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NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

THE ADMINISTRATION OF GOVERNOR JOHN PETER ALTGELD OF ILLINOIS 1893-1897

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

for the degree
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

BY

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EVANSTON, ILLINOIS
JUNE, 1936

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PREFACE

The unique historical contributions of the larger states of the union under a federal scheme of government has been frequently obscured by an overemphasis upon events at the capitol. Within the heterogeneous mass of states appear oligarchies as well as democracies, regressive commonwealths as well as progressive modern states, and a myriad of differences in social, political, and economic practices ranging from the near-medieval to the experimental point of view. The apparent similarities of the states in constitutional forms, intended to approximate the national model, conceal the most diverse legislation affecting the individual much more intimately in many instances than do the laws of the federal capitol. The effectiveness of social legislation. whether initiated locally or at Washington, has rested primarily upon the will of the individual state. Questions regarding labor, suffrage, education, taxation, religion, crime, social equality, industrial monopolies, marriage and divorce suggest the huge sphere of state activities, besides important institutional services, which have only in recent years been seriously threatened by the advance of centralization. The failure of Congress to enforce such vital provisions as the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments in the South indicate the practical independence of the states in such crucial matters as those pertaining to civil liberties. A detailed study of an Illinois state administration under a strong executive like John Peter Altgeld reveals the numerous ways in which these important social problems were almost the sole concern of an individual state. An attempt is also made here to show the close inter-relationship of certain state and federal issues such as the role of the military and the courts in labor disputes and the advance of reform sentiment from a local to a national stage. It is the opinion of a number of students, besides the present writer, that Illinois occupied an unusually large role in the social and political developments of the nation during the middle nineties at least.

A special phase to be considered is the unique contribution of Altgeld and his administration to American life and thought. As an outstanding social reformer fighting the corrupt alliance of big business and politics and as an intelligent humanitarian upholding some of the highest ideals of his time, his importance has become increasingly evident with the perspective of the years that have gone by. As a successful political leader animating the battle of 1896 with something of his own crusading fervor, John P. Altgeld is truly of national importance.

CHAPTER I THE MAN AND HIS TIMES

Circumstance reduced John Peter Altgeld to a myth within his own lifetime. The powerful forces which he defied required that his motives appear suspect to those whom he wished to serve. He was pictured variously as a comrade of Guiteau, the assassin; as John "Pardon" Altgeld, abettor of the criminal; as a composite of Benedict Arnold and Jefferson Davis; and most frequently as the friend of universal anarchy. His proud silence beneath attack gave rise to much doubt and misunderstanding. The newspapers which baited him persistently spoke of his "tough hide," unaware of the deadliness of their aim. To those who wondered at his calm, Altgeld replied that slander would die, if left alone, from want of nourishment. Early in his career as governor, he remarked that he had stopped reading the newspapers. The small band of friends about him, however, and the discerning few recognized the sensitive semi-invalid who shrank from the cruel charges hurled at him.

Only after death came the high tribute denied him in life. An Altgeld Memorial Association was established in his honor and statues of him erected in the public

parks. Nicholas Vachel Lindsay paid an unforgettable tribute to Altgeld in his poem, "Eagle Forgotten," and Edgar Lee Masters portrayed a Lincolnesque figure in "Spoon River Anthology." Writers like Theodore Dreiser and Brand Whitlock drew much of their material from the activities of the Illinois "Anarchist." A favorable reaction had definitely set in.

The early life of John Peter Altgeld has been told in detail by his biographer, Waldo R. Browne, and can only be briefly summarized here. He was born on December 30, 1847 in the Duchy of Nassau of present-day Prussia. His father, John Peter, a wagon-maker by trade, was evidently the soul of parsimony and wholly unsympathetic to his son's ambitions; and his mother Mary (nee Lanehart) occupied the usual subordinate role of women in a patriarchal household. Following the severe agricultural blight of the middle forties which brought distress to many Germans as well as Irish, the Altgelds joined the great tide of migration to America bringing with them their three month old infant, John Peter 2 Altgeld.

¹ Waldo R. Browne, Altgeld of Illinois, New York, 1924.

² Letter of D. A. Lanehart to Waldo Browne, April 12, 1922, Browne Collection.

The family settled near their kinsfolk, the Laneharts, in Richland County, Ohio, on a farm in the vicinity of Mansfield, an industrious German community. Few educational opportunities presented themselves to young Altgeld. His schooling was of an inadequate sort and achievement came to him only as a result of firm application to the study he imposed upon himself during the evening hours. He peddled garden 'truck' as a boy to the neighbors and at fourteen assumed the arduous tasks of a farm hand. In 1864, when sixteen years of age, he joined the National Guard of Ohio called out by Governor Brough to engage in active service. serving as a substitute for a more cautious conscript, Altgeld earned one hundred dollars, ninety of which went to his father. Eventually, his company joined Grant during the Wilderness Campaigns and they were set to work at building fortifications. He fell sick at Wilson's Landing, Virginia, but after a short convalescence at a military hospital, returned to duty.

During 1866-7, he attended a seminary at Lexington, Ohio, for a term or two, after which he obtained a teacher's certificate. Later he taught school for a

R. P. Bishop, "Commoners in American Politics--John Peter Altgeld," The National Magazine, July, 1892.
This account evidently had Altgeld's collaboration.

year near Mansfield. This life proved too unprogressive for his inclinations which were directed towards the law--a profession abhorred by his parents. At twenty-one, he broke off all home ties to seek an opportunity for earning money independently. He told his parents that if he succeeded, he would return, but if not, latey would not hear from him again. Thus began his wanderjahre.

This period of American development belongs to the great era of railroad construction on a continental scale. Laborers were in demand for track-laying crews and wages were relatively high. Altgeld worked as a day laborer on the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas Railroad at the time cutting through Indian Territory (Oklahoma). Then he joined an Irish grading crew in southern Kansas. He seems to have been well-liked by his fellow-workers and was on the way to saving enough money for a winter Ill-health, however, again marked law school course. him and for a time he was in a critical state. physician advised him to go further north; accordingly. he set out for a destination somewhere in Iowa. (In later years, Altgeld would speak of his earlier self as a typical 'hobo'). Eventually, he came to Savannah.

¹ Letter of J. R. Williams to W. R. Browne, Nov. 18, 1922; also letter of C. E. McBride to Browne, Nov. 22, 1922, Browne Collection.

Missouri, in 1869. His arrival here is vividly described.

Just about twenty years ago, a strange young man, poorly clad, sick, and penniless stopped at a farmhouse near Savannah one evening for lodging and something to eat, stating that he had no money, and was sick, but that if he got well, he would work and pay for what they did for him; that if he died it would be an act of charity on their part.

The farmer, C. H. Williams, extended the fullest hospitality to the wayfarer and in a short time Altgeld was again making active preparations to enter the legal profession. Through the influence of Alexander Bedford, a school trustee who had employed him as a farm hand, Altgeld obtained a grade school teaching position, succeeding very well at this task. Beginning in September, 1870, he studied law under a Savannah Judge, David Rea. The latter, after observing his protege for a few months, remarked that Altgeld was a better posted man than his teacher. In 1871, he succeeded in being admitted to the bar and became a member of the firm of Rea and Heren. It seemed that the wanderer was destined to become a permanent citizen of Savannah.

¹ Prominent Democrats of Illinois, Democratic Publishing Company, Chicago, 1899, passim.

² Charles A. Towne, "John Peter Altgeld," Altgeld Memorial Association Pamphlet, March 10, 1907, Chicago Historical Society; R. P. Bishop, op. cit., pp. 361-365; Jr. R. Williams to W. R. Browne, March 17, 1922, Browne Coblection.

In 1874, Altgeld enjoyed his first political triumph as a Democratic candidate on a fusionist Granger ticket for States' Attorney of Andrew County. The duties of a prosecutor, however, repelled him as alien to his sympathies. Ten years later, he expressed these convictions in 1 no uncertain terms:

Our penal machinery seems to recruit its victims from among those that are fighting an unequal fight in the struggle for existence. The subject of crime-producing conditions has received but little attention in the past, and is only now beginning to be discussed. It has always been assumed, in our treatment of offenders, that all had the strength, regardless of prior training and surroundings, to go out into the world and do absolutely right if they wished. . . Only recently have we begun to recognize the fact that every man is to a great extent what his heredity and his early environment have made him, and that the law of cause and effect applies here as well as in nature.

With such an outlook, it is little wonder that a prosecutor's role seemed distasteful. In later years, Clarence Darrow, a lifelong friend of Altgeld's, adopted this point of view and applied it to many cases of national interest as his philosophy of the criminal.

This indebtedness to Altgeld has been acknowledged.

John Peter Altgeld, "Our Penal Machinery and its Victims," pamphlet in <u>Live Questions</u>, Chicago, 1899, pp. 7-62.

² Clarence Darrow, The Story of My Life, New York, 1932.

This attitude and other considerations influenced Altgeld in leaving Savannah for a larger sphere. He saw no future in a country town. An unhappy love affair lamp possibly have been an important factor as well.

At any rate in October, 1875, he set out for Chicago. He had little capital and a good part of his assets was uncollected bills.

Chicago was then in an abnormal stage of growth due to the reconstruction activities following the great fire of 1871. Real estate thrived particularly as ground values soared above improvement costs. In the decade 1870-1880, the population of which two-fifths were foreigners, rose from 298,977 to 503,185. At the time Altgeld entered the city, Chicago's railroad supremacy was becoming increasingly evident. Four trunk lines connected the city with the east and six with the west while two reached out to the Gulf of Mexico and the Southwestern states; to the northward at Lake Superior there were two rail connections. Ten years later, the eastern trunk lines had doubled and the aggregate railroad mileage east of Pittsburg was nearly thirty thousand miles. Within the decade 1876-1886, bank deposits increased from \$32,680,000 to over sixty seven million

¹ Another version is given in the <u>Washington Post</u>, March 16, 1902; see Browne, <u>Altgeld of Illinois</u>, p. 18.

dollars. The great Union Stock Yards covering 350 acres, experienced a phenomenal growth and was employing 25,000 men in 1886; Chicago pork-packers managed to obtain fifty per cent of the business of the entire Mississippi Valley.

Altgeld soon showed that he was far from oblivious of the "main chance" and set himself to accumulate a small reserve of capital. But this realization was still in the dim future. He rented an office in the newly-constructed Reaper Block at the corner of Clark and Washington streets. Here he arranged to partition off a portion of the office for his law practice and use the remainder as a sleeping room. Through the kindness of Judge E. O. Brown, thereafter a close friend, Altgeld was enabled to find a few clients.

Within a short time, his affairs improved appreciably. In November, 1877, he returned to his old home to marry Miss Emma Ford, a childhood sweetheart. She was a woman of considerable culture and attractiveness; had attended Oberlin College and subsequently taught school.

Appleton's Annual Encyclopedia, 1886, (New York), pp.163-164. Edward Osgood Brown, "Biographical Sketch of John Peter

Altgeld, "Paper read before the Chicago Historical Society, Dec. 5, 1905.

3. Editorial, "Death of Mrs. John P. Altgeld," Journal of the Illinois Historical Society, April, 1915, p.189; also letters of Mrs. Adolph Heile to Browne, July 20, 1922, Browne Collection.

At one time she possessed considerable literary aspirations and wrote a popular novel, The Nortons, which has, however, an ephemeral reception. She proved her devotion to Altgeld during the years at the Governor's Mansion in Springfield when the storm of newspaper abuse descended upon his head. Her husband's principles were likewise dear to her and she championed them to her death.

The Altgelds lived then in Lake View which was outside of Chicago. To save carfare, the young lawyer who was still without an appreciable clientele, would walk to his office downtown. Fortunately, at this time he met a kindly lawyer, Adolf Heile, who gave him free desk room in his office, turned over some legal business to him, and introduced the young man to many prominent Chicagoans.

Soon Altgeld found an opportunity to take part in real estate investments which were highly profitable.

In 1879, with a modest capital of five hundred dollars, he 3 began subdividing unimproved land. Clarence Darrow later

¹ Published in Chicago, Ill., 1892. The book is of doubt-ful literary merit.

^{2.} Letter of L. A. Heile to Browne, July 3, 1922, Browne Collection. Altgeld's ability as a lawyer is attested by a Chicago Judge, "He had the leanest, most sinewy intellect of any man who ever came before me. . . . His thoroughness raised the status of the entire Bench and Bar of Cook County," quoted by Elbert Hubbard, "Altgeld," The Philistine, May, 1902.
3 R. P. Bishop, op. cit., p. 364.

wrote of him, "He(Altgeld) had good business sense, and
last always ready to take a chance." Sometimes, his
boldness bordered on recklessness, but he was generally
correct in judgment. Altgeld became a protege of William
c. Goudy, an outstanding member of the bar and a general
counsel for the Chicago and Northwestern Railway Company;
and it is possible that he obtained advance information as
to a favorable location for town sites. He was now
(1885) on the way to becoming a wealthy man.

His occasional trips to his home near Mansfield,
Ohio, brought the possibility of a profitable investment
in traction enterprises to his mind. In 1886, he secured
a franchise for a street railway system (horse cars) in
Mansfield, but concluded that the city was too hilly and
let the option lapse. A year later, he purchased a street
car line in Newark, Ohio, a town of about 12,000 people.
This system eventually became electrified. Unfortunately,
the investment proved a losing one; but when Altgeld's
manager suggested retrenchment, he agreed only on the con-

¹ Darrow, op. cit. p. 97.

Letter of J. S. Huey to Browne, Nov. 7, 1922, Browne Collection; Editorial, "John P. Altgeld," National Review of London, December, 1896. (Reprinted in "Dedicatory Exercises," September 4, 1910, Chicago Historical Society.)

³ Letter of C. E. McBride to Browne, Nov. 22, 1922, Browne Collection.

dition that it would not be at the expense of the employees. This interest was sold for \$100,000 when he received the gubernatorial nomination in 1892.

