The reform fever which characterized the American scene in the first decade and a half of the twentieth century made no significant impact on Pennsylvania before 1905. A Republican stronghold since the Civil War, the Keystone State was dominated by a highly disciplined political machine headed by Matthew Quay and, after 1904, by his successor, Senator Boies Penrose. Backed by the huge corporate interests in the state, the Republican machine seldom faced serious competition from its Democratic and independent opposition. In 1905, however, a political revolt took place in Philadelphia which temporarily upset the ruling machine and marked the beginning of a decade of insurgent reform activity in both the city and the state.

Philadelphia politics at the beginning of the twentieth century was ruled by the “Organization” of State Insurance Commissioner Israel Durham, a professional politician and an ally of the state machine. Like other contemporary urban bosses, Durham depended for his success upon rigid control of the political machinery in most of the precincts and upon thorough domination of municipal employees. In each precinct, two committeemen were responsible for winning and retaining the loyalty of the voters for the Organization. They accomplished this primarily by performing a large variety of personal services for their constituents, particularly those in the immigrant
and lower economic groups.\textsuperscript{1} In addition, the committeemen approved candidates for public jobs, choosing only those with demonstrated loyalty to the machine.\textsuperscript{2} "The cohesive power of the 'machine' is the offices," one Organization spokesman acknowledged. "There are ten thousand of them at the disposal of the Organization. . . . The Poles, Hungarians, Italians, and the other foreigners who come here vote with us because we control the offices. They want favors and know they cannot get them unless they vote with us."\textsuperscript{3}

Once obtained, a public job could be retained only through continued allegiance and substantial financial contributions to the Organization. Each employee was assessed according to a fixed schedule, which ranged from three to twelve per cent of his yearly salary, depending upon his income bracket. In 1903, for example, ninety-four per cent of all city employees paid $349,035.38 into the campaign chest of the Republican organization.\textsuperscript{4}

Through trusted henchmen in the city administration, the Durham Organization controlled the letting of contracts for maintenance and construction and the distribution of public franchises. The contracts were awarded to friends and accomplices, such as contractor Daniel J. McNichol, who charged exorbitant prices for shoddy work and split the profits with Organization leaders.\textsuperscript{5} James M. Crawford, a member of the Common Council, estimated that about $5,000,000 was wasted in the city each year because of graft in the contracts for filtration, street paving, garbage removal, sewage disposal, and public lighting.\textsuperscript{6} Public franchises which could have brought millions of dollars in revenue to the city were given away. In 1901, for example,

\textsuperscript{1} William S. Vare, My Forty Years in Politics (Philadelphia, 1933), 29–30. In 1900, 22.8 per cent (295,340) of Philadelphia's total population (1,293,697) was foreign born. United States Bureau of the Census, Abstract of the Twelfth Census: 1900, 100–105. Most of the immigrant population was concentrated in South Philadelphia, the heart of the Organization's strength.


\textsuperscript{3} Quoted in Robert D. Bowden, Boies Penrose, Symbol of an Era (New York, 1937), 92–93.


\textsuperscript{5} North American (Phila.), Feb. 15, 1902.

\textsuperscript{6} Public Ledger (Phila.), Jan. 5, 1905.
City Councils adopted fourteen ordinances which gave away an estimated $7,000,000 worth of street railway franchises to favored "grabbers." Other favors were granted to friends of the Organization on the basis of cash payments into any one of the numerous party funds.

With the view that nothing should be left to chance, the Organization made outright manipulation of elections a common practice. Ballot boxes were stuffed by ambitious ward leaders, votes were purchased for as little as twenty-five cents or a drink of whiskey, and voting lists were padded with phantom voters. In January, 1900, the Republican City Committee attempted to purchase poll tax receipts for a list of 30,000 names of which more than 27,000 later proved to be fraudulent. In the electoral process, as in every other aspect of government in Philadelphia, corruption was the rule and not the exception. "Other American cities," wrote Lincoln Steffens in 1903, "no matter how bad their own condition may be, all point with scorn to Philadelphia as worse—'the worst-governed city in the country.'"

