

## REFORM IN PHILADELPHIA UNDER MAYOR BLANKENBURG, 1912-1916

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THE midpoint of Philadelphia's modern political history was reached in 1911 when Rudolph Blankenburg, insurgent reformer, was elected mayor. For forty years previously independents had struggled against one-party Republican rule. An equal span of time would pass before the Republican machine would again lose control of City Hall. The one term which Mayor Blankenburg served a half-century ago was in fact the last reform administration before the present era of Mayors Clark and Dilworth.<sup>1</sup>

Any account of an independent mayor's record should at least mention the years of struggle preceding his election. Suffice it to say of Philadelphia's earlier good-government leaders, they had their moments of glory, albeit the triumphs were all too brief. In 1881 they elected a Democratic mayor, Samuel King, but the Republican city councils (which were bicameral until 1919) blocked his program. They managed to get a promising new charter in 1885, only to be disappointed because corruption continued unabated in municipal circles. They rose up in righteous anger and fought the "Gas War of 1905," and from the startled Republican leadership they obtained legislation the next year at Harrisburg that put an end to the old era of ballot-box stuffing in Pennsylvania.

Yet, although exciting, such high points were few and far between. When public apathy to reform set in, the businessmen and upper class elite who had staffed the insurgent movements deserted quite regularly to the Republican city machine—which was perhaps natural since most of the reformers voted ordinarily for that

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<sup>1</sup>For a recent report on reform by Joseph P. Clark and Richardson Dilworth, see James Reichley, *The Art of Government: Reform and Organization Politics in Philadelphia* (New York, 1959).

party in state and national elections, showing only local independence. The workingmen, mostly immigrants, mistrusted top-hatted civic leaders who for their part seemed not too much concerned about the depressed economic and social status of the lower classes. The Republican politicians courted the immigrant vote with small but nonetheless appreciated favors. Doomed to monotonous defeat, the independents lost heart and disbanded their local organizations time and again. But a few like Rudolph Blankenburg never quit, and it was they who kept alive a flickering resistance to machine rule.<sup>2</sup>

Help arrived for the little band of reform leaders in Philadelphia, one might almost say, from the outside. The Progressive Movement swept the land, and concern for good government grew to be a national passion. The American public went on a crusade, hoping to smash the alliance of corrupt political machines and large corporations, or trusts, as they were then called.

In Pennsylvania Senator Boies Penrose, powerful Republican boss, unwittingly aided the Progressive cause when he misjudged the public mood. His slip came during the election of 1910, when he was popularly believed to have hand-picked the nominees for governor for both major parties. Whether he did this or not, it was the wrong time for a conservative leader to arouse liberal opposition. Angry insurgents from both parties formed their own Keystone party. Though the Republicans won the election, the opposition to standpat rule remained stirred up as never before.<sup>3</sup>

For the mayoralty contest in Philadelphia in 1911, the jittery Republicans were divided. A small group of business leaders within the party backed Judge Dimmer Beeber, former president of the Union League, but he had few followers and was never a real

<sup>2</sup> The most famous account was that of Lincoln Steffens, *The Shame of the Cities* (New York, 1948), 193-229. The original study, "Philadelphia: Corrupt and Contented," was printed in 1903 in *McClure's Magazine*.

<sup>3</sup> It was believed that Penrose coaxed Cyrus LaRue Munson, popular Democrat, to withdraw from the race, whereupon the Democratic party nominated State Senator Webster Grim of Doylestown, protégé of Colonel James McClurg Guffey, who was allegedly a political ally of Penrose. The Republicans ran John K. Tener of Charleroi, a little known first-term congressman and a former major league baseball pitcher. The new Keystone party put up William H. Berry of Chester, former Democratic state treasurer. Tener won, though outpolled by the combined vote of Grim and Berry. For the Keystone party platform, see *Philadelphia North American*, July 29, 1910.

threat to Penrose. More seriously, William S. Vare, contractor-politician and recorder of deeds for the county of Philadelphia since 1901, decided to test Penrose's leadership and run for mayor. South Philadelphia with its immigrant workers was solidly behind Vare, who thus had his own powerful following. Senator Penrose, whose choice usually ran unopposed in the primaries, picked as his candidate George H. Earle, Jr. (father of the Governor), a public-spirited business executive. To smash Vare, Penrose brought on the scene a legislative investigating commission, headed by State Senator Sterling R. Catlin, to look into alleged Vare corruption.