The enterprise of which Altgeld was most proud was the Unity Building, a sixteen story fireproof office building at Dearborn mear Randolph Street (now the American Bond and Mortgage Building). Completed in 1892, it was applauded as a unique "skyscraper" for the rising Chicago skyline, but new engineering difficulties as well as financial problems outweighed the satisfaction in the achievement and ultimately ruined Altgeld. He was compelled to arrange a bond issue of \$300,000 through John R. Walsh, the unscrupulous president of the Chicago National Bank and a power in the Democratic Party. This connection was largely responsible for Altgeld's loss of the Unity Building.

The year 1892 was an unusually good one for Altgeld.

He built two structures at Van Buren and Market streets,

as well as other buildings in this vicinity; and erected

several factory buildings on the north side. The Chicago

Journal reported that he sold his Van Buren street property

l Letter of George Schilling to Browne, May 15, 1922, Browne Collection.

² Letter of Newark Librarian to Browne, _____, 1922, Ibid.

³ The Chicago Chronicle, March 13, 1902; also Waldo R. Browne's Altgeld of Illinois, pp. 34-41.

for \$625,000 to W. C. Seipp, redeiving \$100,000 in cash \$300,000 in mortgages, and \$225,000 in south side real estate. The building was said to have cost him \$250,000 two years previously. Altgeld was reputed a millionaire at this time, but his close friends declare that he never possessed over \$500,000.

This elaborate structure of wealth collapsed after the onset of the great panic of 1893 while he was Governor of Illinois. Darrow has written an explanation of this 3 fact:

As governor, he could give little time to his own affairs. After pardoning the Anarchists, his best tenants in the Unity Building left him and an impecunious group of radicals and lawyers helped to bring about the loss of his building. His bond-holders showed no mercy to the anarchist-governor.

Politically, as well as financially, Altgeld made considerable progress during the eighties. Through the sponsorship of Goudy, who was a Democratic leader, he began to participate in local campaigns. His German name and speech were undeniably assets in a city as Teutonic as Chicago. He possessed considerable oratorical

¹ The Chicago Journal, May 26, 1892; The Chicago Chronicle, March 13, 1902.

² The Chicago Journal, May 26, 1892.

³ Darrow, op. cit., p. 97.

ability of an unusual character. In an effort to bring his name to the attention of political leaders, he asked three or four friends in 1882 to cast their votes for him for U. S. Senator in the Illinois legislative caucus. Two years later, he was nominated for Congress from the Fourth Illinois District, a hopelessly Republican area on the north side of Chicago. Though he lost the election, he succeeded in cutting down the normal Republican vote by over two thousand and thus gained an appreciable political following. Years later, a Republican opponent wrote of Altgeld in this campaign:

I was first struck by his ability as a votegetter twn years ago when he ran for Congress against George E. Adams. He was not elected but our executive committee was pretty badly frightened toward the end of the campaign by the strong canvass he made.

The Democrats readily perceived the political potentialities of Altgeld and nominated him in 1886 for Judge of the Superior Court of Cook County. Since the County normally had a Republican majority of nearly 12,000 votes

Bryan later said of him, "His speeches will stand as models which young men may read who would learn the art of speech . . "Monument Unveiling Ceremonies," September 1915, Altgeld Memorial Association Pamphlet, Chicago Historical Society. Altgeld wrote a short text upon the subject, Oratory: its Requirements and its Rewards, Chicago, 1901.

² Letter to E. O. Brown to Browne, March 31,1922, Browne Collection.

³ The Chicago Times-Herald, November 20, 1895.

the nomination seemed but a graceful compliment. The ensuing contest was said to have been one of the hottest in the history of the state. Altgeld's advanced views on labor problems and social reform brought him the muchneeded workingman's vote—a result facilitated by his friend, George Schilling, a trade unionist of long standing. His successful campaign made him a political figure of state—wide prominence.

Five years on the bench proved a disillusioning experience to Altgeld. Early in his career as Governor, he pointed out the abuses of the county judicial system.

"The condition of business in the courts of Chicago almost amounts to a denial of justice. It takes years to get a case finally settled by the courts . . . " One curious rule required that if a lawyer on either side of a case was occupied in another court of the county, the case must be passed until he was at leisure. An increase of judges alone without a revision of the system was useless. "We now have twenty-eight judges in Cook County alone, while there are only thirty-four in all England, Ireland, and

¹ R. P. Bishop, op. cit., pp. 361-365.

² Interview with Schilling, December, 1934; Darrow, op. cit., p. 98.

³ General Message on Assembly of Legislature, Jan. 9, 1895; reprinted in Live Questions, pp. 897-937.

Wales, " he pointed out in a legislative message of 1895.

Nevertheless, he seems to have done the best he could under the circumstances. He introduced a change in the methods of instructing juries in his court, aiding justice by securing intelligent consideration of facts by these He refused to accept free passes sent to him, bodies. regarding the custom as a means of judicial corruption. The judge's gown was dispensed with as an insignia of intolerable medieval conditions and a sham for humbugging He emphasized the need of drastic changes the people. in the judiciary and detailed his ideas to Sherwood Dixon, a Springfield legislator who was proposing a bill on the Writing to a member of the Constitutional Convention at Bismarck, North Dakota, he advised the abolition of the fee system. "To permit any officer, whether judicial or executive, connected in any manner with the administration of justice, to collect and keep fees is a standing temptation, if not a bribe, to do wrong in very many matters." The courts, he added, should be kept easily accessible and

¹ Letter of E. O. Brown to Browne, March 31, 1922, Browne Collection.

² Interview in the Chicago Daily News, (no date); reprinted in Live Questions, p. 194.

³ Altgeld in The Chicago Globe, March 16, 1891, Live Questions, p. 194.

⁴ Altgeld to Sherwood Dixon, January 22, 1889, ibid., p. 131.

capable of expediting justice. These ideas of judicial reform were later embodied in his Executive Messages and urged upon a recalcitrant legislature.

On July 31, 1891, Altgeld resigned his position to retire as a private citizen. To the press he declared that he was not a candidate for office though politics did exercise a strong fascination over him. He characterized the office-holding class as cowardly, opportunistic, and far from being influential leaders of public opinion. Since he was a candidate for governor the next year, it is difficult to determine the degree of renunciation involved. His candidacy for reelection in 1896 was preceded by a similar disavowal. On each campaign occasion, he seems to have been persuaded rather easily and his subsequent campaigns left nothing to be desired in the way of effective canvassing.

During these years it was Altgeld's extra-official activities that brought him into greatest prominence. He firmly identified himself with a rising movement of reform,

¹ Altgeld to David Bartlett, July 19, 1889, Live Questions, p. 139.

Interview in Chicago Evening Post, July 31, 1891, ibid., p. 338; Darrow said of Altgeld's resignation, "After five years' experience on the bench he came to understand that the administering of law as a judge . . . had a tendency to lessen the capacity, diminish and destroy the independence, and hamper the usefulness of the man who would be content with this place."

Ms. of speech at Memorial Meeting at Auditorium, April 20, _____.

social, political, and economic, which preceded the era of the "muckrakers." His intense interest and championship of the weak and under-privileged were unquestionably genuine. His entire life is testimony on this point. Many of the causes he espoused were scarcely of the type to gain him popularity. He shared the democratic ideal of the "muckrakers" who believed that the people, once informed of an abuse, would rise up against it. When later events found the "people" complacent under the revelations concerning the city "rings," local and state corruption, the press as a tool of the employing class against labor, and the underground war against industrial reform, he preferred to believe that they were merely slow to act. Only much later, after leaving the governorship, did he move decisively in the direction of public ownership. Though friendly with Socialists, Single-taxers, Populists, and reformers of all types, he never went beyond that political position today designated as "liberal."

Political corruption, particularly notorious in the fast-growing city of Chicago and in the state, claimed his attention. His writings are a mine of information on the mechanism of corruption in many of its phases. Foreign observers like Lord Bryce have been struck by this especially rank weed of American democracy. One authority has said:

¹ Peter H. Odegard, "Political Corruption," Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, Vol. IV, pp. 448-455.

Corruption is in a sense a product of the way of life of an acquisitive society where 'money talks,' where that which 'works' is justified, and where people are judged by what they have rather than what they are.

More specifically he adds,

Favoritism and discrimination in the use of the taxing power, misuse of funds, contract frauds and job patronage are common evils attendant upon the administrative wilderness which is America.

Altgeld pointed out that the diffusion of responsibility among large executive bodies like the city councils was the means by which the Tweed Ring was able to operate in New York and the 'gas ring' in Chicago. He recommended a strong executive to replace the City Council. "The business of governing cities is executive, not legislative," Board government might be adequate in a rural he remarked. community, but in a city, where the voter could not expect to be informed, it was dangerous. General laws could regulate most of the matters deemed subjects for the Council's action. Special legislation was the mechanism by which such bodies could levy toll on every enterprise seeking entrance. "Does the fact that a railroad has to pay all the way from \$50,000 to \$100,000 or more in cash to city aldermen by way of blackmail for an ordinance permitting it to enter a city, help the people of a city?" The very fact

¹ John P. Altgeld, "Address to the Sunset Club of Chicago,"
October 23, 1890, L. Q. p. 185.

that it was so expensive to get an ordinance from the council prevented others from building street railways and thus prevented competition. He recommended a separate elective officer for every important post to hold office for a reasonably long term and the abolition of governing boards or councils.

Another reform he urged was the introduction of the Australian ballot as an aid to an honest election. He thought it might eliminate the political boss and his retainers; and prevent the employer from compelling his men to vote as directed. In response to the request of an Illinois State Senator, he prepared a draft of a law embodying the principle of this ballot.

Altgeld clearly recognized the far-reaching consequences of the prevailing tendency toward economic combination. In Chicago the rise of great fortunes like the Ryersons, Palmers, McCormicks, Nelson Morris, Philip D. Armour, the Fields, and George Pullman had not escaped his notice. A rich man himself, he believed that the state must interpose its authority to maintain the equality of opportunity which he believed was implicit in the Jeffersonian

¹ Address to the Sunset Club, L. Q., p. 186.

² Letter of Altgeld to State Senator Richard Burke, January 22, 1889, ibid., p. 141.

philosophy. In an interview during this period, he said:

Trusts are the product of our development, and the line upon which they have come goes beyond the mere formation of trusts. They are the legitimate offspring of the concentration of wealth in a few hands. This started soon after the close of the War and has acquired an accelerated motion as it has progressed. Its first effects were noticeable in the crowding out of the small merchant, the small manufacturer, and the small farmer. . . . In spite of the law these organizations seem to thrive and it is apparent to the most casual observer that the tendency of modern times is toward consolidation .. . It is so easy for these powerful combination to evade the law that it is very doubtful whether their growth can be arrested. It is a question whether there is any other way of preserving an equilibrium in our institutions than by organization and concentration of the counter-balancing forces . . .

His writings and acts indicate that he belonged to the anti-monopolist thinkers with their fundamental reliance on the doctrines of economic abundance. More far-sighted than these, he recognized the impossibility of turning the clock back economically and that the era of free competition was drawing to a close. Until the late mineties, Altgeld believed that government regulation, "however weak" was the best solution; afterwards, he turned to municipal owner-2 ship.

Briefly, the combination movement in the United States

The Chicago Herald, Jan. 11, 1891.

² John P. Altgeld, "What Shall We Substitute for Competition?" Speech at the St. Andrews Society Banquet, Nov. 30, 1895, L. Q. p. 506. The Chicago Tribune, Dec. 1, 1895.

can be attributed to several factors. The tendency toward consolidation was evident before the Civil War, but it gained momentum during that struggle due to the greatly increased funds of capital. With the gradual disappearance of the tillable public lands, the more accessible mineral resources and natural wealth of all kinds came a marked decrease in the opportunity for speculative gains along the old lines. As a result the new capital accumulations were forced to seek new outlets in order to escape unprofitable competition. The control of manufacturing industry through combination was a natural result of such circumstances. Expansion of operations meant increased risks which required control, i. e., a combination of direction and management of the competing producers. Various factors fed the movement such as the advantages offered by "stock watering, " i. e., overcapitalization, the tariffs, the corporate form of organization with its minimization of legal responsibility, price discrimination, and "cutthroat" competitive practices.

The repercussion of this movement upon our political and social life can easily be inferred. The history of the

¹ Cf. L. H. Haney, Business Organization and Combination, New York, 1914, pp. 134-138.

Granger and populistic movements is illustrative of one phase of this struggle. Thoughtful men like Henry Demarest Lloyd, Professor Richard T. Ely, as well as Altgeld thought they could detect the pungent odor of oil in the intellectual by-products of the University of Chicago, established in Political representatives with private economic constituencies are not new in our history, but in Altgeld's day this tendency had attained such a degree of organization as to cast doubt upon the actuality of democratic institutions. Though a lawyer himself and a former judge. Altgeld showed no inhibitions when it came to denouncing the corrupt alliance of big business and the courts. Recurrently in his career, Altgeld selected the most powerful political figures as a public illustration of the practical nullification of justice. As for the United States Senate, in his estimation it was a "rich man's club."

The influence of Henry Demarest Lloyd upon Altgeld is of particular importance in any interpretation of the latter's philosophy. Though their personal relationships did not begin until the early part of 1891, there are numerous evidences that Altgeld was a close student of the other's

¹ This synthesis of Altgeld's ideas and his times is drawn from a study of his writings and their background.

writings. In 1881, Lloyd fired his first volley against the monopolistic methods of the Standard Oil Company and against the railroads. He became the champion of the independent competitor, the consumer, and the worker. His thinking tended towards the old Utopian Socialism of Robert Owen with its emphasis on eclectic humanitarian ideals rather than Marxian determinism. Eventually however, (1903), he joined the Socialist Party.

A mutual friend of both Lloyd and Altgeld who realized the essential similarity of their views wrote to the former, "I notice that whenever he (Altgeld) speaks on that subject (labor) with me he asks me if I know when your book is to come out. He evidently is much interested in your views.

. . . You ought to know Altgeld intimately. He is one of the most genuinely brainy and sympathetic men I have met.

