

one is robustly healthy, full of affection. Most significantly, this affection persuades the reader, who is not left wondering whether the record has been distorted or even merely simplified. Equally notable, I think, is the way in which the writer's method combines the account of her own interior development with her portraits of family, friends, fellow-students and many others. (Annie Dilliard grew up in the Point Breeze section of Pittsburgh: her background and family were distinctly upper-middle class. She attended Ellis School.)

Finally, this is a book about that special kind of growth which arises from an addiction to reading. Annie Dillard seems never to have been separated from the life of books, from some particular volume to which she found herself creatively responsive. And we conclude her present work with the sense of an identity fully achieved, of the young girl *then* so completely embodied in the woman *now*. ■

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*Don't Call Me Boss: David L. Lawrence, Pittsburgh's Renaissance Mayor* By Michael P. Weber

(Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1988. Pp. xxii, 440.

Preface, biographical sketches, illustrations, epilogue, appendix, notes, index. \$32.95 hard, \$16.95 paper.)

Michael P. Weber might have entitled his biography, *David L. Lawrence: A Study in Paradox*. Lawrence came out of a provincial, Irish-Catholic working class neighborhood in Pittsburgh's Point, but collaborated with its business and social elite in promoting the post-World War II Renaissance. Reared in a family which expected the children to "lead hard-working, moral, blue-collar lives," he could neither fully accept nor escape this imperative; he retained a life-long commitment to better the lot of the working class, but sought to transcend that status himself. (Few encountered Lawrence without a jacket and tie, even at home.) A workaholic, disdainful of frivolity, he devoted much of his scarce free time to card-playing and spectator sports. Lawrence subscribed to the ideals of familism dictated by his religion, class and ethnic heritage, but allowed most of his time to be consumed by political activity. Not the least paradoxical was the clash between Lawrence's political role and his

personality: more forbidding than affable or genial.

But what is most important to history in the life and career of David L. Lawrence is a final paradox: the machine boss and politician who transcended the limitations of that role to save a city. Lawrence would have resented any implication that to be called a politician was less than honorable, but his career before 1945, in which he acted more as a political czar, might not have justified this commendable biography. Although he was never exactly a party hack, he did spend most of his time in the early years of his career concerned with what political spoils would go to what worthy Democrat in Pittsburgh, Allegheny County or Pennsylvania. A biography based on the early years might fascinate political historians, but not the majority of the human race.

Nonetheless, Weber provides an excellent, detailed account of Lawrence's political career from 1920, when he became Allegheny County Democratic chairman, to 1945, when he was elected Mayor of Pittsburgh for the first time. (He won again in 1949, 1953, and 1957, but left for Harrisburg as governor in 1959). Republican domination of Pittsburgh until the New Deal had resulted in a less than glorious tenure as party leader. Then, exploiting the opportunities created by the Depression, the Democratic election triumph in 1932, and dissension among Pittsburgh Republicans, Lawrence skillfully helped shift the allegiance of workers, unions, ethnic groups and blacks toward the Democratic Party. After the election of a Democratic governor, George Earle, in 1934, Lawrence became Commonwealth Secretary in 1935. Following Democratic successes in the 1936 elections, Lawrence played a key role in the enactment of a bundle of liberal state legislation—the "Little New Deal."

"The Roosevelt victory in 1932 and the triumph in the municipal election of 1933," Weber observes, "ushered in one of modern America's most durable and efficient urban political machines. David L. Lawrence, as its head, remained in power until his death in 1966." Students of urban political history will be particularly interested in Weber's analysis of how Lawrence acquired, maintained and utilized political authority. In essence, "patronage, the party workers it supplied, and the funds it helped raise became the foundation upon which the Democratic party was built . . . ." Weber informs us that almost all of Pennsylvania's 3,000 WPA administrators from 1935 to 1940 were Democrats. Local ward committeemen and chairmen, especially, frolicked in this Garden of Eden; by 1940, the author notes, nearly half of the former were on the government payroll, as were almost all the ward chairmen.

Although Weber is respectful of his subject, he is hardly uncritical. He describes Lawrence's lapses of political judgment, especially in his

choice of candidates for office. More important, Weber describes in considerable detail the charges of graft and corruption which plagued Lawrence in Harrisburg in the 1930s and then during the mayoralty in Pittsburgh. The corruption issue points to a fundamental conflict in American political culture, one embodied in the person of David Lawrence: the conflict between party or politics, and community.

The Democratic Party was Lawrence's secular religion. What benefited the Democrats, he believed, benefited the community because the party was the voice of the ordinary citizen. And nothing sustained a political party more than loyalty between leaders and rank-and-file. Loyalty meant, if necessary, a tolerant attitude toward corruption, including a police force which operated as an adjunct to ward and neighborhood politics. Weber puts the dilemma succinctly: "On the one hand, he believed he needed the lower echelon of the Democratic party to enable him to remain in office and complete the rebuilding job . . . . On the other, to rid the city of rackets and corruption required a complete overhaul of the system that had swept the Democrats into power."

Lawrence, however, also subscribed to an ideal which conflicted with the religion of party: good government was the best politics. This concept was illustrated by Lawrence's role in the legendary Pittsburgh Renaissance, when he came under criticism from labor and Democratic Party interests. These two groups alleged that Lawrence had become too protective of the business and corporate element in the partnership forged between the public and private sectors. Lawrence resolved (if that is the right word) the dilemma by insulating the renewal activities from party politics while suffering corruption in the police, public works and other traditional agencies of city government in order to retain the loyalty of the party faithful.

To Lawrence, as a party leader, consensus almost ranked as high as loyalty in the parthenon of virtues. In the selection of candidates for local or state office, he preferred to accept a mediocre candidate rather than risk dissension. But, again, the imperatives of party conflicted with those of community, and again Lawrence embodied the conflict. The redemption of the City of Pittsburgh from smoke, floods, traffic congestion, Central Business District decline, and economic obsolescence required decisions which put Lawrence in conflict with his party and constituency. Two critical issues at the beginning of his administration in 1946 illustrate the point: the imposition of smoke control and the handling of the Duquesne Light strike. In both cases (and in his imposition of a city wage tax in 1954) he acted contrary to party imperatives in favor of the city's long term welfare. Indeed, his handling of the smoke control and

Duquesne Light issues made the Renaissance possible by demonstrating to the Republican business community that Lawrence was no political hack or demagogue. Nor was he a spend-now, pay (or borrow)-later liberal. By virtue of family heritage, temperament and experience, he believed that government should better the lot of the ordinary citizen — man or woman, white or black. But he demanded accountability from legislatures; if they wanted social programs, they had to provide the funding. One might describe Lawrence, in this context, as a liberal with a fiscal conscience.

After his term as governor, Lawrence concluded his career in public life as chairman of President Kennedy's newly created Committee on Equal Opportunity in Housing. (As mayor he had been a strong advocate of fair housing and employment measures.) He died November 21, 1966, at age 77.

A biography of Lawrence is a difficult challenge. He did not leave a cache of letters or other documents. He did not reflect much on his activities, or publish an autobiography. He did not organize his thoughts in the way an academic political scientist does, or even leave us an oral interview. Yet Weber, depending greatly on written interviews and newspaper sources, has produced a convincing portrait — one which does not squeeze Lawrence into a conceptual straightjacket. Most important, it is impossible to read this biography without reflecting on the conflict between politics and society, and its implications for the future of American society.

One final observation. It is gratifying to read a book written in plain, old-fashioned English — no genderspeak, no parameters, interfaces or other manifestations of academic-bureaucratic prose. ■

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