. Writing to a supporter in Kansas, Roosevelt asserted: "I find that citizens of other states do not always realize that New York is one of the leading agricultural states in the nation, ranking third or fourth in the value and volume of its farm products. I, myself, was born and brought up in an agricultural community and I have always been particularly sympathetic with the problems of the farmers and anxious to help them in every way possible. I am glad to say that during the past three years we have put into effect some rather unusual measures, definitely directed to aid this group in our population." Roosevelt to Lloyd Kohler, April 2, 1932, Box 223, DNC Papers. See also Roosevelt to Guy C. Hanna, March 3, 1932, Box 192, ibid.
John J. Raskob, under attack from his party's extreme rural wing, sought to revitalize the Democratic organization. Immediately following the election, demands that Raskob resign the chairmanship began to emanate from the Southern states. Significantly, however, most of these demands were voiced either by Democrats who had bolted the party or by those whose support of the ticket had been only nominal. Nor were the rural extremists of one mind as to the necessity of ousting Raskob. Tom Love suggested that there was nothing to be gained from such action. Furthermore, he indicated that unless Raskob could reduce the one and one-half million dollar party deficit, the debt probably would not be liquidated.

The rural moderates, not the rural extremists, were in control of the situation, and they desired a period of calm during which the party might recuperate. Walsh, Hull, and Daniels cautioned that nothing should be done that might create a permanent party disruption. They advised their followers that since Raskob's policies had been overwhelmingly repudiated, he would resign

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17 Tom Love to M. D. Lightfoot, December 21, 1928, Box IU-9B, Love Papers (Dallas Historical Society).
eventually. For the time being, they felt that the party should main-
tain a semblance of harmony until Raskob had cleared away the
deficit.\textsuperscript{18} The \textit{New Republic}, capturing the prevailing mood, sug-
gested: "What the Democratic leaders want Mr. Raskob to do is to
make up that million and a half deficit and let them alone. . . .
Their idea is that the last campaign was strictly Mr. Raskob's party
and that it is up to him and the small band of wealthy friends who,
with him, formed the tight little ring that ran the campaign from the
General Motors Building, to foot the bills."\textsuperscript{19} Time was to prove
that while the party's rural moderates were perfectly content to let
Raskob rehabilitate the party's finances, they had no intention of
allowing him to formulate party policy.

Moving with dispatch, Raskob sought to shore up the party's
organization and to provide adequate financing. In mid-April, 1929,
he summoned the party's executive and advisory committees to meet
in New York. Smith, Lieutenant-Governor Lehman of New York,
James J. Hoey, Jouett Shouse, former Senator Gerry, and Senators
Robinson, Pittman, Harrison, Hawes, and Wagner were present for

\textsuperscript{18}Josephus Daniels to Lehman Johnson, December 20, 1928,
Box 628, Daniels Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Con-
gress); Josephus Daniels to Patrick Gallagher, December 20, 1928,
ibid.; Cordell Hull to J. M. Gardenhire, November 22, 1928, Ser. I,
Con. 23, ibid.; Cordell Hull to Harry F. Byrd, January 21, 1929,
ibid.

\textsuperscript{19}New Republic, LVII (January 2, 1929), 186.
the meeting. The conferees discussed plans both for constructing a strong, militant organization and for reducing the deficit. Two important decisions developed from this conference. Jouett Shouse was appointed chairman of the executive committee of the Democratic national committee, and his position was to be an active rather than an honorary one. Equally important, the deficit was to be reduced substantially by calling upon the campaign's underwriters to make good upon their guarantees. The rank and file would be called upon to reduce the remainder of the deficit and to provide funds for maintaining a permanently functioning organization.20

Shouse's selection appeared to be an excellent political maneuver. An ardent McAdoo supporter during the early part of the decade, Shouse had rallied to Smith's standard and had proved to be one of his most valuable advisers. Shouse, therefore, enjoyed widespread political contacts with both the party's major factions. It was anticipated that he would be of invaluable service in uniting the fractured party.21 In accepting his assignment Shouse was careful


not to arouse any animosities. He stipulated that his work would be
concerned primarily with organization and that "it will not be in any
sense my duty or my province to attempt to originate party policy."\(^\text{22}\)

It remained to be seen whether Shouse could live up to this pledge of
self-denial. Shortly following the election he had confided that while
Raskob may have overemphasized the prohibition question, ". . .I
think he is dead right about it and was right to emphasize it."\(^\text{23}\)

Raskob and Shouse strengthened the Democratic organization
further when they secured the services of Charles Michelson, chief
of the New York World's Washington bureau, as publicity director
for the Democratic national committee. Upon accepting the appoint­
ment, Michelson received the distinct impression that the party was
to be revived for Smith's benefit.\(^\text{24}\) If such was the case, there
must eventually be a conflict between Raskob and Roosevelt for
control of the party machinery. For the moment, however, with
the presidential election more than three years away and with
Republican prosperity still reigning, something approaching harmony
prevailed in the Democratic ranks. With the exception of isolated

\(^{22}\) New York Times, May 6, 1929, p. 3.

\(^{23}\) Jouett Shouse to Francis G. Caffey, November 13, 1928,
Correspondence 1911-1929, Shouse Papers (University of Kentucky).

\(^{24}\) New York Times, June 9, 1929, Sec. II, p. 15; Charles
Michelson, The Ghost Talks (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1944),
14-15.
outbursts from Simmons, Heflin, and Representative Box of Texas demanding Raskob's resignation, Democratic politics was deceptively tranquil. The year 1929 ended on an encouraging note for the Democrats when they posted some victories in special congressional and gubernatorial elections. The results from the Virginia gubernatorial race were especially gratifying; Cannon's influence had receded and the Hoover Democrats had returned to the fold.  

Throughout the year 1930, it became increasingly apparent that inter-party relationships had altered dramatically since the Democratic debacle in 1928. The stock market crash and subsequent business depression, coupled with Democratic victories in the municipal elections and the congressional by-elections, made the Democratic presidential nomination in 1932 seem to be a very attractive prize indeed. And with Democratic chances of victory improving with each passing day, the relative quiescence within the Democratic ranks began to evaporate in the spring of 1930. The prohibition issue, with all its potential for destructiveness, came increasingly to the fore, and, at the same time, the Roosevelt

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campaign began to assume clearer dimensions. 26

Early in April, 1930, John J. Raskob appeared before the Senate Lobby Committee. He admitted that since becoming chairman of the Democratic national committee, he had contributed approximately $65,000 to the Association Against the Prohibition Amendment. Raskob, however, denied that as Democratic chairman, he was attempting to influence the party on the question of prohibition repeal. Under questioning, Raskob stipulated that it was not the Democratic national committee's function to commit the party on questions of policy. Only the Democratic national convention could take such action. It would soon become evident that Raskob was less than sincere in this assertion. Following the committee meeting, Raskob assured reporters that he did not intend to resign as Democratic

national chairman. 27

A demand for Raskob's resignation was not slow in developing. Both Furnifold Simmons and Josephus Daniels suggested that Raskob's contributions to the Association Against the Prohibition Amendment made it inadvisable for him to continue in his post as national chairman. 28 On April 7, Senator Simmons attacked Raskob from the Senate floor. Simmons felt that Raskob was singularly unsuited for the chairmanship since, according to his own testimony, "...the money that he and others are contributing to the association in question is being used, or is to be used, by that association for the election of wet Senators and Representatives, and, of course, in many instances is being used, or will be used, for the defeat of dry Democrats who are opposed by wet Republicans." 29 While the Winston-Salem Journal found Simmons' logic irrefutable, "the New Orleans States indicated that Simmons could scarcely lecture Raskob on suitable conduct, inasmuch as the North Carolinian "bolted the party in the Presidential campaign of 1928." 30


29 Congressional Record, 71 Congress, 2 Session, 6587.

Josephus Daniels, who had retained his party regularity in 1928, likewise insisted that it was highly inappropriate for the Democratic chairman to make contributions to the Association Against the Prohibition Amendment. Such a situation constituted an unacceptable conflict of interests. Daniels asserted: "I think that a chairman of the Democratic party ought not to be a member of and be giving money to any organization to elect anybody except Democrats."31 Speaking for the National Women's Democratic Law Enforcement League, Mrs. Jesse W. Nicholson averred: "We demand that this man, who has never had a Democratic heartbeat, pay off the debt he incurred and resign at once."32

Raskob not only refused to resign but also he began to champion his cause more vociferously. He characterized the Drys' refusal to permit a referendum on the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment as "not only dangerous but cowardly."33 Privately, he counseled the necessity for repeal and for the return of the liquor problem to the states.34 Jouett Shouse likewise proclaimed that prohibition would be a paramount issue in 1932. Unquestionably,

34John J. Raskob to H. M. Deputy, July 28, 1930, File 602, Raskob Papers.
that divisive issue was again working its way to the fore. Throughout the summer and fall prominent Democratic leaders, associated with the party's Wet wing, demanded repeal. James Cox, James Reed, Norman Mack, and James Hamilton Lewis, Democratic senatorial hopeful in Illinois, suggested that the liquor problem should be returned to the states.\(^{35}\) The prohibition issue had rendered the Democracy impotent throughout much of the decade. It remained to be seen whether it would have the same result in 1932.

That the Democracy's sectional dilemma was apt to reassert itself in 1932 was apparent to columnist Ernest K. Lindley as early as the summer of 1930. Commenting upon the Democracy's revived hopes as a result of Republican misfortunes, Lindley queried:

> What kind of party is the Democratic party going to be? Is it going to be the urban, liberal, wet party of Alfred E. Smith? Or, is it going to be the essentially rural party of the South, perhaps liberal upon some questions, but still politically dry? . . . in 1932, the party will once again have to decide whether it is going to try to win the Presidency by combining the South with the West, or by combining the urban East with as much of the South and West as it can hold.

The first combination elected Wilson in 1916, and was advocated by William Gibbs McAdoo in 1924. The second, under Al Smith, yielded very few electoral

votes, but a much larger number of popular votes than any other Democratic candidate for President had ever received.36

Lindley indicated that as a result of the mounting sentiment against prohibition in the East, Southerners were beginning to realize that any urban Democrat would have to exhibit some degree of wetness. He insisted that Democrats who were interested in unity would have to find a leader other than Smith for the Wet urban Democrats and an issue other than prohibition. A possible replacement for the prohibition issue was the growing anti-big business sentiment, particularly as it related to power and public utilities. Of the most frequently mentioned for the Democratic nomination at this early date--Governor Roosevelt, Owen D. Young, Senator Joseph T. Robinson, Senator Walter F. George, Governor Albert C. Ritchie, and Al Smith--Franklin Roosevelt seemed best suited to take up the power issue. Lindley asserted that Roosevelt's advocacy of public power, his association with the Wilson regime, his independence of Tammany, his straddle on prohibition, his name, and his position as Governor of New York made him the outstanding presidential nominee. To retain this leading position, however, Lindley cautioned that Roosevelt must be re-elected governor.37

36Ernest K. Lindley, "The Donkey Kicks His Heels," Outlook, CLV (July 23, 1930), 443.

37Ibid., 444-45, 476.
Roosevelt had not publicly encouraged this presidential boom. His first task was to win re-election in the New York gubernatorial race in 1930. Despite Roosevelt's understandable hesitancy to become the front-runner too early in the race, his candidacy was prematurely launched in the spring of 1930. Speaking at the Democratic Party's Jefferson Day Dinner in New York City, Senator Burton K. Wheeler averred: "As I look around for a general to lead the Democratic Party on... the tariff and control of power and public utilities, I ask to whom can we go? I say that, if the Democratic Party of New York will elect Franklin D. Roosevelt governor, the West will demand his nomination for President and the whole country will elect him."38 Significantly, the first public declaration of the Roosevelt candidacy had emanated from the West, and the endorsement was in no way associated with the explosive prohibition issue.

Wheeler offered his support because he considered Roosevelt to be both a progressive and a possible winner. The Montanan wanted to avert another futile Smith campaign. Wheeler's speech elicited an immediate rebuke from Jouett Shouse. Having fallen under the sway of Raskob's influence, Shouse insisted that either Owen D. Young or Myron C. Taylor, highly successful business executives, should be nominated. There was also consternation

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38 Wheeler, Yankee From the West, 295.
within the Roosevelt camp because they considered Wheeler's endorsement to be premature. Roosevelt, therefore, did nothing to actively further the boom. In fact, he delayed five weeks before he wrote Wheeler to acknowledge the Montanan's efforts. Roosevelt made the typical disclaimer that he did not desire to run for national office. Yet he requested Wheeler to keep in touch with the general sentiment on the power question in the Mountain states. 39

Roosevelt's first task was to win re-election as governor of New York. On the eve of the 1930 off-year elections, Ernest K. Lindley assessed Roosevelt's first two years in office for the Nation. Lindley indicated that Roosevelt in his legislative programs had moved perceptibly to the left of Smith. The columnist noted that Roosevelt's major gains during the first legislative session had been in the areas of farm relief. Accomplishments in the realms of power development, public utility regulation, old age pension, prison reforms, and pro-labor legislation had characterized the second session. In addition, Roosevelt had restored the Democratic organizations upstate and avoided alienating Tammany without having appeared subservient to it. 40 In short, thus far Roosevelt had


40 Ernest K. Lindley, "Two Years of Franklin Roosevelt," Nation, CXXXI (September 17, 1930), 289-91.
succeeded in retaining Smith's urban base of support while grafting his own rural following to it. Lindley indicated, however, that "Wet Democrats, which means most Democrats in New York, have been concerned by his [Roosevelt's] persistent silence upon the subject of prohibition. He was elected upon a wet platform and there is no doubt that the party platform this year will propose repeal or amendment of the Eighteenth Amendment. But he has evaded every effort to force a declaration of his own views, and many persons, . . ., think that he is dry."41

In the interest of party harmony, Roosevelt had sought to push the prohibition issue to the background for several years. But if he was to be his party's presidential nominee, he must win a decisive victory in the New York gubernatorial election. Early in September, Roosevelt broke his silence on the prohibition question. In a carefully worded public letter to Senator Wagner, Roosevelt adopted a moist, as opposed to a Wet, position. He decried the fact that the Eighteenth Amendment, rather than fostering temperance, had encouraged excessive drinking, corruption, and disrespect for the law. Roosevelt suggested replacing the Eighteenth Amendment with another amendment that would both transfer control of the liquor problem to the states and protect the Dry states against being inundated with liquor from the Wet ones. A stipulation that liquor could

41 Ibid., 289.
be sold only through state agencies would prevent the return of the saloon. While Roosevelt's proposition differed little from Smith's 1928 proposal, Roosevelt had apparently shown more concern for the Dry states. More importantly, he had distinguished his position from that of the extreme Wets who simply demanded repeal. Frank Freidel suggests that Roosevelt's timing was perfect. Not only had Roosevelt occupied the middle ground but also he could hope that by making his announcement relatively early, the prohibition question would burn itself out by 1932 and he could then emphasize economic issues.

The reaction to Roosevelt's announcement was somewhat muted. Both Raskob and Smith, no doubt reluctantly, congratulated Roosevelt upon his position. Significantly, Burton K. Wheeler, an early advocate of prohibition, announced that the Eighteenth Amendment had not attained its intended result: temperance. He insisted, therefore, that the Democrats would nominate a candidate opposed to nationwide prohibition. Some Westerners, such as National Committeeman Oswald West of Oregon, who indicated that they still supported prohibition, expressed the highest esteem for Roosevelt.

While there were some indignant outbursts from the South, no one

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44 Freidel, Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Triumph, 145.
of prominence attacked Roosevelt. Commenting upon the absence of a negative response from Dry Southerners and Westerners, the New York Times suggested editorially that: "Such people will require time to clarify their ideas and adjust their party positions." Time would indeed work to Roosevelt's advantage upon this issue. Meanwhile, his announcement won for him one important convert immediately. Joseph F. Guffey, who along with Palmer and McCormick had been instrumental in securing Wilson's nomination in Baltimore in 1912, joined the Roosevelt camp with promises to deliver the Pennsylvania delegation to the New York Governor.

While Roosevelt was maneuvering to win re-election and thereby emerge as the leading Democratic presidential aspirant for 1932, Raskob and Smith were attempting to lay the groundwork for their continued domination of the Democracy. On the eve of the 1930 off-year elections, Raskob and Smith, in closely coordinated radio addresses, demanded the election of a Democratic Congress. Raskob called for the establishment of a bi-partisan tariff commission and urged a five-day week for labor. More a businessman than a


Democratic politician, Raskob predicted that beginning in January, the current business depression would quickly evaporate. That being the case, the real issue before the country was prohibition, and Raskob trained his heaviest fire upon that question. Raskob insisted that if it had been possible to tax all the illegal liquor that had been consumed during prohibition, the federal government would have collected approximately $900,000,000. Venturing further, he suggested that the collection of such excise taxes would have made it possible to abolish most federal income taxes. He speculated that had the $900,000,000 paid the government in income taxes been used to increase consumption and enlarge industry, employment would have been vastly increased. Raskob's inference that prohibition was one of the chief causes of the depression was certainly intriguing, although scarcely convincing.

Two nights later Smith outlined the Democratic position on leading issues of the day. Demanding economy in government, Smith called for a reorganization of governmental machinery. In an effort to reduce unemployment, Smith, like Raskob, advocated a five-day work week for labor. As a staunch devotee of state rights, he proposed state regulation of child labor. Echoing Raskob, Smith demanded a readjustment of the tariff schedules. Finally, he insisted that it would be "senseless" for the American people to

ignore the fact that prohibition was a very real issue. 49

Thus, the 1930 off-year election loomed as very portentous indeed. Should Roosevelt attain an impressive victory, he would establish himself as the front-runner in the race for the Democratic presidential nomination. If the Democrats should make massive gains in Congress, Raskob could claim successful stewardship of the party. If the Wets should make significant progress, Raskob's position would be enhanced further. On the eve of the election Joseph Tumulty predicted that the Wets' successes would be spectacular. In that event, he suggested that Raskob and Shouse should move quickly to consolidate their positions of leadership. Tumulty believed that, initially, Democratic leaders would be favorably disposed toward Raskob and Shouse because of their success in reviving the party. It would be wise for them to act before this general feeling of warmth dissipated. 50 Ironically, therefore, the more successful the party was, the more likely it was that an internal struggle for control would erupt between and Roosevelt and Raskob.