. . . " After a later conversation with Altgeld, Latchford had again to comment upon "the most profound impression" that Lloyd had made on the Judge. At this time Altgeld addressed his first letter to Lloyd:

¹ Henry Demarest Lloyd, "Story of a Great Monopoly," The Atlantic Monthly, March, 1881. A newer approach to this problem of combination and a more detached judgment are given by John T. Flynn, God's Gold, N.Y. 1932.

² Walter J. Couper, "Henry Demarest Lloyd," <u>Dictionary of</u>

<u>American Biography</u>, Vol, XI, pp. 331-333; Herman Teufel,
Henry Demarest Lloyd, Master of Arts Thesis, Univ. of
Wisconsin, 1935; Caro Lloyd, <u>Henry Demarest Lloyd</u>, 2
vols., 1912.

³ Henry Latchford to Lloyd, Nov. 26,1889, Lloyd Papers.

^{4 &}lt;u>Ibid.</u>, Dec. 8, 1890.

⁵ Altgeld to Lloyd, June 3, 1890, ibid.

I have read your pamphlet The New Conscience and cannot resist saying to you that I would rather be the author of one such article than to hold any office in the gift of the American people.

Accept my congratulations and go on with your work. The future will know you and coming generations of suffering humanity will rise up and bless you.

When Lloyd spoke on "The New Independence," Altgeld attended the lecture and again wrote to the other that he had "placed all lovers of justice under obligation" 1 to him. Several weeks later, he issued an invitation to 2 Lloyd so that they "might get better acquainted."

This connection with Lloyd which ripened into a warm friendship proved of the utmost significance for Altgeld, particularly as a reform governor. Lloyd's advice was constantly sought and frequently followed.

Although an amployer of labor, Altgeld's reputation rests primarily on his pro-labor attitude, almost partisan at times. Labor organization was one of the "counter balancing" forces which he would oppose to the combination movement. In the spring of 1890, during a carpenter's strike, he had an opportunity of stating his position. The organized employers, speaking through an executive head refused to deal with the carpenters' organizations. In an

¹ Altgeld to Lloyd, Dec. 7, 1890, Lloyd Papers.
2 Letter of Altgeld to Lloyd, Dec. 30, 1890, Ibid.

interview given to the Chicago Daily News, Altgeld pointed out that the employers' organization settled all questions relative to policy and frequently of prices and wages also.

Now an individual employe confronting one of these organizations is not only absolutely at his mercy, but is almost too insignificant to secure thoughtful attention to his demands.

. . The condition of many of the laborers has been greatly improved in the last twenty years and in not a single instance has this been brought about by individual effort. In every case it was accomplished by the force of organization. . . It comes with ill grace from those who, to a greater or less extent hold not only their own employees but the whole community by the throat by means of their organizations to refuse to recognize the rights of others to organize.

He explained the workers' animosity toward 'scabs' as only natural in view of the latter's attempt to defeat their movement. The argument advanced by the employers as to the American ideal of individualism which was seemingly imperilled by the unions struck him as ridiculous. "A noticeable thing is that this argument in favor of the individual freedom of each workman is made almost exclusively by the class who either by instinct or interest, are antagonistic to the laboring men."

Today this doctrine has many adherents. In Altgeld's

¹ Interview of April 28, 1890; reprinted in L. Q., p. 214; also John Swinton, A Momentous Question, p. 427; The Chicago Tribune, Dec. 16, 1896.

² Live Questions, p. 214.

day, it was regarded as vote-getting demagogy, particularly when the speaker was himself in such comfortable economic circumstances. These words become of increased significance when the whole background of the labor movement is consid-Since the events of May 4, 1886 in the Chicago Haymarket, the political struggle of labor groups had cut across old party lines and produced a distinct cleavage in society. Democrats in local elections of 1887 in Chicago, Milwaukee, New York, and other cities where Labor tickets were formed, preferred to join hands with the Republicans in defeating the aroused forces of workmen. Henry George's Campaign of 1887 in New York City appeared to many as a movement of "the masses against the classes." Repressive legislation of the most stringent type was enacted to checkmate "the Great Upheaval" as it was called. The Illinois Legislature passed a conspiracy act which brought boycotting and almost any degree of labor radicalism under its provi-In the same session, aliens were forbidden to sions. hold land "by descent, devise, or purchase." Property owners were to be indemnified for damages occasioned by mobs and

John R. Commons and Associates, <u>History of Labour in the United States</u>, Vol. II, New York, 1926, Chs. IX-X.

2 <u>Appleton's Annual Encyclopedia</u>, 1887, ("Illinois")

and riots at the city's expense. Special provisions for deputies and for calling out the militia in labor disputes were made. This type of class legislation was likewise passed in the New York legislature.

Altgeld identified himself with the eight-hour movement which was reviving after the blow dealt it at Haymarket. He advocated shorter hours not only on humanitarian grounds, but also as a necessary offset to technological unemployment, and to encourage the cultural rise of the workingman. Ten hours pay must be given for eight hours work or the standard of living would suffer. He attributed the failure of the eight-hour system at the Union Stock Yards in Chicago to the unwillingness of eastern competing establishments to adopt the same arrangement. Only by a universal and thorough organization of labor, industrial as well as craft unions, could the eight-hour movement succeed.

The subject of industrial arbitration received much thought from him. During 1886, at the height of the strike epidemic, he advocated a modified form of compulsory arbitration, "subject to the fact that a board cannot

¹ Commons et al., op. cit., Chapter X.

^{2 &}quot;Address to the Brotherhood of United Labor" at the Armory, Chicago, Feb. 22, 1890, L. Q., p. 170.

compel an employer to run his factory against his will, or force a man to go to work against his will. A board consisting of an employer, an employe, and a mutual choice would be the proper mechanism for an arbitral group. He believed the worker was in most cases willing to submit his cause to arbitration. This subject recurred in his speeches and gubernatorial messages and resulted ultimately in the establishment of the first Board of Arbitration in the history of Illinois.

CHAPTER II

GOVERNOR OF ILLINOIS

As the last decade of the century began, national and local political trends indicated a forthcoming transfer of party leadership to the hungry Democrats whose appetite had been merely whetted by their short tenure of power under Cleveland (1884-1888). Even in Illinois, where the Republicans had enjoyed an uninterrupted tenure of office since 1856, the usual political portents were ominous for the reigning party. passage of the McKinley Tariff Bill with its sharp increases in the manufacturing schedules precipitated the ballot-box revolt of 1890. In the House, a Democratic majority of 150 replaced the slender Republican advantage of twenty; while in the Senate the Republican majority was reduced from fourteen to six. Illinois cast 432,042 votes for the Democratic Congressional candidates and 311,320 for the Republicans. During the Illinois senatorial contest of 1891 in the Legislature, John M. Palmer, who had bolted the Republican party, was chosen by a union of Democrats and Alliancemen.

¹ Campaign text-Book of the Democratic Party . . . 1892. New York, 1892.

² Appleton's Annual Encyclopedia . . . 1892, "Illinois;"
Brand Whitlock, Forty Years of it, New York, 1920,
p. 61; Edward F. Dunne, Illinois, the Heart of the
Nation, Vol. II, p. 138.

The early part of 1892 found the Cook County Democratic Committee unusually active in preparation for the quadrennial election. Altgeld's cousin and business partner, John W. Lanehart, was Treasurer of the Committee. On February 23, they issued a circular to party members that Cook County was entitled to the gubernatorial candidate on the state ticket. Instructions for Altgeld soon came in from various ward clubs. The Democratic managers found many things in favor of a man with a German name who had served in the Civil War. In a state like Illinois, where the native element religiously voted a straight Republican ticket and had done so ever since the birth of the party, the German voters could be persuaded with less difficulty to transfer their allegiance to the Demo-Altgeld's war record could offset the waving of the "bloody shirt" done by the Republican Governor, "Private Joe" Fifer. Labor had reason to feel more confidence in Altgeld than in his opponent, who was believed to be favorable to the iniquitous company stores in the mining districts. Furthermore, as a wealthy man, Altgeld

Chicago Daily News Almanac, 1892, p. 331.

² Chicago Journal, February 24, 1892.

³ Dunne, op. cit., p. 138.

would presumably contribute in a material way to the l campaign.

With the withdrawal of his chief rival Speaker Crafts, Altgeld became the leading candidate for the Democratic nomination. The Chicago Journal wrote patronizingly, "The Judge has wealth, ambition, and a certain order of ability." At the Springfield Convention of April 27, 1892, the Democrats nominated Altgeld on the first ballot. The southern Illinois delegation (Little Egypt) under the leadership of William R. Morrison, were dissatisfied with a free silver man like Altgeld, but the endorsement of Cleveland at the expense of Palmer offered Joseph B. Gill, who had earned them some consolation. some labor support by his legislative efforts in behalf of the miners, was nominated as lieutenant-governor; while Hinricksen, a strong silver man, was given the nomination as Secretary of State. The Chicago Tribune wrote of Altgeld:

l Wm. H. Holly, "A Forgotten Governor," Ms. of speech delivered before the Chicago Literary Club, Oct. 1932.

² The Chicago Journal, Feb. 15, 1892.

The Chicago Tribune, April 28, 1892.

⁴ Brand Whitlock, op. cit., p. 82; The Chicago Tribune April 26, 1892.

⁵ The Chicago Tribune, April 29, 1892.

The delegates are a little doubtful about the nomination of Altgeld. It has not enthused the old-line Democrats . . . The farmer Democrats are not kindly disposed towards the socialistic ex-Judge. They do not like the "business methods" which secured him the nomination.

Throughout Altgeld's career, the Chicago Tribune led the attack upon him, viciously maligning his motives and giving credence to every rumor from anonymous sources. Other Chicago papers were not far behind, while the Democratic press gave him at best lukewarm support and frequently a form of neutrality that was not far from hostility. Eastern papers and periodicals generally copied the Tribune for their articles on Altgeld. The editor of Harper's Weekly, Henry Loomis Nelson, later Professor of Political Economy in Williams College, remarked in 1899 after an interview with Altgeld, "How in the world did such a man as that come to be so misrepresented before the public?" To this a Chicago editor, Francis F. Browne, replied, "Ask yourself, Mr. Nelson: surely your journal has done its full share." After a silence, Nelson said regretfully, "Yes, I suppose we have; but of course we got it from the Chicago newspapers." The incident is a sad commentary upon the methods of journalism.

Letter of Francis F. Browne to Louis F. Post, 1899, Browne Collection; reprinted in Browne, Altgeld of Illinois, pp. 313-314.

Immediately after his nomination, Altgeld made an acceptance speech outlining the issues of the campaign. He attacked the Republicans as the direct descendants of the Federalists and Know-Nothings; they were guilty of "fostering trusts, monopolies, and illegal combinations, a harvest of taxation and ocrruption, a harvest of farmers who find the mortgages upon their farms growing larger and larger, of mechanics who find it harder to get bread for their children." (Applause) He declared that a conflict existed between the Rights of Man and grasping monopoly. The Republican tariff system was non-protective to farmer and laborer. Turning toward state issues, he attacked the spoils ring in Illinois politics which was creating positions to provide rewards for followers. declared that the Republicans were responsible for the Edwards Law which discriminated against parochial schools of the state.

The Democratic State Platform of 1892 was practically identical with the Republican on state issues as can be seen from the following:

¹ The Chicago Tribune, April 28, 1892. 9

² Platforms taken from the Chicago Daily News Almanac, 1893, pp. 139-140 and The Chicago Tribune, April 28, 1892.

Democratic Platform

- Republican Platform
- 1. Denouncing Edwards Law
- 2. Denouncing Trust and Monopolies
- 3. Denouncing Contract Labor
 4. Denouncing Child Labor
- 5. Board of Labor Arbitration
- 6. Omitted #6 Republican plank.
- 7. Prohibiting company truck stores

- 1. Same
- Same 2.
- 3. Same
- Same 4.
- 5. Omitted
- Uniform Assess-6. ment of Property
- 7. Same

Of these issues, the Edwards Law proved to be the most prominent in local speeches. Altgeld stressed this issue particularly as involving a violation of fundamental The Edwards Law had been passed several years previously by a vote of both Democrats and Republicans; in fact Joseph B. Gill, the Democratic candidate for Lieutenant-Governor, had favored it. It provided that children must be sent to a district school a certain number of months a year; thus parochial schools which might lie outside the district were discriminated against. Altgeld declared that the bill had originally been in a praiseworthy form, but had had several objectionable features added by Dr. Edwards, the State Superintendent of Education. The legislators, unaware of the recent changes and believing they were merely extending the teaching of the English language, voted for it regardless of party affiliation. The Republican Party, as was noted

¹ The Chicago Tribune, April 29, 1892. Interview of Altgeld in the Quincy Journal, reprinted in Live Questions, p. 224.

Speech at Joliet, Sept. 13, 1892; reprinted in L. Q., pp. 262-289.

above, now condemned the law equally with the Democrats. Only the Prohibition Party approved it as it stood. There is considerable evidence that the law was the work of secret nativistic groups such as the United Order or Deputies and the Patriotic Sons of America. Altgeld charged the Republicans with insincerity regarding their pledges to repeal the law. German Lutherans and Catholics resented a measure obviously directed against them. The issue was partly responsible for the victory of the Democratic candidate for State Treasurer in 1890. Strategy therefore urged the stressing of this question.

At the Democratic National Convention held at Chicago Adlai E. Stevenson of Bloomington, Illinois was nominated as Vice-President to strengthen the Cleveland Political managers appreciated the strategic candidacy. importance of the state in influencing the doubtful ones. Cleveland himself watched Altgeld's campaign with keen

Chicago Daily News Almanac, 1893, p. 140.

Prominent Democrats of Illinois, Democratic Publishing Company, Chicago, 1899, p.85. Chicago Journal, Jan. 9, 1892.

Walter Townsend, Illinois Democracy, Springfield, Ill., 1935, Vol. I, p. 156.

interest as of significance for his own.