Although most Philadelphians—the influential gentlemen as well as the average men of business—were more interested in devoting their time to their own private enterprises than in fighting corruption, opposition to the machine was not lacking on the part of some of the newspapers and several reform groups. Of the newspapers, the most consistent enemy of the Durham Organization was the North American. While it was owned by Thomas B. Wanamaker, son of the department store millionaire, the paper owed its vigorous

7 City and State (Phila.), June 20, 1901.
8 "I have the promise of $200 more for the convention fund, provided we get the Pine Road. This makes $1400, and I believe if His Honor the Mayor, will give us this road, we can make it very much more. And this is money that would not be given unless the Pine Road matter is taken up." Thomas H. Wilson to J. Hampton Moore (secretary to Mayor Samuel H. Ashbridge), Feb. 27, 1900, J. Hampton Moore Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP).
9 North American, Mar. 13, 1900; Public Ledger, Dec. 18, 1904.
10 City and State, Feb. 1 and 15, 1900. For a more extensive discussion of the Organization's electoral methods, see Clinton R. Woodruff, "Philadelphia's Election Frauds," The Arena, XXIV (1900), 397-404.
reform policy primarily to its controversial editor, Edwin A. Van Valkenburg.\textsuperscript{13}

A native of Tioga County, Van Valkenburg had taken command of the \textit{North American} in 1899 and had transformed it from a small, rather staid paper into an exciting, crusading journal whose daily circulation climbed from 3,000 to more than 160,000 within a few years.\textsuperscript{14} Seldom did it lack a cause to champion or a scandal to splash across its front pages, from the "great oleomargarine scandal of 1900"\textsuperscript{15} and the attempted blackmail of John Wanamaker by a city official\textsuperscript{16} to election crimes and corrupt transactions of the city administration.\textsuperscript{17} Like many other "muckraking" journals of the time, the \textit{North American} in many instances failed to substantiate its charges adequately, and seldom prompted immediate improvement even when they were valid, but there is little doubt that its exposures often flustered the Organization and shook the complacency of proper Philadelphians.\textsuperscript{18}

Of the reform groups protesting against municipal corruption, the loudest and best organized was the Municipal League. Founded in 1891 by a small group of college graduates, the principal goals of the League were the separation of municipal affairs from state and national politics, the extension of the civil service to all city departments, and the development of more businesslike management of all municipal services.\textsuperscript{19} In support of its aims, the League endorsed reform candidates in municipal elections, investigated election frauds, and proposed reform legislation, but it rarely met with success for want of wider backing from the citizens of Philadelphia.\textsuperscript{20}

By the fall of 1904, the Municipal League had reached the conclusion that its usefulness was at an end. It had been the object of


\textsuperscript{14} \textit{[North American]}, Confessions of a Newspaper (Philadelphia, 1909), 26.

\textsuperscript{15} Apr. 16–May 11, 1900.

\textsuperscript{16} May 12, 1900.

\textsuperscript{17} For example, Feb. 3, 1900 and Feb. 15, 1902.

\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Pennsylvania History}, XXI (1954), 116–117.

\textsuperscript{19} \textit{The Declaration of Principles and By-Laws of the Municipal League of Philadelphia, 1894}, Citizen's Municipal Association Papers, HSP.

ridicule by the machine and its press for so long that its influence and support were practically nonexistent. At the same time, however, the Leaguers were not ready to give up on reform. Accepting the unprecedented majorities given Theodore Roosevelt in Philadelphia and Pennsylvania in the November election as evidence of widespread reform sentiment, they believed that a new organization with new methods should be created to fight for the revamping of Philadelphia politics.21

The League called for all interested citizens to meet at the Bourse on November 14 to discuss the reform question. Several hundred business and professional men attended the meeting, heartily applauded a number of speeches denouncing municipal corruption, and unanimously agreed that the organization of a new independent political group offered the only hope for the rescue of Philadelphia from its political degradation.22 At a second and much larger meeting in mid-December, the assembly adopted a plan of organization drafted by a committee headed by attorney Frank P. Prichard. The plan provided, first, that a Committee of Seventy would be established to form the core of the organization and supervise an Executive Board of Nine which would direct the active campaigning. Second, it stated that the primary policy of the organization would be to endorse the fittest candidates of the major parties rather than run separate candidates, but, if none of the candidates met its standards as to character, experience, and ability, then it would nominate its own candidates. Third, the plan provided that a fund of not less than $50,000 would be maintained to conduct the work of the organization.23 While neither the goals nor the operating plan of the new group differed significantly from those of the old Municipal League, it had attracted the interest and support of many influential citizens, and the assembly adjourned in a climate of confidence that a substantial beginning had been made toward the purifying of Philadelphia.24