Amassing a plurality of 725,000 votes, Roosevelt was overwhelmingly re-elected in November, 1930. Significantly, he carried


50 Joseph P. Tumulty to John J. Raskob, October 20, 1930, File 602, Raskob Papers.
Republican upstate New York by a plurality of 167,000 votes. The decisiveness of this victory insured his position as the leading Democratic presidential possibility. Taking advantage of Roosevelt's plurality, Farley issued a statement, intended for national consumption, to the New York press on November 5, 1930. Farley's statement read in part:

I fully expect that the call will come to Governor Roosevelt when the first presidential primary is held, which will be late next year. The Democrats in the nation naturally want as their candidate for President the man who has shown himself capable of carrying the most important State in the country by a record-breaking majority. I do not see how Mr. Roosevelt can escape becoming the next Presidential nominee of his party, even if no one should raise a finger to bring it about.

The Democratic tide that swept Roosevelt along on its crest also jeopardized Hoover's control of Congress. Equally encouraging from the Democratic standpoint, the election demonstrated that the South was once again solidly Democratic. Josiah W. Bailey, who earlier had defeated Simmons in the Democratic primary on the

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52 Farley, Behind the Ballots, 62.

issue of party regularity, overpowered his Republican opponent in the
general election. Denied the right to participate in the Democratic
primary because he had bolted the party, Thomas Heflin ran as an
independent in the November elections. Again party regularity was
victorious as John H. Bankhead defeated Heflin. Insofar as the pro-
hibition contest was concerned, both the Wets and the Drys claimed
the victory. The Wets' gains were by no means spectacular. They
acquired five additional Senate seats. Yet following the election the
Drys still indisputably controlled Congress. The Senate contained
seventy-six Drys and twenty Wets, and the House possessed 290 Drys
and 145 Wets. The Wets' gains, however, had been sufficient to prove
that the issue was still very much alive.54

The election results raised Democratic hopes to new heights;
the presidency in 1932 was within their grasp. Emily Newell Blair,
former vice-chairman of the Democratic national committee, sug-
gested that the Republicans could not defeat the Democrats but that
the Democrats might defeat themselves. They could throw their
opportunity to the winds by once again dividing over the prohibition
issue. She insisted that the party must concentrate upon economic

54 New York Times, November 5, 1930, pp. 1 and 2; New York
Times, June 9, 1930, pp. 1 and 7; New York Times, June 10, 1930,
p. 28; "The Democratic Landslide," 8-9; "Wet and Dry Uproar Rising
Higher and Hotter," Literary Digest, CVII (November 22, 1930), 8-9;
"An Off-Year Poll That Was Off," World's Work, LX (January,
1931), 20.
issues, an area in which the Republicans were decidedly vulnerable, and just ignore the internally divisive prohibition question. Quite accurately, she noted that the division over prohibition was geographic, not partisan. Where Dry sentiment prevailed, the local candidates of both parties were Dry. Where Wet sentiment prevailed locally, both candidates were Wet. She suggested that if Democrats understood that their chances for victory hinged upon economic issues, they would not allow prohibition to divide them. The voters were more interested in jobs than in prohibition. She was reiterating the position that moderates of the Roosevelt-Walsh-Hull school had been espousing for years.

Just how successful her appeal would be, however, remained a matter of conjecture. In offering his congratulations to Jouett Shouse the day following the election, Daniel Roper suggested, "Is it not possible during the next two years to emphasize a constructive program along economic lines without stressing the social issues that serve only to divide groups of democrats. . . . Some such constructive program should enlist all factions in the Democratic Party as well as the progressive forces elsewhere and in my opinion would likely win in 1932." Completely converted to Raskob's point of

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56Daniel C. Roper to Jouett Shouse, November 5, 1930, Correspondence 1930-1932, Shouse Papers.
view, Shouse responded: "...I think that the Democratic Party
must face the present situation as to prohibition and must take a
definite stand."
Denying that he was attempting to chart the course
of the party, Shouse predicted ". . . that this question will inevitably
be a dominant one in the next presidential election, and I feel that
unless the Democratic Party faces it frankly and honestly, it has
no chance to win and will not deserve to win."
Blind to the increasing human misery around them, Raskob and Shouse would let the
people drink booze.

Immediately following the November elections, Raskob and
Shouse maneuvered to direct the party's future course of action.
Seven Democratic Party leaders addressed an open letter to Hoover
offering cooperation in the interest of business recovery. Raskob's
hand was evident in their pledge not to interfere with business by
pressing for tariff revision. Those who joined in signing this
declaration were: Cox, Davis, and Smith--the party's last three
presidential nominees; Raskob and Shouse, representing the Demo-
cratic national committee; Joe Robinson, Democratic leader in the
Senate; and John Garner, Democratic leader in the House.

The Roosevelt forces viewed this statement warily. Despite
the presence of Garner's and Robinson's names, they felt that the

57 Jouett Shouse to Daniel Roper, November 15, 1930, ibid.
Smith contingent was attempting to reassert party leadership in the face of Roosevelt's overwhelming plurality in New York state.

Roosevelt was growing increasingly suspicious of Raskob's and Shouse's direction of the national committee. He sensed that they were hostile toward his ambitions and that they would not remain neutral in regard to the presidential nomination. It would become increasingly difficult for Roosevelt to avert an open break with the

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59Elliott Roosevelt and Joseph P. Lash (eds.), F. D. R. His Personal Letters: 1928-1945 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pierce, 1950), 155. The Democratic open letter did not offend Roosevelt alone. Carter Glass was appalled. He asserted: "It seemed an astonishing thing that seasoned party leaders should abjectly acquiesce in the persistent Republican campaign contention that the success of the Democratic party at the polls constitutes a menace to business . . . . The feature of the statement that particularly riled me was the assertion that the Democratic party did not purpose to disturb the vile Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act--and this after we had conducted a campaign of denunciation of the measure from one end of the country to the other." Carter Glass to W. G. McAdoo, November 29, 1930, Box 5, Glass Papers (University of Virginia). McAdoo characterized the letter as extremely poor politics. He insisted that "if the Democrats interpret the great gains they made in the Congress as a wet triumph, they are simply the victims of stupidity. Democratic victory resulted from the wide-spread discontent with the economic situation, for which the Administration was regarded as responsible." McAdoo suggested that the country expected the Democratic Party to work in Congress to correct the Republicans' economic blunders. W. G. McAdoo to Carter Glass, November 18, 1930, ibid. An incensed Norman Davis confided to Hull: "I think Raskob is making a great mistake in his sophomoric addresses on economic conditions and particularly in attempting to commit the Democratic Party to the Republican bunkum and to Hoover's policy of revising the tariff only upon the recommendations of the Tariff Commission after studies as to the differences in costs of production at home and abroad. The Democratic Donkey would look very funny going around with the trunk of the Republican elephant." Norman H. Davis to Cordell Hull, November 7, 1930, Ser. I, Con. 30, Hull Papers.
Smith-oriented leadership of the national committee. Yet an open rupture was to be avoided if at all possible. An essential part of Roosevelt's strategy centered on grafting Smith's Eastern followers to the old Bryan-McAdoo South and West.

Publicly, Roosevelt attempted to mute any campaign that would place him in the race prematurely. On November 7, 1930, Roosevelt emphatically denied that he was a candidate for the presidency. Notwithstanding Roosevelt's disclaimers, his staff became more active in promoting his cause. Howe, Farley, and Flynn formed the nucleus of the organization. By January, 1931, they had set up a vast correspondence with political leaders throughout the country. They distributed promotional pamphlets that emphasized Roosevelt's vote-getting ability both in New York's rural and New York's urban districts. In order to finance the upcoming campaign, the "Friends of Roosevelt" was organized during the winter of 1930-1931. Aside from Flynn, the early contributors included: Frank C. Walker, New York attorney; Henry Morgenthau, Sr., former ambassador to Turkey; William H. Woodin, industrialist; William A. Julian, Ohio businessman; James I. Straus, New York merchant; Herbert H. Lehman, lieutenant-governor of New York; Joseph P. Kennedy, financier; E. M. House, and Mrs. Sara Roosevelt. 60

60New York Times, November 8, 1930, p. 1; Farley, Behind the Ballots, 68-72; Flynn, You're the Boss, 84-85; Roosevelt and Lash, F. D. R. His Personal Letters: 1928-1945, 160.
While Roosevelt was laying the groundwork for his campaign, Raskob and Shouse were planning a coup to capture the Democratic national committee for the Wet cause. By December 1, 1930, Raskob had decided to call a meeting of the national committee for January 8, 1931, and to demand that the Democracy stipulate its position in regard to prohibition. Although Michelson felt that Raskob's decision was unwise, both Shouse and Tumulty agreed with Raskob. Shouse requested, however, that the meeting be postponed until March 5. He indicated that Congress would adjourn on March 5 and that Raskob's critics would, therefore, be unable to make extended speeches on the floor of Congress against Raskob's liquor proposals. At the same time since congressmen could attend the committee meeting, they would be unable to charge that the committee had met while they were out of town. Shouse suggested that the precise purpose of the meeting should be guarded with the greatest secrecy, and he warned Raskob to expect a great deal of bitterness from certain segments of the party. Evidently, Shouse's arguments carried the day because the meeting was postponed.

Before Raskob had the opportunity to summon the national committee, Frank R. Kent of the Baltimore Sun subjected the Democratic Chairman to a devastating attack. Studying the public reports

61 Jouett Shouse to John J. Raskob, December 1, 1930, Correspondence 1930-1932, Shouse Papers.
of Democratic Treasurer James Gerard, Kent charged that Raskob had assumed most of the party's debts and liabilities and that the Democracy owed him one quarter of a million dollars. Kent contended that Raskob had "bought" the party and that the Democracy was so indebted to him that he could name its standard bearer in 1932. Raskob replied that he was confident that the party could repay his loans and that others had also underwritten a portion of the party debt. He denied that he had "bought the party." 62

Kent's charge precipitated an immediate outcry from the South. When Governor Moody of Texas sent his final message to the state legislature, he called upon the Democratic national committee to oust Raskob from the chairmanship. Moody warned that only a united Democracy could overthrow Republican rule and that "such a Democracy has no room for the wet, cynical and entirely commercial chairman of the National Democratic Committee, . . ." Moody insisted that Raskob's " . . . blatancy, his attempt to assume national leadership by use of money, and his belief that he can through its use buy the leadership of the Democratic party have so disgusted the rank and file of the party in the South that there can be no hope of discharging the responsibilities of the party if he is allowed to remain in leadership of any portion of the party." 63


The unfavorable publicity surrounding Kent's disclosures, coupled with the publication of the Wickersham Commission report, caused Shouse to question the advisability of summoning a meeting of the national committee. Shouse believed that it would be much easier to select Wet delegates to the national convention if the prohibition issue were not prematurely agitated; the Drys would have less time to prepare. Shouse warned Raskob that they would be criticized for elevating the prohibition issue at a time when millions of Americans were suffering from economic distress. Furthermore, Shouse indicated that Hoover's response to the Wickersham Commission report had given the Democrats the advantage on the issue without their having to act. Michelson and Tumulty concurred with Shouse's opinion. Michelson suggested that the country was moving rapidly toward the Wet position and that the Wets would have a better chance of success at the convention than in the committee. Tumulty likewise felt that time was on the side of the Wet Democrats. Raskob, however, could not be swayed from his determination to call a meeting of the national committee and to force a decision on the prohibition issue. 64

Raskob's insistence upon immediate action was no doubt conditioned in part by his desire to deflate the Roosevelt candidacy. While Roosevelt was known to be moist, the Drys did not view him as being as Wet as Smith and the other potential Eastern candidates. Roosevelt might possibly be discredited in the South if Raskob and Shouse could dictate both an anti-prohibition and a high-tariff platform to the committee. Roosevelt would then be placed in the unenviable position of either accepting the committee's decision and thereby antagonizing the South or of repudiating his party's national committee. Raskob's decision was also quite conceivably dictated in part by his desire to submerge economic issues. From a businessman's perspective a campaign waged upon the prohibition issue would certainly be preferable to one waged upon the economic consequences of the business depression. Thus, against the advice of his advisers, Raskob, on February 10, 1931, issued a call for the Democratic national committee to meet in Washington on March 5, "to discuss plans and policies to govern our activities during the next immediate repeal, seven had favored some type of revision, and two had opposed revision or repeal. Yet in transmitting the report to Congress in January, 1931, Hoover had interpreted the Commission report as a whole as not favoring repeal. Harris Gaylord Warren, Herbert Hoover and the Great Depression (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 215.

fifteen months. "66

Although Raskob had not mentioned prohibition in his call, the possibility that the Chairman intended to force a showdown on that explosive issue immediately became the central topic of speculation. Among Democrats in Washington the general consensus was that such action was both inconceivable and unnecessarily divisive. The party's candidate in 1932 would probably exhibit some degree of moistness and it was, therefore, not wise to rend the party over a possible platform declaration at this early date. 67 That Raskob's proposed course of action was fraught with danger became apparent on February 16, when, as so often in the past, the Senate floor became an arena where Democrats did battle against other Democrats. A full scale debate over the prohibition question erupted between Senator Tydings of Maryland on the one hand and Senators Sheppard of Texas, Black of Alabama, Heflin of Alabama, and Morrison of North Carolina on the other. 68

Morrison transformed the debate into a personal attack upon Raskob and notified the Chairman that any attempt to bind the national committee to repeal would be fruitless. Morrison submitted

68Congressional Record, 71 Congress, 3 Session, 5005-15.
"...that the only political significance Mr. Raskob has, or ever has had, or ever will have, is that he is the monumental mistake of our great candidate for President in 1928, the Hon. Alfred E. Smith."

Denying that Raskob was the leader of the Democratic Party, Morrison contended: "He is the chairman of our committee, because Governor Smith made the great mistake of naming him for chairman; and as soon as we nominate another candidate for President, if not before, Mr. Raskob will disappear from American politics as suddenly as he entered, in my opinion." Morrison warned Raskob that if he attempted to use the national committee to determine policy rather than leaving that prerogative to the national convention, he would be seriously defeated.69

Even though he had not mentioned prohibition, there could be no question that Raskob's call for a national committee meeting threatened to make a shambles of Democratic unity. Baruch informed Shouse that if the purpose of the meeting was to settle financial matters and to reduce the party's indebtedness, it was wise to summon it. "But," Baruch warned, "if the idea of the National Committee is to declare the Democratic Party's position, I think it is a very serious mistake, which can only result in a battle of contending candidates and the splitting up of the party in several directions."70

69Ibid., 5011.  

Harrison and Joseph T. Robinson likewise feared that Raskob would attempt to force through a Wet proposal. They advised the Chairman that the party should avoid division at the present time. The two powerful Southerners suggested that the prohibition issue should lie dormant until the convention met. 71

Raskob had seriously misjudged the temper of his party. With few exceptions, congressmen of both Wet and Dry proclivities agreed that the national convention, not the national committee, constituted the party's policy-making body. Furthermore, they felt that any attempt to state the party's position on prohibition fifteen months before the convention convened would have a detrimental effect upon party harmony. But despite the overwhelming opposition to any discussion of prohibition, the rumor persisted that Raskob would force a showdown on the issue. This rumor gained additional strength when it was learned that the party's last three presidential nominees--Cox, Davis, and Smith--would attend the committee meeting. Since all three men had taken a stand against prohibition, they were expected to support Raskob's position. 72

71 S. R. Bertron to Roosevelt, February 24, 1931, Box 404, DNC Papers.

Meanwhile, Cordell Hull and Roosevelt began to maneuver independently of one another to thwart Raskob's plan. Hull had been working quietly to wrest control of the national committee from the Smith-Raskob leadership for some time. He had frequently consulted with Roosevelt, who agreed with the Tennessean on the necessity for lower tariffs. Yet since Roosevelt had not broken with Smith, the New York Governor had not formally joined Hull in his efforts to gain control of the national committee. Following Raskob's call for a national committee meeting, Hull began to marshal his forces. Harry Byrd and Claude Swanson of Virginia, Joe T. Robinson of Arkansas, and John Cohen of Georgia formed the nucleus of Hull's force. Hull, like Roosevelt, hoped to submerge the prohibition issue and to wage the 1932 campaign upon economic questions.  

Hull loosed his first public salvo on February 22, 1931. Commenting upon unemployment, human distress, privation, bankruptcy, and the dislocation of production, Hull asserted: "In the face of this unspeakable situation, it would be shocking and amazing if the great historic Democratic Party should complacently turn away from its manifest and imperative duty to place first on its program the task of grappling with and solving the huge and pressing economic problems confronting this and other countries." On March 1, Hull challenged

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Raskob's leadership again. He contended that the national committee had no authority to determine party policy; that function belonged to the national convention's platform committee.75

Raskob's apparent intention to force a decision upon the prohibition issue greatly alarmed the Roosevelt forces. Some of Roosevelt's supporters suspected that Raskob hoped to make the party officially Wet so that Smith would emerge as the logical nominee. Roosevelt's dilemma lay in his need to retain Smith's Wet support while capitalizing upon his own appeal in the Dry South and West. There seemed to be one solution to Roosevelt's predicament. By asserting that the national committee could not determine policy, the stance that Hull had assumed, Roosevelt could check Raskob's plan for a Wet plank without advocating a Dry plank. Such a position would serve him in good stead with his Southern friends without his having to directly assault the Wet position. Having determined his course of action, Roosevelt summoned a meeting of the New York state committee. That body adopted a resolution declaring that the national committee had no authority to advise the party on controversial political questions. Significantly, the meeting of the Democratic state committee was held without Smith's knowledge. New York's position was communicated to Harry Byrd on March 2, and to Cordell Hull on March 3. The day before the national committee was

75Washington Post, March 2, 1931, p. 4.
scheduled to meet, James Farley went to Washington and actively cooperated with Hull's group in an effort to thwart Raskob's proposals. 76

The New York Committee's position elated the Dry senators who were opposed to the national committee's going on record in regard to the Eighteenth Amendment. Senators Morrison of North Carolina and Connally of Texas publicly praised New York's action. As a consequence of that action, political prognosticators agreed that Roosevelt had enhanced his chances for the nomination. He had shown the country that he, not Al Smith, was the leader of the New York Democracy and that he did not regard prohibition as the leading issue. 77 While Roosevelt's course of action was exceedingly popular with the party's rural moderates, it constituted a calculated risk.