Meanwhile, the Keystone party in Philadelphia was well organized and ready to take over City Hall if the Republicans should fail to end their feud. Rudolph Blankenburg easily won Keystone endorsement over D. Clarence Gibboney, an ardent prohibitionist. Earle, in a savage Republican primary scuffle, bested Vare. The Democrats, pitifully weak in Philadelphia since the Civil War, supported Blankenburg, and the Keystone-Democratic fusion strength was only about 56,000 to 191,000 for the Republicans. Reform chances seemed slim. But, to the dismay of Penrose, the investigators called together to club Vare could not shake off a local subcommittee headed by the stubborn Logan Bullitt, who continued to expose Republican corruption, hurting "Sunny Jim" McNichol, Penrose's contractor friend, as much as Vare. The powerful Philadelphia *North American* also unearthed scandals that further damaged the sagging G.O.P. To top it off, McNichol (boss of the city north of Market Street) distrusted the man who headed the ticket. George Earle, who had homes both in the city and on the Main Line, talked reform so much that McNichol, who was afraid that Earle meant it, told his men not to work very hard on election day. In South Philadelphia Vare men also acted peculiarly whenever Earle's name was mentioned. Blankenburg, an honored old timer, inspired his supporters to work their hardest. A political upset was the result, Blankenburg winning over Earle 134,680 to 130,185.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> William S. Vare, *My Forty Years in Politics* (Philadelphia, 1933), 47-113; interviews with David J. Smyth, Republican leader, July 10, 1953, and Thomas Raeburn White, deputy counsel for the Catlin Commission, August 5, 1953. For election returns, see Philadelphia *Public Ledger*, November 29, 1911. Vare's brother Edwin was also a local political power.

Rudolph Blankenburg is probably the least known of the big city Progressive mayors. Possibly this is because he was the last of the reform mayors before World War I diverted public attention to international issues. Still, Blankenburg, a cultured and rather elderly German-American, showed great promise when he took office in 1912. He and his wife Lucretia, a militant Philadelphia Quakeress, had been active in civic causes since the 1880's. At his inaugural he solemnly pledged that he would be a non-partisan executive who would give the city a business-like administration. He then proceeded to put into operation modern ideas of efficiency, picking relatively young experts for his cabinet and giving them wide latitude. Economy and efficiency were his watchwords.<sup>5</sup>

The leading members of the mayor's cabinet were able Progressives. Morris L. Cooke, director of public works, was a young industrial engineer and a protégé of Frederick W. Taylor, father of scientific management. A man with ideas, Cooke was the driving force of the administration. Similarly, George D. Porter, director of public safety, was a youthful and energetic reformer. George W. Norris, director of wharves, docks, and ferries—not to be confused with the Progressive Senator from Nebraska with the same name—was a Democrat who had been a leader in the "Gas War of 1905" and active ever since in numerous volunteer organizations. Herman Loeb, director of supplies, was a businessman in politics who had won acclaim in common councils in the years from 1894 to 1905 as an opponent of the Pennsylvania Railroad—a time when few Philadelphians spoke out against that corporation's wishes. It was a well-balanced cabinet politically. All were Republicans except Norris. Cooke and Porter, like the mayor, were Protestants, Norris a Catholic, and Loeb a Jew. They were officials heading the first unbossed Philadelphia government in a

<sup>5</sup> Clinton R. Woodruff, "Rudolph Blankenburg," *Dictionary of American Biography* (20 vols., New York, 1928-1936), I, 357-358. Woodruff's article is somewhat biased, probably due to the fact that he wrote it after he had left the insurgent movement to seek favors from Senator Penrose; for substantiation of this, see *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, March 31, 1913, and *Philadelphia North American*, February 25, 1915; also interview, J. Henry Scattergood, colleague of Woodruff's on the Philadelphia Election Commission, April 10, 1952. The mayor's wife summarized their joint civic efforts—see Lucretia L. Blankenburg, *The Blankenburgs of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1929). For an obituary, see *Public Ledger*, April 13, 1918.

generation, and they were anxious to give the city efficient, non-partisan rule.<sup>6</sup>

Cooke, director of public works, was an advocate of both industrial efficiency and political purity. He searched the nation's technical schools for experts to assist him in what he regarded as pioneer work in the field of municipal reform. He introduced scientific methods to replace "rule of thumb" notions handed down from the remote past. He ended collusion between city officials and contractors, and—as did all Blankenburg's department heads—he drew up standard specifications, awarding contracts after open bidding to the "lowest and best" bidder.

A friend of civil service goals, Cooke fired over a thousand men, mostly for inefficiency or political activity. In the highway bureau he found but one trained engineer among a thousand employes; when he left office the city had nearly two hundred salaried highway engineers. He began the practice of paid vacations for city employes and saw to it that on-the-job training was offered to municipal workers. Other fringe benefits raised morale in his department.