21 North American, Nov. 15, 1904.
22 Public Ledger, Nov. 15, 1904; Edmonds, 184.
24 Members chosen for the Executive Board were: John C. Winston (publisher), chairman; James Bateman, Jr. (lawyer); J. Claude Bedford (lawyer); Alfred D. Calvert (Typographical Union president); Mahlon N. Kline (merchant); George W. Norris (banker); J. Henry Scattergood (business executive); Thomas Bromley, Jr. (merchant); and George Woodward (doctor). Ibid.
For the most part, the new reform group was greeted warmly by both the public and the press. The *North American* felt that it offered a real hope of success because it was spontaneous and revealed that the community was aware of its problems. “It is the most logical and inherently the most powerful [reform movement] that has yet been opposed to the confederation of evil that rules the city. . . . He is dull of comprehension who does not feel that the political atmosphere is heavily charged and at any moment may draw the lightning of revolution.” The other independent Republican newspapers, the *Public Ledger* and the *Press*, also welcomed the formation of the new group and endorsed its goals. The chief dissent came from the Organization’s most loyal newsheet, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, whose attitude was that the movement would not be any more successful and should not be taken any more seriously than its predecessors.

The first political test for the reformers came in the municipal election for magistrates and councilmen in February, 1905. Under the title of City Party, candidates were entered in selected residential wards where reform sentiment was high and where there was less chance for the machine to manipulate the returns. Supported by most Philadelphia civic and religious organizations and aided by new exposés of machine corruption in the *North American*, the *Press*, and the *Public Ledger*, the reform candidates made an impressive showing. Although the Organization retained every office, its majorities in many wards were reduced to their lowest levels ever, a cause for considerable optimism on the part of the reformers. Furthermore, it appeared that the City Party campaign, by focusing the glare of publicity on machine corruption, had awakened the consciences of many Philadelphians.

In the wake of the election, dozens of mass meetings were called by community religious and civic groups to protest against the license of the machine. Beginning in late February, a series of mass prayer meetings was held for the purpose of encouraging the mayor, John Weaver, to overcome the temptations of the machine and lead

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25 Dec. 21, 1904.
26 Dec. 20, 1904.
27 Dec. 20, 21, 1904.
28 *Public Ledger*, Feb. 1, 1905.
Throughout the city, Sunday sermons were increasingly devoted to revelations of political sinfulness and to appeals for higher civic morality. Philadelphia clergymen, laying aside sectarian differences temporarily, formed a city-wide ministerial association to conduct a unified campaign for higher morality in city government. To the North American, it appeared that a great religious and moral awakening was taking place which was paving the way for political reform. While these events demonstrated that the early months of 1905 had witnessed the greatest awareness of municipal corruption and the broadest sentiment for reform experienced in Philadelphia for many years, it is quite probable that the movement, like many in the past, would have gradually subsided if the Organization had not ignored the charged atmosphere and selected this time to make one of its most serious blunders.

In the early spring of 1905, Israel Durham was in failing health. He anticipated retiring from active politics in the near future. First, however, he wanted to provide for his own future security and reward his faithful servants in the city machine. His plan was to cancel the existing short-term lease of the municipal gasworks and give a new seventy-five-year lease to the United Gas Improvement Company headed by his friend Thomas Dolan. Under the new terms, U. G. I. would pay the city $25,000,000 over a period of three years in lieu of the annual rentals which had been customary in the past. The bulk payments would provide a handsome kitty with which to award municipal contracts to firms associated with Durham and his friends. At the same time, U. G. I. would be paying only a fraction of the real value of the lease. Since he had City Councils

30 Public Ledger, Feb. 27, 1905; North American, Mar. 1, 1905.
31 Public Ledger, Feb. 28, 1905.
32 Mar. 15, 1905.
34 North American, Apr. 28, 1905; Edmonds, 185. The original lease had been granted in 1897 for a period of ten years and was to be renewed for twenty years if the city so desired. Under its terms, the city received a share of the revenue from the sale of gas as annual rental. In 1904, this share amounted to $655,000. On this basis, even if the sale of gas did not increase—a most unlikely prospect—the city would receive close to $50,000,000. It is also of interest to note that in 1897, when he was struggling for political position, Durham and his followers opposed the original lease in favor of municipal operation, the same position taken by the city reformers at that time. North American, Apr. 24, 1905.
in his pocket, Durham had little reason to doubt the success of his plan.