How would Smith respond?

Honoring a speaking engagement in Raleigh, North Carolina, Smith asserted that while the national committee could not bind the party to any particular policy, the committee was entitled to discuss


the prohibition issue without restraint.\textsuperscript{78} There could be little doubt that the tension between Smith and Roosevelt was mounting. Queried by reporters as to whether he would again be a candidate for the presidency, Smith replied: "To answer that question would be like trying to cross a bridge 17 miles before you get to it."\textsuperscript{79} When Smith arrived in Washington and was asked about the action of the New York state committee, he informed reporters that all he knew about it was what he had read in the newspapers.\textsuperscript{80} Venturing further, Smith asserted that while he was not out of harmony with the state committee, its members had apparently "started to talk before they knew what they were talking about."\textsuperscript{81} Not unnaturally, Smith's comments prompted speculation that he had split with Roosevelt. Smith denied any such rupture. But when asked if he favored Roosevelt's nomination in 1932, Smith replied: "This is not the time to discuss that. That is the question that must be decided by somebody that is more important than me. And that is the national convention."\textsuperscript{82} While Roosevelt had undoubtedly helped to thwart Raskob's scheme, he had


\textsuperscript{79}Washington Post, March 3, 1931, pp. 1 and 11.

\textsuperscript{80}Washington Post, March 4, 1931, p. 16.

\textsuperscript{81}Washington Post, March 4, 1931, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{82}Washington Post, March 5, 1931, p. 1.
not achieved this victory cheaply. The cost was further estrangement from Al Smith.

The long anticipated committee meeting finally convened on March 5. Since the morning's business was devoted to formalities, the committee members had to wait until the afternoon session to hear Raskob's proposals. Calling for a return to Jeffersonian principles, Raskob charted the course that the party must follow to achieve victory. Not unexpectedly, the first item on Raskob's list of priorities was the prohibition problem. He did not, however, explicitly demand repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment. Rather, he called for the addition of a new amendment. This amendment would stipulate that the Eighteenth Amendment did not prohibit any state from controlling the manufacture, sale, and transportation of intoxicating beverages within its own borders if such action was approved by a state-wide referendum. The new amendment would require ratification by popular conventions, not by state legislatures, in three-fourths of the states. Raskob christened his proposal the "Home Rule Plan" and defended it on the grounds of state rights and personal liberty.


84 Ibid., 406-408.

85 Ibid., 408-11.
Disguise it as he might, Raskob's new amendment, if enacted, would in effect repeal the Eighteenth Amendment which provided for nation-wide prohibition.

After discussing the need to strengthen the Democratic national organization, Raskob belatedly admitted that the country was suffering from some economic distress. Raskob offered several suggestions for dealing with this problem. He called for strong leadership that would inspire the people's confidence. Once faith in government was restored, the wheels of industry would begin revolving again. Raskob cautioned that above all it would be foolhardy to attack the rich in the hope of aiding the poor; the interests of capital and labor were identical. It might have been more appropriate to suggest that the interests of Raskob and Hoover were identical. Raskob admitted that there was a farm problem, but he offered no proposals for dealing with it. Raskob then called for the development of unemployment insurance, the modification of the Sherman Act to allow business mergers in order to promote the common good, the establishment of a tariff commission to take cognizance of the higher wages paid to American industrial workers and to protect American industries from foreign industries employing cheap labor, and finally the adoption of a five-day week.\(^\text{86}\)

Early in the session, Raskob indicated that he did not want the

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\(^{86}\text{Ibid.}, 411-19.\)
committee to take any action on his proposals at this particular meeting. Rather, he would distribute copies of his address to the committee members. At their next meeting, after measuring public opinion, they could transmit recommendations for consideration and adoption to the national convention. The outcry raised against his proposals before he had ever made them had forced Raskob to back down. He had originally intended to have it declared the sense of the national committee that his speech be referred to the Democratic national convention with an accompanying recommendation that it be given earnest consideration.

Despite the fact that Raskob had requested that no immediate action be taken upon his proposals, his address generated a controversy. Speaking for the moderates, Cordell Hull implored his fellow Democrats to realize that the country desperately needed the services of the Democratic Party. He charged that the Republican Party's leadership was hopelessly chained to privilege and that they had led the country into its present deplorable economic plight. Pleading for harmony, Hull asserted: "Never has there been such a crop of tremendously vital problems pressing urgently upon us, problems upon which Democrats everywhere can unite and fight. Why should

87 Ibid., 399.

88 Jouett Shouse to John W. Davis, February 28, 1931, Correspondence 1930-1932, Shouse Papers.
we then... proceed to switch to something on which we can divide."\(^{89}\)

While Hull's remarks had been temperate, Joseph T. Robinson's were not. Robinson indicated that no one associated with the Dry cause had suggested that the committee endorse their position. Lashing out violently, Robinson thundered: "You cannot write on the banner of the Democratic Party, however, [sic] much you may desire to do so, the skull and crossbones emblematic of an outlawed trade, and expect the masses of the Democrats to accept your recommendation without resistance."\(^{90}\) Robinson severely chastised Raskob both for addressing a Democratic body on issues intended to divide it and for failing to attack Republican misgovernment. The Arkansan also took Raskob to task for advocating repeal of the anti-trust laws. Perhaps ignited by presidential aspirations of his own, Robinson announced: "...I repudiate, ... , the effort of the National Chairman to submerge all other issues and bring most prominently to the front, one about which he knows that the Democrats entertain conflicting opinions." Growing bolder, Robinson continued: "...the suggestion is that you eliminate the economic issues by doing exactly what the Republican Party is doing, by pursuing the policy of the Republican Party, and that you strip for action for a close contest

\(^{89}\)DNC Proceedings, 1932, 425.

\(^{90}\)Ibid., 428.
over prohibition. I am not in favor of this course, . . . "

Following the seemingly interminable flood of oratory, the committee meeting finally adjourned. The prohibition question had proved to be just as disruptive as the moderates had feared. But since Raskob had been unwilling to risk a vote on his proposals, it was clear that the Roosevelt-Hull moderates had achieved a victory. Roosevelt, however, had paid a high price for this triumph; he and Smith had been ranged on opposite sides of the question. Yet while Roosevelt's growing estrangement from Smith posed potential dangers for Roosevelt insofar as the East was concerned, it was an asset for him in the South and the West. As a result of the committee meeting, Hull asserted that the Drys, those who did not want to see prohibition become an issue, and those opposed to Smith would gradually "... turn to Roosevelt as the most effective way of killing off Smith." Both the New York Evening Post and the New York Herald Tribune reported that Southern Drys, while not ready to accept a Wet platform, were reconciled to the nomination of a Wet candidate in 1932, and that they would prefer to work with moderate Wets of the Roosevelt

\[91\text{Ibid.}, 430.\]

\[92\text{Ibid.}, 430-53.\]

\[93\text{Farley, Behind the Ballots, 75-76; New York Times, March 7, 1931, p. 3.}\]

\[94\text{Hull, The Memoirs of Cordell Hull: Volume I, 145.}\]
variety than with extreme Wets such as Smith and Raskob. For the
time being, those moderates who wished to emphasize economic
issues had been successful in their efforts to relegate prohibition
to the background. 95

Despite Roosevelt's triumph at the committee meeting it was
obvious that his quest for the nomination would not go unchallenged.
The depression had considerably brightened the Democratic prospects
for success which had seemed so dim after Smith's shattering defeat
in November, 1928. The 1932 Democratic presidential nomination,
which had seemed to be a singularly hollow honor in November, 1928,
began to appear tantamount to election by the summer of 1931. Under
these circumstances it was not surprising that other names came
increasingly to the fore. Political observers noted that while Roose-
velt was strong in the South and the West, he was weak in his native
East. The endorsement of Roosevelt by the progressive West and
the Dry South had helped to crystallize Eastern opinion against him.

95 "Raskob's Bomb," Literary Digest, CVIII (March 21, 1931), 9. The moderates' control of the prohibition question was well illu-
strated by Joe T. Robinson's fate. As a result of his speech, Robin-
son had emerged as the most conspicuous Dry leader. He had earned
this distinction, however, because of his highly vitriolic address.
And the very intemperateness of his remarks redounded against any
presidential aspirations that he might have possessed. Washington
Post, March 7, 1931, p. 1; New York Times, March 7, 1931, pp. 1
and 2. Carter Glass believed that Robinson had contributed as much
to the bitterness displayed at the national committee meeting as had
Raskob. The Virginian felt that Raskob simply should have been
ignored. Carter Glass to Henry T. Wickham, March 11, 1931, Box
279, Glass Papers.
The Eastern industrialists and business interests preferred Young, Ritchie, or Baker. Tammany did not look with favor upon Roosevelt, and it was becoming increasingly apparent that the Raskob-Shouse forces were hostile to him as well. Frank Kent observed that the Southern and Western forces that had championed McAdoo were now coalescing behind Roosevelt, with the important difference being that Roosevelt would have the New York vote on the early ballots. 96

This was, of course, Roosevelt's strategy. He had hoped to unite McAdoo's rural strength with Smith's urban following. Whether or not this strategy would succeed depended upon Smith's willingness to add his urban forces to the equation. Smith's position was the important question mark. If he chose to oppose Roosevelt, his would be a formidable threat. In the early part of 1931, it seemed extremely doubtful that Smith would seek the nomination. When asked directly by Joseph Guffey if he was going to seek the presidential nomination in 1932, Smith replied that it was too early to decide. Although no definite decision was reached, Guffey left the meeting convinced that Smith would not seek the nomination again. Smith conveyed a similar impression to Ed Flynn and Lieutenant Governor Herbert H. Lehman. 97


In a conversation with Arthur Mullen, Smith observed that there was "no chance for a Catholic to be President." 98 Most importantly, it was obvious that the Southern opposition to Smith was stronger than ever before and that the party did not want a repetition of the 1928 fiasco. 99

Regardless of whether the "Happy Warrior" was again a candidate, Frank Kent felt that Smith's attitude would be the determining factor at the 1932 convention. Kent reported that Smith remained the most popular Democrat in the party and that he was its most powerful figure in New York. Smith's close association with the business interests had not diminished his popularity with the urban masses; he retained their loyalty and their love. While Kent felt that Smith's refusal to answer a point blank question as to whether he favored Roosevelt's candidacy was significant, the correspondent doubted that Smith would seek the nomination for himself. 100 Yet throughout the spring and summer of 1931, rumors continued to abound that Smith was a receptive candidate. It was clear that little cordiality remained between Smith and Roosevelt. Still there had been no open rupture

98 Mullen, Western Democrat, 260.


between the two New Yorkers. 101

Owen D. Young of New York and Governor Albert C. Ritchie of Maryland were the other men most frequently mentioned in connection with the presidential nomination in the summer and fall of 1931. Young enjoyed the advantages of residence in New York state, unquestioned ability, business support, and an enviable reputation as a statesman accruing from his work on the Dawes and Young Plans. Although he was a Wet, he was not an extreme Wet and would not alienate any faction on that issue. In addition, Young was very acceptable to the Smith-Raskob-Shouse wing of the party. Yet his strengths were also his liabilities. His association with big business, high finance, and the power trust made him anathema to the South and to the West even though his views on power regulation and control were as liberal as Roosevelt's and Smith's. 102

Governor Albert C. Ritchie of Maryland was another prominently mentioned presidential possibility. Ritchie had been elected to four successive four-year terms as governor, and he was friendly with the same interests that championed Young. His appeal lay primarily in the East. Ritchie had long advocated repeal of the

101 New Republic, LXVI (February 25, 1931), 44-45; New Republic, LXVI (March 18, 1931), 127-28; New Republic, LXXVII (June 24, 1931), 153.

Eighteenth Amendment, and he was a staunch adherent of the state rights doctrine. Since he believed that that government was best which governed least, he particularly appealed to all those who opposed governmental interference with business. 103

Newton D. Baker of Ohio received increasing attention as the convention drew nearer. Baker had begun his career as an associate of Tom L. Johnson, reform mayor of Cleveland, and had later succeeded him. Having served in Wilson's cabinet as Secretary of War, Baker had become the country's outstanding champion of the League of Nations. After leaving the cabinet, Baker entered the legal profession as a corporation lawyer associated with the big business interests. Although Baker would not officially sanction the drive for the nomination conducted in his behalf, in 1932 he did begin to soften his position on the League of Nations. Thus, depending upon which aspect of Baker's career one wished to emphasize, he offered appeal to many segments of the party. 104


While several other names were mentioned from time to time, none of this second group, with the possible exception of Garner, possessed more than potential favorite son appeal. It was significant that of the five men most prominently mentioned—Roosevelt, Smith, Young, Baker, and Ritchie—not one was a representative of the rural South or West. Clearly, rural America in a geographic sense had failed to produce any leader capable of replacing McAdoo and Bryan. Yet if rural America united behind a nominee who could command some appreciable urban support, it could control the nomination. Roosevelt had realized this and had planned his strategy accordingly. The predominance of potential candidates from the industrial states as opposed to those from rural areas indicated that Roosevelt was having more success in attracting rural support than he was in maintaining control of his own section.

By the end of 1931 Roosevelt had achieved remarkable success in recreating the old Bryan-Wilson-McAdoo coalition around himself. He had been busily consolidating his following in the South and the West since early in that year. The addition of Colonel House and Robert Woolley to the ranks of Roosevelt's supporters symbolized

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105 Former presidential nominees Cox and Davis; Senators Robinson of Arkansas and Lewis of Illinois; Governors White of Ohio, Moore of New Jersey, and Murray of Oklahoma; former Senator Reed of Missouri; former Governor Byrd of Virginia; Melvin Traylor, a Chicago banker; and Speaker Garner were all mentioned as presidential possibilities at one time or another. Peel and Donnelly, The 1932 Campaign, 25-43.
his tie to Wilsonianism. More importantly, Cordell Hull arranged for Daniel Roper to meet with Howe and to establish a working relationship. Roper's conversion to the Roosevelt cause was of more practical significance than that of House or Woolley. As one of the chief architects of the Wilson victories and of the McAdoo campaigns, Roper enjoyed invaluable contacts throughout the South and the West. Both Hull and Walsh untiringly championed Roosevelt's cause in their respective sections. In addition, Arthur Mullen, Burton K. Wheeler, and Scott Bullitt of Oregon promoted Roosevelt's candidacy in the West. In the South, Roosevelt could count Senator Harris of Georgia, Senator Byrnes of South Carolina, Senator Bailey of North Carolina, and Josephus Daniels among his early supporters. Significantly, Joseph Guffey, another old Wilsonian turned Rooseveltian, did not enjoy as much success promoting the Roosevelt cause in the East as did his Southern and Western counterparts.  

106William J. Harris to Albert Howell, March 4, 1931, Box 131, DNC Papers; William J. Harris to Roosevelt, March 4, 1931, ibid.; John S. Cohen to Roosevelt, March 18, 1931, ibid.; T. J. Walsh to James R. Bennett, Jr., April 8, 1931, Box 382, Walsh Papers; T. J. Walsh to Roosevelt, April 15, 1931, ibid.; Cordell Hull to Louis Howe, April 15, 1931, Ser. I, Con. 31, Hull Papers; Cordell Hull to Louis Howe, April 20, 1931, ibid.; Daniel C. Roper to Henry Morgenthau, May 26, 1931, Box 99, DNC Papers; Roosevelt to Howe, memo, June 10, 1931, Box 52, Howe Papers (Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park); Josephus Daniels to Roosevelt, June 17, 1931, Box 15, Daniels Papers; E. M. House to Roosevelt, July 9, 1931, Box 407, DNC Papers; Robert W. Woolley to E. M. House, July 11, 1931, ibid.; Gerald Fitzgerald to E. M. House, July 16, 1931, Box 318, DNC Papers; T. J. Walsh to A. S. Burleson,
While Roosevelt would never completely duplicate the old Wilson-McAdoo organization, by the end of 1931 he had already garnered the support of some of the most influential of the former Wilsonians and the moderate McAdooites. Newton Baker, Carter Glass, Bernard Baruch, and McAdoo himself constituted important exceptions. Baker was himself a receptive candidate, and Glass initially favored Virginia's favorite son, Harry Byrd. Baruch had not yet decided whom he favored, but he would back the party's nominee regardless of the choice. McAdoo, undoubtedly still possessed by ambitions of his own, did not favor any of those most frequently mentioned for the nomination. Since Roosevelt was the

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July 16, 1931, Box 382, Walsh Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress); T. J. Walsh to A. S. Burleson, August 6, 1931, ibid.; Louis Howe to D. C. Roper, August 18, 1931, Box 99, DNC Papers; Joseph F. Guffey to James Kerney, August 21, 1931, Box 646, DNC Papers; James Kerney to Joseph Guffey, September 8, 1931, ibid.; Robert W. Woolley to Roosevelt, September 18, 1931, Box 99, DNC Papers; Daniel C. Roper to E. M. House, September 21, 1931, ibid.; Scott Bullitt to James Farley, October 6, 1931, Box 767, DNC Papers; James F. Byrnes to Roosevelt, October 15, 1931, Box 96, ibid.; Josiah W. Bailey to Roosevelt, October 21, 1931, Box 561, ibid.; Josiah W. Bailey to Roosevelt, November 17, 1931, ibid.; E. M. House to Louis Howe, November 17, 1931, Box 407, DNC Papers; Scott Bullitt to Roosevelt, November 24, 1931, Box 767, ibid.; Josiah W. Bailey to Roosevelt, November 25, 1931, Box 561, ibid.; Burton K. Wheeler to Louis Howe, November 28, 1931, Box 356, ibid.; Cordell Hull to Louis Howe, December 2, 1931, Box 97, ibid.; Frank Andrews to E. M. House, December 5, 1931, Box 718, ibid.; Joseph F. Guffey to Louis Howe, Box 646, ibid.

107 Newton D. Baker to Carter Glass, April 6, 1931, Box 279, Glass Papers; Carter Glass to W. H. Hale, November 19, 1931, Box 280, ibid.; Bernard Baruch to Carter Glass, November 14, 1931, ibid.
front-runner, McAdoo reserved his greatest contempt for him. Confiding to Bertrand, McAdoo asserted: "Certainly the disclosures already made concerning Tammany Hall plus Roosevelt's declaration for the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment, and his failure to cooperate in the enforcement of the Federal laws in New York are a heavy handicap for him to carry." In 1924 McAdoo had attempted to emphasize economic issues at a time when cultural tensions had come to the fore. He was not stressing cultural issues when his party's moderate majority was more concerned with economic problems. Both he and Raskob were outside the mainstream of Democratic thought.