The Republican State Convention renominated Governor Joseph W. Fifer of McLean County. They met the "socialistic" ideas of Altgeld with the declaration, "We have allowed no legal partition walls to stand between class and class. The avenues to distinction, to wealth, and to honor have been opened to all." They extolled President Harrison and prosperity. The Chicago Tribune enclosized Fifer, granting him generous publicity while reviling Altgeld as a hypecrite who favored free silver and wild cat banking when he was demanding payment in gold from his tenants.

Meanwhile, Altgeld had begun an unusual type of campaign. He spoke informally before groups in practically every county of the state. The strenuous nature of this method was later described by an eyewitness:

He was not at that time a very strong man having been lately attacked with locomotor ataxia in a mild form. This prevented him from standing long on his feet and often when he was compelled to make fifteen or more speeches a day from the rear of a car, he was compelled to seek his conch while the train was whirling from town to town.

¹ Letter of Grover Cleveland to Lambert Tree, Sept. 20, 1892, <u>Letters of Grover Cleveland</u>, edited by Allan Nevins, New York, 1933, p. 310; also <u>Prominent Democrats of Illinois</u>, p. 92.

² The Chicago Tribune, May 6, 1892.

³ Ibid., Nov. 3, 1892.

⁴ The Chicago Chronicle, March 13, 1902.

In an endeavor to carry his appeal to the common man he visited homes, shops, and offices, generally meeting with an enthusiastic reception. The Chicago Journal, a Republican paper, wrote of Altgeld's methods:

He is the Democratic candidate for Governor . . . which the majority of voters may have forgotten. . . . He makes no speeches . . . He slips quietly into a town, has a conference with the men whom he supposes to be "influential Democrats" . . . supposititiously leaves a small roll of boodle.

Henry Demarest Lloyd, whom Altgeld never ceased to admire, contributed effectively to the campaign by circulating his startling expose of labor conditions in Spring Valley among Illinois miners. In 1890, Lloyd had written his "Strike of Millionaires against Miners" which investigated the absentee ownership of Spring Valley mines and the story of a brutal lockout which was revelatory not only of Illinois but also of big business methods in the nation. He showed that certain Eastern directors such

¹ An illustrative account of his canvass methods is in Edgar Lee Master's, "John Peter Altgeld," American Mercury, Jan. 1925, pp. 161-174.

² The Chicago Journal, May 12, 1892.

Henry Demarest Lloyd, A Strike of Millionaires Against
Miners-The Story of Spring Valley, Chicago, 1890.
For substantiation of his charges see J. M. Gould
and F. H. Wines, Report on the Coal Miners' Strike
and Lockout in Northern Illinois, Springfield, Ill.,
1889.

as Chauncey M. Depew, William K. Vanderbilt, William L. Scott, and D. R. Kimball were responsible for "booming" a town (Spring Valley) by circulating false rhapsodical reports among Europeans as well as in the United States and then permitting the enterprise to escape loss at the expense of the deluded emigrants. Company lots were sold at a huge profit and the establishment of company stores monopolized the local market. Wages were soon cut, lay-offs were frequent, evictions and foreclosures common. In April 1889, a lockout was declared by the mineowners and all company stores closed; no explanation was given. one hundred men were left stranded in a penniless condition: six hundred and fifty evictions were made. When the mine owners found it advantageous to reopen, a new schedule of wages was published which cut the wage rate from ninety cents a ton to thirty five cents and outlawed the union. Despite their pitful circumstances, the miners refused to work at a starvation rate; thereupon the shut-down was continued until the Governor was compelled to intervene. Fifer's course proved so indecisive and dilatory as to arouse the belief that he was sympathetic to the mine owners.

Altgeld wrote to Lloyd, "It is highly gratifying to me know that I have your good opinion and support. . . . It looks to me now as if I was going to be elected. Every now and then I see in the papers that you are still engaged in the great work of serving humanity

In the summer of 1892, events at Homestead, Pennsylvania, sent a shock through the nation and affected materially the course of the political campaign. The Carnegie Steel Company, a leading beneficiary of the Republican tariff, cut the wages of its employees on the ground that it was justified by the introduction of labor-saving machinery. Though Carnegie left the scene for Scotland soon after the announcement of the new wage scale, subsequent events can scarcely be attributed in toto to the activities of his general manager, Henry C. Frick. The latter hired three hundred Pinkerton detectives to serve as guards of the company's property, obviously to intimidate the strikers. At four o'clock on the morning of July 6, the Pinkertons were towed up the Monongahela River only to meet an entire village in arms. A pitched battle ensued leaving casualties of at least half a dozen men killed on both sides and others seriously wounded.

Lloyd was profoundly stirred. This can be made the most important conflict in the history of organized labor and it can be won. All the workingmen can be en-

⁽cont.) and always feel like holding out my hand to you. May 25, 1892, Lloyd Papers. Illinois State Register, Oct. 6, 1892.

¹ Commons et al., History of Labour in the United States, II, pp. 495-7. For subsequent details see the Illinois State Register, Oct. 12, 1892.

listed . . . Carnegie can be used to teach the Captains of Industry that men who treat their 'brother laborers' like sponges to be squeezed and rats to be shot cannot continue doing business in that style in this country," he wrote to Gompers. Altgeld dramatized the significance of this episode before his audiences and in the press. He had repeatedly attacked such firms as Carnegie before the Homestead affair as an evidence of the alliance of politics and big business. Carnegie, he said, "has been enabled to make \$50,000,000 because the government assisted him, practically, in levying a tax upon the whole American people for his benefit. To the press, he remarked that American laborers "would look upon the Pinkertons as armed ruffians, willing to shoot down the laborer if somebody will pay them for it . . . "

Altgeld's campaign speeches, which cannot be treated in detail here, reveal the man's profound concern in questions of social reform and his familiarity with the injustice and abuses of the day. Like his friend Lloyd,

Letter of Lloyd to Gompers, July 15, 1892, Lloyd Papers.

² Interview in the Chicago Mail, May 1892, Live Questions, p. 219.

³ Speech at Joliet, Sept. 13, 1892, in Live Questions, p. 289.

⁴ Interview in Quincy Journal, 1892, in Live Questions, p. 221.

he hoped that public exposure of such evils would bring about the needed changes. He dealt with a large variety of subjects, including trusts, contract labor, the tariff, state institutional reforms, labor philosophy, corruption, compulsory education, and other matters of vital importance always omitting the blatant generalization of the stump-speaker.

Cleveland, observing the Illinois campaign, wrote:

I have read . . . that Altgeld gave the most encouraging account of what he saw in his trip through the State and predicted with the utmost confidence his election by quite a large majority. He is inclined to make a difference of 15,000 votes between his and the electoral ticket but thinks, so far as I can learn, that there is a good chance of both being carried.

In an effort to stem the tide for Altgeld, the Chicago
Tribune printed an affidavit intended to prove that Altgeld
had been disloyal to Senator Palmer in 1891 during the
senatorial contest. It was hoped to weaken Altgeld's
forces by the withdrawal of the Palmer men. Altgeld denied
the charge and his friends asserted that he had refused
to be a candidate at that time. The affidavit itself, as

¹ Cleveland to Lambert Tree, Sept. 20, 1892, <u>Letters of Grover Cleveland</u>, p. 310.

² Affidavit of R. A. D. Wilbanks in the Chicago Tribune, Oct. 15, 1892.

pointed out by the editor of the <u>Illinois State Register</u>,
was actually innocuous and proved nothing. Palmer
continued to support Altgeld.

An important factor in winning the pivotal vote of Cook County was the work of George Schilling, a close friend of Altgeld's and the Anti-Contract Convict Labor League which he organized. Its intention was to collect funds from various labor groups and carry on legal proceedings to compel appointees of the dominant party in the state to observe and enforce the law. It was an indirect movement for Altgeld's election. "If Altgeld were elected they (the prosecutions) would be dropped, for Altgeld had promised to remedy the situation. If Fifer . . . were successful, the suits would be pushed with all the energy the League could muster. Through Schilling the 1892 Convention of the State Federation of Labor was shifted from a post-election date in November to October. When the delegates met, C. J. Stivers, a representative of Schilling's League, was given two hours in which to present the case for Altgeld; literature favoring the Democratic candidate was circulated with good effect. The

¹ Illinois State Register, October 19, 1892.

² Letter of Thomas Morgan to Henry D. Lloyd, Jan. 5, 1892, Lloyd Papers.

Tugene Staley, <u>History of the Illinois State Federation</u>
of Labor, Univ. of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1930,
p. 86, p. 100 (based on interviews with Schilling).

Federation passed a resolution censuring the Republicans 1 for anti-union acts. During the entire administration of Altgeld, this organization closely collaborated with the governor in furthering social legislation.

Election day brought the anticipated victory for the Democrats in all executive offices. Illinois cast a straight ballot vote in favor of Cleveland and Altgeld; there was a difference of only 723 votes between the presidential and gubernatorial ticket. Altgeld won 425,558 votes with his greatest strength in Cook County and the souther half of the state, while Fifer polled 2402,676 votes. The Prohibition Party candidate, Robert R. Link, obtained 24,808 votes and the Peoples' Party received 20,103 votes; but these minor tickets did not carry a single county.

Since the Civil War, the governor of Illinois, has,

with one exception, been of the same party as the

President. The Democrats Altgeld, Edward F. Dunne, and

Henry Horner coincide in time with Cleveland, Wilson, and

Franklin D. Roosevelt. Since the state is so firmly

addicted to the straight-ballot, it is difficult to determine to what extent state and national issues interact

¹ Eugene Staley, op. cit., p. 101.

² Official Vote of the State of Illinois at the General Election Held Nov. 8, 1892, Springfield, 1893. See attached chart for county analysis.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Richard Oglesby, 1885-1889.

upon each other. It is probable however that Altgeld carried the state for Cleveland rather than the reverse.

Altgeld's health and reduced him to a semi-invalid stage which accelerated his early death. Before the time for his inauguration, he became so ill that it was thought he would not live. Though urged to remain in bed, he refused and went to Springfield to take the oath 1 of office. He was compelled to turn over the manuscript of his address to the clerk and the occasion became solemn rather than joyous. The Message expresses his policies very well and deserves consideration:

He asked for the repeal of the Edwards Law and its replacement by another act which should make provision for the education of neglected children. (2) The interest on public funds which had hitherto gone to the official should go to the State and the funds deposited in the banks. (3) Judicial fees were a standing bribe to false imprisonment and should be abolished. (4) The time had come for a classified civil service divorced from partisan politics. (5) The state, through its military arm,

¹ The Chicago Chronicle, March 13, 1902; The Chicago Tribune, Jan. 11, 1893.

Walter Townsend, <u>The Illinois Democracy</u>, Vol.I, pp.173-174.

Message in <u>Live Questions</u>, pp. 308-319; also in the <u>Illinois State Register</u>, Jan. 11, 1893.

must not become the convenient club of the employer; nor should it permit the use of "armed mercenaries" by private corporations or individuals; the civil officers (sheriffs) were expected to do their duty in times of industrial conflict. (6) A Board of Arbitration must be established. (7) The constant increase in labor saving machinery necessitated legislation for the purpose of shortening working hours. (8) Attention was drawn to the problems of child labor, the sweating system, and factory sanitation. (9) The European experiment in municipal ownership of public utilities deserved careful consideration. (10) A State road-building program was imperative. (11) The evils of convict-labor competition should be mitigated by spreading prison industries over a wide range of manufactures and reduce friction in any given industry to a minimum. (12) The introduction of the indeterminate sentence in penal legislation would be a marked step forward in individual rehabilitation. (13) A fair redistricting act (reapportionment) should be passed. (14) The introduction of a heavy graduated succession tax on inheritances, a provision for a heavy corporation fee, and a revision of the revenue laws in the interests of fair assessment were necessary.

Throughout his brief term of office Altgeld persisted

in urging these progressive aims upon an indifferent—and corrupt—legislature. Indeed the venality of the Illinois legislators was so well-known as to be a matter of jest. Eugene Field's description of a crowd of Illinois legislators on a junket at public expense would be amusing if it were not so tragic:

The second section of the train bearing the Illinois legislature to New Orleans was stopped by bandits last night. After relieving the bandits of their watches and jewelry, the excursionists proceeded on their journey with increased enthusiasm.

Another legislative difficulty in the way of Altgeld's proposed reforms was the fact that his party were in the majority only for a short time. The Democrats during 1893 and 1894 had a margin of seven votes in the Senate and three in the House; but during the biennium of 1895-6, the Republicans won a majority of fifteen members in the Senate and thirty-one in the 2 House.

The fact that Altgeld was able to enact an appreciable part of his program was largely due to his

¹ Charles A. Beard and Mary R. Beard, The Rise of American Civilization, New York, 1930, Vol. II, p. 439. The discussion of local and state corruption will be reserved for a later chapter.

² The above figures are from the issues of 1892-1897 of The Chicago Daily News Almanac and Appleton's Annual Encyclopedia.

ability to unite the reform elements behind him and to influence public opinion sufficiently to overawe the Legislature. Labor organizations of all kinds showed a clear perception of his motives and repeatedly offered public endorsements of his actions. The influence of George Schilling and the Illinois State Federation of Labor in securing his election has already been mentioned. Schilling became Altgeld's adviser on labor matters and Secretary of the Bureau of Labor Statistics which he utilized for several powerful exposes of the Gas and Traction Rings interested in monopolistic legislation at the expense of the public. Portions of his biennial reports were reprinted in pamphlet form for public consumption. Charles J. Riefler, President of the State Federation of Labor, was appointed to the Board of Arbitration shortly after the passage of the arbitration law. historian of the Federation states that Altgeld's Administration coincided with the influential period of the life of the organization.

