

# fter Daley

## Daley and blacks: plantation politics and racist stubbornness

By Francis Ward

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Richard J. Daley's political career spanned half a century—from 1923 when he became a precinct captain in the "old hood," Bridgeport, to Dec. 20, 1976, 20 months into his sixth straight term as mayor of Chicago. During that career, Daley earned a well-deserved reputation as a man who rewarded his family and friends (especially if they were from Bridgeport) while paying little homage to those he felt he didn't have to respect.

This tendency, along with Daley's own racism, explains his relations with blacks throughout his tenure as Democratic Party overlord and mayor: He imperiously demanded and got their votes on election day, dispensed the minimum favor and patronage necessary to keep their loyalty, conveniently elevated a black front man whenever it suited his purposes, and just as conveniently discarded him when no longer needed.

The major spoils of political power and privilege—the best, highest paying jobs, the lucrative city contracts, inner circles of party power—were reserved for those whites whom Daley favored, either because he wanted to or because he had to.

To Daley, as with most white Chicago politicians, it was inconceivable that blacks should share in the councils of party power. After all, they reasoned, regardless of how often or faithful blacks voted Democratic, their "leaders" seldom demanded a piece of the action at the top. Frederick Douglass' admonition of a century ago rings true today: "Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never has and it never will."

### ►Plantation politics under Daley.

Faced with few demands from blacks, Daley and his Democratic party conceded little in the way of services, influential jobs or real party power.

Under Daley, "Plantation Politics" was the accepted norm for the poorest black communities that always gave Daley and the Democrats their highest percentages on election day. The black 24th Ward on the West Side, encompassing much of Lawndale, is still known as the most "deliverable" Democratic ward in the country. The percentage of the Democratic vote, whether through stealing or habit, always ranges at or above 95 percent.

Since 1970, the 24th has produced two congressmen—the late George Collins and, after his death in an ill-fated plane crash in December 1972, his widow, Cardis. But the real power in the 24th has been and remains Erwin (Izzy) Horowitz, whom the faithful in the 24th Democratic organization affectionately call "The Coach."

Horowitz, who only recently relinquished his post as ward committeeman, making sure it was entrusted in the hands of party loyalist Walter Shumpert, comes from a line of Jewish bosses in the 24th: Jack Arvey, who used the mostly Jewish 24th as his base of political power during the 1930s and '40s; Arthur X. Elrod (father of Cook County sheriff Richard Elrod), Sidney Deutsch and then Horowitz.

For a fleeting moment, the Jewish control of the 24th was challenged by Ben Lewis, a dapper, smart and brash black pol who wanted to control the ward's vice as well as its politics. Like any good



Photo by Paul Sequeira

Democrat, he knew the two were almost synonymous. But the challenge was short lived. Lewis became committeeman in 1961. In February 1963, the day he was elected alderman, Lewis was murdered in ward headquarters. His killer has never been found. The murder remains a chilling reminder to any other black with similar aspirations or audacity.

### ►Many plantations in Chicago.

But the 24th ward isn't the West Side's only plantation. Vito Marzullo, has been boss of the 25th Ward for as long as anybody can remember. The 27th Ward, whose most famous thoroughfare is the Madison Street bowery from Halsted to the Chicago Stadium, has long been run by a succession of Irishmen, from Frank and Harry Sain, to present boss "Big Ed" Quigley.

The 28th Ward, which (like Lawndale) made a quick changeover from white to black in the early 1950s, for years was run by Italians Anthony Girolami and Joseph Jambrone until a streak of kind benevolence compelled them to yield the ward's committeeman job to the late Isaac (Ike) Sims in the early 1970s.

Sims, who is black, served several terms in the state legislature before losing his seat in 1974 to a black independent, Jesse Madison, in one of the most startling upsets the Daley machine has ever suffered on the West Side.

Daley encouraged and defended plantation politics on the West and South Side. It ensures maximum exploitation with minimum return to the people of any benefits. It also helped to maintain the fiction that Daley owed black communities nothing.