Public service was Cooke's main concern. He found that office hours in his department had been from 9 to 2 on weekdays; he made 9 to 5 the rule. Where records were lacking, he built up a filing system. A former journalist, Cooke published readable reports with graphs, photographs, and visual aids—somewhat new for that day. Municipal complaint books were made available in drug stores, and all grievances were promptly looked into. Office routine was modernized. Cooke got the city to pay its bills by mail so that creditors would not need to come to City Hall. He appealed to the people of the city with posters, exhibits, and campaigns; to cite but one case, water waste inspectors launched a campaign to educate the public, and by this means located hundreds of thousands of leaky fixtures. The city water filter system was improved. The department forced garbage collectors and street

<sup>6</sup> Citations for the cabinet members are too numerous to record here; many are included in my doctoral dissertation, "The Progressive Movement in Philadelphia, 1910-1916" (University of Rochester, 1957). For an over-all view I have relied on the annual reports of the departments of the city, 1912 through 1916, and also on interviews with Morris L. Cooke, March 19, 1952, August 28, 1953, and September 25, 1954.

cleaners to give better, cheaper service. Cooke's efficiency is said to have saved the city over five million dollars.<sup>7</sup>

Opposing private utility companies for their inflated profits and inadequate service, Cooke fought the Philadelphia Electric Company until that corporation agreed to lower its rates, thereby saving consumers about \$1,125,000 a year. He persuaded Mayor Blankenburg to call a conference of American mayors at Philadelphia to discuss public policies relating to municipal utilities. The National Bureau of Public Utilities Research resulted from the conference, and its subsequent investigations saved consumers throughout the country millions of dollars. On other occasions he clashed with local heads of corporations, pressing them to give better service to the community.<sup>8</sup>

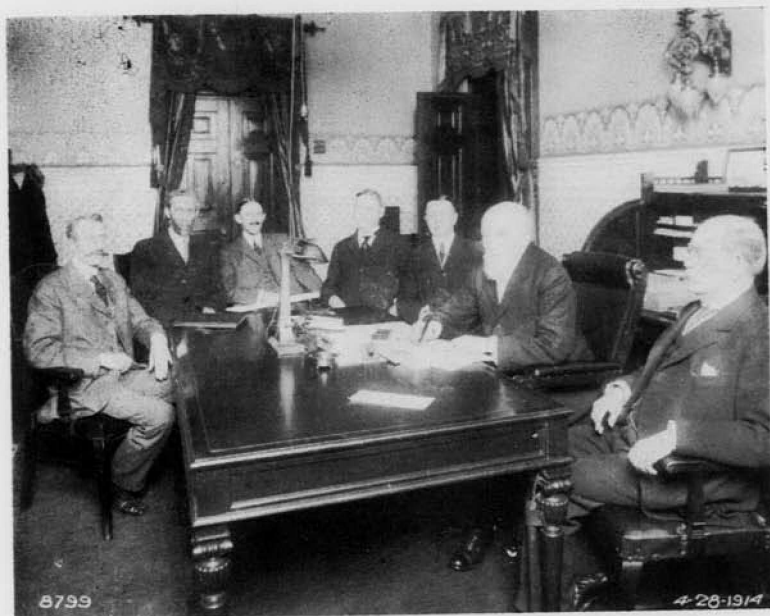
Cooke was interested in more than just local reform. He sent experts overseas to study Germany's system of municipal administration. In 1913 he and Henry Bruère of the New York City Bureau of Municipal Research tried to interest President Wilson in the idea of setting the capital city of Washington aside as a laboratory for municipal experimentation; however, nothing came of the suggestion.<sup>9</sup> If Cooke failed to get across his main idea—cooperation of major cities in bringing about municipal reforms—it was not because he did not try.

George D. Porter, director of public safety, was in charge of the police and fire bureaus. Opponents claimed that Porter used his office to further political ends. Whatever the facts, he had the mayor's confidence and worked hard at his post, often traveling to see how other cities handled their problems. While in office, he introduced the three-platoon system and decreed open trials for accused police. He established a night court at City Hall and

<sup>7</sup> T. Henry Walnut, "Reform in Philadelphia," *The New Republic*, November 27, 1915, 92-94; the same article is in *Public Ledger*, November 18, 1915.

<sup>8</sup> For the P.E.C. case, see *North American*, November 13, 14, 15, 1914, and *Public Ledger*, November 14, 1914. The conference is fully reported in "Proceedings of the Conference of American Mayors on Public Policies as to Municipal Utilities," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, LVII (January, 1915), 1-334.

<sup>9</sup> *Public Ledger*, April 1, 1913. After his Philadelphia experience Cooke continued his public service at state and national levels; he was the first administrator of the Rural Electrification Administration and was a "trouble shooter" for Presidents Roosevelt and Truman. See Kenneth E. Trombley, *The Life and Times of a Happy Liberal: A Biography of Morris Llewellyn Cooke* (New York, 1954), and also see *Current Biography* (New York, 1950), 95-97. For his obituary, *New York Times*, March 7, 1960.



MAYOR AND OFFICIALS SIGNING AGREEMENT TO ELIMINATE GRADE CROSSINGS.