Another factor which contributed to Altgeld's success in realizing some of his aims is the settlement movement in Chicago. The late Jane Addams has told in her ingenuous

¹ Staley, op. cit., p. 104. I have interviewed George Schilling for some of this information, March, 1935.

fashion of the lofty humanitarian ideals which brought the Toynbee idea to the United States. The uncomfortable spectacle of human misery on the West side of Chicago had been spared to those who wished to accept the Malthusian middle class philosophy of the inevitability of poverty as a population problem. Immigrants from southern Europe clustered in dense unsanitary settlements along Halsted Street isolated by language, customs, and poverty from the Americanized population. Politicians like John Powers of the Nineteenth Ward regarded these pitiful inarticulate people as their legitimate prey and constructed a political constituency useful for unbridled corruption. Against such a background, Jane Addams and her associates moved into Hull House in Septem-The purpose of the organization as stated in ber, 1889. the charter was:

To provide a center for a higher civic and social life; to institute and maintain educational and philanthropic enterprise, and to investigate and improve the conditions in the industrial districts of Chicago.

In order to realize these aims, Miss Addams was compelled to organize a powerful lobby of humanitarians to exercise pressure upon local, state, and later, national

Jane Addams, Twenty Years of Hull House, passim.
 James Weber Linn, Jane Addams, New York, 1935, p. 110.

authorities. Her associate, Florence Kelly, eventually received Altgeld's appointment as Illinois' first Factory Inspector. As Secretary of the Civic Federation Committee on Industrial Arbitration, Jane Addams led the fight for Altgeld's idea of arbitration. These activities will be considered in another connection.

The Chicago Civic Federation, which was organized in 1893 during the panic by Lyman J. Gage, a wealthy philanthropist, deserves mention. Though its heterogeneous membership which included the leading merchants and manufacturers of the city brought with it an element of hypocrisy which Altgeld resented, some of its committees, such as Miss Addams group, accomplished notable work.

A number of genuine reformers took part in the proceedings of the Federation including Graham Taylor, Professor Albion W. Small, Clarence Darrow, Emil G. Hirsch and other important leaders.

Henry Demarest Lloyd and Clarence Darrow proved of inestimable service to Altgeld in planning and directing the course of reform legislation. Lloyd's powerful friends and acquaintances were constantly invoked by the foe of Standard Oil in behalf of Altgeld's struggle against privilege. Darrow, less fastidious than Lloyd, was willing

¹ James Weber Linn, Jane Addams, p. 162.

with the Illinois legislators. The names of E. O. Brown, Willis J. Abbot, Francis F. Browne, and Richard T. Ely deserve mention in this group of reformers who assisted in the common cause.

With the Democrats in power now for the first time in thirty-six years, it was evident that Altgeld's first important problem would be making appointments to state positions. In his campaign speech at Joliet, Altgeld had charged that the state institutions "have been converted into the most shameless political machines, in order to secure the political advancement of the present Governor, and where a man was found at the head of such an institution who declined to prostitute it for such a purpose, he was 1 removed." In the same speech he indicated his future action:

It is the history of institutions of this character everywhere, that when one party has been long in power and its favorites collect in these asylums and almost fill them up, not only living there themselves, but bringing their sisters, and their cousins, and their aunts there, it frequently, also, becomes corrupt, and the favorites look upon the whole institution as having been erected for their benefit. And the only way to guard against this is to have an occasional change—to introduce a new broom—for the new broom is not only a great factor of cleanliness and purity in the kitchen, but of reform in the

¹ Speech at Joliet, Sept. 13, 1892, Live Questions, p. 264.

public service.

Altgeld disagreed with the theory of professional social workers who believed that the standards of a public institution should be like those of a private business where a man discovers who are the best workers and keeps them. The administration of a public institution where financial needs were met by state grants frequently did not receive the vigilance of a private executive and lawas apt to degenerate into negligence and complacency.

On the other hand, Altgeld's long advocady and active efforts in behalf of Civil Service reform indicate that he was opposed to any form of the spoils system.

During January, 1893, the Governor's office was busy in issuing requests for the resignations of many superintendents and other administrative officers of public institutions. A series of form letters were sent out intermittently in order to avoid the chaos of a wholesale change in personnel. The letter stated that it was desirable to replace the present heads by those "in thorough harmony with the Executive and the dominant legislative party."

The bitter reaction of displaced social workers in

¹ Letter of Altgeld to J. W. Babcock, Nov. 20, 1894, Live Questions, p. 457.

² Governor's Letter Book, January 14, 1893 and subsequent dates, Springfield, Ill., pp. 8-46.

the Illinois Institutions is suggested by their subsequent unfavorable accounts of Altgeld's personnel policy. Several leaders in the field of Social Service Administration, basing their conclusions on the work of their graduate students, have perpetuated the belief that Altgeld inaugurated a spoils system which became the precedent for succeeding administrations. This charge seems to have been first presented in authoritative form by a group of writers in collaboration with H. M. Hurd. It is stated that before 1893, state positions were evenly divided between adherents of both parties. The appointments at the Kankakee Hospital are said to have been unfortunate since the individuals lacked any altruistic inclinations.

Altgeld's charges made during the campaign that the Illinois state institutions were the chief means by which the Republican machine controlled the party primaries in behalf of certain individuals are substantiated by confidential reports in his Executive Files. The administration of Governor Fifer, while it may not have differed from its predecessors, shows numerous evidences of political manipulation in personnel policies as in the case of the Pontiac Reformatory. Altgeld's appointees were frequently

¹ H. M. Hurd, et. al., The Institutional Care of the Insane in the United States and Canada, Baltimore, 1916, Vol. II, p. 256. Altgeld's successor, Governor Tanner,

not even Democrats, but were chosen for exceptional ability. This policy aroused bitter complaints among party men who believed that they enjoyed a natural right to state positions. His almost unprecedented act in appointing women to important positions antagonized such politicians as Mayor John Hopkins of Chicago. The Chicago Tribune reported that Altgeld was attempting to make peace among certain factions of Democrats particularly in the Senate, where one group threatened to make common cause with the

⁽cont.) made a clean sweep of Democrats in office.
Letter of Daniel Goodwin to John P. Altgeld, Oct.
31, 1892, files of the Chicago Historical Society.

2 Governor's Executive Files, 1893-4.

Ibid., for example, letter of Miss E. M. Henroten to 1 Altgeld, April 13, 1894. A staunch Republican, Major R. W. McClaughry, became Superintendent of the Pontiac Reformatory where he did able service; another Republican became Superintendent of the Asylum at Jacksonville. Republicans received appointments on such important Boards as the West Park Board, the Lincoln Park Board, the State Board of Health, the State Board of Charities, the State Board of Education, and in the various state institutions. Biennial Message to the Legislature, Jan. 6, 1896. In a day before woman suffrage the following words may be believed, "This administration has taken a new departure by appointing a number of women on important boards and to other positions. While this was not good politics, from either a personal or party standpoint, it was believed to be eternally right, and was done solely on the ground of justice. " General Message on Assembly of Legislature, Jan. 9, 1895.

Republicans. Joseph Gill, the new Lieutenant-Governor, wished to obtain certain appointments for his friends and relatives; Altgeld's refusal was interpreted as the end of the Governor's chances for a seat in the United States Senate.

Altgeld's insistence on high standards of official 3 conduct was noted by the Chicago Herald:

Governor Altgeld is not popular with his appointees in the various state departments and institutions. It is said that Altgeld exacts too much of the men who hold places under him. He wants them to be always at their places attending to their duties. He has a habit . . . of dropping in at a state institution when he is least expected and of making inquiries as to the number of people kept on the payrolls and what their duties are. . . .

A number of the more important appointments went to reformers like the Hull House group and the associates of Henry Demarest Lloyd. The remarkable activities of these idealistic men and women contributed in no small measure to the achievements of Altgeld's administration.

Not all of Altgeld's appointees turned out as well as these. The grain inspector at Chicago left office in

¹ The Chicago Tribune, Jan. 21, 1893.

^{2 &}lt;u>Ibid.</u>3 <u>The Chicago Herald</u>, Feb. 8, 1895.

1896 with a shortage of \$4500. in his accounts. This was made the subject of special senatorial and grand jury investigations by the Tanner Administration. Worst of all his acts, Altgeld recommended Charles W. Spalding, president of the Globe Savings Bank in Chicago, as Treasurer of the University of Illinois. During the panic of 1893, Spalding used these funds to protect his weak financial position and was unable to replace them. loss was estimated eventually at one hundred thousand dollars. Since Altgeld had been at one time a Vice-President of Spalding's Bank and John W. Lanehart, his partner. had been secretary, the Republican investigating committee hinted that there had been collusion in misappropriating state funds. Altgeld's familiarity with the Globe Savings Bank and its methods had led him to suppose that Spalding was entirely dependable. This can be understood in the light of our own banking crisis which revealed an appalling amount of dishonest banking methods on the part of men hitherto respected for their probity. Another factor involved was Altgeld's desire to obtain a University treasurer who would pay at least two and one half per cent interest on deposited funds. He had therefore insisted

¹ Letter of Altgeld to Lambert Tree, May 11, 1897, Browne Collection.

² Report of Special Committee Appointed to Investigate the Failure of the Globe Savings Bank, Springfield, Ill., 1897. Letter of S. A. Bullard to W. R. Browne, May 6, 1922. Browne Collection.

that the state auditor pay over funds to the Globe Bank
that were not yet due from the office of the State

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Treasurer. The entire incident was a painful one for
Altgeld.

The new Governor keenly felt the responsibilities of his position. His messages reflect a close study of the reports made by the various state institutions and organizations. He reprimanded the Illinois Horticultural Society, "It does not appear from the report whether Illinois raised one bushel or ten thousand bushels of apples last year, nor whether it raised any other kind of fruit . . . "

The practice of extraditing criminals in Illinois seemed to him to contain numerous abuses. After a requisition for a fugitive had been made, detectives availed themselves of free travelling expenses to render bills in excess of the amount expended. In many cases, the prosecution would fail after the prisoner had been returned. Altgeld recommended a law to require the Governor to issue requisitions only in cases of felony and then only after he is satisfied that there is a reasonable prospect of securing a conviction. This was passed. He proceeded

¹ Report . . . Globe Savings Bank, op. cit., passim.

² Altgeld to Hammond, June 12, 1893. Governor's Letter

³ Special Message to Senate, Feb. 24, 1893, Governor's Letter Book.

Lewelling applied to Altgeld for extradition of a prisoner on a trivial offense, Altgeld refused. Governor Boies of Iowa sought to obtain a prisoner charged with adultery, but Altgeld objected on the ground that a conviction of the defendant could not reasonably be expected. False or hasty imprisonment always drew a sharp rebuke from him. His theories of penology as expressed in his book, "Our penal Machinery and Its Victims," were put into practice.

An incident occurred at this time which revealed the Governor's fixed determination to combat mob violence. At two o'clock on the morning of June 2, a mob broke into a jail at Decatur, Illinois and forcibly removed the prisoner, a negro accused of rape, and hanged him to a nearby post. The victim, Sam Bush, protested his innocence before an interested crowd of some fifteen hundred people who calmly watched the lynching spectacle. Although the identity of the ringleaders was well-known, no effort was made to bring them to justice. Upon hearing of this outrage, Altgeld immediately issued a telegram to the local authorities demanding to know what effort had been made by the jailors to protect the victim. He published an official

¹ Altgeld to Lewelling, March 7,1893, Governor's Letter Book.

² Altgeld to Boies, March 7, 1893, Lbid.

³ Altgeld to Mills, June 3, 1893. Ibid.

proclamation denouncing the "cowardly and diabolical act as not only a murder under our laws, but as a disgrace to our civilization." The arrest of all guilty parties was demanded and a reward offered for their apprehension. At Altgeld's request, prosecution proceedings began at once, but despite the evidence which indicated the guilt of some twenty-five mob-leaders, the grand jury refused to present any indictment. The judge's insistence upon a reconsideration failed to alter matters since the lynch spirit had seized the community.

Most important of all the problems of his administration was that of the policing of industry by the state militia. As a friend of labor Altgeld was fully aware of the role of the state military as strike-breakers and determined not to permit them to be used for such purposes. It is this attitude, as later evidenced in the great Pullman Strike, that invited much misunderstanding as to his real motives.

In the Chicago Drainage Canal district and particularly about Lemont, a labor situation had arisen similar in some respects to the Spring Valley episode of 1889-1890.

Workers were induced to come to this district by contractors who made promises that were never kept. Once on the

¹ The Chicago Times, June 4; The Chicago Tribune, June 4, 7, 23, 29, 1893.

² General Order of May 25, 1894, Governor's Letter Book.

ground, they were compelled to work without wages save in the form of truck store orders; when they protested, they were replaced by others under a similar misrepresentation. A combination of several large stone quarries resulted in the elimination of competition, a rise in the prices of stone, but a cut in wages. Community workers were replaced by cheaper labor, mostly Hungarians, Italians, and Negroes who lived in shanties. Soon the discontented men went on a strike demanding a minimum of seventeen and one half cents per hour of \$1.75 per day. The contractors imported a force of ruffians, whites and negroes from the south, to harass the activities of the strikers. A later investigation by Altgeld revealed that these strikebreakers had fired without provocation upon an unarmed group of men going to a union meeting, not within three hundred yards of the sanitary district lines. Gilbert of Cook County, faking three telegrams that were supposedly from different sheriffs, tried to exercise pressure upon Altgeld to send state militia upon the scene.

Altgeld at first refused to intervene, and telegraphed back: 4

¹ Col. Dose (Altgeld's Secretary) to McCormick, June 8, 1893, Governor's Letter Book, p. 358.

² The Chicago Times, June 17, 1893; The Chicago Tribune, June 11, 1893.

³ The Chicago Times, June 10, 1893.

⁴ Altgeld to Sheriffs of DuPage, Will, and Cook Counties, June 15, 1893, Governor's Letter Book, p. 383.

Why not swear in more deputy sheriffs? Copies and dispatches received here indicate that the officers have been masters of the situation; nobody has been hurt except strikers, several of whom have been killed and a large number wounded.