### ►A monument to racist stubbornness.

Though Daley won plaudits nationally as a great urban builder and innovative fiscal wizard of city government finances, his record in race relations remains as a national monument to racist stubbornness and intransigence.

He presided over a city that became, by intent and design, one of the most segregated in America, and yet stubbornly

claimed Chicago had no slums. He and his loyal negro flunkies bitterly fought the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. when he led open housing marches in Chicago in 1966, yet Daley and these same flunkies hypocritically led the mourning in City Council following Dr. King's assassination in 1968.

Since 1970, the Chicago Housing Authority, police and fire departments have all been sued in federal court to halt racially discriminatory practices. All three are headed by Daley appointees who are carrying out their boss's policies. All three suits could have been quickly settled if Daley had favored non-discrimination in practice as he claimed he did. As a result, each suit was fought out every step of the way, primarily because Daley's Chicago would yield nothing to black people without a demand that he could not refuse.

### ►A few signs of disintegration.

There have been signs the past several years that the Daley machine is losing some of its hold in black communities, due either to its indifference or declining effectiveness among blacks. The most telling sign was in the 1972 election when massive numbers of blacks defected from the Democratic column to help elect Republican Bernard Carey over the machine's choice, Edward V. Hanrahan, as county attorney.

Hanrahan had masterminded the Dec. 4, 1969, police raid that resulted in the deaths of Black Panthers Fred Hampton and Mark Clark.

The Daley machine also suffered a humiliating defeat when Ralph H. Metcalfe was reelected to Congress last year in a lopsided win over the machine's choice Erwin France, former head of the Chicago Model Cities agency.

Despite these setbacks, the Democratic organization is no more responsive to black people than it has ever been. The Daley legacy of give nothing, concede nothing without a demand, will no doubt continue until a strong, progressive independent movement successfully leads blacks away from the Democratic party into an alternative style of politics.

Francis Ward has been a Chicago correspondent for the Los Angeles Times for nearly eight years and is a member of the Kuumba Workshop.



# Chicago after Daley

## Post mortems: the least of a bad deal

What was distinctive about Mayor Richard Daley in comparison with other big city mayors? What was his greatest accomplishment? His greatest failure? What lessons can be learned from his years in office by people concerned about problems of the cities?

In *These Times* asked those questions of several urban experts, drawn from different points on the political spectrum. Here are excerpts from their comments:

**Edward Banfield**, professor of government at Harvard University, author of *The Unheavenly City* and prominent conservative theorist.

"American cities are run by a variety of independent operations interested in checking each other. In order to get much done it is necessary to find an informal way of centralizing. That's what political machines do, in Chicago with a high degree of success. At the ward level, people can reach the committeeman, but he doesn't have power to check city-wide projects. Daley was one of the few who was able to maintain that arrangement, because he was a man of great administrative ability and he was honest.

"Daley gave businessmen the sense that the city was intelligently run. They didn't think they would be harassed by some mousetrap gimmick. If political leaders of New York had paid more attention to businessmen there, the poor would be better off.

"There are costs along with the benefits. Americans seem to have preferred informal centralization to formal centralization. If they were perfectly reasonable beings, they'd conduct political affairs by rational discussion, but they aren't. So I think it's better they organize themselves through patronage and ethnic loyalties rather than some other means, such as force. Given the composition of cities and the people you've got to govern, the Chicago political system is a very good model indeed."

**Pierre DeVise**, assistant professor of urban sciences, University of Illinois, Chicago Circle, a frequent critic of Daley policies.

"Daley controlled the last of the city machines. He started out as a new-style boss, an efficient city manager, not an old-style boss, but he was an efficient manager of a machine.

"Probably his greatest accomplishment was to become a kingmaker and the biggest disappointment was the comedown in 1968. He brought Chicago tremendous influence and got federal funds in the Kennedy-Johnson years. After 1968 came the failures. Chicago had avoided racial confrontation and that caught up with it, as well as peace demonstrations and the convention week. From that year on the mayor was a failure.