*Left to right: Ashbel Welch, Vice President, Belt Line; Joseph Johnson, a district surveyor for the city; Benjamin A. Haldeman, in charge of city planning in the Bureau of Surveys; John J. Curley, Secretary, Belt Line; George S. Webster, Chief, Bureau of Surveys; Mayor Blankenburg; and Francis B. Reeves, President, Belt Line.*

*Courtesy of City of Philadelphia Archives.*

set up a service training school for police and fire recruits. He freed the department's employees from the old system of annual political assessments and the necessity of obtaining permission from ward leaders whenever they wished to move to another part of the city.<sup>10</sup>

George W. Norris, director of wharves, docks, and ferries, was also an active official. His major accomplishment was the contract which he and Cooke negotiated in 1913 with the principal railroads serving Philadelphia. The city and the railroads agreed to share nearly \$19,000,000 expenses in order to abolish grade

<sup>10</sup> Interview, Mrs. George D. Porter, April 10, 1952 (Porter died in 1946). Philadelphia was the fourth major city in the United States to study vice conditions; see *The Vice Commission of Philadelphia: A Report on Existing Conditions with Recommendations to the Honorable Rudolph Blankenburg, Mayor of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1912).

crossings in South Philadelphia and to relocate or elevate tracks to open up new industrial and residential areas. After these changes, all railroads had access to public and private wharves. Norris and the mayor sought state monies to expand port facilities; though usually rebuffed, they were able to quadruple the number of municipal wharves available for ocean trade.<sup>11</sup>

Herman Loeb, director of supplies, arranged to have dual appropriations eliminated in city purchasing, his department thereafter being authorized to spend the funds. He was disappointed, however, when the councils would not agree to build a central warehouse to obtain savings through bulk buying. The councilmen were not eager to reduce the profits of businessmen selling to the city, and the project was allowed to die.<sup>12</sup>

A new department—that of transit—was set up by Mayor Blankenburg, who named as director A. Merrit Taylor, local rail executive. Taylor drew up a blueprint for the construction of the Broad Street subway. Despite Philadelphia's having but fifteen miles of elevated and subway lines, the Republican councils would allow no more than a token start. The Broad Street subway was not completed until 1928.<sup>13</sup>

The Republicans naturally blocked Blankenburg whenever they could. A new housing code that was passed by the state legislature worked none too well because the city councils (controlled by the G.O.P.) voted funds insufficient for its enforcement.<sup>14</sup> An attempt to lower food costs by initiating a system of trolley freights to bring cheaper Delaware Valley produce into the city never got beyond the planning stage.<sup>15</sup> Conservatives complained of "municipal socialism" as they killed Blankenburg's proposals. The councils

<sup>11</sup> See autobiography of George W. Norris, *Ended Episodes* (Philadelphia, 1937). For a good history of port development before Blankenburg, see Norris's article, *Public Ledger*, November 17, 1912. For summary of accomplishments of Norris and John W. Meigs, who succeeded him for a few weeks before the close of the term, see *ibid.*, October 23, 1915. The city had only to await our entry into World War I to become for awhile the world's greatest shipbuilding center.

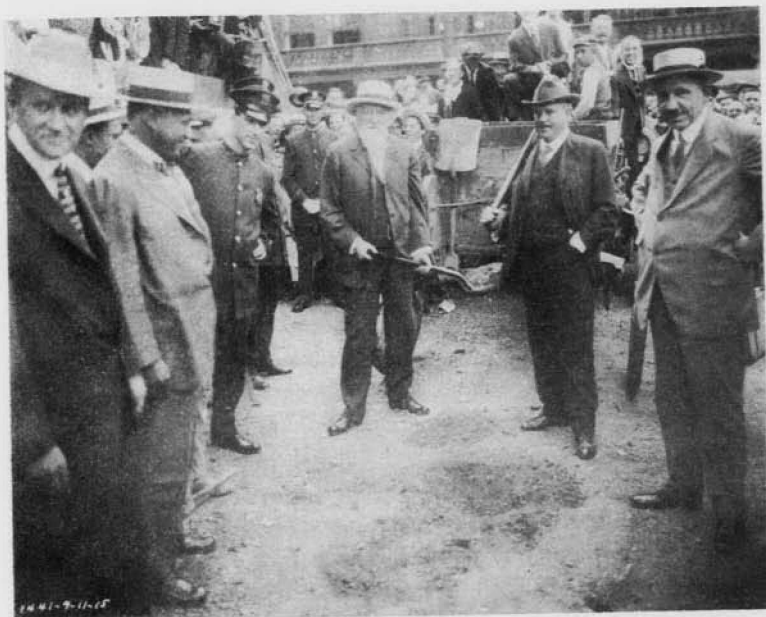
<sup>12</sup> *Fifth Annual Message of the Mayor* (Philadelphia, 1915).

<sup>13</sup> A. Merrit Taylor, "Philadelphia's Transit Problems," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, LVIII (January, 1915), 28-32.

<sup>14</sup> *Annual Reports of the Philadelphia Housing Commission* (Philadelphia, 1913, 1914, 1915).

<sup>15</sup> Clyde L. King, *A Study of Trolley Light Freight Services and Philadelphia Markets in Their Bearing on the Cost of Farm Produce* (Philadelphia, 1912).