When telegrams came in, apparently from three different sheriffs, representing the situation as on the verge of a crisis which could be averted only by the militia, Altgeld yielded. He ordered out the Second and Third Regiments to Lemont where they found everything quiet. Altgeld himself arrived in the afternoon to examine disinterested witnesses and strikers. He soon discovered the duplicity of the Sheriff. Not a single deputy had been in the vicinity of the shooting; the contractor's hirelings were guilty of an unprovoked attack upon the strikers. Altgeld's anger was aroused and he demanded the appearance of the canal contractors who discreetly withdrew. The troops were ordered home as soon as a strike settlement could be arranged. Governor asked for the Mayor's mediation on the basis of accepting all strikers back into employment. To the press he remarked,

From all I can learn, it was a deliberate, cold-blooded murder and I shall take vigorous steps to punish the perpetrators of this wanton attack upon unoffending and unarmed citizens

¹ The Chicago Times, June 11, 1893; Chicago Tribune, June 12, 1893.

of Illinois by a gang of non-residents.

In a special message to the legislature, Altgeld reviewed in detail the circumstances involved in the He demanded adequate legislation to hold sheriffs fully responsible for their duties. When deputies were sworn in, the county authorities had to pay their salaries and therefore, to shift the charges to the state, they preferred to use the militia. Altgeld's request for the abolition of armed mercenaries like the Pinkertons and other strike-breakers bore fruit in legislation along this line. An alien law was passed preventing non-residents from serving or acting as deputy sheriffs, special policemen, or special constables. This culminated a long struggle for such legislation which had been supported by many labor bodies like the Knights of Labor and the Illinois State Federation of Labor.

There are indications that Altgeld hoped eventually to enter the United States Senate. A Democratic editor wrote to him:

> P worked six weeks nearly night and day to secure your election. There seems

¹ Special Message to the Legislature, June, 1893, Governor's Letter Book, p. 389. The Chicago Times, June 17,1893.

Laws of the State of Illinois (38th Gen'l Assembly),1893,

² p. 2. Approved June 19, 1893.

Letter of J. D. Reeder of Fairfield, Ill. to Altgeld, June 14, 1893, Governor's Executive Files.

now to be an open door by which you may enter the United States Senate. . . . There is a move on foot in the Democratic Party to defeat you. If I have been correctly informed two Congressmen from the north part of the State and two from the Southern part are in the plot.

The editor of the Chicago Tribune remarked caustically, "Governor Altgeld has his sails spread, but he whistles in vain for a senatorial breeze." William R. Morrison, who opposed Altgeld throughout this period, wrote to a friend, "It is as clear as noonday that everybody who is not favorable to the election of the Governor to the Senate and who will not sell out in that interest is to be crushed out and all the state appointments will be made to 2 that end." Altgeld's poor health brought about a belief that he had given up these hopes. "He has not now the vigor nor the inclination to engage in the strife for the seat of either Cullom or Palmer," wrote the Chicago Tribune

The Chicago Tribune, July 25, 1893.
Letter of W. R. Morrison to George W. Wall, Jan. 13, 1893. Wall Papers. Morrison had referred to this matter previously, "It was for that (the Senatorship) that he became a candidate for Governor. To get that there is nothing he will not do." Letter to Wall, Jan. 6, 1893, Wall Papers.

in 1894. Whatever hopes he may have entertained received a permanent set-back with the victory of the Republican party in the legislature which brought large majorities in both houses during 1895 and thereafter. In 1897, William E. Mason of Chicago was elected to the United States Senate over Altgeld by a strict partisan vote of 125 to 78.

A recent historian has ably summarized the place of Altgeld's Administration among those of the other states of the union:

With the exception of John P. Altgeld, Governor of Illinois, there was hardly a state executive who stood out during the nineties as the representative of a better day; yet within a decade of Altgeld's retirement to private life amidst a storm of abuse, the people of the various states were placing in the gubernatorial chair men whose schemes of reform were more radical than Altgeld's.

The Chicago Tribune, March 19, 1894.
Editorial, "William E. Mason," Journal of the Illinois
State Historical Society, July, 1921. The Atlanta
Journal said of Altgeld's candidacy, "The election

Journal said of Altgeld's candidacy, "The election of Altgeld would be a disgrace to the Democratic Party. The man who pardoned the murderous anarchists is not worthy to sit in the Senate." Reprinted in the Chicago Tribune, Nov. 4, 1893.

³ Harold Underwood Faulkner, The Quest for Social Justice, 1898-1914, History of American Life Series, New York, 1931, p. 91.

CHAPTER III

ECHOES OF HAYMARKET

Behind the grim walls of Joliet Penitentiary, three men were completing their seventh year of confinement for a crime which could be only vaguely defined. were accused of responsibility in the events of May 4, 1886, commonly known as the Haymarket Riot, in which a number of police had been either killed or wounded as a result of a bomb thrown by an unknown hand. The most generous of statutory constructions had enabled the prosecution to find a category for their offense. At this time, however, the imprisonment of these men, whose behavior and antecedents were wholly unlike that of the criminal, had begun to trouble the conscience of the sensitive portion of society, now recovering from an earlier hysteria. But since the trial had been so literally one of the defendants versus "the people," i. e. the powerful middle class, there could be no doubt cast upon the certainty of their guilt, but it was permissible to consider the benevolent gesture of a pardon on the grounds that the condemned had been sufficiently punished.

The men, Oscar Neebe, Samuel Fielden, and Michael Schwab had been tried originally with five others. Four of these had been hanged on November 11, 1887 and one,

Louis Lingg, committed suicide in jail under particularly revolting circumstances. As the trial of the accused progressed from the Criminal Court of Cook County to the Illinois Supreme Court and finally the Supreme Court of the United States, the testimony and arguments of both sides assumed such proportions as to constitute in itself a psychological handicap for the case of the defendants. Anatole France in his brilliant satire, Penguin Island, has pictured imaginatively the mounting bulk of the "evidence" against Dreyfus as so great as to cause a collapse of the room in which it was stored. Likewise. the evidence for the State reinforced by depositions of Pinkertons, tramps, and perjured witnesses, proved staggering indeed. Before the trials had proceeded very far, both sides were indulging in ponderous briefs and copious The opinions of the various judges who partiabstracts. cipated reveal a simplicity in analysis which is noteworthy in view of the character of the evidence. The United States Supreme Court frankly evaded the onerous task of examining this material by declaring that there was no federal question involved.

¹ Emma Goldman, the well-known Anarchist, during a public lecture delivered at Northwestern University in April, 1934, declared that "indisputable proof" exists that Louis Lingg did not commit suicide, but was brutally murdered by the police. Until the proof is forthcoming, the record stands on the general agreement of both sides that Lingg committed suicide.

Against such a background, the determination of Governor Altgeld to examine the case thoroughly upon its merits rather than decide that the men had suffered sufficiently, can be properly appreciated. If the men were guilty as stated in the indictment, he resolved to refuse executive clemency, regarding it as misused under the circumstances; if they were innocent, then he would free them regardless of the outcry involved.

A study of the famous case, apart from the Governor's arguments, is indispensable from the standpoint of perspective and interpretation. If it is dealt with as an isolated instance of alien violence momentarily transplanted to an American environment, the affair has but little significance in our history. But if the Haymarket Riot is considered as an integral phase of our economic and social history, then it is revealing of a vital aspect of our development. Three phases, interlocking to some extent, seem most prominent in an analysis of the case:

- 1. Technological advances in industry and the movement for shorter hours.
- 2. The rise of radical thought, particularly Marxian, and the new technique of repression.
- 3. The psychological factor, arising from the above, as manifested in the strong nativistic reaction and the

lynch spirit.

The Industrial Revolution, however beneficent in its ultimate nature, produced a new set of social and economic problems which required effective adjustment if the new genie of plenty was not to become a spectre of want. Detached humanitarian impulses which resulted in certain social legislation in the spirit of medieval charity proved at all times during the nineteenth century in England, France, and the United States to be greatly inadequate. Such factors as unemployment, economic insecurity, revolting factory conditions, long hours and other problems which required dynamic, rather than static, philosophies, were treated piecemeal in the spirit of grudging conces-The subsequent social cleavage along sharper lines is hence understandable. Organizations of employers in the virtual absence of effective state regulation attempted to operate the delicate valves of economic adjustment. Friction was inevitable under these conditions. Marxian philosophy arose to interpret this phenomena as revelatory of an eternal class war. But even without the acceptance of this philosophy, a trade union movement developed aiming at the fulfillment of its demands by the weapons of industrial conflict, strikes, boycotts, sabotage. and the courts. Anarchist and syndicalist ideas sometimes

entered in extending the strike on a nation-wide scale and advocating violence as a preliminary to social revolution.

The movement for shorter hours reveals every phase of this industrial conflict. In the United States, the short-hour movement began in 1803 with the organization of the building trades. A demand for ten-hours instead of fourteen, was met by the employer's use of the blacklist which effectively eliminated union members. 1840, the ten-hour movement had attained such magnitude that President Martin Van Buren established the system for all navy-yard employees of the United States. British Government passed a ten-hour law in 1847. of the prominent arguments used was that in Germany, where factory employees worked as many as sixteen hours, there was such physical degeneration that few could qualify The agitation of 1848 strengthened the for army service. Trade Union demands for a universal ten-hour day in the United States. Eight hours were desired as a limit for child labor. Chicago played a leading role in the organization of this movement. Following the action of several labor Congresses, President Andrew Johnson signed an eighthour bill for government workers in 1868. The next year an Eight Hour League was formed in Boston and the Knights

¹ Joseph Gruenhut, "The Eight Hour Movement," The Carpenter, Oct. 15, 1889, E. W. Bemis Papers.

of Labor organized. During the panic of 1873, particularly in the great railroad strikes of 1877, the labor issue attained its greatest national prominence. With the depression of 1885-6, the eight hour movement reached a critical stage. The choice of May-day with its radical connotations for the inauguration of wide-spread strikes alarmed the conservatives.

In Illinois, as well as in other industrial states, labor conflicts of 1885-6 assumed a sanguinary form. strike of quarrymen in Will and Cook Counties during April, 1885 brought the state militia to the scene. Cook County three strikers were shot in an effort to disperse them. In the succeeding April, a strike of railway switchmen again brought the intervention of the state militia. When it was withdrawn, Pinkerton detectives were imported. These industrial hirelings soon fired upon an unarmed crowd of people gathered upon a bridge, killing, or seriously wounding some eight persons. Again the militia was invoked. During 1885, a great street car strike in Chicago revealed new extremes of police brutality in labor struggles. Most notorious of these police in the exercise of indiscriminate brutal force was John Bonfield.

Covernor's Biennial Message to the Legislature, 1886; reprinted in Appleton's Annual Encyclopedia, "Illinois," 1886.

an officer who played a leading role in the Haymarket Riot and the trial. Charles Edward Russell, who reported the strike for an eastern paper, writes:

I remember well the sight of him leading a line of policemen . . . the clubs descending right and left like flails and men falling before them, often frightfully injured. All sorts of men they were, not merely strikers and their sympathizers, but innocent citizens caught in the throng unable to escape.

Before considering the inauguration of the strikes of May 1886, it is necessary to consider the rise of radical labor movements, a development which has obscured the essential trade unionist basis of the short-hour battle culminating in the Haymarket affair. There is little space here to outline the main streams of radical thought in the nineteenth century. The original cooperation between Karl Marx, the Socialist, and Mikhail Bakunin, the Anarchist, had been shattered but the confusion in party designation persisted. Men might refer to themselves as Socialists and Anarchists without appreciating any fundamental differences in the philosophies of each. In the United States and in Britain, a species of "philosophic" Anarchism had developed under the leadership of Godwin, Emerson, Thoreau, and Tucker. In France, Proudhon had developed his own particular brand of Anarchism. is little wonder indeed that the anarchists on trial in

Charles Edward Russell, "The Haymarket and Afterwards,"
Appleton's Magazine, October, 1907, p. 400.

Judge Gary's court could not reply definitely as to their doctrinal allegiance. In most cases the advocacy of violence, if not repudiated, was given merely a formal assent. The Declaration of Independence is in some respects a more radical document than many Anarchist manifestoes.

Though radical socialist and anarchist leaders, particularly from Germany, came to the United States soon after the Civil War, a definite Marxian organization did not begin until 1870, when three sections of the socialist International Workingmen's Association were established in New York City. By the next year it had only 293 members and was finally dissolved in 1876. The ejection of Bakunin in 1872 from the International brought about an independent Anarchist movement consisting of his followers. On October 21, 1881, the revolutionary group formed a national organization at Chicago, named the Revolutionary Socialist Party. Justus Schwab, Albert R. Parsons, and August Spies, later defendants in the Haymarket Case, were among the delegates. They were also present at the Pittsburg Convention of October 19, 1883, when Johan Most, the reputed leader of the American Anarchists, was present. Most had a long revolutionary career dating back to his German home and while an adept in phrases of violence, was quick to condemn its practice. The platform adopted provided for establishing a cooperative society, equal

woman's rights and autonomous communities. This new organization became known as the International Working

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People's Association. Some of the members went into the Knights of Labor and made Terence V. Powderly, its leader, uneasy because of the aggressive tactics advocated.

Following the elections of 1827 which were unusually corrupt and the shooting of strikers by police in Chicago during a walkout of furniture workers, the Lehr und Wehr Verein was organized by the anarchists as an armed unit to resist the police. The Illinois legislature passed a statute prohibiting such organizations. An appeal was made by the organization to the local courts which declared in favor of the constitutional right to bear arms, but the supreme court of the state reversed this ruling and was later upheld by the national supreme court.

Nevertheless, small units of armed men continued to drill. This factor played a large part in the psychology of the public during the Haymarket trial. The recollection of the Commune uprisings in France and Spain during the seventies was still fresh in the minds of many.

Norman J. Ware, Labor Movement in the United States, 1860-New York, 1929., p. 305 et passim. (Also from testimony in trial); Nathan Fine, History of Labor and Farmer Parties in the United States, 1828-1928, New York, 1928, p. 110.

Appleton's Annual Encyclopedia, 1885, p. 491.