"The main lesson would be to prevent another leader from combining chairman and mayor and try to prevent another representative of the Irish Mafia from holding the office. I think political action at the local level is gone. Daley was unique as a local, state and national leader."

**Stanley Hallet**, faculty of Center for Urban Affairs, Northwestern University, graduate school of management.

"Daley paid attention to the fundamentals. He kept his Roman Catholic Irish identity as a glue in the ethnic mosaic of the city and focused on the basic questions of physical infrastructure, negotiating the deals and managing the finances necessary to rebuild that infrastructure from highways to sewer plants.

"The first lesson for liberals and the left would be to pay attention to ethnicity and religion. The second would be to get a better grip on the fundamentals, economy and infrastructure, as a basis for building more democratic political life and better civic institutions."

**Richard Hatcher**, Mayor of Gary, Ind., national black political leader.

"I think the most distinctive thing was his ability to put together a workable coalition of private business interests, political interests and organized labor interests in such a way as to be able to transcend the limitations of the Mayor's office itself.

"His greatest accomplishment was that he was able to build the city physically, the lakefront, skyscrapers, highways. I know he's regarded as a 'man of the people,' but his greatest failure was that the people, or certain people, were not given the kind of attention they deserve. When you look at the South Side and the West Side of Chicago, these are areas of abject failure. To some degree white working class neighborhoods did not fare all that much better than blacks and Latinos. Daley's support of some of the more base attitudes of the people contributed greatly to racial segregation that still prevails in Chicago.

**Ira Katznelson**, associate professor of political science, University of Chicago, co-author of *Politics of Power*.

"In some ways Daley was a genuinely working class politician, who was able to treat working class politics as intensely personal, local and distributive. Yet he was able to keep invisible from the neighborhoods his relationship with representatives of capital and the State, outside of the city. He was the master of that and gave the fullest and most classic expression to a traditional American grammar of working class politics. That orientation to localities gave him immense freedom to bargain and broker with other powers.

"His most positive accomplishment, even though it had enormous costs, was that without challenging any of the features or routine operation of the American economy, he was able to maximize resources for Chicago, getting for the city the least bad deal. His biggest failure was not challenging the basic forces that were producing a declining Chicago.

"At some point the left has got to challenge the enormous gap between the language and politics of the community and the real impact of the political economy on the neighborhood. Also, challenges to machine, working-class politics can't be effective with liberal reform campaigns. Daley at a minimum was of the working class, but the liberal reformers are often profoundly anti-working class."

**Len O'Connor**, author of *Clout*, a biography of Daley, and political commentator on WGN-TV.

"He depended on nobody but himself. He had no partners.

"His greatest accomplishment was that he survived as long as he survived.

"You'd have to look at the lessons from the standpoint of practical politics—'Give ground grudgingly—maintain the status quo as long as possible until you face revolt'. He preserved white ethnic cohesiveness. He didn't want open occupancy. He wanted to keep blacks where he could vote them. For Daley everything was politics.

"The big lesson to be learned from Daley is 'inherit a powerful machine and a solvent city'. That's the moral."

## Daley the builder: Chicago still crumbles

By David Moberg  
Staff Writer

"What trees do they plant?" Mayor Daley asked in attacking demonstrators at the 1968 Chicago Democratic party convention.

Although not famous for his trees, Daley did plant expressways, universities, convention centers, an international airport, and many public buildings. He encouraged private investors to build skyscraper offices (Sears, Standard Oil and John Hancock most recently), shopping centers and high-rise apartments.

Like Robert Moses in New York, Daley swung a heavy hammer, knocking down an old city to make way for profitable construction of a new one appealing to big business and middle-class whites.

Any growth was better than no growth for Daley the Builder. He succeeded with the strategy better than most mayors who have tried. In the process he often destroyed much as well, and left behind a lopsided city.

### ► Boss, housekeeper and builder.

Daley succeeded because he was three mayors in one—boss, housekeeper, and builder.

As political boss he had centralized control of the whole city government. That meant bankers and businessmen "could reach an agreement with one person and he could deliver," Ron Grzowski, chairman of South Shore National Bank, says.