SUBWAY GROUND-BREAKING CEREMONIES, SEPTEMBER 11, 1913.

*Left to right: George D. Porter, Director of Public Safety; George Datesman, Asst. Director of Public Works; unnamed policeman; Mayor Blankenburg; A. Merrit Taylor, Director of Transit; and "Sunny Jim" McNichol, contractor and Republican leader.*

*Courtesy of City of Philadelphia Archives.*

refused to vote funds for a public works program to help the unemployed during the depression of 1914-15, and the city had to rely upon charity administered by society women to alleviate the effects of the slump.<sup>16</sup> Though contract bidding was open, the Vare and McNichol firms continued to receive most of the city's business because there were no other specialized companies large enough to challenge the entrenched political contractors. Plans to build the Parkway were held up until the 1920's when the organization Republicans finally completed the projects the city had looked forward to for half a century—the wide boulevard, the museum, public library, and so forth. In short, Blankenburg was allowed to make plans, but beyond that he was usually restricted to administrative reforms.

The mayor could never get cooperation from the Republican

<sup>16</sup> *Public Ledger*, January 14, April 18, 1915.

machine when it came to taxation. The local board of review of taxes—a Republican body—each year kept down anticipated increases in assessed valuation; consequently the administration had less money to spend than it might have had.<sup>17</sup> When Blankenburg asked the councils in September, 1912, for taxes that would bring the city approximately \$4,000,000 a year and also raise the borrowing capacity from \$7,000,000 to \$91,000,000, the municipal legislature balked. The public did not rise up and endorse the mayor's proposals, and from then on the councils fought him openly, whereas formerly the machine had treated him with cautious respect.<sup>18</sup> Undoubtedly, part of the trouble was due to the bicameral councils which were unique for an American metropolis in the twentieth century. As long as Blankenburg was mayor, the Republicans resisted all attempts to install a smaller, streamlined single house.

Aside from the Republicans, the mayor had problems in dealing with the Keystone party which had helped to elect him. No sooner had he taken office than the doorbell-ringers and poll-watchers came to City Hall to demand patronage. Blankenburg had campaigned on a platform promising nonpartisan government; he was one politician who meant what he said, so he honored his pledge. The dismayed Keystoners deserted him, taking their allegiance elsewhere, for his decision to remain a purist meant death for their party. The tiny remnant that held together for awhile finally followed D. Clarence Gibboney back into the Republican fold in 1915. No great loss, perhaps, but the break with the Keystoners deprived the mayor of a potentially loyal band of followers he could undoubtedly have used.<sup>19</sup>

Philadelphia politics of the period were further complicated by the appearance on the national scene of the Bull Moose party. The followers of Colonel Theodore Roosevelt won the Pennsylvania electoral votes for T. R. in the celebrated three-cornered contest of 1912, and the municipal reform group behind Blankenburg supported Roosevelt. The Progressives were strong enough in the state legislative sessions of 1913 and 1915 to put across a number

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, October 6, 1913; *North American*, August 7, 1912.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, September 23, 1912; interview, T. Henry Walnut, reform leader, April 16, 1952.

<sup>19</sup> *Public Ledger*, April 9, 1912; *Inquirer*, May 1, 1912; *North American*, April 7, 1912.

of reforms that in some cases helped Blankenburg. But the mayor's nonpartisan administration was a disappointment to the Roosevelt leaders also. (In Pennsylvania the Progressive organization was called the Washington party because Senator Penrose had preempted on the ballot such names as Progressive and Roosevelt.) The disappointment of the Roosevelt circle could be seen in the growing coolness between Blankenburg and Edwin A. Van Valkenburg, editor of the Philadelphia *North American*. The latter, T. R.'s leader in eastern Pennsylvania, was more interested in the fortunes of his idol, the popular Colonel, than in the achievements of Blankenburg's nonpartisan administration. After all, the Bull Moosers like the Keystoneers needed jobs, and the mayor offered no political plums. Thus, the national goals and interests of the Progressive party were not always consistent with those of the local reform administration. The two groups cooperated as well as possible during elections, but were not synchronized sufficiently to offer the best front to Senator Penrose, who was steadily reuniting the factions within the G.O.P. and building a fighting conservative party that could take over when the liberal trend came to a halt.<sup>20</sup>

At the halfway point, in 1913, the voters passed judgment on the Blankenburg administration. The important city posts at stake were district attorney, recorder of taxes, treasurer, and register of wills. All the incumbents were organization Republicans, but the reformers hoped to win an impressive victory to better their outlook for the 1915 mayoralty election.