While Howe was busily building up rural support both through his massive correspondence and through his conferences in Washington, Farley blitzed the West for Roosevelt late in June, 1931. At Howe's suggestion Farley made use of his attendance at an Elks convention in Seattle to sample the political environment in the Midwest and the West. Setting out on June 29, Farley covered eighteen states in nineteen days. He conferred with the party leaders in the states through which he traveled and attempted to ascertain the prevailing direction of the political winds. Although his report was overly optimistic in some instances, it revealed that Roosevelt had

108 W. G. McAdoo to Bertrand, March 31, 1931, Box 29, DNC Papers.
tremendous strength among the Western party leaders. While there was some sentiment for Smith, Ritchie, Young, and Baker, Farley felt that it was largely insignificant. The Western leaders had decided that Roosevelt was a potential winner, and they were ready to support him.\textsuperscript{109}

Farley's trip had not generated a great deal of concern at the party's national headquarters. The Raskob-Shouse faction expected that Shouse, who was also speaking throughout the country, would effectively counter Farley's efforts.\textsuperscript{110} Farley, however, proved to be a very capable ambassador. A politician's politician, Farley was very adept at dealing with the Western organization leaders.\textsuperscript{111} Joe Davies, who had gone to the Pacific Coast to stimulate support for Roosevelt among the former Wilsonians, reported that "... Farley did a grand job in the west. I ran across his tracks and have a great admiration for his effectiveness."\textsuperscript{112} By September, 1931, an ebullient Roosevelt could confide to James J. Hoey that "... my friends in both the South and West strongly advise me to let things

\textsuperscript{109}Farley, \textit{Behind the Ballots}, 80-88; James Farley to Roosevelt, July 6, 1931, Box 53, Howe Papers; Farley memorandum, n.d., ibid.

\textsuperscript{110}Michelson, \textit{The Ghost Talks}, 135.

\textsuperscript{111}Louis Howe to E. M. House, August 17, 1931, Box 52, Howe Papers.

\textsuperscript{112}Joe Davies to Louis Howe, September 30, 1931, Box 97, DNC Papers.
drift as they are going for the present as the great majority of the states through their regular organizations are showing in every way friendliness toward me."\footnote{113}

By the fall of 1931, Roosevelt was unquestionably the front-runner. Nevertheless, an *Outlook* poll of Democratic editors released in September, 1931, revealed the possibility that Roosevelt's early dominance might be successfully challenged if a strong candidate actively opposed him. The journal's questionnaire was distributed to 142 key Democratic newspapers throughout the country. It posed two questions. First, whom do you prefer for the nomination? Second, from a knowledge of conditions in your state and throughout the country, whom do you think will receive the nomination? While a substantial majority of the editors felt that Roosevelt would receive the nomination, more preferred Baker, who was not conducting a campaign.\footnote{114}

There were various reasons offered to explain this divergence of opinion. One New Yorker referred to Roosevelt as being less capable than Baker, Young, Ritchie, or Governor Ely. He felt that

\footnote{113}Roosevelt to James J. Hoey, September 11, 1931, Roosevelt and Lash, *F.D.R.* His Personal Letters: 1928-1945, 216. Hoey was one of those New York politicians who, when faced with the choice of supporting either Roosevelt or Smith, opted for Smith. See editor's note *ibid.*, 217.

\footnote{114}"Roosevelt the Favorite!" *Outlook*, CLIX (September 9, 1931), 43.
Roosevelt was "a very poor financier and a little bit susceptible to those political moves which mean 'the main chance.'" Many editors felt that Roosevelt's lead was due primarily to his early campaign rather than to any inherent virtues that he might possess. H. Yates, editor of the Sheridan, Wyoming, Press, suggested that Roosevelt would probably be nominated "not because of what he stands for but because so far he is the only one whose publicity has permeated the fastnesses of this Rocky Mountain district." Of greater significance than the editors' reasoning was the geographical distribution of their replies. These showed Baker to be particularly strong in the East; Roosevelt was strong in the South and in the West.

Raskob did not intend to allow control of the party to pass to Roosevelt by default. While Roosevelt had been constructing his base of support, Raskob and Shouse had scarcely been idle. Notwithstanding the rebuke that he had been dealt by the Democratic national committee, Raskob persisted in his efforts to force both his prohibition and his economic views upon the Democratic Party. On April 4, 1931, he dispatched a letter to all the members of the Democratic national committee. He indicated that while it was not the national committee's function to write the platform, it was its duty to make policy recommendations to the national convention. Raskob,

115 Ibid., 44.
116 Ibid., 45.
therefore, requested that each member submit his recommendations to the committee for consideration at the next meeting. Specifically, he called for proposals dealing with the question of national prohibition. Although Raskob admitted the existence of economic problems, the major portion of his nine-page letter was devoted to a defense of his prohibition plan.\(^{117}\)

Not surprisingly, Raskob's letter precipitated another cry of outrage from the Democratic ranks. The moderates were in control, and the moderates, regardless of their views on the merits of Raskob's plan, did not want the party split over the prohibition question. They would leave the determination of the party's position on prohibition to the national convention.\(^{118}\) While there were isolated voices raised in support of Raskob's proposal, the dominant opinion called for submerging prohibition and stressing economic issues. Cordell Hull led the moderates' attack. Hull indicated that Raskob's letter was, in most respects, a repetition of his address to the national committee meeting "...in which it is strenuously attempted to make prohibition not only a partisan issue but a paramount partisan issue, which automatically would, for an indefinite

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\(^{117}\) John J. Raskob to Members of the Democratic National Committee, April 4, 1931, File 602, Raskob Papers.

number of years, exclude serious or deliberate consideration of all other issues and problems by party agencies, no matter how vital and pressing. Chairman Raskob's reference to other questions impresses one as being minor and parenthetical. Hull suggested that the Democratic Party had more important tasks than prohibition with which to deal. He asserted: "There are today six or seven millions of able-bodied wage earners without employment, who, taken with their families, aggregate nearly 20,000,000 men, women and children, who are really in need of more food and clothing. What problem, including cause and remedy, could be more pressing and important?"

Insofar as Hull was concerned there were no problems more important. He insisted that "...economic problems must have first place in any Democratic program." 119

In emphasizing bread rather than liquor, Hull spoke for the majority of his party. Representative Ayres of Kansas suggested that "this is not the time to split the party on whisky." Senator Coolidge of Massachusetts asserted: "I hope the party will make the issues economic and try to do what it can to give the working man employment and good food." 120 James H. Moyle of Utah thundered: "Food, not liquor is the paramount issue. The liquor question must be solved, but economic relief must not be pushed to the background.

120 New York Times, April 7, 1931, p. 20.
by inflaming the minds of the people upon a question which is moral rather than economic." Like Moyle, Vincent Miles of Arkansas agreed that the liquor question must be settled. But he would resolve it by some type of referendum apart from the presidential contest. In the meantime, the Democratic Party should not divide over the issue but should devote itself to curing economic distress. The party's moderates simply did not intend to allow prohibition to overshadow economic issues.

The New York Times gently chided Raskob editorially. The paper indicated that "with the best of intentions, he [Raskob] misunderstands the proper functions of the National Committee. He seems to be seeking to make it an engine of propaganda for policies the agitation of which, at this time, can only conduce to further Democratic dissension." The Times suggested that "it is by the quiet assembling of delegations, not by proclaiming from the housetops a referendum of the National Committee, that the course of the national convention in 1932 will be determined." While the Times was willing to attribute Raskob's actions to political naivete, Republican Senator George Norris was not so charitable. He charged that

122 Vincent Miles to Jouett Shouse, April 7, 1931, Box 279, Glass Papers.
Raskob wanted to nominate a Democrat who shared Hoover's economic instincts and to wage the campaign on a sham issue—prohibition. He accused Raskob of being an instrument of the "special interests."

Norris vowed that these interests "...want the people to forget that they are hungry and cold, while they discuss the proposition of the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment. They want them to talk about liquor, instead of bread. Not only that, but they are going to compel them to drink their liquor on an empty stomach."

Largely oblivious to the opposition generated by his proposals, Raskob remained undeterred in his determination to chart the party's course on policy matters. Raskob turned a deaf ear to Scott Ferris' pleas that the party ignore the divisive prohibition issue and


125Raskob's proposals had been greeted warmly in some circles. Most significantly, former Senator Bruce, a Ritchie supporter, and Newton D. Baker approved of them. Harry Byrd also encouraged Raskob. Byrd would not commit himself on the merits of the prohibition question, but the Virginian was keeping a foot in both camps. He undoubtedly pictured himself as a possible compromise choice. William Cabell Bruce to John J. Raskob, April 6, 1931, File 602, Raskob Papers; John J. Raskob to William Cabell Bruce, April 7, 1931, ibid.; John J. Raskob to John H. McCrähon, April 9, 1931, ibid.; Charles A. Karch to John J. Raskob, April 10, 1931, ibid.; John J. Raskob to Charles A. Katch [sic], April 14, 1931, ibid.; Newton D. Baker to John J. Raskob, August 5, 1931, ibid.; Harry F. Byrd to John J. Raskob, April 8, 1931, ibid.; John J. Raskob to Harry F. Byrd, April 9, 1931, ibid.; Harry F. Byrd to John J. Raskob, April 18, 1931, ibid.; John J. Raskob to Harry F. Byrd, April 21, 1931, ibid.; Harry F. Byrd to John J. Raskob, August 20, 1931, ibid.; Harry F. Byrd to John R. Raskob, August 25, 1931, ibid.; John J. Raskob to Harry F. Byrd, August 24, 1931, ibid.
deal instead with the economic problems that were disturbing the people. Either blind to the miseries of the depression or afraid of its possible adverse effects upon capitalism, Raskob refused to alter his plan of action. He responded to Ferris' appeal by indicating that millions of people were clamoring for a change in the prohibition law. If they were denied the opportunity to alter it through the ballot box, the country might erupt in rebellion. While there may have been cause for revolution, the scarcity of food, not of liquor, would be more likely to spark it. Almost as an afterthought, Raskob stipulated that economic issues should also be considered. His analysis of the farm problem was unique to say the very least. He indicated that prior to the enactment of the Eighteenth Amendment approximately twenty million acres of land had supplied the grains necessary for liquor production. It was not the surplus of those twenty million acres that was creating such havoc with farm prices. Having thus dispensed with the economic problems, Raskob again turned his attention to prohibition. 126

While Raskob confined most of his remarks to private correspondence, Jouett Shouse actively carried the national committee's case to the people throughout the country. Unlike Raskob, Shouse recognized the existence of economic problems. Yet Shouse also

126 Scott Ferris to John J. Raskob, April 8, 1931, ibid.; John J. Raskob to Scott Ferris, April 14, 1931, ibid.
insisted upon publicizing Raskob's prohibition proposals. Raskob's and Shouse's activities aroused a great deal of concern in the Roosevelt camp. Roosevelt hoped to avoid an open fight over prohibition at the upcoming national committee meeting, yet Raskob refused to discuss the matter with him. Since Raskob had appointed a large proportion of the national committee members, Roosevelt and Howe were afraid that he might succeed in forcing the Wet-Dry question to the fore. Howe advised Hull, who was watching over Roosevelt's interests in Washington, that it was necessary that they act quickly to prevent the eruption of a factional fight at the national committee meeting.

It was not only the threatened fight in the national committee meeting but also the growing hostility to the New Yorker's candidacy that disturbed the Roosevelt forces in the late fall of 1931. It had long been apparent that if Roosevelt was to be opposed, that challenge would come from the East; who would dispute his lead had not yet been determined. When in November, Governor Ritchie made an accelerated speaking tour through the Eastern states and conferred with Smith and Raskob, his actions unleashed a flood of speculation.

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128 Roosevelt to Josephus Daniels, August 1, 1931, Box 15, Daniels Papers; Louis Howe to Cordell Hull, November 2, 1931, Ser. I, Con. 31, Hull Papers.
The almost universal interpretation pictured Ritchie's activity as an effort on the part of the stop-Roosevelt forces to head off the front-runner. Walsh was certain that Raskob and Smith were behind the stop-Roosevelt maneuver. Hull depicted the New York and Illinois machines as the villains, and Wheeler insisted that it was the party's conservatives, particularly the utility interests, who were attempting to find a candidate to block the New York Governor. Ritchie seemed a likely choice since Owen Young had taken himself out of the running and Baker refused to advance his own candidacy in any way.\(^{129}\)

Perceptively summarizing the situation, H. K. Flemming of the Baltimore Sun observed that:

The powerful financial interests in the East fear Governor Roosevelt's progressivism. Between Roosevelt and Ritchie, they would prefer Ritchie.

Smith and Raskob are definitely dubious about Roosevelt.

Tammany Hall does not want Roosevelt, and would probably prefer Ritchie.

However, politicians concede that Roosevelt will get the New York delegation in the 1932 convention

\(^{129}\)New York Times, November 3, 1931, p. 3; New York Times, November 4, 1931, p. 11; New York Times, November 14, 1931, p. 5; T. J. Walsh to E. G. Worden, November 17, 1931, Box 382, Walsh Papers; "The Ritchie Presidential Bee's Trial Flight," Literary Digest, CXI (November 28, 1931), 10. An indignant Raskob assured Wheeler that the national committee's power was not being used to further the ambitions of any candidate. John J. Raskob to Burton K. Wheeler, November 11, 1931, File 602, Raskob Papers. While the national committee may not have been hostile to any particular candidate, there was little question that its officers were. Rosen indicates that as early as September, 1931, Smith, Shouse, and Raskob had decided upon Baker as their choice to stop Roosevelt. Rosen, "Baker on the Fifth Ballot?," 231.
unless the local political situation changes materially by next spring, but they also point out that if a third of the convention remains adamant in blocking the Roosevelt nomination, the New York delegates will swing their votes elsewhere. Just where is a question that remains unanswered. 130

By far the greatest unanswered question revolved around Smith's position vis-a-vis the Roosevelt candidacy. Would the idol of the urban masses actively use his following to block the Roosevelt bid? Or would he allow that support to go to Roosevelt? In November, 1931, Smith opposed a Roosevelt-sponsored reforestation amendment that had gone before the voters. Smith evidently hoped that by defeating Roosevelt upon this issue, the Roosevelt cause would suffer nationally. Roosevelt, however, emerged victorious from this test of strength. 131 Ironically, the New Republic speculated that despite his victory, Roosevelt's cause had been weakened. Smith was now more bitter than ever, and the journal felt that Smith had the power to block Roosevelt's nomination, if he chose to exercise it. In the New Republic's opinion Smith held the key to the nomination. 132

In a Roosevelt feeler extended early in December, Clark Howell, publisher of the Atlanta Constitution, advised Smith that his


131 Bellush, Franklin D. Roosevelt as Governor of New York, 97-98.

132 New Republic, LXIX (November 18, 1931), 18.
support would insure Roosevelt's nomination. To Howell's declaration that the country expected him to support Roosevelt and that he could hardly do otherwise, Smith replied, "the hell I can't." Smith said that he did not mean that he would not support Roosevelt; he was for the party first and would support whatever man seemed best for the party. As Howell began to extol Roosevelt's virtues, Smith said to him: "But you speak for the South...and don't understand the situation up here as I do." Howell assured Smith that Roosevelt had the backing of every Southern state and would receive as many as three-fourths of the electoral votes west of the Mississippi. When Smith informed Howell that such backing did not insure him the votes of the Northeast, Howell responded that with Smith's support it would. Howell also asserted that "...with Roosevelt as the nominee it means New York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut and New Jersey." Smith replied that he "doubted" it. Howell reported that Smith went on to say that "'millions' of people in this section resented 'the way he had been treated'. . .that no Democrat had ever polled as many votes as he had..."133

Probing deeper, Howell attempted to determine the reason for Smith's coolness. Smith did not leave him in doubt long. Giving vent to his emotions, Smith inveighed, "Do you know, by God, that

he has never consulted me about a damn thing since he has been Governor? He has taken bad advice from sources not friendly to me. He has ignored me! . . . By God, he invited me to his house before he recently went to Georgia, and did not even mention to me the subject of his candidacy.  

Smith also indicted Roosevelt for equivocating on the prohibition issue. In concluding his report, however, Howell assured Roosevelt that if he handled Smith diplomatically, he could be brought into line. In any event, Howell believed that Roosevelt could be nominated without Smith's support if that became necessary.  

Howell's letter indicated only a few of the factors that had dampened Smith's enthusiasm for Roosevelt. Smith distrusted Roosevelt's dependence upon intuitive decision. He felt that Roosevelt displayed a lack of sober judgment and investigation in formulating policies. Smith's resentment increased as he saw Southern and Western Democrats who had rejected him forming the phalanx of the Roosevelt movement. And as it became more apparent that the depression was likely to sweep into office any Democrat nominated, it became increasingly difficult for Smith not to yield to Governor Ely of Massachusetts and "Boss" Hague of Jersey City who were urging


135 Ibid.
him to seek the nomination. 136

As the year 1931 drew to a close, however, Smith had not actively opposed Roosevelt, and the New York Governor remained the front-runner. In analyzing the source of Roosevelt's strength, the *New Republic* noted that both the South and the West were practically solid in their support for the New York Governor. The journal contended that if Roosevelt was nominated it would be because "...the rest of the country has put him over on the East." In fact, the *New Republic* felt that the Eastern opposition to Roosevelt was one of his chief assets. It was not love for Roosevelt that attracted Southern and Western politicians to his standard. Rather, "...the general conviction that Raskob, Smith and Tammany do not want him gives him popularity in their states." 137

Thus, Roosevelt's strategy had been partially successful. He had captured the old Bryan-Wilson-McAdoo rural following. While he did not have Smith's active support, the "Happy Warrior" had not openly opposed him. Nevertheless, there were clouds on the horizon. If the Wet and the business interests of the East could find a suitable challenger, the Democratic convention of 1932 might degenerate into


137 *New Republic*, LXIX (December 23, 1931), 162.
a repetition of the Madison Square Garden fiasco. Furthermore, Raskob's determination to force a decision of the prohibition question at the upcoming national committee meeting made such a debilitating struggle appear more likely. Much would depend upon the moderates' ability to keep prohibition subordinated to economic issues.
CHAPTER XIII

CHICAGO

In the months immediately preceding the 1932 Democratic convention Roosevelt endeavored both to keep the prohibition issue subordinated to economic problems and to build such an insurmountable lead that his nomination would be a mere formality. Roosevelt and his moderate allies thwarted Raskob's attempts to force a Wet declaration upon the party prior to the convention, and by the time the convention convened, public opinion had swung so sharply against the Eighteenth Amendment that the issue was defused. Roosevelt did not enjoy similar success in his efforts to graft Smith's urban support to the old Bryan-McAdoo following in the South and the West. Consequently, Roosevelt entered the convention as the champion of the Southern and Western Democracy, not as a national candidate. His native East rejected him and flocked to the standard of Al Smith. Roosevelt's nomination, therefore, signaled a victory of the South and the West over the East, a victory of the country over the city.