Daley the boss could stimulate private development with deals the businessmen found hard to refuse. For example, he could use the right of eminent domain and urban renewal powers to clear out large chunks of land, then assemble them into blocks for developers to build middle and upper income housing. He could guarantee enormous tax breaks through control of the assessor's office. When the University of Chicago wanted the black neighborhood to its south declared a slum and cleared, Daley could do so without delay.

Daley the boss also delivered the votes for state and national elections. During the Kennedy and Johnson years he called in those debts, bringing Chicago a disproportionate share of federal money—half a billion dollars for expressways feeding traffic into the Loop, one billion dollars for urban renewal projects, half a billion more for public housing.

Daley as housekeeper attracted private investment by concentrating the city's own resources on the classic tasks of keeping the streets clean, maintaining a tough police force and providing adequate fire protection. If funds for social welfare programs didn't come from Washington or Springfield, they got short shrift—but property taxes were held down.

Daley the builder used public money for construction that provided political monuments and helped to bind together his political coalition of banks and bondholders, real estate speculators, construction firms and the construction trade unions.

### ► Maintain the tax base.

"There's one thing Daley never forgot," Daley ally Julian Levi, University of Chicago law professor and chairman of the Chicago Plan Commission, says. "The ability of Chicago to survive and progress was completely dependent on it retaining its tax base. His basic strategy from the beginning was to maintain and enhance the solvency of the city."

Tax structure and land values thus

dominated city politics the way profit rules in a corporation. As a result, Daley used public construction to boost the value and quantity of downtown private building. One study showed that the city spent 88 times as much per square mile on the central business district as on the rest of the city.

"Daley was most concerned with the health and vitality of the central business district," Grzowski says. "He was mostly interested in structures, less in human development, such as schools or neighborhoods."

Take for example Daley's relationship with Sears, Roebuck and Co. The city promptly and cheaply provided Sears a block of city street and relocated water and sewer lines so that it could build its 110-story headquarters in the Loop. Yet when Sears decided to abandon a retail store that was the heart of a shopping center in the black Englewood neighborhood, none of Daley's famed clout stopped the exodus.

### ► Much of city sliding off a cliff.

Daley prevented Chicago's downtown from following the path of Detroit or Cleveland, but the rest of the city suffered. Ironically, that neglect is undercutting the effects of the development efforts.

Urban renewal and public housing money was often spent in black neighborhoods, but it was used to "urban remove" blacks or else to maintain segregation, more pronounced in Chicago than in any other major U.S. city. Neighborhood shopping, housing and recreation declined as a result of government neglect and redlining by financial institutions. As a result, "a significant portion of the city is simply sliding over the cliff as a result of years of inattention," Northwestern University urban studies researcher Stan Hallet says. Many businesses have fled the decaying neighborhoods, hurting the city by taking away jobs. Also, more blacks now have turned to the Loop for shopping and entertainment, to the horror of the downtown businessmen.

Daley's centralized power meant few neighborhoods had local institutions that could make the continual minor adjustments necessary for neighborhood vitality, safety and the "secondary jobs" of a thriving local economy. The exceptions were university and middle-class lakefront neighborhoods.

### ► Chicago still crumbled.

Daley furiously built, but Chicago still crumbled. From 1967 to 1972, 140,000 jobs were lost. In 1976, the city had a net loss of 56 homes or apartments a day. The real estate tax base declines each year despite new construction.

Corporate and government policies shaped the national trends creating problems for Chicago and other cities. Daley couldn't stop those trends or escape business cycles; he tried simply to "manage the consequences of his inability to solve problems such as poverty," in the words of Ira Katznelson, author of *Black Men, White Cities*.

Daley tried to save the city from ruin by working with and serving private capital and by attempting to attract white middle class residents. Benefits of these policies for the rest of the city "trickled down," often in a thin and uneven stream. Other mayors tried to do what he did, but few were as successful. Yet the success of Dick the Builder as a Mayor of things ultimately exaggerated his failures as a Mayor of people.