Owen Wister, the Philadelphia novelist, succinctly presented the case for reform in an article in the *Outlook* a few months before the election, and his points were echoed by others throughout the 1913 campaign. He arraigned the Republican record before the Blankenburg administration on several counts: crooked police, sub-standard fire service, firetrap schoolhouses, a new reservoir that leaked, packed juries that released machine workers violating

<sup>20</sup> Interviews, Walter Darlington, July 13, 1953, and James Benn, Sr., April 18, 1952 (both were associates of Van Valkenburg); Lucretia L. Blankenburg, *Blankenburgs of Philadelphia*, 78. The Edwin A. Van Valkenburg Papers are in the Widener Library, Harvard University; they contain numerous references to the Philadelphia scene. For a summary of the life of the editor, see Robert L. Bloom, "Edwin A. Van Valkenburg and the Philadelphia *North American*, 1899-1924," *Pennsylvania History*, XXI (April, 1954), 109-127.

election laws and thugs committing violence on poll-watchers, and an obsolescent city plant resulting from niggardly appropriations and graft. He contrasted this mismanagement with Blankenburg's record of civil service reform, intercity cooperation, sound engineering practices, a nonpartisan approach to the city's expansion problems, and savings resulting from honest contracts.<sup>21</sup>

Local reformers, Roosevelt Progressives, and Democrats formed a fusion ticket to oppose the Republicans. They united behind the slogan, "All Philadelphia Against Two Contractors," referring to "Sunny Jim" McNichol and William S. Vare. All the fusion candidates were sponsored by the Washington party. For the top position of district attorney they supported George W. Carr. Samuel T. Rotan, incumbent since 1905, was the Penrose selection. The *déclassé* Keystoneers ran D. Clarence Gibboney, a perennial aspirant for office. The Republicans derided the Blankenburg tax proposals, said the mayor drove manufacturing from the city, attacked the importation of experts whom they called "carpet-baggers," and made much of the dismissal of a few Civil War veterans by the mayor. Rotan won with over 113,000 votes to Carr's 86,000, Gibboney trailing with 4,500. Most of the other offices went to Republicans. After the count Van Valkenburg impulsively strained Blankenburg-Bull Moose lines with an editorial flaying the mayor.<sup>22</sup>

Again in 1914 the Republicans won, this time in the state elections. They sent Penrose back to the United States Senate—his first endorsement by the people themselves, now voting directly by virtue of the 17th Amendment. The Democrats put up A. Mitchell Palmer, congressman from Stroudsburg; and the Bull Moosers, Gifford Pinchot. With his opposition divided, Penrose triumphed—in Philadelphia he was better than a two-to-one victor over his two opponents. For governor the Republicans were successful with the Philadelphia educator Martin G. Brumbaugh, a moderate who

<sup>21</sup> Owen Wister, "The Case of the Quaker City," *Outlook*, 101 (May 25, 1912), 162-173.

<sup>22</sup> Besides Carr, the fusion ticket was comprised of Samuel F. Scattergood, retail grain and feed dealer, for treasurer; Robert S. Bright, lawyer, for register of wills; Daniel Wade, mill owner, for receiver of taxes. Wade was the only Democrat; the rest were Republican. See *Public Ledger*, September 21, 1913, for biographical sketches and *ibid.*, November 7, 1913, as well as *North American*, November 7, 1913, for election returns.

defeated his opponent, Vance McCormick, Democratic reform editor from Harrisburg.<sup>23</sup>

As the conservatives began to regain ground from 1913 on, some of them became aggressive. More and more of the middle-of-the-roaders, who had identified themselves with the liberal cause when Progressivism was at high tide, moved over to the other side, joining the defenders of the status quo. In Philadelphia it was the old story of reformers scurrying back to the Republican party and to respectable conservatism as soon as the public tired of liberal insurgency.

Ever vulnerable in times of political unrest, the scholar in politics was violently opposed by conservative leaders from the business community. A case that gained national attention involved Scott Nearing, a socialist, who was dismissed as instructor in the Wharton School of Finance and Commerce at the University of Pennsylvania for allegedly advocating the redistribution of wealth and accusing Joseph Grundy, a trustee, of gaining riches through the use of child labor in his Bristol mills. The newly created American Association of University Professors investigated the case and concluded that the trustees had acted arbitrarily with no thought of safeguarding academic freedom. The AAUP report noted that the Wharton School alumni had campaigned for three years against Nearing and other "radical" professors before they persuaded the trustees to act. It was significant that the University professors who had helped Director Cooke of the Department of Public Works in his investigations of local corporations doing business with the city were foremost among the academicians under fire. Nearing was never reinstated, though reputedly very popular and successful with his students. His was by far the most controversial case, though there were other incidents involving free speech in Philadelphia.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> For election returns, *Smull's Legislative Hand Book and Manual of the State of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, 1915), 737-738. President Wilson, in supporting Palmer for the United States Senate, wrote Powell Evans, Philadelphia Republican, and developed the argument that the Progressive Movement had come to a halt. See reprint of letter in *Public Ledger*, October 21, 1914. Bull Mooser William Draper Lewis, dean of the Law School of the University of Pennsylvania, withdrew after the primaries in favor of McCormick for governor, but neither Palmer nor Pinchot would step aside for a fusion candidate for senator. Pinchot's vigorous campaigning laid the ground for his later victories as governor in 1922 and 1930.