Continuing his relentless pressure to secure a Wet declaration prior to the convention, Raskob, late in 1931, conducted a poll of the
90,000 contributors who had financed the Smith presidential campaign. Raskob sought their opinions on the advisability of the national convention's making a positive declaration on the prohibition question. He also called a national committee meeting for January 9, 1932. Because residents of New York, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Illinois, and New Jersey constituted approximately one-half of the total contributors and Southern and Western inhabitants comprised less than one-fourth of the total, the outcome of the poll was scarcely in doubt. ¹ The New York Times caustically commented: "When the National Committee meets again, Mr. Raskob, at the expense of $5,000, will be able to tell it that those who put up money to elect Al Smith President still believe that prohibition should be repealed. This can hardly rank as a sensational revelation."²

Roosevelt's supporters believed that Raskob had devised his questionnaire in order to eliminate Roosevelt. While Roosevelt was known to favor a Wet platform, he wanted it drafted so that it would be acceptable to both the Wets and the Drys. As a further concession to the Southern and Western moderates, Roosevelt definitely desired to relegate the prohibition question to a place of secondary importance. The Roosevelt camp feared that if Raskob dictated the

prohibition plank, it would be designed to make Ritchie, not Roosevelt, the logical Democratic candidate. Furthermore, many political prognosticators viewed Ritchie as a mere stalking horse; Smith was the Wet's real candidate. Raskob strenuously denied that his questionaire was intended to aid any particular candidate. Rather, he insisted that he merely desired to avert a disastrous fight at the national convention. 3

Logic seemed to indicate that if a Wet-Dry fight were generated prior to the convention and if potential candidates were forced to campaign on that issue, it would insure a fight at the national convention. Roosevelt certainly did not desire to become wed to either side in such a controversy, and Southern and Western moderates did not want prohibition to become the dominant issue. Raskob, therefore, provided another opportunity for Roosevelt to strengthen his position in the South and the West. Howe, Hull, Walsh, Swanson, Byrd, and Roper moved quickly to forestall the possibility of a controversy at the national committee meeting that might endanger party harmony prior to the convention. They agreed to permit Raskob's proposals to be referred, without recommendation, to the

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3 New York Times, November 24, 1931, pp. 1 and 2; New York Times, November 25, 1931, p. 2; "Raskob's Liquor Questionnaire," Literary Digest, CXI (December 12, 1931), 8-9; John J. Raskob to Scott Ferris, December 1, 1931, File 602, Raskob Papers (Eleutherian Mills Historical Library, Wilmington, Delaware); John J. Raskob to Alfred E. Cohn, December 15, 1931, ibid.; John J. Raskob to Morris Sheppard, December 23, 1931, ibid.
national convention's platform committee. Since this same privilege
would be extended to anyone who had platform suggestions, neither
the national committee nor Roosevelt would be committed to the
merits of any particular proposal. By the latter part of December,
Roosevelt and his allies had sufficient votes to prevent Raskob's
forcing any Wet declaration.4

Realizing that the Roosevelt forces had again outmaneuvered
him, Raskob began to retreat. It was obvious that he did not have
the votes to secure the national committee's endorsement of his
prohibition proposal. On January 5, Raskob publicized a letter that
he was sending to the national committee members. He urged the
national convention to adopt a plank recommending submission of an
amendment to the Eighteenth Amendment. This new amendment
provided for the establishment of Raskob's "Home Rule" plan. Raskob
indicated that he would not ask the national committee to go on record

4 Cordell Hull to Louis Howe, December 2, 1931, Ser. I, Con.
31, Hull Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress);
Louis Howe to Cordell Hull, December 3, 1931, ibid.; Louis Howe to
T. J. Walsh, December 3, 1931, Box 383, Walsh Papers (Division of
Manuscripts, Library of Congress); T. J. Walsh to Louis Howe,
December 8, 1931, ibid.; Robert W. Woolley to Roosevelt, December
21, 1931, Box 99, DNC Papers (Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde
Park); Harry F. Byrd to Roosevelt, December 22, 1931, Box 756,
DNC Papers; Cordell Hull to Louis Howe, December 23, 1931, Ser. I,
Con. 32, Hull Papers; Harllee Branch to Louis Howe, December 24,
1931, Box 130, DNC Papers, T. J. Walsh to Mrs. Roy C. Battey,
December 28, 1931, Box 382, Walsh Papers; Josephus Daniels to
Roosevelt, January 2, 1932, Box 15, Daniels Papers (Division of
Manuscripts, Library of Congress).
on the prohibition question. Rather, he would request that both his letter and his questionnaire results be referred, without recommendation, to the national convention's platform committee. This was precisely the procedure that the Roosevelt forces had advocated. Roosevelt had won again; the national committee meeting would be a harmonious gathering with no discussion of prohibition. 5

On the whole, the Roosevelt forces were quite satisfied with the outcome of the Democratic national committee meeting held early in 1932. There was no discord over the prohibition issue, and they selected Robert Jackson, a Roosevelt supporter, as the committee's secretary. They suffered a partial reversal in the designation of the convention site. With Chicago, Atlantic City, Kansas City, and San Francisco competing for the honor, Chicago won the bid. The Roosevelt leadership preferred Kansas City because the galleries in Chicago were likely to be hostile. But, since Chicago both pledged more money for the convention and afforded a more convenient location, the Roosevelt leadership could not hold their forces in line. They did, however, prevent the selection of Atlantic City, 5

which was decidedly Smith territory. Of equal importance, Farley and Roper, while in Washington attending the national committee meeting, won an important convert to the Roosevelt cause. Confer-
ing with former Chairman Homer Cummings, they drew the influential Wilsonian leader into the Roosevelt orbit. Events would soon prove that Cummings was a very valuable addition to the Roosevelt entourage.

Roosevelt's command of the national committee was not matched by a similar mastery in his quest for the presidential nomination. Although Smith had not yet openly opposed him, the year 1932 opened very inauspiciously for the New York Governor. On January 2, William Randolph Hearst launched a nationwide radio attack against Roosevelt, Baker, Young, and Smith. Hearst considered them all to be misguided disciples of Wilsonian internationalism. Having discovered upon investigation that Garner opposed foreign entanglements, Hearst boomed the Texan for the presidency. A genuine Garner candidacy would pose a direct threat to Roosevelt's ambitions. Roosevelt's pre-convention strategy had been based, in part, upon his securing absolute control of the South

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7 Farley, Behind the Ballots, 93-94; Daniel Roper to E. M. House, January 8, 1932, Box 99, DNC Papers.
and the West. While projecting absolutely no appeal in the East, Garner might be a factor of some importance in the West. Initially, however, Roosevelt discounted the seriousness of the Garner talk. Since Garner had earlier predicted that Texas would be in the Roosevelt column, Roosevelt knew that the Texan was not personally antagonistic toward him. Furthermore, Garner assured both Homer Cummings and newspapermen that he was not a candidate. 8

Hearst was not the only journalist who was dissatisfied with Roosevelt's performance. Following closely on the heels of Hearst's announcement, Walter Lippmann penned a devastating indictment of Roosevelt's campaign. In an article appearing in the New York Herald Tribune on January 8, Lippmann accused Roosevelt of attempting to be all things to all people. Lippmann noted that the New York Governor's Western supporters pictured Roosevelt as a radical while the New York Times assured its readers that Roosevelt envisioned no socialistic proposals of any type. This rather apparent contradiction led Lippmann to comment that "the art of carrying water on both shoulders is highly developed in American politics, and Mr. Roosevelt has learned it." Suggesting that Roosevelt was

"...a highly impressionable person, without a firm grasp of public affairs and without very strong convictions." Lippmann indicated that he was not sure which of Roosevelt's supporters had been more deceived. Lippmann's further analysis, however, suggested that he believed Roosevelt's Western supporters would be those most disappointed in the New York Governor. Wall Street disliked Roosevelt because of his vagueness, not because they feared him. And if Westerners thought that Roosevelt was hostile toward Tammany, they were mistaken. Roosevelt attacked Tammany only if he was forced to do so or if it was politically profitable to do so. Lippmann concluded: "...Franklin D. Roosevelt is no crusader. He is no tribune of the people. He is no enemy of entrenched privilege. He is a pleasant man who, without any important qualifications for the office, would very much like to be President."9

9Lippmann, Interpretations: 1931-1932, 259-62. Lippmann was not alone in evaluating Roosevelt as an opportunist lacking in conviction. Describing Roosevelt in The Mirrors of 1932, Ray Tucker observed: "Although advanced as a liberal--the most vociferous one among the candidates of the major parties--his liberalism is born of impulse rather than intelligence or conviction. It moves him, except when he can see a definite end in sight, only slowly and sporadically. He is indecisive, indiscreet and impulsive. Ever ready to embrace the newest fad or figure in politics, he surrenders himself wholeheartedly to momentary men and issues... Expediency rules him. He wavers between warring sets of advisers. Those who have his ear last usually prevail." Unlike Lippmann, however, Tucker did sense a streak of genuineness in Roosevelt's character. Significantly, he detected nothing hypocritical in Roosevelt's concern for the rural American. Tucker
Lippmann's article, or one like it, was the logical outcome of Roosevelt's attempts both to retain the Smith following and to attract the old Bryan-McAdoo constituency. Howe advised Roosevelt to read Lippmann's article, but he admitted that there was nothing that they could do about it. Lippmann preferred Baker to Roosevelt, and Baker's name continued to cloud Roosevelt's horizon. Although Baker insisted that he was not a candidate, political prognosticators refused to eliminate him from the picture. His own actions encouraged such continued speculation. Before leaving for Mexico on January 26, 1932, Baker, at one time the foremost champion of Wilsonian internationalism, made quite explicit an attitude that he had often expressed in private. He was opposed to a plank in the Democratic platform urging American entrance into the League. Asserting that the League issue should not be a partisan one, Baker indicated that he would not lead the United States into the League until a clear majority of the American citizens favored such action. Baker's utterances upon the League issue seemed to belie his insistence that he was not a candidate, and Roosevelt's scouts reported the presence of considerable Baker sentiment throughout

noted: "If there is some pretense in his relations with the metropolitan machine, there is none in his contact with the country folk. Whereas most Democratic Governors of New York neglect the 'hick' voters, he cultivates them. . . . His rural ties and sympathies are real." Tucker, The Mirrors of 1932, 78, 98.

10 Rollins, Roosevelt and Howe, 321.
the country. 11

Late in January, 1932, Roosevelt moved to regain the initiative. On January 22, Roosevelt formally announced his candidacy in a letter to F. W. McLean, secretary of the North Dakota Democratic state committee. 12 Shortly thereafter, yielding to Hearst's pressure and hoping to blunt any possible Garner candidacy, Roosevelt retreated from internationalism. 13 On February 2, Roosevelt, who had once ardently defended the League, averred:

"The League of Nations today is not the League conceived by Woodrow Wilson. . . . American participation in the League would not serve the highest purpose of the prevention of war and a settlement of international difficulties in accordance with fundamental American ideals. Because of these facts, therefore, I do not favor American participation." 14 Although this maneuver served to illustrate the validity of Lippmann's analysis, Roosevelt was wise in moving to

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13 Swanberg, Citizen Hearst, 436.

strengthen his position in the South and the West. In February, Smith entered the race; Roosevelt's hopes of inheriting the "Happy Warrior's" Eastern support were shattered.

On February 8, succumbing at last to the various pressures working upon him, Smith stated:

So many inquiries have come to me from friends throughout the country who worked for and believed in me as to my attitude in the present political situation that I feel that I owe it to my friends and to the millions of men and women who supported me so loyally in 1928 to make my position clear.

If the Democratic National Convention, after careful consideration, should decide it wants me to lead I will make the fight; but I will not make a preconvention campaign to secure the support of delegates. 15

While the editorial response to Smith's announcement was varied, the consensus indicated that Smith had weakened Roosevelt's chances, that Smith could not win the nomination himself but could deadlock the convention, and that the eventual nominee would be a dark horse or compromise candidate. Garner, Ritchie, and Baker seemed to be the potential candidates most likely to profit from a deadlocked convention. While Roosevelt's supporters admitted that their cause had been hurt, they did not view Smith's statement as wholly disadvantageous. They felt that it might tend to solidify Roosevelt's following in the South and the West. They admitted, however, that the Smith candidacy would render their task more

difficult in the industrialized Northeast. 16

It was difficult to view Smith's late entry into the race as anything other than a stop-Roosevelt tactic. Smith had successfully engaged in such negative maneuvering previously, most notably in 1924 when he had deprived McAdoo of the nomination. In fact, the 1932 campaign was beginning to bear a very close resemblance to the 1924 encounter. Walter Lippmann's analysis of the situation attested to the fact that the Democracy's rural-urban cleavage was again coming to the fore. Perceptively Lippmann noted that "both in its strength and its weakness Governor Roosevelt's candidacy follows the pattern of Bryan's and McAdoo's." Roosevelt was strong in the South and in the West but weak in the industrial Northeast. Significantly, Lippmann commented that "the political plan on which the carefully managed Roosevelt candidacy has been based was to assume the delivery of Smith's strength in the Northern cities, and to concentrate on developing independent strength in the region which rejected Smith." Yet Roosevelt's strategy had been only partially successful. He had not inherited Smith's urban strength. 17

Lippman was at no loss to explain Roosevelt's failure.

According to the columnist, Roosevelt had inadvertently alienated

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the Northern masses who had already been hurt by the outcome of
the 1928 presidential campaign. Lippmann indicated that the
Northern vote for Smith had "...represented the coming of age in
American politics of a part of the population which had not, until
then thought of itself as entitled to the full rights of American
citizenship." Smith's nomination symbolized their emancipation.
Anyone, therefore, who injured Smith's pride also offended the
masses who identified with him. Thus, when Roosevelt began to
dissociate himself from Smith, the urban masses felt that they had
been slighted. Lippmann believed that while Smith did not expect to
be nominated, the "Happy Warrior" was determined to play a role
in the final choice.18

There could be no question that Smith's announcement had
precipitated chaos within the Democratic ranks. While Smith's
entrance helped solidify Southern support behind Roosevelt, in
Illinois former Roosevelt stalwarts deserted both to Senator Lewis
and to Smith. Although reports from Kansas indicated that Roose-
velt's cause had been strengthened, there was also evidence that
Shouse had intensified his efforts to organize the state against
Roosevelt and that Baker sentiment had increased.19 Shouse took

18Ibid., 273-74.

19Adolphus Ragan to Roosevelt, February 16, 1932, Box 412,
DNC Papers; Lucius J. M. Malmin to Roosevelt, February 8, 1932,
Box 153, ibid.; I. B. Dunlap to Roosevelt, February 15, 1932, Box
324, ibid.
advantage of Smith's statement to urge more forcefully that states send unpledged delegations to the convention. The convention could then make its choice in light of current conditions. In offering such advice Shouse denied that he was attempting to block Roosevelt's nomination, but his protestations of innocence had a hollow ring.\textsuperscript{20}

It was at this critical juncture, with Roosevelt's nomination apparently in jeopardy, that Homer Cummings' earlier conversion to the New York Governor's standard began to pay political dividends.

Hoping to counter the disquieting effects of Smith's entrance, Hull and Roper requested Roosevelt to send Cummings to Washington as his personal representative. Cummings arrived in Washington on February 11, and immediately conferred with Roper, Hull and Senator Dill. The conferees then began to meet with senators and representatives in an effort to shore up the Roosevelt ranks. Drawing upon his long experience as Democratic leader, Cummings presented Roosevelt's case very forcefully. As a result of his endeavors, Cummings both converted numerous congressional leaders to Roosevelt's cause and calmed many of those who were waverling. Hull later recalled Cummings' efforts as one of the major turning points in the Roosevelt candidacy.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{20} New York \textit{Times}, February 10, 1932, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{21} Cordell Hull to E. M. House, December 31, 1932, Ser. I, Con. 32, Hull Papers; Daniel Roper to Louis Howe, February 13, 1932, Box 99, DNC Papers; John F. Costello to James A. Farley,
Cummings' activities in Roosevelt's behalf were not an unmixed blessing. Reporters repeatedly reminded their readers that both Cummings and Roper had been closely associated with McAdoo's 1924 campaign. Roosevelt's inheritance of McAdoo's former supporters became more apparent when Frank Hampton, prominent both in the McAdoo management in 1924 and in the Smith bolt in 1928, viciously attacked Smith for attempting to block Roosevelt. While Roosevelt needed the support of the former McAdooites, he did not need the Klan stigma associated with McAdoo's name. Events, however, would soon eradicate the latter contingency. 22

Cummings' missionary work came none too soon. Shortly after his trip to Washington, the Garner candidacy began to assume clearer definition. Although Garner refused to become an active candidate, Tom Connally and Sam Rayburn began to seek support for him. On February 16, Senators Connally and Sheppard of Texas endorsed Garner, and on February 22, Garner's Texas supporters formally launched his campaign. Sam Rayburn became Garner's

February 13, 1932, Box 97, ibid.; T. J. Walsh to Herbert J. Friedman, February 15, 1932, Box 383, Walsh Papers; Jared Y. Sanders to Roosevelt, March 17, 1932, Box 241, DNC Papers.

campaign manager. The Garner candidacy became something more than a favorite son movement when, on February 18, William Gibbs McAdoo endorsed the Texan. While McAdoo was not particularly impressed with his candidate, the Californian needed Hearst's newspaper support to overthrow the Dockweiler-Wardell organization in California. That organization was supporting Roosevelt. If successful, McAdoo would then be in a position to dominate the state party and to seek the Senate seat that would be available in 1932. Perhaps he entertained illusions of a deadlocked convention's offering him the presidential nomination.