On April 15, 1905, the *North American*, without revealing its source of information, announced that a gas “steal” was in the making and that a bill would soon be introduced in Councils to ratify it. Undisturbed by this divulgence of the deal, the Select Council set the stage for Durham’s plan on April 20 by passing a resolution citing the urgent needs of the city for large sums to carry out important public works it had undertaken. It asked the Finance Committee to “confer with the United Gas Improvement Company with the purpose of ascertaining whether the yearly payments the city now received under the gas lease can be anticipated.”

The Committee of Seventy was immediately alerted and demanded that the Finance Committee delay introduction of its plan until other syndicates could bid against U. G. I. The protest was ignored, however, and the bill was introduced in Councils on April 27. Determined to force the issue, the Committee of Seventy appealed for a public demonstration against the “steal.” The *North American*, the *Press*, and the *Public Ledger* devoted the bulk of their news space to denouncing the proposal, citing the enormous loss of revenue to the city and the exorbitant profits that would be made by U. G. I. if the deal were approved. On May 1, the *North American* announced that it would subscribe $5,000,000 to any syndicate that would agree to provide $25,000,000 to meet the city’s short-term needs and offer an alternative plan which would permit the city to retain the existing lease.

Meanwhile, city councilmen were bombarded with hundreds of letters from Philadelphians protesting the “grab.” The chain reaction of public indignation caught the Organization by complete surprise. Durham, confident of success, had departed for a vacation at Hot Springs, Virginia, after the U. G. I. plan had been introduced in Councils. When he received reports of the growing opposition, he was forced to rush back to Philadelphia to shore up his defenses and prevent any defections among the councilmen.

35 Quoted in *North American*, Apr. 21, 1905.
37 Apr. 25–May 1, 1905. The *North American* estimated that U. G. I. would make approximately $88,572,200 from the deal.
38 Norris, 73; *North American*, May 2, 1905.
The Committee of Seventy, the Law and Order Society, and the *North American* moved to crystallize public opinion by calling for a mass meeting of all those opposed to the U. G. I. deal. Nearly 5,000 citizens responded to the call and gathered in the Academy of Music on the evening of May 3. They heard a stream of prominent Philadelphians denounce the proposed “steal” and the officials who were condoning it. Following the town meeting, the leading ministers of Philadelphia held a prayer meeting for Mayor Weaver in the hope that it would give him the strength to stand up against the gas deal and work for the cause of reform.

Like Durham, Weaver was also out of town, en route to a long-planned vacation in Canada, when the storm broke. He quickly canceled his plans and left his family to hurry back to Philadelphia. When he arrived, he denied knowing anything about the U. G. I. deal and promised a full investigation. On May 4, after witnessing the civic meeting of the preceding night and hearing the objections of reform leaders, he issued a statement opposing the U. G. I. plan. He also denied the statement by Councils that the city urgently needed a large amount of additional money for current projects.

Later the same day, the Select Council, beginning to feel the pressure of public opinion and acknowledging the strength of the mayor’s opposition, directed the Finance Committee to advertise for bids on the lease of the gasworks. However, it tempered its concession by stipulating that the bids must be submitted before May 15, thus presenting any rival bidders with the nearly impossible task of organizing a company, devising a plan, raising money, and presenting the bid within the space of a week and a half. The *North American* bluntly charged that Council’s action merely represented a delay in its plan to adopt the U. G. I. deal and that it had no intention of accepting another bid. A delegation appointed by John H. Con-
verse, chairman of the May 3 mass meeting, appealed for more time to negotiate a lease but was turned down by the Finance Committee. Nevertheless, supported by the *North American*, a group of Philadelphia bankers led by George Norris set to work to form a rival syndicate to submit a better bid for the city.