<sup>24</sup> "Report of the Committee of Inquiry on the Case of Professor Scott Nearing of the University of Pennsylvania," *Bulletin of the American*

In the field of religion, an Episcopal rector, the Reverend Dr. George Chalmers Richmond, was tried in 1915 and again in 1917 by ecclesiastical courts for being a belligerent liberal, and was unfrocked. Richmond from his pulpit had championed Scott Nearing and the I.W.W., when that radical union attempted to organize the city's unskilled workers in 1913. All of this was too much for Bishop Philip Mercer Rhinelander and prominent lay leaders of the church.<sup>25</sup> Spiritual and political issues were also involved when the popular Billy Sunday, Protestant revivalist, came to the city in 1915. Professor Nearing accused him of preaching "heavenly bliss" to divert attention from "real, pressing worldly injustice." There may indeed have been justification for regarding Sunday as an anti-liberal crusader. At least Roger Babson, the business statistician, admitted at the time that he was told by a number of Philadelphia employers that they had helped finance Sunday so that he would lead the workers' thoughts to God while they forgot union grievances. Billy Sunday, they felt, was cheaper than a costly strike. The Protestant minister arranging the evangelist's visit to Philadelphia wrote editor Van Valkenburg that lower class people, after hearing Sunday, left talking about him instead of damning the government and spreading anarchy.<sup>26</sup>

In the wake of Billy Sunday, an English-born Episcopal rector, Reverend H. C. Stone, founded a secret order that attracted Protestant businessmen. The Stone Men's League was fraternal as well as anti-Catholic. George D. Porter, director of public safety for Mayor Blankenburg, was an active member, and some noted Philadelphia people were advisers or participants in the organization. It was curious to see a number of local liberals consorting with conservatives in this paramilitary order. The League was short-lived and was forgotten when the country went to war, but at its height it was believed to have had 100,000 members in Philadelphia. On one occasion, Lieutenant General Nelson A. Miles, a hero of the Spanish-American War, reviewed the Stone

*Association of University Professors*, II (May, 1916), 9-57; Lightner Witmer, *The Nearing Case* (New York, 1915); Upton Sinclair, *The Goose Step* (published by the author, 1922), 97-110.

<sup>25</sup> Henry Budd, *The Richmond Ecclesiastical Trial: The Charge to the Triers* (Philadelphia, 1917).

<sup>26</sup> *North American*, February 2, 1915; Witmer, *Nearing Case*, 52; Reverend James B. Ely to Edwin A. Van Valkenburg, April 20, 1914, Van Valkenburg Papers.

Men, who marched past him with clenched right fists. Many Stone Men were vocal opponents of "Sunny Jim" McNichol, Catholic leader of center-city Republicans. Whatever ideology inspired the Stone Men, they were part of a bigoted current that somehow caught up men of differing political persuasions.<sup>27</sup>

Liberals and Catholics were by no means the only targets of the time. The super-patriots were worried also about the city's most recent immigrants, the so-called hyphenates. Just after the sinking of the *Lusitania*, President Wilson on May 10, 1915, came to Philadelphia to address a public reception for thousands of naturalized citizens. On this occasion he made his famous pacifistic statement, "There is such a thing as a man being too proud to fight." The old German-American mayor of the city, Rudolph Blankenburg, introduced the President, and the latter affirmed his belief in the cosmopolitan sources of American nationality. This was the keynote for humanitarian liberals—to assimilate the foreigners while stressing their unique contributions to the country. Progressives generally took this line as they followed Wilson's concept of America sacrificing for the world community.<sup>28</sup>

But a conflicting current also set in, one which became the theme for the National Conference on Immigration and Americanization, held in Philadelphia, January 19-20, 1916. Philanthropic, business, civic, and educational organizations sent delegates to discuss the problems of Americanization, and the leaders of the meeting were mostly conservatives. Former President Roosevelt was on hand. Though concern was expressed for the economic and social plight of immigrants, and some good was accomplished by follow-up committees in various cities, the conferees refused to endorse the use of trade and labor unions as agencies for assimilation. As John Higham points out in his *Strangers in the Land*, conservative business interests together with 100-percenters eventually captured the Americanization movement, as the United States became more deeply involved in the war, and as the fear of Russian Bolshevism brought on increased anti-liberal activities.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> *Press*, September 21, 1915; *Public Ledger*, September 18, 1916.

<sup>28</sup> *North American*, May 11, 1915.

<sup>29</sup> John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1955), 243-263; Edward George Hartmann, *The Movement to Americanize the Immigrant* (New York, 1948), Chap. 6.

With aggressive reaction manifestly popular, the reformers were losing ground in an atmosphere that was steadily growing hostile to liberal change. The four-year term of the Blankenburg administration was coming to a close, and in November, 1915, the voters of Philadelphia turned the reformers out of City Hall, restoring regular Republican rule.