Powderly's fear of being identified with the radical elements was realized in full. Certain industrialists recognized the fact that if the cause of labor could be confused with violence and anarchy, the short-hour movement would be checked; soon Anarchist plots became the talk of the Early in 1885, several of the largest property owners in Chicago raised a large sum to employ Pinkerton detectives who were to investigate the activities of the Anarchists. During the later trial, Pinkerton men like A. C. Jensen acted as witnesses for the state in implicating Spies, Fielden, and Parsons, Professional informers and agents provocateurs also were active at this time to reappear later In Switzerland, Austria-Hungary, and France, as witnesses. occasional anarchist 'plots' were being discovered and evi+ dence of the Pinkerton type used to discredit the labor Agents provocateurs, evidently animated by the movement. desire to perpetuate their usefulness, naturally found whatever evidence was necessary for the conviction of labor agitators.

On May 1, 1886, a strike of organized workers began in Chicago and other industrial centers of the country for the eight@hour day with the same compensation as for the

¹ Appleton's Annual Encyclopedia, 1886, p. 13.

² Testimony of A. C. Jensen, Abstract of Record of Anarchy Cases, Vol. II.

³ Appleton's Ann. Encyc., 1884, p. 67; 1885, p. 746.

ten-hour day. The employers, organized in associations for each industry, prepared to resist. In the city 40,000 workers left their tasks. Demonstrations of a peaceful character were held in the streets. The occasional appearance of a red flag and the singing of revolutionary songs convinced many that the strikers were dangerous foreign agita-A good deal of nativistic hatred was aroused. Of Chicago's 616,323 people, 209,631 were Germans, 114,005 Irish, 28,281 Bohemians, 23,500 Poles, and 23,755 Swedish. Public attention was directed particularly to the great McCormick Harvester organization on the far west side where Poles and Bohemians predominated. When the McCormick officials imported strike-breakers, repeated riots followed. Patrol wagons dashing down the street became a common sight; sometimes these were attacked by angry men and women who threw stones at the officers. Meetings held to express sympathy with the strikers were broken up by the police. Every railroad in the city was crippled, all the freight houses were closed and barred, and most of the industries of the city were paralyzed. The situation was tense.

On Monday afternoon, May 3, August Spies, editor of the semi-anarchist labor paper, Arbeiter Zeitung, addressed a large meeting of striking lumber yard workers at the

¹ Census of Chicago for June 1884, reprinted in Appleton's Annual Encyclopedia, 1884, p. 403.

² C. E. Russell, op. cit., p. 402.

³ Chicago Tribune, May 1-4, 1886.

Black Road, about a quarter of a mile north of McCormick's factory. While he was speaking, a group of men on the fringe of the crowd cried out, "On to McCormicks! Let us drive off the scabs." About two hundred men left the group and ran towards the factory. Spies, who was unaware of what was being done, continued speaking and was followed by a Polish speaker. While the latter spoke a patrol wagon rushed up towards McCormick's. The crowd began to break up. In about three minutes, several shots were heard and soon followed by others. More detachments of police arrived and opened fire on the fleeing men and women. Some five or six of the crowd were mortally wounded and several times that number hurt.

Spies went back to his office to compose a circular protesting against this outrage. The substance of this was largely responsible for his eventual execution:

"Revenge!

"Workingmen to Arms!!!

"Your masters sent out their bloodhounds—
the police; they killed six of your brothers
at McCormick's this afternoon. . . If you
are men, if you are the sons of your grandsires
who have shed their blood to free you, then
you will rise in your might, Hercules, and de—
stroy the hideous monster that seeks to destroy
you! To arms, we call you, to arms!"

Northeastern Reporter, Vol. 122, p. 882.
 Ibid., also Chicago Tribune, May 4, 1886. Spies wrote all of this except the word, "Revenge." Abstract of Record, Vol. II, p. 311.

The next day a circular was distributed announcing a mass meeting at seven-thirty that night at the Haymarket square on Randolph street between Desplaines and Halsted. It was feared by some that an outbreak might take place. The Mayor, Carter H. Harrison, decided to be present. the Chicago Tribune, a highly colored account of the Mc-Cormick affair was given in which a mob of 10,000 men, most of whom were fighting drunk, attacked the employees of the McCormick Reaper Company as they came from work. They had been "wrought up to a frenzy by the inflammatory More factories harangues of a lot of rabid Anarchists." were reported closed as men struck for shorter hours. Armour organizations capitulated to the strikers. employers met at various hotels in convention to decide on a firm policy of resistance.

That night, the anticipated large crowd failed to materialize. It was unnecessary to use the large Haymarket proper, so the speaker, August Spies, who arrived about eight-thirty, moved to a point in front of Crane's Alley on Desplaines street between Randolph and Lake. The rear of an empty wagon was used as a speaker's platform. About one hundred yards from this point a force of 180 police was

¹ The Chicago Tribune, May 4, 1886.

² Sigmund Zeisler, Reminiscences of the Anarchist Case, read before the Chicago Literary Club, 1927.

kept in readiness at the Desplaines Street Police Station; reserves were spread about the district. The mayor himself was listening attentively in the audience. He was prepared to order the dispersal of the crowd if any suggestion of violence was made. Several reporters were present—and some police informers.

Spies began by stating that the meeting had not been called for the purpose of inciting a riot. He wished to deny the account of the McCormick affair in the Chicago

Tribune which had attributed the attack on the factory to his inspiration. Referring to the police in this instance,

Spies was later reported to have said, "The day is not far distant when we will resort to hanging these men." When Albert Parsons, the editor of the Alarm, arrived he was asked to address the meeting. He followed Spies who had spoken for fifteen or twenty minutes. His speech, which lasted about forty five minutes, attracted considerable attention though it dealt largely with statistics on capital and labor.

Harrison was becoming bored. He noted that when a speaker referred to the brutality of certain industrialists, a small boy amused everyone by his shrill, "Hang him!" The audience was largely German and appeared to be less than

¹ Testimony of English, Reporter for the Chicago Tribune,
Abstract of Record, Vol. II, p. 130.

a thousand in number. He did not believe there were more than two or three hundred sympathizers in the crowd. During Parson's speech, he left for five minutes to go to the Desplaines Street Station to tell Captain Bonfield that the meeting was "tame." He suggested that the police reserves be released. Bonfield agreed and stated that his spies in the crowd had given him a similar report. The mayor noted that the crowd was unarmed and far from considering any act of violence. Bonfield declared that he had received information that the Haymarket meeting or part of it would go over to the Milwaukee and St. Paul Freight house, which was manned by scabs, and blow it up.

After Parsons finished speaking, Samuel Fielden, who was associated with the Alarm, spoke. It was now about ten o'clock. Harrison, convinced that there would be no trouble, went home. Clouds were forming in the sky and people began leaving. Soon two-thirds had left; only some three hundred remained. Parsons interrupted the speaker to suggest that they go to Zepf's Hall nearby, but Fielden declared that he was almost through; besides Zepf's Hall was occupied as the lights in that section indicated. Parson then left with his wife and children. Spies had also gone. One remark made by Fielden during the course of his speech

¹ Testimony of Carter H. Harrison, Abstract of Record, Vol. II, p. 174.

² Testimony of Fielden, ibid., pp. 264-275.

was later used against him, "You have nothing more to do with the law except to lay hands on it and throttle it until it makes its last kick." Just as he was saying, "In conclusion--", a cry of "police" was raised.

A force of 180 policement under Bonfield and Ward were marching slowly from the Desplaines Street Station, three abreast in the middle of the roadway, leaving the sidewalks The electric lights of the Lyceum Theatre revealed their forms to the crowd. Many of the latter began going away to Randolph Street. When the police had reached a point near the speaker's platform, Captain Ward gave the statutory command to disperse. To this, Fielden remonstrated, "Why Captain, this is a peaceable meeting!" Suddenly, something like a miniature rocket rose out of the crowd on the east sidewalk in a line with the police and fell among the officers. A terrific explosion followed. Uniformed men fell on all sides; about fifty were hurt by the dynamite which was of a concentrated quality; seven were fatally wounded. One policeman, Mathias J. Degan, died almost immediately. The remaining officers fired wildly wherever they happened to throw their arms.

Thoroughly enraged, the police began to shoot at those in open doorways and in entrances of houses and saloons. Fielden was shot. A bell tolled a riot alarm. New crowds

¹ The Chicago Tribune, May 5, 1886. Testimony of Captain John Bonfield, Abstract of Record, II, p. 1.

² Testimony of Barton Simonson, Abstract of Record, II, p. 176.

of spectators who were startled by the explosion were dispersed by the police.

The news of a gigantic conspiracy of Anarchists against law and order was telegraphed everywhere. York, London, Berlin, Paris, Vienna--all received the account of "wholesale murder in the streets of Chicago." The New York Herald produced the news under the caption "Dynamite and Blood!" The special correspondent reported, "The labor world this evening is in revolt. Blood has been shed during the day and from appearances this evening the morrow will not be any better." The editor attributed the bloodshed to "the thousands of Poles, Bohemians, and other malcontents from Central Europe. " The London Times produced a distorted version of the affair. Its editor declared, "There are signs that the temper which has sometimes made the State militia mercilessly shoot down lawless mobs is aroused and the Socialists will do well to take note of this. . . . Rarely has the world of industry been more disturbed than it is. " He hoped that the treatment of Socialists in Chicago and Milwaukee would not be "maudlin or weak." The Chicago Tribune devoted itself to a strong

¹ This was a Caption of the New York Herald, May 5, 1886.

<sup>Z Ibid., May 6, 1886.
The Times (London), May 6, 1886.</sup>

demand for vengeance which received support in many parts

of the country. Its editor declared significantly:

Perhaps some such monstrous act as this was needed to arouse public opinion in Chicago and unite law-abiding citizens in defense of their rights. Until recently the conduct of the municipal authorities in dealing with all Anarchist demonstrations has been pusillanimous.

There must be an atonement. The scoundrels who murdered them must be punished.

Labor leaders denounced the murder and defended themselves from charges of abetting violence. The strikers still held out in many cases despite the alienation of a certain amount of support; after a few days, with the rising tide of lynch feeling, they were forced in many instances to capitualate. Employers, who had refused to be impoverished by the eight-hour movement, hastened to contribute to the policemen's fund with unprecedented generosity. The Chicago packing firms gave \$25,000.during the first day of the drive. On the second day, the railroads alone gave \$10,750.

2 to the families of the stricken police. The succeeding days brought such a shower of corporation contributions as to excite considerable notice in other cities.

The London editor was correct in his analysis of the current unrest pervading the industrial world. France,
Belgium, Austria-Hungary, Great Britain and other industrialized countries were experiencing strikes and police conflicts.

¹ The Chicago Tribune, May 5, 1886.

² Ibid., May 5-10, 1886.

The position of the Socialists as well as Anarchists was the topic of debate in several parliaments. In the West End of London a riot occurred which was interpreted in England as the "working of a spirit which threatens order in the Old and New World." From Milwaukee came the news of an industrial war which was second only to the Haymarket riot in magnitude. A demonstration of strikers both men and women, said to be socialists, was fired upon by the state militia after an order for their dispersal had been made. Five strikers were killed outright and about a dozen wounded, several of them fatally. Stray bullets of the militia hit a schoolboy on his way to class and invaded a sickroom. The anger aroused among the workingmen assumed such proportions as to threaten open civil war. The police brought in the Catling gun which was assuming a primary place in industrial conflict.

With the news of the Chicago Riot, a widespread struggle was feared. In Cincinnati, the Governor of Ohio upon the 4 request of the mayor sent four regiments to that city.

In New York the militia was held in readiness for an expected

¹ The Times (London), May 7-8, 1886.

² Ibid., May 6, 1886.

³ The New York Herald, May 5, 1886; the Chicago Tribune, May 4-5, 1886.

⁴ Special Correspondent to The Times (London), May 10, 1886.

Certain employers in that city, encouraged by the reaction against labor, prepared to end the shorter hour movement by a lockout.

Within a few days of the Chicago Riot, a powerful sentiment among conservative newspapers all over the country arose demanding that the Anarchist leaders be hanged. Indianapolis Journal declared, "Nothing less than hanging will do justice to the Chicago Assassins. . . Let there be no talk about imprisonment." The Chicago Tribune editor suggested that even if the evidence should fail, the Illinois criminal code was broad enough to convict the Anarchists This journal likewise demanded of conspiracy at least. hanging for the accused. The pulpit added its voice to the cry for vengeance.

Meanwhile the Chicago police, aided by Pinkerton's and official approval, started on an anarchist hunt determined to find the necessary victims to popular clamor. Homes were invaded without warrant and ransacked for evidence; suspects were beaten and subjected to the "third degree;"

The New York Herald, May 5, 1886.
The Chicago Tribune of May 9, 1886 quotes the fierce sentiment for hanging in the New York Graphic, the Cleveland Leader, the Boston Herald, the St. Paul Globe, the Indianapolis Journal, the New Orleans Times-Democrat, the Nashville, American, the Denver Tribune, the Davenport Gazette, the New York World, the New York Sun, the Philadelphia Times, the Savannah News, the Atlanta Constitution, the New York Express, and the Brooklyn Eagle. Ibid., May 6, 1886.

individuals, who were ignorant of the meaning of socialism and anarchism, were tortured by the police, sometimes bribed as well, to act as witnesses for the state. Governor Altgeld later collected affidavits establishing these facts. One affiant, Vaclar Djmek, whose home had been thus invaded, swore that the officers had wrecked his belongings because a pillow slip was red. His deposition reads in part:

. . . though this affiant offered no resistance whatever and went at the command of the officer, peacefully, this affiant was choked, covered with revolvers, and otherwise inhumanly treated by the police officers; that for many days this affiant was jailed and refused a preliminary hearing; that during said time he was threatened and promised immunity by the police if he would turn State's witness; . . . that on his protestations that he knew nothing to which he could testify, this affiant was abused and ill-treated; that while he was jailed, this affiant was kicked, clubbed, beaten and scratched . . . and was threatened with hanging by the police; that this affiant's wife was abused by the police when she sought permission to see the affiant.