Analyzing the effects of Garner's entrance into the race, Arthur Sears Hennings noted that the anti-Roosevelt forces viewed the Garner candidacy with a great deal of satisfaction. Roosevelt's opponents felt that Garner would capture many Southern votes that otherwise would go to Roosevelt. Garner's delegates when combined with Smith's would be sufficient to block Roosevelt. On the other hand, Roosevelt's supporters did not exhibit a great deal of anxiety. They felt that the Garner votes would eventually drift to Roosevelt.

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rather than to Smith or to any candidate that Smith might endorse. Moreover, the Roosevelt camp was elated when McAdoo joined the Garner forces since it "...operated to take the Ku Klux curse off the Roosevelt candidacy." Roosevelt's opponents could no longer claim that "...McAdoo's army of Kluxers of 1924 was lining up for Roosevelt." Henning speculated that the Roosevelt candidacy would get its real test in the March primaries when the New York Governor faced Smith in New Hampshire and Murray in North Dakota. Henning suggested: "New Hampshire will furnish a straw indicating whether Roosevelt is conservative enough to suit the east, North Dakota whether he is radical enough to suit the haunts of the sons of the wild jackass."24

24Chicago Tribune, February 22, 1932, p. 5. Time was to prove that the Roosevelt forces need not have been too concerned about the Garner candidacy. Garner never took his own candidacy too seriously, was determined that he would not be responsible for deadlocking the convention, and did not dislike Roosevelt. Timmons, Garner of Texas, 159-61. Unsure of Garner's personal feelings, the Roosevelt leadership took pains to insure that their candidate was the second choice of the Texas delegates. While a few of the Texas delegates selected in May were a party to the stop-Roosevelt movement, the vast majority of them preferred Roosevelt once it could be demonstrated that Garner could not be nominated. Thomas W. Davidson to Roosevelt, April 4, 1932, Box 729, DNC Papers; E. G. Brown to Roosevelt, April 9, 1932, Box 718, ibid.; Thomas W. Davidson to Roosevelt, May 2, 1932, Box 729, ibid.; Thomas W. Davison to T. S. Henderson, May 2, 1932, ibid.; Thomas W. Davidson to Roosevelt, May 25, 1932, ibid.

The Murray to whom Henning referred was Governor William H. Murray of Oklahoma. Frank Kent observed that beneath Murray's eccentricities lurked a very shrewd politician. With his campaign slogan of "Bread and Butter, Bacon and Beans," Murray had captured
If New Hampshire and North Dakota were indeed the real tests, Roosevelt passed them with flying colors. Roosevelt's New Hampshire victory was particularly impressive and revealing. He defeated Smith in the primary and captured the entire delegation. Significantly, Roosevelt polled a sufficiently heavy vote in the rural areas to offset the Smith majority in Manchester, the state's largest city. But, despite Roosevelt's victory, there was some question as to whether Smith had been eliminated. The Roosevelt forces had thoroughly organized the state prior to Smith's rather belated entry into the race. Observers, therefore, suggested that perhaps the Massachusetts and Pennsylvania contests in April would provide a more accurate indication of Roosevelt's strength. In addition to New Hampshire and North Dakota, the month of March also saw Roosevelt secure delegations in Minnesota, Georgia, Iowa, and Maine. Although the Missouri delegation was instructed for favorite son James Reed, the Kansas City boss Tom Pendergast informed the Roosevelt leadership that Missouri would swing to Roosevelt when she was needed. The seventy-year-old James Reed, who joined the stop-Roosevelt movement, was not made privy to this deal and did not realize that he did

the Oklahoma delegation and now sought that of North Dakota.

"Alfalfa Bill's Drive for the White House." Literary Digest, CXII (March 19, 1932), 13.
not fully control his own delegation. 25

In March, Roosevelt had captured delegations in the West, in the East, and in the South. But impressive as these March victories might appear, he had not yet faced either the primary voters or the state conventions in any of the highly industrialized Northeastern states. And there could be no question that Roosevelt's greatest weakness lay in the Northeast. In an article for *Scribner's Magazine* appearing in April, Frank Kent emphasized this weakness. Kent queried: "How Strong is Roosevelt?" The columnist professed to find the Roosevelt campaign somewhat puzzling. Roosevelt was a sectional candidate, but unlike all other sectional candidates in Kent's memory, Roosevelt was most vulnerable in his home section. Kent's inference was plain: those people who knew Roosevelt best liked him least. 26


In his efforts to castigate Roosevelt, Kent did not rely solely upon his readers' imaginations. In terms reminiscent of Lippmann's earlier attack, Kent noted that Roosevelt's critics discerned in his character either "...a lack of conviction or a covering up of conviction." These critics also suggested that Roosevelt's positions on prohibition and the League revealed him to be a "...straddler, a trimmer, a pussyfooter."27 Kent insisted that Roosevelt was the front-runner because he had waged an effective organizational campaign for over a year, not because he possessed any inherent strength. Indicating that Cox, Davis, and Smith opposed Roosevelt, Kent averred that the most important party leaders in Roosevelt's own section frowned upon his candidacy, that there was no popular sentiment for him in his own section, and that residents of the states with big electoral votes preferred Ritchie, Young, and Baker. Kent suggested that if the depression continued, any Democrat could be elected. But, if the business situation improved, "...the Democrats will incur an unnecessary risk not to nominate their best available man. It may be that Mr. Roosevelt is the best, but the fact is too plain to ignore that a good many party people do not think so."28

27 Ibid., 201.
28 Ibid., 203.
Events of April served to verify Kent's assertion that while Roosevelt was a sectional candidate, he was not the candidate of his own section. With little difficulty Roosevelt secured delegations from Arkansas, Wisconsin, Nebraska, Kentucky, and Michigan. The Michigan delegation, however, was bound to him for one ballot only. He was not so successful in the large industrialized states. Illinois instructed for Senator J. Hamilton Lewis, a favorite son. More significantly, Roosevelt's showing against Smith in Pennsylvania was disappointing, and Smith disastrously defeated him in Massachusetts. Following Roosevelt's poor showing in Pennsylvania and Massachusetts, editorial consensus indicated that his chances of attaining a quick and virtually uncontested nomination had been


Roosevelt should never have entered the Massachusetts primary. Senator Harrison warned him against it. Both Governor Ely and Senator David I. Walsh supported the "Happy Warrior," and the people of Massachusetts idolized Smith and were intensely loyal to him. To compound an already bad situation, Mayor Curley, in directing Roosevelt's campaign, concentrated on the cities and neglected to organize the rural vote. Roosevelt was thereby deprived of his natural constituency. S. R. Bertron to Roosevelt, March 15, 1932, Box 404, DNC Papers; Roosevelt to James L. Curley, April 28, 1932, Box 261, \textit{ibid.}; Louis Howe to Elisabeth Marbury, May 13, 1932, Box 263, \textit{ibid.}; Tugwell, \textit{The Democratic Roosevelt}, 224; Huthmacher, \textit{Massachusetts People and Politics}, 236-37. For a detailed account of the Massachusetts primary see James H. Guilfoyle, \textit{On the Trail of the Forgotten Man: A Journal of the Roosevelt Presidential Campaign} (Boston: Peabody Master Printers, 1933).
Roosevelt's lack of urban support was growing ever more apparent. Walter Lippmann offered an incisive analysis. Referring to the Massachusetts and Pennsylvania primaries, he observed:

These results dispose completely of the Roosevelt propaganda that he is the idol of the masses, opposed only by the international bankers, the power trust, and Mr. Raskob. To-day it is certain that in the industrial sections of the country Mr. Roosevelt is very far from being the idol of the masses.

Why is that?
Are the miners of Scranton and Wilkes-Barre the minions of Wall Street?
Or don't they want a President whose heart is sympathetic with them?
The real reason is that the people of the East know about Mr. Roosevelt, and gradually have taken his measure. They have detected something hollow in him, something synthetic, something pretended and calculated.

It has now been made plain that Mr. Roosevelt's position is about as follows: he has popular strength in the South, in the Northwest, and probably on the Pacific Coast. He has strength among the professional politicians in these sections plus some scattered professional following elsewhere among politicians who are looking for the band-wagon.

But in the industrial Middle West and the industrial East he has neither popular strength nor professional, and he has the great weakness of having antagonized Al Smith's most devoted followers. Unless the Chicago convention thinks that he can carry every state west of the Mississippi and south of the Potomac, and win with these electoral votes alone, they will not take the risk of nominating him.

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Whereas Kent had merely implied that those people who knew Roosevelt best disliked him, Lippmann had emphasized the point. Echoing Kent, Lippmann warned the Democrats that with Roosevelt as their nominee, they would lose the electoral votes of the large Northeastern states. But while the Massachusetts primary signaled Roosevelt losses in the East it also heralded Roosevelt gains in the South and the West. With the Roosevelt campaign reeling from the loss in Massachusetts, Huey Long chose this as the best psychological moment to announce his support for Roosevelt. Republican Senator George Norris had converted Long to the Roosevelt standard, and Norris likewise availed himself of this opportunity publicly to endorse Roosevelt.32

April not only witnessed Roosevelt disasters in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania but also saw Smith abandon the passive role he had adopted in February and begin to oppose Roosevelt more vigorously. Roosevelt's "Forgotten Man" radio address of April 7, 1932, served as the immediate catalyst for Smith's increased activity. During the course of a rather innocuous address, Roosevelt remarked: "These unhappy times call for the building of plans that rest upon the forgotten, the unorganized but the indispensable units of economic

power, for plans . . . that build from the bottom up and not from the
top down, that put their faith once more in the forgotten man at the
bottom of the economic pyramid."33

Significantly, the farmer was Roosevelt's forgotten man.
Indicating that public works projects were only stop-gap remedies,
Roosevelt called for a restoration of the farmer's purchasing power.
Once this was accomplished, industry would flourish. Next Roose­
velt demanded relief for the farm and home owners to prevent their
being dispossessed. He suggested that these individuals deserved as
much governmental help as that accorded the corporations and the
banks. Finally, he advocated a revised tariff that would permit a
reciprocal exchange of goods.34 In conclusion, Roosevelt indicated
that while the problems he had mentioned were only three among
many vital factors, "... they seem to be beyond the concern of a
national administration which can think in terms only of the top of
the social and economic structure. It has sought temporary relief
from the top down rather than permanent relief from the bottom up."35

Clearly, Roosevelt's address had been aimed at his natural
constituency in the rural areas. He had largely ignored the plight of

33Roosevelt, The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D.
Roosevelt: Volume I, 625.

34Ibid., 625-27.

35Ibid., 627.
the industrial laborer. Smith chose to make his reply at the Jefferson Day Dinner in Washington on April 13. But the "Happy Warrior" seemed more intent upon protecting the capitalist than upon representing the urban poor. Without mentioning Roosevelt by name, Smith announced: "I will take off my coat and vest and fight to the end against any candidate who persists in any demagogic appeal to the masses of the working people of the country to destroy themselves by setting class against class and rich against poor."36

The Republicans viewed the Roosevelt-Smith encounter with glee. They concluded that the Democrats were preparing for a radical-conservative convention fight and that Smith had saved them the trouble of stamping Roosevelt as a radical.37 Smith's attack upon Roosevelt was also counter-productive in another respect. Smith's open opposition to Roosevelt propelled many rural voters, who heretofore had been vacillating, into the New York Governor's camp.38 Yet, notwithstanding the fact that every Eastern attack upon Roosevelt strengthened him in the South and in the West, the Eastern conservatives continued their assault. In a public letter to


38 George N. Welch to Louis Howe, April 22, 1932, Box 717, DNC Papers; Henry Ware Allen to Roosevelt, April 22, 1932, Box 223, ibid.; Glenn A. Kenderdine to James A. Farley, April 26, 1932, Box 209, ibid.; Thomas J. Walsh to John R. Yates, May 6, 1932, Box 385, Walsh Papers.
Homer Cummings, Thomas Chadbourne, a former McAdoo supporter now firmly ensconced in the Smith-Raskob-Shouse camps, assailed Roosevelt in much the same terms that Smith had employed. Chadbourne insisted that Roosevelt's speech had "... convicted him of cheap opportunism bordering on downright demagogy." Chadbourne's letter simply added to Roosevelt's prestige among the party's Bryan-Wilson element.

In due course, Cummings, with the aid of House, Hull, and Roper drafted a reply. If Chadbourne could charge "demagogy," Cummings could and did charge "conspiracy." Labeling the attack on Roosevelt's speech as "hysterical," Cummings indicated: "The real difficulty with Governor Roosevelt's radio speech was that it

39 Thomas L. Chadbourne to Homer Cummings, April 24, 1932, Box 57, Howe Papers (Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park).

40 Writing to Chadbourne, W. W. Durbin asserted: "When I looked at the number on your letter, I had your number right away. I have been dealing with fellows like you ever since 1896. I remember in that campaign that Bryan was denounced as an anarchist. ... I also remember that when I was a delegate to the Convention in 1912 for Woodrow Wilson, that this same element to which you belong, fought him tooth and nail. ... This idle chatter about demagogy has always been applied to men who have stood up for the great common people. ... Governor Roosevelt is exactly right and he is going to have the nomination at Chicago in June and the election in November, and the best recommendation of him to me is that fellows like yourself, who are against him, will have no influence with his administration and the people will be permitted to have a square deal. William W. Durbin to Thomas L. Chadbourne, April 28, 1932, DNC Papers.

41 Homer Cummings to Louis Howe, May 13, 1932, Box 86, DNC Papers.
was distasteful to those who for more than a decade have been controlling the destinies of the United States and who are, in a large measure at least, responsible for our present predicament. They do not like to have their palliative remedies correctly appraised." Cummings explained that the nameless individuals to whom he referred were neither Republicans nor Democrats. Rather, they were nonpartisan and were intent upon controlling the government regardless of which party was in power. Cummings suggested that if with the aid of Democrats these sinister figures "...are able to throw our party into confusion and maneuver us into another Madison Square Garden Convention, they will be well content. That such an unworthy conspiracy will be permitted to prevail I do not for a moment believe." The Chadbourne-Cummings exchange, coupled with Smith's strong showing in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania, indicated very clearly that Roosevelt was completely at odds with his party's Eastern wing. The business interests feared Roosevelt while the urban masses remained devoted to Al Smith, who represented their social aspirations if not their economic interests.

Because the anti-Roosevelt Eastern Democracy nominally controlled the party machinery, the Roosevelt forces maneuvered to exert their dominance over the convention organization. The

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42 Homer Cummings to Thomas L. Chadbourne, May 20, 1932, Box 57, Howe Papers.
arrangements committee was scheduled to meet in April and to select a temporary chairman for the convention. Prior to the meeting, the Roosevelt forces designated Alben Barkley of Kentucky for the post. Unaware that the Roosevelt leadership had selected Barkley, some of Roosevelt's followers pledged their votes to Jouett Shouse who also desired the position. When the arrangements committee met, a compromise was achieved whereby the committee "recommended" Barkley for the post of temporary chairman and "commended" Shouse for the position of permanent chairman. The arrangements committee could not recommend Shouse for the permanent chairmanship because that was properly the function of the committee on permanent organization. Contacted by Farley, Roosevelt indicated that he would not object to the arrangements committee's commending Shouse. But as the weeks passed and as Shouse became more active in the stop-Roosevelt movement, the Roosevelt forces decided that Thomas Walsh should be named permanent chairman. Understandably, this decision precipitated a bitter controversy. Had Roosevelt in not objecting to the committee's commendation in fact approved it? Shouse's followers answered in the affirmative, Roosevelt's in the negative. The debate raged until the convention met and provided the occasion for one of the convention's first major test votes. The Roosevelt forces championed Walsh while the anti-Roosevelt
contingent supported Shouse.43

The conventions and primaries held in May and in June confirmed the rural-urban division established earlier. Roosevelt garnered delegates from the essentially rural states of South Dakota, Alabama, Arizona, Wyoming, West Virginia, Kansas, New Mexico, Montana, South Carolina, Vermont, Tennessee, Oregon, Nevada, Delaware, Colorado, Utah, Mississippi, Florida, Idaho, and North Carolina. As expected, Smith secured the support of Rhode Island, New Jersey, and Connecticut.44 Garner captured California and Texas. Ohio instructed for a favorite son, Governor George White. Maryland, as usual, endorsed Ritchie, and Indiana selected an uninstructed delegation containing delegates favorable both to


Roosevelt and to Baker.\textsuperscript{45} Virginia endorsed Harry Byrd. Roosevelt originally believed that Virginia's votes would be his if he needed them. The more imminent a deadlock became, however, the more likely it appeared that Byrd would consider his own best interests.\textsuperscript{46}

By far the most significant of these late primaries was that held in California in May. Roosevelt's defeat in that state constituted the most shattering blow to his candidacy to date. Roosevelt had been caught in the midst of an organizational fight between the Dockweiler and the McAdoo factions of the California Democracy, and he had tremendous obstacles to overcome in his contest against Garner and Smith: the Hearst press opposed him, the thousands of native Texans living in California supported Garner, and the presence of Smith's name on the ballot divided the Wet vote between the two New Yorkers. Running true to form, Roosevelt did well in the rural areas, but he did not command enough votes to win. While Garner's California victory did not greatly enhance his chances for the nomination, it made Roosevelt's task more onerous. As a result of the California primary, it would be virtually impossible for Roosevelt

\textsuperscript{45}New York\ Times, May 5, 1932, p. 1; New York\ Times, May 12, 1932, p. 2; New York\ Times, May 13, 1932, p. 10; New York\ Times, May 25, 1932, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{46}New York\ Times, June 10, 1932, p. 3; Mullen, Western Democrat, 262; Louis Howe to Richard Crane, April 21, 1932, Box 753, DNC Papers; Richard Crane to Louis Howe, April 23, 1932, ibid.; Richard Crane to Roosevelt, May 17, 1932, ibid.
to acquire a first-ballot nomination. If the deadlock were protracted, perhaps Roosevelt could be stopped. 47

Roosevelt's defeat in California generated a revived interest in the dark horse candidates. Unquestionably, Roosevelt's Eastern opponents, picturesquely described by the New Republic as the "Smith-Raskob-Shouse-Traylor-Hague" combine, preferred Owen Young for the presidency. But in mid-May, Young declared that he would not accept a presidential nomination. Some of Roosevelt's opponents then looked toward Baker as an acceptable alternative to the New York Governor. Baker, however, continued to hold himself aloof and reiterated that he was not a candidate. Understandably, Baker did not desire to be considered Smith's choice; such an association would endanger his availability in the South and the West. Nevertheless, Rosen indicates that Smith's intermediaries were in constant communication with Baker. 48 Yet on the eve of the


convention the anti-Roosevelt forces had failed to coalesce behind a single candidate. They would enter the contest as a splintered, rather than as a united, force.