For the mayoralty contest Senator Penrose reverted to form and picked for his nominee a secondary figure, Thomas B. Smith, former postmaster of the city and president of a bail-bonding company. (Later, as mayor, Smith lost the confidence of many because of the conflict of interest involving his business and his position of trust in public life.) Penrose generally ran men of prestige for top offices when he was afraid he could not win, but now he was showing contempt for the opposition by choosing Smith. The miniscule Keystone party, which four years before had sponsored Blankenburg, endorsed Smith and disappeared forever as an organization.<sup>30</sup> The dispirited Democrats were led by their old guard; they had never responded to President Wilson's efforts to revive them, though an offshoot of liberals maintained in the Democratic Club of Philadelphia a concern for progressivism. The party, however, endorsed Gordon Bromley, a machine worker, who polled around 4,500 votes in November, a miserable showing.

Mayor Rudolph Blankenburg declined renomination because of his advanced age. When Morris L. Cooke, the outstanding figure in the administration, decided not to run for mayor, Blankenburg threw his support to George D. Porter, director of public safety. As already noted, Porter had been a member of the bigoted Stone Men's League, and this fact hurt the reform cause. Late in September the men behind Porter activated the new Franklin party, feeling it necessary to set up another organization to attract the local insurgents who did not care for the old Roosevelt label, the Washington party, which was still the vehicle for Bull Moosers. The Franklinites pledged themselves to popular rule, fair and open bidding, a one-chambered council, and cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce in its drive to expand industry and business in Philadelphia.<sup>31</sup> The leaders of this party pointed with pride to the Blankenburg record and warned against rule by a

<sup>30</sup> *Public Ledger*, September 16, 1915.

<sup>31</sup> *Press*, September 30, 1915.



Republican contractor-mayor. (Smith was so represented because of his bonding company.) But the independents were not united and the Republicans were. Mayor Blankenburg refused to comment on Porter's connection with the Stone Men's League; Cooke was an engineer, not a politician, and took no active part, disapproving Porter's misalliance with bigots; and Norris as a Catholic naturally gave no support to Porter.

As expected, the G.O.P. won the 1915 mayoralty elections, Smith carrying 42 of the 48 wards and amassing 168,182 votes. Porter lagged well behind with 91,655.<sup>32</sup> Better administrative procedures, economy, open bidding for city contracts, bold municipal planning, intercity cooperation against national monopolies—these objectives had insufficient appeal to the voters to prevent Philadelphia's return to the Republican machine.

Smith's victory was the signal for a wholesale return of insurgents to the Republican fold. Eighty leaders of the Franklin party—most of them active for a long time in civic affairs—issued a statement in January, 1916, explaining their decision to disband the last in a long succession of independent parties. The gist of the articles of surrender was that these were old Republicans coming back home. "For many years the political conditions in Philadelphia have prevented a host of loyal Republicans from acting with their party in local affairs, and the party has thus been deprived of an important element of strength. The issues involved in the approaching election call for cooperation and party unity." Rudolph Blankenburg, just retired as reform mayor, did not sign, but George D. Porter, his heir-designate who had lost the mayoralty race of 1915, was the spokesman for the group. Senator Penrose warmly welcomed the former renegades and promised municipal reform under Republican leadership.<sup>33</sup> In 1916 the Bull Moosers of Philadelphia joined in disbanding the state-wide Washington party and most of them followed their national leader, Theodore Roosevelt, back into the Republican party. For Philadelphia, it was the end of a political chapter.

<sup>32</sup> *Manual of Councils* (Philadelphia, 1916), 301-337.

<sup>33</sup> *Public Ledger*, January 24, 1916. Owen J. Roberts was one of the eighty to rejoin Penrose. Most of the Franklin party leaders who brought local insurgency to an end in Philadelphia belonged to the managerial or professional class; of 63 listed in the 1916 city directory all but 9 belonged to these upper echelons (85.7 per cent), while the remainder were white collar or manual workers.

Insurgency had failed mainly because the city was predominantly Republican. When it was clear that the Blankenburg administration was blocked by the Republican city councils, mild liberals became tired of insurgent reform and decided to let the G.O.P. run the city. Bull Moosers, more interested in Teddy Roosevelt's career than in the local picture, did not cooperate too well with the Blankenburg administration. Republicans who had been independent in local matters only were swayed by the tariff issue and by their mistrust of President Wilson's Democratic regime, with its southern-western orientation. The war contributed to the drive towards conservative conformity and to the decrease in the popularity of continuing reform. Politically, the return of the insurgents to the G.O.P. was a tribute to the patient skill of Senator Penrose, a masterful leader.

But the eclipse of independent reform in Philadelphia should not detract from the record of Mayor Blankenburg and his dedicated officials. Theirs was a solid achievement for the times, even though the city's return to the machine nullified many of their efforts. In the annals of municipal administration, 1912-1916 were four bright years for Philadelphia.