The Organization, meanwhile, had received a morale boost from the state government. On May 5, the same day that the Finance Committee decided to accept additional bids, Governor Samuel Pennypacker signed a bill which would deprive the mayor of Philadelphia of the power to appoint the two most important administrative officials in the city, the director of public safety (who was in charge of all policemen and firemen) and the director of public works (who was responsible for awarding public contracts). According to the so-called “ripper bill,” the two directors would be appointed by City Councils after 1907. Introduced and passed by the legislature under Durham’s direction, the bill was the result of the increasing differences between the Organization and Mayor Weaver. Durham realized that the mayor was more susceptible to popular reform and more difficult to control than Councils, and he wanted the insurance against future obstinate or impressionable mayors that the “ripper” would provide.

While the “ripper bill” would not affect the administration of Mayor Weaver, its implications for the future were obvious to reform leaders. Before the bill was signed, representatives of the Committee of Seventy and several dozen civic and trade associations appeared before Pennypacker with a petition signed by more than 8,000 business and professional men opposing the bill. Pennypacker realized that Durham was not acting out of regard for the “principles of government” and that he was trying to get ahead of Weaver, but

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45 *Public Ledger*, May 9, 1905.
46 Norris, 76–77.
47 *North American*, May 6, 1905.
48 Although Weaver had been elected mayor in 1903 as Durham’s ‘protégé,’ he had assumed a more independent attitude than Durham expected and the two gradually drifted apart. Vare, 85, 90. In early 1904, the Organization had even considered “ripping” Weaver out of office. See letter of Rudolph Blankenburg to Matthew Quay, Feb. 17, 1904, Rudolph Blankenburg Papers, HSP.
he signed the bill anyway. Later, in his Autobiography, Pennypacker explained that he had supported the bill because it “had been passed by a majority of over two-thirds of the members of the legislature, more than enough to overcome the veto of the governor, [because] the representatives from Philadelphia had so voted and [because] it was in line with the democratic tendencies of the time.”

Although the signing of the “ripper” was an Organization victory, it gave the reform press a new cause to propagandize and intensified the public clamor for reform action. The Organization, however, still refused to take the rising storm seriously.

When the bidding deadline of May 15 arrived, the Finance Committee was surprised to find that a second bid for the gas lease had been submitted. Made by the banking firm of E. B. Smith and Company in collaboration with the North American, the bid was much more favorable to the city than the U. G. I. bid. Under its terms, the city would be paid an annual rent of $1,250,000 plus one third of the profits for the first ten years and two thirds thereafter, or, in lieu of a share of the profits, the city would have the option of reducing the price of gas to consumers. Furthermore, if the city needed and desired an immediate advance, the syndicate would lend it $25,000,000 and reimburse itself from the annual payments.

City Councils met in open session on May 18 to consider the two bids. Thousands of onlookers filled the galleries of the chamber and overflowed into the hallways and out onto the streets. There was no doubt as to popular feeling: speakers opposing the U. G. I. deal received cheers and applause; its supporters could scarcely be heard above the boos and catcalls.

Despite the raucous disapproval of the crowd, Councils kept to its original script and rejected the E. B. Smith bid in favor of U. G. I. In an attempt to subdue public reaction, an amendment was added to provide for the gradual reduction

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51 Pennypacker, 382-383. Pennypacker seemed to have strong prejudices against Weaver not only because he had “turned on his old friends,” but also because he was not a native Philadelphian. “Except in cases of exceptional fitness,” he wrote later, “no man born abroad, like John Weaver or Rudolph Blankenburg, ought to be elected mayor of Philadelphia, for the reason that, having no part in her traditions, he cannot be in sympathy with the aspirations and thought of her people.” Ibid., 383.

52 Edmonds, 185; Vare, 91.

53 North American, May 16 and 18, 1905.

54 Ibid., May 19, 1905; Vare, 92.
of gas prices to eighty cents, but the Organization's concession was too little and too late. Throughout the city, angry crowds gathered at protest meetings. Some paraded through the streets; others gathered in front of the homes of Organization councilmen, demanding explanations and threatening violence. To some observers there appeared to be a dangerous possibility of bloodshed.