As the delegates began their trek to Chicago, it was apparent that Roosevelt had emerged as the virtually unchallenged champion of rural America. As a result of the spring primaries and conventions, he had captured every state west of the Mississippi except California, Texas, Oklahoma, and Missouri, and Missouri would be his when he required it. Roosevelt also had garnered all the Southern and border states except Maryland and Virginia. Virginia might be his, but Byrd had ambitions of his own. In short, Roosevelt had succeeded in that part of his strategy which had called for capturing the old Bryan-McAdoo territory. In fact, Roosevelt was stronger in the South than McAdoo had been in 1924. McAdoo had failed to control Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Alabama, West Virginia, Delaware, Virginia, and Maryland. Garner's control of Texas and California constituted the most flagrant breach in Roosevelt's Southern and Western hegemony. It was, therefore, not surprising that Roosevelt applied enormous pressure to the Garner states during the convention. Yet while Roosevelt had succeeded in that part of his strategy which called for his building rural support, he had failed miserably in that portion which called for his inheriting Smith's urban strength. A great portion of the industrial Midwest and Northeast was arrayed against Roosevelt. Thus, instead of
entering the convention with the requisite two-thirds vote, Roosevelt would have to wage a battle in Chicago.

Given the nature of Roosevelt's backing, it was not surprising that with the exception of Farley, Flynn, and Howe, Southerners and Westerners dominated Roosevelt's convention organization. Arthur Mullen of Nebraska served as Roosevelt's floor leader, and he was assisted by two other former McAdoo lieutenants, Daniel Roper and Breckinridge Long. J. Bruce Kremer of Montana, McAdoo's floor leader in 1924, was chairman of the Roosevelt-dominated rules committee. The Roosevelt leadership offered Hull the chairmanship of the all-important resolutions committee. But, observing that Roosevelt's choices for the temporary and the permanent chairmanships, Barkley and Walsh respectively, were Drys, Hull declined the honor. He felt that it would be unwise to designate another Dry to chair the resolutions committee. Significantly, when the Roosevelt forces selected a Wet to head that committee, they went West, not East, and chose Gilbert Hitchcock of Nebraska. Hull and A. Mitchell Palmer, Wilson's Attorney-General, had already drafted the platform that Hitchcock was to guide through the committee. The addition of Palmer and his former campaign manager, C. C. Carlin, to a Roosevelt convention staff already manned by many former McAdooites symbolized the reunion of the Wilsonian forces. It was the struggle between McAdoo and Palmer in
San Francisco in 1920 which had heralded the Wilsonians' loss of power. \textsuperscript{49} With the notable exception of Ed Flynn, Roosevelt's convention management contained no representatives of the new urban America. \textsuperscript{50}

The representatives of the urban Democracy were to be found in the anti-Roosevelt camp. Governor Wilbur Cross of Connecticut, Governor Harry Moore of New Jersey, Governor Joseph P. Ely of Massachusetts, Mayor Frank Hague of Jersey City, Mayor Anton Cermak of Chicago, Mayor James Walker of New York City, and Rhode Island Democratic state chairman J. Howard MacGrath opposed Roosevelt. While Roosevelt controlled New York's upstate delegates, Smith could rely upon Tammany's support. Yet, while urban America opposed Roosevelt, the anti-Roosevelt coalition was


\textsuperscript{50} Flynn was the first to admit that in supporting Roosevelt, he was not representing his Bronx constituency. During the course of a conversation at the convention, Smith turned to Flynn and said: "Ed, you are not representing the people of Bronx County in your support of Roosevelt. You know the people of Bronx County want you to support me." Flynn indicated that "this was probably true, for a majority of the people of the Bronx were without doubt more favorable to him than to Roosevelt, whom they scarcely knew." Flynn, \textit{You're the Boss}, 94.
not wholly urban. It also contained rural elements, most notably, California, Texas, Oklahoma, and Virginia, and in this diversity lay weakness. The anti-Roosevelt delegations were unable to unite behind a single candidate. The tremendous dissimilarity within the ranks of the anti-Roosevelt forces explained the constant reference to Baker as a compromise choice. Time would prove, however, that Baker was by no means acceptable to all the members of this heterogeneous coalition. 51

Although the 1932 convention presented the familiar rural-urban dichotomy that had long plagued the Democracy, the meeting in Chicago differed from those in New York and in Houston in one important respect. The presidential nomination rather than the platform loomed as the most divisive point of contention. In New York the Klan plank had shattered the party. In Houston the greatest potential threat to party harmony had centered around the prohibition plank. But, as the delegates arrived in Chicago, it was clear that the party would not rend itself over the liquor issue. Public opinion had swung so sharply against prohibition that by the time the convention met, Baker, Byrd, Roosevelt, Milton, McAdoo, Garner, Hull,

and Daniels had advocated resubmission of the Eighteenth Amendment to a popular vote of the people. To be sure, there was to be debate over the prohibition plank in Chicago, but no one in a responsible position of leadership advocated a Dry plank. The plank was to be Wet; the controversy centered around the degree of moistness. Should the party frankly advocate repeal or should it merely declare for resubmission? Moreover, the debate did not threaten party harmony. The moderates wanted the prohibition question set aside once and for all so that the party could concentrate upon the vital economic issues facing the country. 52

While there was general agreement as to the platform's contour, this spirit of unanimity did not extend to the selection of the presidential nominee. The convention witnessed a bitter sectional struggle for control of the nominating process. Arriving in Chicago on June 22, Smith vehemently denied that he was the leader of a stop-Roosevelt movement. Rather, Smith insisted that he was in Chicago to seek the nomination for himself. Whether Smith was sincere in the advocacy of his own candidacy or whether he was

merely serving as a stalking horse for Newton Baker is open to
cjecture. But before either Smith or Baker could be nominated,
Roosevelt had to be stopped. Smith, therefore, exerted every effort
to block the front-runner. In accordance with an earlier arrange-
ment, Smith and McAdoo met and conferred about the possibilities
of a deadlocked convention. Whether McAdoo agreed to assist in
stopping Roosevelt is unclear, but the Smith forces proceeded upon
the assumption that McAdoo was their ally.53

On June 23, Mayor Frank Hague of Jersey City, Smith's
manager, leveled a public assault upon the Roosevelt candidacy.
Rather than emphasizing his own candidate's virtues, Hague attacked
Roosevelt's availability. The Jersey City boss stipulated that if the
Democracy nominated Roosevelt, it would forfeit its chance for
victory. Insisting that Roosevelt could not "...carry a single
State east of the Mississippi and very few in the Far West," Hague
warned that: "It has been demonstrated in the contested primaries
in which Roosevelt was a candidate that he has never carried a
single large city, which clearly indicates that the people in the
populous centres do not regard him as the right man to lead."

Echoing both Lippmann and Kent, Hague indicated: "It is very

53New York Times, June 23, 1932, p. 1; Jouett Shouse to
Newton Baker, July 7, 1932, Box 85, Baker Papers (Division of
Manuscripts, Library of Congress); Warner, The Happy Warrior,
257-61; Rosen, "Baker on the Fifth Ballot?," 242-45.
apparent that any man who cannot carry New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut and the other New England States, together with the Middle West and a very few in the Far West, is not the man for the party leaders to choose in this crisis." Labeling Roosevelt the weakest candidate in the field, Hague suggested that every other Democrat for the nomination, including Murray of Oklahoma, would be a better choice than Roosevelt. 54

Hague's remarks both angered and alarmed Roosevelt's supporters. Meeting later that evening, they moved completely beyond Farley's control and committed one of their greatest blunders of the convention. The immediate object of their attack was the two-thirds rule. Farley did not intend to discuss that rule at the meeting, and he did not mention it. Nevertheless, vowing that it was reprehensible for a minority to thwart the will of a majority, Wheeler, Long, Kremer, Daniels, Dill, Cummings, and Mullen launched an assault upon the ancient rule. Farley tried unsuccessfully to steer the discussion into other channels. With Long taking the lead, the conferees adopted a resolution demanding the abrogation of the two-thirds rule. This action could scarcely be interpreted as anything other than a sign of fear. Roosevelt clearly and unmistakably controlled a majority of the convention; he did not as yet,

54 New York Times, June 24, 1932, p. 12; Chicago Tribune, June 24, 1932, pp. 1 and 2.
however, command the allegiance of two-thirds of that body. Faced
with an accomplished fact, Roosevelt endorsed his followers' actions.
He advised Farley to allow things to drift. If they discovered that
they needed to retreat, they would do so as gracefully as possible.55

Clearly, Farley had displayed inept management, and the
opposition was quick to seize the opportunity with which he had
presented them. Carter Glass described the Roosevelt forces' action as a "gambler's trick," and James Reed indicated that "what
was good enough for Andrew Jackson should be good enough for the
rest of us." With a tone of righteous indignation, Al Smith thundered
that "the spirit of American fair play will not tolerate any eleventh-
hour, unsportsmanlike attempt to change the rules after the game
has been started."56 The Nation, scarcely enamored of Roosevelt,
reproachfully announced that: "We had never deceived ourselves as
to his [Roosevelt's] weak and vacillating statesmanship, but we had
believed him honest and sincere. Instead he stands revealed as
ready to lend his support to any trick or device that will advance his
political fortunes."57

When it became apparent that Roosevelt's Southern followers

Farley, Behind the Ballots, 117-18.


57Nation, CXXXV (July 6, 1932), 1.
would not support the attempt to abrogate the two-thirds rule, Roosevelt publicly withdrew the demand.\footnote{Chicago Tribune, June 25, 1932, pp. 1 and 2; New York Times, June 26, 1932, p. 1; New York Times, June 28, 1932, p. 13; New York Times, June 29, 1932, p. 1.} Attempting to make the best of an embarrassing situation, Roosevelt asserted: "I believe, and always have believed, that the two-thirds rule should no longer be adopted. It is undemocratic." Somewhat sanctimoniously, he conceded, "nevertheless it is true that the issue was not raised until after the delegates to the convention had been selected, and I decline to permit either myself or my friends to be open to the accusation of poor sportsmanship or to the use of methods which could be called, even falsely, those of a steam-roller."\footnote{New York Times, June 28, 1932, p. 12.} Not surprisingly, the opposition greeted Roosevelt's statement with amusement. Reed suggested that "having carefully canvassed the situation and put forth every effort to obtain abrogation, the forces supporting Roosevelt now make a virtue of necessity." Making an oft-repeated observation, Reed commented: "The statement revealed to the country what New York and the East know so well, that Mr. Roosevelt cannot stay put on any matter, even where principle is involved."\footnote{New York Times, June 28, 1932, p. 13.}

Notwithstanding the embarrassment surrounding the abortive attempt to abrogate the two-thirds rule, very early the Roosevelt
forces demonstrated their ability to control any situation requiring majority action. When the Democratic national committee convened on June 24, the Roosevelt forces, with Kremer and Mullen in the lead, quickly established their dominance. Winning the right for the whole committee to decide upon contested delegations, the Roosevelt majority rejected contesting delegations from Minnesota and Louisiana. In similar fashion, the Rooseveltians exerted their supremacy in the resolutions committee. The subcommittee on drafting was composed of six Roosevelt supporters and three anti-Roosevelt men.

Despite the strength being displayed by Roosevelt's supporters, neither Lippmann nor Mencken could discern any genuine enthusiasm for the New York Governor. Lippmann observed that while Roosevelt's Southern supporters did not consider him to be the ablest man available for the presidency, they had "...an almost hysterical desire to depose the Raskob-Smith leadership in the high command of the party." They viewed Roosevelt as the best means for accomplishing that end. The enemies that Roosevelt had made also

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61 DNC Proceedings, 1932, 512-75.

impressed his Western supporters. In a similar vein Mencken asserted that "...at least a majority of the Roosevelt men are not really for Roosevelt at all, but simply against Al Smith." Mencken continued: "The special merit of Roosevelt in their eyes, and perhaps his only real merit, is that Al seems to hate him." Notwithstanding Lippmann's and Mencken's attacks and Cox's arrival in Chicago to assist the anti-Roosevelt forces, Roosevelt appeared to develop strength just prior to the formal opening of the convention. James Hamilton Lewis unconditionally released the Illinois delegation, which temporarily deprived Cermak of a candidate. The Chicago boss, however, soon remedied this situation.

Raskob formally convened the convention on Monday, June 27. After commending Shouse and Michelson for their work in rehabilitating the Democracy's fortunes, Raskob announced that the Democrats had assembled to deliver the country from the depths of depression. Lest the more conservative delegates fear that Raskob had undergone some tremendous conversion, the Chairman beseeched: "We should strip our party of all barnacles and 'isms,' refuse to allow radicalism to supplant our liberal doctrine and should rededicate the party


65 New York Times, June 27, 1932, p. 10; Chicago Tribune, June 26, 1932, Sec. i, pp. 1 and 2.
to those principles of government enunciated by its founder, Thomas Jefferson."66 Following this not particularly subtle thrust at Roosevelt, Raskob devoted the major portion of his address to the need for prohibition repeal. Speaking of the evils spawned by the Eighteenth Amendment, Raskob asserted: "After twelve years of practical experience living under conditions imposed by this amendment all honest Democrats must concede that the people themselves should have opportunity to vote directly upon this important social question which is of greater economic importance than any other question before the country today."67 While practically all Democrats would concede that the Eighteenth Amendment should be re-submitted for popular consideration, not all would contend that it was the primary economic question facing the country.

In fact, Alben Barkley, the convention's temporary chairman and keynoter, quickly relegated the Eighteenth Amendment to a position of secondary importance. Unlike Raskob's speech, the major portion of Barkley's address was devoted to economic problems. In particular, Barkley criticized Republican agricultural and tariff policies. Entirely ignoring the merits of the prohibition question, Barkley suggested resubmission of the Eighteenth

66DNC Proceedings, 1932, 9.

67Ibid., 10.
Amendment for popular consideration. Barkley had conferred with Roosevelt prior to the convention, and Roosevelt had indicated that while Barkley's request for resubmission was acceptable, he hoped that the convention would advocate repeal. Roosevelt's flexible attitude on this question was significant. It meant that Roosevelt's supporters could follow their own convictions in voting on the prohibition question; the success or failure of Roosevelt's candidacy would not revolve around the wording of the prohibition plank.

In refusing to bind himself to either side in the prohibition debate, Roosevelt exhibited sound political judgment. There was a definite movement underway within the resolutions committee to replace the resubmission plank with one advocating outright repeal. While both planks committed the party to resubmission, the repeal plank went further and placed the party on record as favoring repeal. And on this question the Roosevelt-anti-Roosevelt dichotomy disappeared. Hull and Palmer, Roosevelt's supporters, and Glass, Byrd's representative, were ranged on the side of resubmission. David I. Walsh, Smith delegate, and W. A. Comstock, Roosevelt follower, led the revolt against the resubmissionists' tentative draft. Although at this stage the advocates of repeal constituted only a

68Ibid., 17-39.

minority, David Walsh believed that they would become the majority before the drafting was completed. In any event there was an increasing likelihood that the question would be settled upon the convention floor. 70

As the delegates prepared for the second day's session, there was revived hope within the anti-Roosevelt camp. Illinois had returned to the fold and was now committed to favorite son Melvin A. Traylor. Furthermore, there was evidence of weakness within the Roosevelt phalanx. Mississippi was particularly restive. Expressing more confidence than was warranted by the facts, Hague asserted that the anti-Roosevelt coalition possessed sufficient strength to elect Jouett Shouse to the position of permanent chairman. The contest between Shouse and Thomas Walsh, Roosevelt's choice for the post, would constitute the convention's first important test of strength. 71

Early in the second session the Roosevelt forces quite convincingly demonstrated that they would be able to dictate the selection of the permanent chairman. In preliminary voting the Rooseveltians easily defeated minority reports from the credentials committee challenging the Roosevelt-backed delegations in Louisiana


and Minnesota. In both cases the vote closely approximated the Roosevelt-anti-Roosevelt division within the convention and revealed that while Roosevelt easily controlled a majority of the delegates, he did not have the two-thirds necessary for nomination. Clearly, if Roosevelt could obtain Garner's ninety votes lodged in California and in Texas, the nomination would be within his reach.  

Following the voting on the contested delegations, the committee on permanent organization offered its report. Not unexpectedly, the Roosevelt-dominated committee recommended Thomas Walsh for the permanent chairmanship by a vote of thirty-six to twelve. Shouse's defenders pleaded that both the spirit of fair play and Shouse's record of party service demanded his selection. Notwithstanding these entreaties, the Roosevelt forces dominated the situation and elected Thomas Walsh permanent chairman. While the opposition would persist in its efforts to block Roosevelt, it was clear that he was the choice of a majority of the delegates. The opposition to him was purely negative and did not even possess a candidate upon whom its component parts could unite. Nevertheless, the Eastern leaders had successfully forced compromise choices upon both the 1920 and 1924 conventions. Whether they would again succeed in such a maneuver remained to be seen.

\[72\text{DNC Proceedings, 1932, 53-79.}\]

\[73\text{Ibid., 121-35.}\]
Outside the convention hall, the anti-Roosevelt forces insisted that Shouse's defeat had not irreparably damaged their cause. Smith endeavored to stiffen his allies' resolve to stand firm against Roosevelt. The "Happy Warrior" emphasized that after three ballots Roosevelt's delegations would begin to desert to other candidates. Walter Lippmann shared Smith's opinion. Accurately gauging the convention's mood, Lippmann indicated that there would be no deadlock similar to that of 1924. Circumstances had changed. While Roosevelt's delegates viewed him as the most available candidate, he did not command the near-fanatic devotion that McAdoo had enjoyed in 1924. Roosevelt's partisans would not support Smith; they would turn elsewhere before allowing a deadlocked convention to jeopardize the national victory that was within their grasp. If Roosevelt were stopped, Lippmann felt that Baker would be the eventual nominee. Lippmann voiced a widely held assumption. James Farley admittedly feared Baker's potential strength, and Josephus Daniels later remarked that "in a contest between Roosevelt and Baker I would have had a hard time in taking sides." In the final analysis, however, the knowledge that the

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74 Chicago Tribune, June 29, 1932, p. 1.

75 Lippmann, Interpretations: 1931-1932, 304.

convention might turn to Baker worked to Roosevelt's advantage. 77

While the anti-Roosevelt forces talked bravely of stopping
the front-runner, the members of the resolutions committee endeavored to draft a prohibition plank. As David Walsh had predicted, those advocating outright repeal were steadily overtaking those favoring resubmission. The committee adjourned at eleven o'clock Tuesday without reaching a decision. Meeting again on Wednesday, the committee rejected the moist resubmission plank by a vote of two to one and inserted a declaration for outright repeal. 78

When the convention began its platform deliberations
Wednesday evening, the proposed prohibition plank generated the greatest debate. Speaking for the resubmissionists, Cordell Hull offered a minority report. Both planks were Wet, but the minority proposal called merely for submission of repeal. On the other hand,

77 Bernard Baruch's attitude toward the Baker candidacy remains shrouded in confusion. Byrnes indicates that Baruch asked him to support Baker, and Rosen suggests that Baruch brought McAdoo and Smith together in a stop-Roosevelt movement. Baruch stoutly denies both these charges in his memoirs. He insists that he was not a party to a stop-Roosevelt movement and that Baker would have been his last choice. It seems clear that while Baruch was not impressed with Roosevelt, he was probably not actively supporting another nominee. Once Roosevelt was nominated, Baruch gave him unstinting aid. James Francis Byrnes, All in One Lifetime (New York: Harper, 1958), 63-64; Rosen, "Baker on the Fifth Ballot?", 240-41; Baruch, Baruch: The Public Years, 238; Coit, Mr. Baruch, 425-26; Roosevelt and Lash, FDR: His Personal Letters; 1928-1945, 245.

78 Chicago Tribune, June 29, 1932, pp. 1 and 8; Chicago Tribune, June 30, 1932, pp. 1 and 2.
the majority plank advocated both repeal and immediate modification of the Volstead Act. In a vote that bore no relationship to the presidential contest, the delegates defeated Hull's minority plank by a vote of more than four to one. In explaining the remarkable ease with which prohibition repeal had swept through the Democratic convention, the New Republic indicated that during the two preceding months, the Wet tide had grown to fantastic proportions. While neither the politicians nor the political prognosticators had seen it coming, the delegates were both aware of and ready to conform to this shift in popular sentiment. Prohibition—a question that had menaced the party throughout the decade—had suddenly ceased to be a disruptive force within the Democracy. Roosevelt's decision to avoid an open rupture on the issue early in the contest had been an astute political maneuver; time had indeed been on his side.

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79 DNC Proceedings, 1932, 149-50. Not unexpectedly Hull's proposal found its greatest support in the Southern and border states. The only states casting a majority of their votes for Hull's minority plank included: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Georgia, Kansas, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Virginia, and West Virginia. Ibid., 188-89.

80 New Republic, LXXI (July 13, 1932), 233-34.

81 During the course of the presidential campaign, Hoover likewise yielded to the popular sentiment for repeal. John D. Hicks suggests that depression psychology was largely responsible for this altered attitude toward prohibition. The people classified reformers, who had promised the millenium and delivered racketeers and bootleggers, with politicians, who had promised prosperity and delivered depression, and they were ready for a change. John D. Hicks, Republican Ascendancy: 1921-1933, (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), 263.
Having finally determined the party's position on prohibition, the delegates turned their attention toward selecting a nominee. When they convened Thursday afternoon, the primary business before the body was the presentation of presidential nominees. Initiating what was to be a marathon session, Alabama yielded to New York and John Mack came forward to offer Franklin Roosevelt to the assembled delegates. In an altogether uninspired address, Mack pictured Roosevelt as a candidate possessing nationwide appeal, an assertion that must have amused the urbanites of the industrial Northeast. Speaking more directly to Roosevelt's natural constituency, Mack emphasized Roosevelt's vote-getting ability in upstate New York. In concluding an address that had begun poorly and progressively degenerated, Mack stressed Roosevelt's country origins and his ability to accomplish any task that was set before him. 82

Amidst a flood of seconding speeches for Roosevelt, Senator Connally placed Garner's name in nomination. 83 Then Governor Ely of Massachusetts rose to present Smith to the delegates. If Mack's speech was one of the worst delivered during the course of that long session, Ely's was among the best. In sharp contrast to the Roosevelt speakers who were frequently booed by the hostile Chicago

82 DNC Proceedings, 1932, 207-11.

83 Ibid., 207-18.
In the process of issuing a call for a modern Jackson, Ely castigated Roosevelt by innuendo. The Massachusetts Governor intoned: "You will ask me, but where is this modern 'Old Hickory'? Shall we admit that education and prosperity have softened our muscles, drained our vitality, and left us only speculating, doubting, equivocating, polite gentlemen? Thank God, no! There is a man who sits amongst us who is a modern Andrew Jackson. You know who he is."84

Commenting upon Smith's humble origins, Ely again indicted Roosevelt when he suggested: "There is no reason for him [Smith] to speak of the forgotten man, because with him no class of men or women or children is forgotten. The love and affection, the respect and response which pour out to him have their roots in no political machine, are fostered by no group of political leaders, are nurtured by no artificial propaganda, but lie embedded deep in the universal affection and esteem of the millions of Americans of all classes and all conditions, and all creeds."85 Emphasizing the sectional nature of the struggle, Ely asserted: "I speak for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In no uncertain terms she has expressed her preference to this convention. I believe that I voice the sentiments

84 Ibid., 219.
85 Ibid., 221.
of the industrial East. 86

As the proceedings droned on, the rural areas provided seconding speeches for Roosevelt while the urban constituencies sent speakers forward to second Smith's nomination. In the midst of these seconding speeches, favorite sons Harry Byrd of Virginia, Melvin Traylor of Illinois, Albert Ritchie of Maryland, James Reed of Missouri, George White of Ohio, and William Murray of Oklahoma were formally presented to the delegates. 87 Although it was now nearly half-past four in the morning, the balloting began. 88 The result of the first ballot revealed that Roosevelt was approximately one hundred votes short of the requisite two-thirds. While this may have encouraged the Rooseveltians, there were danger signs. Only a favorable ruling from Walsh prevented Minnesota and Iowa from breaking the instructions which bound them to vote for Roosevelt under the unit rule. 89 On the next two ballots only seventeen scattered votes were added to the Roosevelt column, and there were signs of revolt in the restive Mississippi and Arkansas delegations. For the time being, Huey Long managed to hold his fellow Southerners in line. At 9:15 A.M. Friday, the thoroughly exhausted

86Ibid., 222.

87Ibid., 226-87.

88Chicago Tribune, July 1, 1932, p. 2.

delegates accepted McAdoo's motion to adjourn until that evening. 90

Insofar as the Roosevelt candidacy was concerned, the convention had obviously reached a critical juncture. While his strength had not decreased, it had not increased appreciably. The delegates would not tolerate a protracted deadlock. Unless Roosevelt could make substantial gains on the fourth ballot, his forces were likely to begin searching for an acceptable compromise candidate. The third ballot had revealed that Roosevelt was approximately eighty-five votes short of the necessary two-thirds. As it had from the outset, the key to Roosevelt's fate obviously lay with Garner's ninety votes in Texas and California. 91 Not surprisingly, therefore, various Roosevelt operatives brought intense pressure to bear upon Hearst, Garner, and McAdoo. While this missionary work was undoubtedly important, the widespread speculation that Baker would be the ultimate beneficiary of a continued deadlock was perhaps

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91 On the third ballot the votes being cast against Roosevelt were as follows: California, 44; Connecticut, 16; Illinois, 43 of 58; Indiana, 14 of 30; Maryland, 16; Massachusetts, 36; Missouri, 16 of 36; New Jersey, 32; New York, 63 of 94; North Carolina, 1 of 26; North Dakota, 1 of 9; Ohio, 50 of 52; Oklahoma, 22; Pennsylvania, 28 of 76; Rhode Island, 10; Texas, 46; Virginia, 24; Wisconsin, 2 of 26; Philippines, 6. DNC Proceedings, 1932, 315-16.
more vital. Both McAdoo and Hearst were hostile toward Baker, and neither was willing to prolong a stalemate that might work to the former Secretary of War's advantage. As for Garner, the Roosevelt forces promised the Texan the vice-presidency for his cooperation. Thus by the time the convention reconvened Friday evening, an agreement had been reached to transfer the vital Texas and California delegations into the Roosevelt column. 92

When the convention convened Friday evening for the fourth ballot, William Gibbs McAdoo dramatically rose to explain California's vote. In a scene reminiscent of Madison Square Garden,
the galleries, packed with Smith supporters, were so disruptive that Mayor Cermak had to intervene in an attempt to preserve order. 93
But as T. L. Stokes recalls: "McAdoo didn't seem to mind, in fact he seemed to relish the uproar. A sly smile sneaked across his face, gradually uncovering his teeth. My impression was of a cat advancing craftily upon its prey. This was his hour of vengeance." 94
With the obvious relish of a man who had waited for eight years to exact his revenge, McAdoo announced that California and Texas would vote for Franklin Roosevelt. 95 McAdoo's announcement produced the desired effect as state after state moved into the Roosevelt column.

Yet Roosevelt's nomination was by no means unanimous; the two hundred predominantly urban Democrats who had been voting for Al Smith were unwilling to follow McAdoo into the Roosevelt fold. 96 Furthermore, when asked whether he would support his party's nominee, Smith refused to comment, and he left Chicago before Roosevelt arrived to speak. 97 Smith had been a party to

93DNC Proceedings, 1932, 326-27.
94Stokes, Chip Off My Shoulder, 323.
95DNC Proceedings, 1932, 326-27.
96Ibid., 324-25.
wresting control of the Democracy from the divided Wilsonians in 1920. He had stopped McAdoo in 1924 and had captured the nomination in 1928. But he had failed in Chicago. In his dispatch to the Baltimore Sun on July 2, Mencken attempted to analyze Smith's defeat. Mencken indicated that while the Smith of old might have stopped Roosevelt, "...it was far beyond the technique of the golf playing Al of today. He has ceased to be the wonder and the glory of the East Side and becomes simply a minor figure of Park Avenue." Mencken overlooked the fact that Roosevelt had quite successfully resurrected and reunited the elements that had formed the once dominant Wilsonian Democracy. Even the Smith of old might have experienced defeat against a united rural Democracy.

Turning his attention to the nominee, Mencken reported that the convention showed no "genuine enthusiasm" for the New York Governor and that the "result was a good deal less a triumph for Roosevelt, who actually seemed to have few genuine friends in the house, than a defeat and a rebuke for Smith." Likewise, Oswald Garrison Villard commented that "never have I seen a Presidential ticket nominated with so little enthusiasm." The convention's choice certainly did not impress Villard. The columnist indicated that Roosevelt had triumphed in his "...campaign of evading all the

98 Mencken, Making a President, 167.

99 Ibid., 159.
pending issues, of refusing to answer questions as to how he stands on the problems of the day. . . . Roosevelt's success is also the triumph of cowardice and muddle-headedness--of the inability to think problems through."100

In its editorial page the Nation was even more caustic in its denunciations of Roosevelt. The journal suggested that "the Democratic party puts forth not its best foot, but a very weak one. Even Governor Ritchie, we are sure, would have proven a stronger candidate than the Governor of New York, who has won the distinction of leading his party in this campaign by silence, evasion and by playing cheap tricks."101 The New Republic was more charitable. While it recognized Roosevelt's weaknesses, the New Republic concluded that he was the best nominee the Democracy had to offer. The journal sounded a familiar refrain when it averred: "If for nothing else, it would be hard not to feel somewhat drawn toward Roosevelt by the enemies he has made. All the most reactionary elements in American life, both within and without the Democratic party, have united in opposing him."102 Indeed it would be hard to deny that the nature of Roosevelt's opposition had assisted him

100Oswald Garrison Villard, "The Democratic Trough at Chicago," Nation, CXXXV (July 13, 1932), 27.

101Nation, CXXXV (July 13, 1932), 22.

tremendously. Nothing could have been better calculated to strengthen him in the South and in the West than the opposition of Tammany and of Wall Street, of Al Smith and of John J. Raskob.

Unquestionably, Roosevelt's nomination alarmed his party's conservative element. Raskob bemoaned the fact that the Democracy had fallen into the grasp of such "radicals" as Roosevelt, Long, Hearst, McAdoo, Wheeler, and Dill. The assumption of power by the "radicals" was particularly distressing to Raskob in view of the fine conservative talent available in the party. He felt that leadership should have been lodged with Shouse, Byrd, Smith, Davis, Cox, Glass, Gerry, Ely, Pierre S. Dupont, and others of the same genre too numerous for him to mention. Raskob was not the only conservative Democrat who expressed disappointment over the convention's action. Davis regretted that Baker had not been chosen, and Baker hoped that Roosevelt would rely heavily upon Davis and Glass. On his part Glass feared that Roosevelt could not be counted upon to pursue sane policies.

Yet while one set of Roosevelt's detractors found him to be

103 John J. Raskob to Harry Byrd, July 5, 1932, File 602, Raskob Papers; John J. Raskob to Jouett Shouse, July 7, 1932, Correspondence 1930-1932, Shouse Papers (University of Kentucky).

104 John W. Davis to Newton D. Baker, July 5, 1932, Box 84, Baker Papers; Newton D. Baker to William Almon, July 9, 1932, Box 192, ibid.; Carter Glass to George Moses, November 4, 1932, Box 299, Glass Papers.
evasive and weak and another discerned him to be a radical, there was absolutely no disagreement as to what forces had been chiefly responsible for his selection. That Roosevelt's nomination represented a triumph of the countryside over the city and of the South and the West over the East was immediately apparent to all observers. Arthur Mullen wrote: "The bands were playing, the crowds were roaring. For the first time in twenty-four years the West was in the saddle. We were riding high toward a bright horizon. Exhausted, happy, triumphant, we, the victors, surged out into the city streets." Walter Lippmann suggested that it was very fitting that McAdoo should have proclaimed the victory for the Roosevelt forces since "they were the same forces which supported him eight years ago and Bryan thirty-six years ago." In a typically iconoclastic statement, Mencken commented that "at Houston, four years ago, the beaten Bible students from the South and the Middle West walked out on Al Smith, holding their noses. And at Chicago last week the beaten Al Smith men from the big cities walked out on Roosevelt...." Referring to Roosevelt as the "...candidate of the South and West as against the East," C. W. Thompson proclaimed a "...new regime in the Democratic party--the regime of the rural South and trans-Mississippi West, as against both the urban and rural Eastern and Central states." He observed: "the dominant note, among the
new leaders, was hatred of the city. . ."105

In Chattanooga, Tennessee, George Fort Milton, Jr., although entertaining doubts as to Roosevelt's ability to handle the responsibilities of the presidency, was certain of one thing: "The outcome Friday night showed decisively that the national Democracy is in no mood to permit Alfred E. Smith, Frank Hague, Albert Ritchie and the city boss crowd in general to continue to dominate. John J. Raskob is no longer the ruler of the party of Thomas Jefferson. Alfred E. Smith has lost his authority."106 Meanwhile in Massachusetts the Italian News regretfully announced: "Al Smith has nothing in common with those who now control the Democratic Party. . . . Today Roosevelt is a symbol of all that is antagonistic to the immigrant groups whereas in 1928 Al Smith was quite the contrary. . . . In the background hovers the gaunt figure of McAdoo."107

Existing on the periphery of national power as the decade of the Twenties opened, the Eastern bosses with their urban


106Chattanooga News, July 2, 1932, p. 4.

107Quoted in Huthmacher, Massachusetts People and Politics, 239.
constituencies had sought to wrest control of the Democracy from the dominant Southern and Western coalition. In the face of rural disintegration, the Easterners had forced the agrarians to accept compromise candidates in both 1920 and 1924. With the rural Democracy completely demoralized in 1928, the urban forces had nominated their symbolic champion--Al Smith. Yet in 1932, the Eastern Democrats again found themselves on the fringes of national power; the rural Democracy achieved its greatest victory of the decade.

Regardless of how Roosevelt's response to the depression might alter his party, the Democratic Party that emerged from the Twenties and tendered him its nomination was controlled by a Southern and Western coalition. To a very large degree it was a party dominated by former Wilsonians. To be sure, the Democracy that nominated Roosevelt was not an exact replica of the old Wilsonian party. The more conservative of the Wilsonians, most notably Carter Glass, were scarcely enamored of Roosevelt. Moreover, the cultural battles of the Twenties had shorn the party's leadership of its more provincial extremists. Notwithstanding these exceptions, the coalition that nominated Roosevelt was largely rural and Wilsonian.

Ironically, the rural coalition that nominated Roosevelt was not to maintain that dominance once their champion became president. Through his response to the depression, Roosevelt would
construct a new coalition with the city at its nucleus. Those urban-
ites who had futilely sought recognition during the Twenties would
become the major component of a new Democracy constructed by
the very man whom their leaders had opposed. Nominated by an
alliance of Southern and Western agrarians, Roosevelt would
bequeath to his successors a party dominated by a coalition of
Eastern urbanites and Southern agrarians, with the urbanites in the
ascendancy.
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II. SECONDARY WORKS

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VITA

Leah Marcile Taylor was born in Memphis, Tennessee, April 26, 1940. She graduated from Blytheville School, Blytheville, Arkansas, in 1958. After receiving the degree of Bachelor of Arts from Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee, in 1962, she began her graduate study in the Department of History at Louisiana in September, 1964. She received the degree of Master of Arts in August, 1966, and is a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in August, 1973.
EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

Candidate: Leah Marcile Taylor

Major Field: History

Title of Thesis: Democratic Presidential Politics: 1918-1932

Approved:

[Signatures]

Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]

Date of Examination:

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