Mayor Weaver had the power to veto the gas bill and immediately announced that he would do so. At the same time, however, he realized that the machine so thoroughly dominated the city government that through threats and intimidation, if not through loyalty, it could muster sufficient votes in Councils to override his veto. On May 23, Weaver moved to reduce both the power of the Organization in the administration and its ability to retaliate against insurgent councilmen. He dismissed the heads of the Department of Public Safety and the Department of Public Works, David J. Smyth and Peter J. Costello, who had been Durham's chief henchmen in the "steal," and replaced them with two venerable city reformers, A. Lincoln Acker and Sheldon Potter. Such decisive action by Weaver was greeted with jubilation by the reformers; numerous mass meetings enthusiastically endorsed his move, and crowds of supporters gathered to cheer him whenever he appeared on the streets. Many believed that a leader who could fight the Organization on its own terms had finally appeared.

The chain of events and the overwhelming opposition of the people to the gas deal began to have its effect on the councilmen. Gradually, many of them deserted their increasingly uncomfortable positions to support the mayor. By the end of the month, the Organization leaders themselves were ready to concede that it would be inexpedient to jam such an unpopular program through Councils at that time. On June 1, two weeks after the passage of the original ordinance, City Councils withdrew its plan to await further investigation.

55 Public Ledger, May 19, 1905.
56 Vare, 91-93.
57 North American, May 24, 1905.
58 Ibid., May 26 and 27, 1905.
59 Public Ledger, May 27, 1905.
60 Vare, 93.
61 North American, June 2, 1905. Two years later, a new gas lease was adopted which contained essentially the same terms as the U. G. I. plan, except for the long-term provision.
Their victory in the “gas war” convinced Philadelphia reformers that the Organization’s hold on the city had been seriously weakened, but they also realized that it was necessary for them to win control of the political machinery to preserve the fruits of their victory and launch a thorough reform program. The wide assortment of business and professional men, religious workers, political opportunists, and generally indignant citizens who made up the movement agreed on the necessity for reform but differed widely on how it could best be achieved. One faction, led by David Martin, Durham’s old nemesis and former chief of the anti-Quay faction in the city, believed that reform should be pursued wholly within the Republican Party. This view was supported by other ambitious anti-Organization Republicans and some former Organization patrons who had become disillusioned with Durham during the “gas war,” including the most zealously Republican newspaper in the city, the Philadelphia Inquirer. The majority faction, on the other hand, felt that the best hope of success was to appeal across party lines and unite all reform elements into one independent party, namely, the City Party. The most active champions of this approach were Van Valkenburg; former Judge James G. Gordon, a Democrat; and the Committee of Seventy leaders, William C. Bullitt and John Winston. The final decision as to how the fight should be continued, however, was largely up to Mayor Weaver, the then unquestioned reform hero of Philadelphia. Shortly after the capitulation of the machine on the gas issue, Weaver had announced his plans to fight for a broad reform program, with chief emphasis on personal registration and honest elections. He also began a purge of those Organization men in his administration who would not swear allegiance to the new reform program. While most of the city employees hastened to affirm their loyalty to him to save their jobs, there was a considerable undercurrent of resentment against him among die-hard Republicans, including most of the ward leaders. Like Governor Pennypacker, they felt that he had betrayed the Republican Party when he defied Durham, and they

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62 Philadelphia Inquirer, July 4, 1905; Edmonds, 185.
63 Philadelphia Inquirer, Sept. 11 and 27, 1905.
64 Norris, 82; Vare, 94.
65 North American, June 5, 1905; Vare, 95.
soon made it apparent that they would not accept his leadership of the party. Undeniably enjoying his sudden fame as a reformer, Weaver came to realize that his own political future, as well as that of reform, depended upon a successful independent movement. By early summer, he had definitely committed himself to the City Party and asked the entire municipal machinery to do likewise. 66

Until the summer of 1905, the City Party had been a nebulous arrangement, actually little more than a campaign committee of the Committee of Seventy. With Weaver’s support, however, the organization of a real party began in earnest. Franklin S. Edmonds, a young lawyer and college professor, was named chairman of the party and began organizing local committees in every section of the city. 67 City Party organizers were greatly aided by the reform press, which poured out a continuous stream of muckraking articles on machine corruption. In June, for example, the North American uncovered a huge graft operation in the allotting of filtration contracts, which led directly to the arrest of several city officials on charges of forgery and making false entries. 68

The immediate objective of the City Party was to enter candidates in the Philadelphia County election to be held in November. At the party’s first convention on September 20, the delegates nominated a full slate of candidates and adopted a thoroughgoing reform platform. Afterward, the entire convention marched to Mayor Weaver’s office as an expression of confidence in his leadership. 69 Already optimistic about their chances in November, the morale of the reformers received an additional boost when the Democratic City Committee announced that it would support the City Party ticket. 70

Meanwhile, it had become apparent to reform leaders that since the city depended upon state approval for most of its vital functions, reform in Philadelphia could not endure unless the state government was freed from machine domination. That the pro-Durham state machine could and would upset reform efforts in Philadelphia had been clearly demonstrated by the passage of the “ripper bill.” By

66 Edmonds, 185-186.
68 June 21, 1905.
69 North American, Sept. 21, 1905.
70 Philadelphia Inquirer, Sept. 21, 1905.
mid-August, sentiment for extending the reform movement into state politics had begun to crystallize in Philadelphia, and correspondence with independent leaders in other parts of the state got under way.

In York County, Henry C. Niles, president of the Pennsylvania Bar Association, headed a group of independent Republicans which endorsed the Philadelphia reform movement and appealed for a similar statewide uprising. In Pittsburgh, the Republican City Committee issued a statement praising Mayor Weaver and the Philadelphia reformers and adopted a half-dozen resolutions calling for reform in Harrisburg. Similar expressions of reform sentiment came from independent Republicans in a dozen other counties. By its success, the Philadelphia revolt had inspired confidence that the same thing could be achieved in state politics.

The cause which eventually drew the widely scattered independents together arose out of the campaign for state treasurer, the most important state office to be filled in November. Before the reform surge had developed, the Penrose organization had named J. Lee Plummer for the office as a reward for his faithful party service. Former chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, Plummer had so obviously used his position for machine purposes that he had earned the title "Penrose's Messenger Boy." To independent Republicans and the reform press he represented the worst type of machine politician. The Democrats, on the other hand, had chosen an outstanding and popular candidate in William H. Berry, the former reform mayor of Chester. Aware of the growing opposition to the state machine, the Democrats had also adopted a timely resolution commending the Philadelphia reform movement and inviting all independents to unite on their ticket.

In response to a call from Henry C. Niles and Philadelphia reform leaders, independent Republicans from forty of the sixty-seven counties gathered in Philadelphia on September 11 to organize an anti-Plummer campaign. Adopting the title of Lincoln Party, the delegates condemned the state Republican organization as a "crimi-

71 North American, Sept. 1, 1905.
72 Vare, 98.
74 Philadelphia Inquirer, Aug. 17, 1905.
nal and corrupt combination masquerading as Republicans," and affirmed their belief in the principles of "honest Abraham Lincoln" and "honest Theodore Roosevelt." Their platform included demands for election reforms, the direct primary, personal registration, and repeal of the "ripper bill." Although some delegates were reluctant to support a Democrat for treasurer, the majority felt that Berry was the strongest candidate available and eventually selected him as the Lincoln Party candidate.

Faced with independent-Democratic fusion in both the state and Philadelphia campaigns, handicapped by the loss of much of its traditional support in Philadelphia, and encumbered with an unpopular candidate at the head of its state ticket, the Republican organization faced one of its most trying battles. Hoping to offset some of the charges of the opposition, Penrose decided to leave most of the active campaigning to a special committee of loyal and distinguished citizens. The chief theme of the Republican campaign was the disloyalty of the reformers. Republican speakers charged that the aim of the independents was "the disorganization of Republicanism" and that they were motivated by a spirit which "would lead eventually to mob and lynch law and to the destruction of American institutions." Considering the respectability of most of the reformers, it is unlikely that such argumentum ad horrendum impressed many voters.

In Philadelphia, the Organization attempted to halt the increasing desertions from the Republican Party by discarding the county ticket made prior to the break with the mayor, replacing it with a

75 According to the North American, Sept. 13, 1905, the Lincoln Republicans were, "without a single exception, Theodore Roosevelt Republicans, Elihu Root Republicans, John Weaver Republicans. They are not spoilsmen; they are not seeking offices for themselves; they are not making war upon any righteous man or offering opposition to any Republican principle. They hate, as every honest man must hate, the scandalous misrule of the State by the Penrose-Durham grafters; and they regard with shame and indignation the miscellaneous knavery with which the Gang has brought reproach upon the Republican party."

76 Public Ledger, Sept. 12, 1905.

77 To make a Democratic candidate more palatable to Republican voters, the North American emphasized that his election would not affect national Republican principles or policy. No real Republican can prefer, it said, "a Republican thief for a cashier to an honest Democrat." Sept. 13, 1905.

78 Samuel M. Clement, Jr., to J. Hampton Moore, Sept. 21, 1905, J. Hampton Moore Papers.

79 See speech by Peter Boyd, an eminent Philadelphia lawyer, at a Republican mass meeting on Oct. 18, quoted in the Philadelphia Inquirer, Oct. 19, 1905.
new one drawn up by a committee from the Union League. To generate popular enthusiasm for the new ticket, the Republicans staged a mammoth parade and numerous circus-like rallies, but their efforts produced no more than lukewarm support. The Organization also attempted to restrain the vicious attacks of the North American. The paper's political cartoonist, Walt McDougall, was offered $1,500 to stay in Atlantic City and keep his cartoons out of the paper until after the election. "You can spit your venom into the ocean and not through the North American," he was told by Penrose.

On election day, more than a million voters—a record turnout for such an election—went to the polls. The final returns gave Berry 546,892 votes to Plummer's 458,698, the margin of difference being the 127,512 votes on the Lincoln Party ticket. In Philadelphia County, the Organization was completely routed as the City Party elected its entire ticket. One machine leader considered the election "the worst defeat sustained by the Organization in its entire history."

The sentiment which produced the reform victories in the state as well as in Philadelphia was essentially the product of the Philadelphia reformers. The Committee of Seventy helped mobilize the ordinarily complacent better elements to lend their prestige to the move against the machine. Such support short-circuited the Organization's efforts to discredit the movement through charges that it was the subversive work of the undisciplined rabble. Mayor Weaver's laudable if not altruistic decision to bolt the machine leadership at the crucial moment gave the movement not only more color and respectability, but the support of the vast city administration. But, credit

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80 *Public Ledger*, Sept 18, 1905
81 Vare, 97.
82 Walt McDougall, *This is the Life!* (New York, 1926), 275. McDougall does not say whether he accepted the bribe or not. However, since his cartoons continued to appear in the *North American*, it is reasonable to assume that he did not.
83 *Smull's Legislative Handbook* (1906), 362. Of the total Lincoln Party vote, 94,244 votes were cast in Philadelphia.
84 *North American*, Nov 8, 1905
85 Vare, 97.
86 In 1906, after failing to get the Lincoln Party nomination for governor, Weaver became noticeably cooler toward the reform movement. Later the same year, when his candidate for the City Party nomination for district attorney was defeated, he deserted the reformers altogether and returned to the Organization.
for generating the popular sentiment for reform must go, above all, to the Philadelphia press. The newspapers, particularly the North American, the Press, and the Public Ledger, never paused in their running attacks on the Organization. The most disinterested Philadelphian could not ignore their charges of corruption and sensational investigations. It might be said that they kindled the fire of public resentment and piled tons of newsprint on the blaze to keep it going.

The reform victories of 1905 did not mean the end of machine domination in Philadelphia, or in Pennsylvania; the Organization was too solidly entrenched to be ousted by the election of a few reformers. They did mean, however, that many citizens of the state were no longer content to accept the ready-made politics and organized corruption of machine rule. The revolt of 1905 was but the beginning of a decade of intensive reform activity which saw the calling of a special reform session of the state legislature in 1906, strong independent gubernatorial campaigns in 1906 and 1910, the election of a reform mayor of Philadelphia in 1911, the victory of Roosevelt Progressives in the state in 1912, and the reform sessions of 1913 and 1915. Although the reformers did not always achieve their specific goals, their efforts ultimately went far toward making the ruling elements more accountable to the people of the state.87