During this reign of terror, Mrs. Lucy E. Parons, the wife of the editor of the Alarm who had been arrested, was herself arrested four times and subjected to unmentionable indignities. Eventually the suspects were reduced to eight individuals, Parsons, Fielden, Spies, Michael Schwab, Louis

¹ Affidavits in Live Questions, pp. 393-394.

² Ibid.

Lingg, Oscar Neebès, George Engel, and Adolph Fischer.
Only Fielden had been present at the time of the explosion;
Parsons and Spies had left some time before; the others
were either at home or speaking elsewhere. A coroner's jury
which held an inquest over the death of Policeman Mathias J.
Degan recommended that the eight men be held without bail
to await grand jury action. The coroner declared that the
accused "were not brought here as persons suspected of
having been concerned immediately in this horrible crime,
but the evidence is such as to show that they may have a
good deal to do with it." Eventually the men were tried
jointly for conspiracy.

The character of the 'conspirators' was wholly out of keeping with the types that the public had been led to expect. Instead of grizzled bomb-throwing agitators, the courts discovered a group of young men, who with one possible exception, Lingg, were peaceful in their lives and inclinations. They revealed a type of social idealism that was readily appreciated by a few kindred spirits like Henry Demarest Lloyd, George A. Schilling, John Buchanan, William Dean Howells, and other independent minds who were not intimidated by the current lynch feeling.

August Spies was then thirty years old. He had come to the United States in 1872 from Germany. For a time he

¹ The Chicago Tribune, May 6, 1986.

had been an upholsterer, but gave it up to accept the editorship of the Arbeiter Zeitung at a salary of eighteen dollars a week. His conversion to anarchist theory had come about as a result of the stolen elections of 1877 and 1879. The phrases of violence which he had written in his paper were always vague as to details, time, and place. He envisaged a revolution which was to come in the future and for which one must be prepared by being armed. As one of the weapons of that revolution he recommended dynamite as highly efficacious.

Albert R. Parsons, thirty seven years old, was born in Montgomery, Alabama and had come to Chicago about 1873 to follow his trade as a type-setter. He described himself a socialist and an anarchist "as I understand it." He did not believe the ballot was useless because he felt that the worker's numerical majority would assert itself; though he stated on the witness stand that the existing scheme of things was founded on force. Since October 1884, he had been editor of the Alarm. He had been in Cincinnati on May 2, 1886, but returned to Chicago two days later where he learned of a labor meeting at the Haymarket which lacked speakers. As already noted, he arrived late, about

¹ Testimony of August Vincent Theodore Spies, Abstract of Record, II, 296, et passim; for copious citations from his Arbeiter Zeitung for 1885-6 see Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 141-204. A short summary of this material is in Currey, Chicago: Its History and Its Builders, Vol. II, pp. 385-6.

nine o'clock, and left an hour later. In his speech, he had recommended that the workingmen arm themselves if necessary as protection against the tactics of the Chicago Tribune and the Times. The former had recently advocated the putting of strychnine on the bread left for tramps whom the depression was bringing to the city; the Times urged 1 the use of hand grenades to break strikes.

Samuel ("Good Natured") Fielden, thirty-nine years of age, was born in Lancashire, England. When eight years old he had begun as a factory hand in a local cotton mill. For a short time he served as a lay Methodist preacher. His essentially religious nature brought him into the maelstrom of various reform movements in England and later in the United States; his passionate eloqueme marked him as a dangerous person. He came to this country in July, 1868 and worked as a weaver in a woolen mill, but soon came to Chicago where his conversion to Anarchism had been not unlike that of others. In July, 1884, he joined the American unit of the International Working People's Association. On trial he appeared ashamed of some of his

Testimony of Albert R. Parsons, Abstract of Record, II pp. 313-4. The Chicago Tribune likewise hailed the use of the murderous Gatling Gun in industrial disputes, May 4, 1886, This was the day previous to the Haymarket affair.

extreme utterances and declared that he was never positive as to the use of violence to overthrow the existing order. His admission of owning two dollars worth of stock in the Alarm seemed of primary importance to the prosecution. Like Parsons, Fielden had agreed to speak at a late moment to the Haymarket crowd when an appeal was made that there were no speakers present. At one time, he belonged to a military drill group which met six times, but no arms had ever been used. He declared that he had never used a revolver in his life.

Michael Schwab, co-editor of the Arbeiter Zeitung and a native of Germany had been in the United States for seven years, living for a short time in Milwaukee and during the last five years in Chicago. In Germany he had been connected with the trade unionist movement and the Socialist groups. He was a book-binder by trade. Though he became a member of the north side group of the International Workingmen's Association, he did not consider himself an anarchist in the usual sense. The late Morris Hillquit, American Socialist leader, paid a high tribute to Schwab's earnestness and devotion to labor reforms. Schwab had gone to the

¹ Testimony of Samuel Fielden, Abstract of Record, II, pp. 264-275; also Curry, op. city Vol. II, pp. 385-6.

² Curry, op, cit., II, pp. 386-7.

Haymarket meeting to deliver a telephone message to

Spies that the latter was to speak at Deering. He came

before the meeting began and failed to see Spies that

l
night.

George Engel, the oldest of the accused men, was born in 1836 in Cassel, Germany. He came to Chicago in 1873 and had a small toy shop. Before coming to this city, he had become aroused as to the labor problem by observing the spectacle of the Pennsylvania militia subjugating Philadelphia strikers. In Chicago, the election grafts of the Fourteenth Ward so disgusted him that he joined the Anarchist movement.

Adolph Fischer, came from Bremen, Germany when fifteen years old. His parents had been Socialists. Like the others he was drawn into the Anarchist movement when he came to Chicago. He was foreman and chief printer of 3 the Arbeiter Zeitung.

Oscar Neebe, thirty-seven years old, was born in this country and came to Chicago in 1866. He joined the Socialist Labor Party and was particularly active in the eight-hour movement. He was primarily a trade unionist

¹ Testimony of Michael Schwab, Abstract of Record, II, pp 294.

² Abstract of Record, II, passim.

³ Ibid., passim; Northeastern Reporter, Vol. 122, p. 868.

and could hardly be considered an Anarchist.

Louis Lingg was a bona fide follower of Johann Most, the Anarchist leader though like his master, he was inclined to ferocity of expression rather than deed. He claimed to have been awakened to the cause of labor at thirteen by the contrast between luxury and poverty.

At times he had experimented with dynamite. His death is ascribed to suicide by this means.

The Arbeiter Zeitung was the German organ of the International Association of Workingmen. It had two special forms, the Sunday edition (Die Fackel) and the weekly edition (Der Yorbote). The total circulation was not above 3600. The English speaking group had as its organ The Alarm, edited by Parsons. This paper led an uncertain life, appearing first as a weekly, then as a semi-monthly; its circulation was approximately 2000. Affiliation with these insignificant newspapers was considered major evidence by the prosecution upon which to hang the accused man.

When the trial opened on June 21, 1886 in the Criminal Court of Cook County, it was apparent that its proceedings

¹ Northwastern Reporter, p. 868 et passim.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

were being watched eagerly by the press of the entire civilized world. A defense committee had been organized by Dr. Ernst Schmidt, a man of high standing in the city and a former candidate for mayor. The lawyers for the defense were Captain William P. Black, William A. Foster, Sigmund Zeisler, and Moses Solomon. Of these men. only the first two had had experience in the local courts. Zeisler, though an able individual, was a foreigner who had just been admitted to the Illinois bar; Solomon was "a beardless youth of no recognized standing." The States Attorney, Julius S. Grinnell, was a man of considerable experience and resourcefulness, ready to profit by his opponents' mistakes, but obviously determined to use any means necessary to convict the defendants. layman is apt to regard such a battle of wits for the ostensible purpose of determining justice as little removed from the medieval ordeal by battle where truth lay with the stronger.

The change of venue made on the petition of the defense from Judge Rogers to Judge Joseph E. Gary proved a bitter disappointment to the hopes of the men on trial.

l Zeisler, op. cit. p. 19.

² Frederick Trevor Hill, "Decisive Battles of the Law,"

Harpers Monthly Magazine, May 1907, pp. 889-900.

Parson handed a note to Zeisler, "In taking a change of venue from Judge Rogers to Lord Jeffries (Gary) did not the defendants jump from the frying pan into the fire?" Gary was regarded up to that time as an able lawyer and an excellent Judge, though occasionally narrow in viewpoint. His subsequent conduct, in the face of the current demand for the lives of the accused, was to belie his reputation. When Defense Attorney Foster protested against the prejudice of a prospective juror, Judge Gary compared the Anarchists to horsethieves, " . . . for a man to say he is prejudiced against horsethieves is no ground for imputing to him any misconduct as juror." dubious logic, he stated that communists, socialists, and anarchists were either a praiseworthy class with worthy objects or else he could not say that a prejudice against them was wrong. The defense attorney, Zeisler, later wrote:

Judge Gary never gave the States Attorney a chance to open his mouth but took it upon himself to argue against us. In so doing he inevitably said many things in the hearing of the jury which could not but prejudice them against Mr. Neebe (against whom no case existed until the end of the trial).

The choice of a jury upon which everything depended

Zeisler, op. cit., p. 20.
Abstract of Record, Vol. I, p. 46. Die Fackel (Sunday issue of the Arbeiter Zeitung) wrote on June 27, 1886 of Judge Gary, "Reaction sits in judgment over its deadly enemies, whose fate has been determined in advance, and gives itself a hypocritical simulation of impartiality.

was conducted under particularly reprehensible circumstances. The States Attorney, Grinnell, recommended Henry L. Ryce as a special bailiff and the latter, who was wholly unfit for the task, was accepted by the judge. The defense attorneys, fearing to be swamped by middle-class jurors, then asked that the jurors be drawn from the body of the county, not from the Chicago wholesale districts. To this Judge Gary retorted that the bailiff was to use his own judgment in getting the best class of men. "They may be selected anywhere in the county that the bailiff pleases." sequently, twenty-one days were consumed in examining 981 prospective jurors, most of whom were objectionable to the defense. According to the statutory provision, each defendant on trial for murder was given twenty peremptory challenges, i. e., the right to disqualify any juror without assigning cause. This gave the prisoners a total of 160 such challenges. It can be readily seen therefore that the tactics of the bailiff aimed at the exhaustion of this fund of peremptory challenges by providing men who would be unacceptable to the defense. On the other hand,

^{3 (}cont. from previous page) Zeisler, op. cit., p. 32. This is emphatically borne out by the court record. Judge Gary was angry at what he considered unreasonable tactics on the part of the defense attorneys.

¹ Abstract of the Record, I, p. 64.

² According to Frederick T. Hill, a prominent lawyer who studied this case, the situation was unique. "Certainly

the state could challenge unacceptable jurors and did excuse 52 of them.

A study of the composition of the prospective jurors called by the bailiff for examination is revelatory of their essentially middle-class character. Of the 659 men whose vocations were clearly noted on the record, 439 were merchants, bankers, and professional men, 90 were clerks and bookkeepers, 61 were salesmen and business agents, 37 were manufacturers, and a scattered handful of craftsmen-some of whom were challenged by the State and excused-completed the list.

A further proof of the deliberate nature of Ryce's empanelling of elements likely to be hostile to the accused men lies in an affidavit of Otis S. Favor. This affidavit was not made until November 7, 1887, four days before the hanging of Parsons, Engel, Spies, and Fischer. Its contents were known in substance, however, on October 1, 1886 when a motion for a new trial was being discussed, but the court refused to issue a subpoena for Favor. In this he quoted Ryce as saying, "I am managing this case, and know what I am about. Those fellows (Spies, et al.) are going to be hanged as certain as death. I am calling such men as the

⁽cont.) no court record in the United States reveals a deeper prejudice or a more widespread public prejudice than that disclosed by the sworn testimony of the talesmen in this case. op. cit., p. 890.

¹ Based on the Abstract of Record, Vol. I. Governor Altgeld

defendants will have to challenge peremptorily and waste their time and challenges. Then they will have to take such men as the prosecution wants."

Favor was himself prejudiced against the defendants and had to be excused from serving as a juror. He stated that, although he was on friendly terms with Ryce, he was prompted by a sense of duty to make the disclosure. In October, 1886, he had gone voluntarily to the office of State's Attorney Grinnell and made the quotation above in the presence of several witnesses. Though Ryce filed an affidavit denying the truth of Favor's statements, the evidence is overwhelmingly against him. A consideration of Favor's reputation as a merchant and conservative as well as an analysis of the court record itself are convincing on this point.

The composition of the ultimate jury of twelve men can easily be imagined. Practically all admitted prejudice,

⁽cont.) later wrote in his pardon message, "According to the record 981 men were examined as to their qualifications as jurors, and most of them were either employers, or men who had been pointed out to the bailiff by their employer." Reasons for Pardoning Fielden. Neebe. and Schwab; reprinted in Live Questions, p. 369.

² Affidavit of E. A. Stevens regarding Ryce statement, and Gary's refusal to issue subpoena in Abstract of Record, Vol. I, p. 26.

¹ Affidavit of Otis S. Favor in Live Questions, pp. 368-9. 2 Ibid.

but offered to try the case on its merits. There was a merchant, a manufacturer, three salesmen, three clerks, two bookkeepers, one educator, and a seed store helper. None were employed in any occupation which was influenced by the trade union movement. Several were employers of labor. At least two of the jurors admitted a settled opinion on the subject unfavorable to the accused. Due to lack of space, only one extract from the voluminous court records of examination will be used:

Denker was examined by the Defense Attorney:

- Q. Have you formed an opinion upon the question of the defendant's guilt or innocence upon the charge of murder, or any of them? A. I have.
 - Q. Have you expressed that opinion? A. I have.
 - Q. You still entertain it? A. Yes.
- Q. Is that opinion such as to prevent you from rendering an impartial verdict in the case sitting as a juror under the testimony and the law? A. I think it is.

Spies v. Ill., U. S. Reports, Vol. 123, p. 131; also
U. S. Supreme Court Reports, Vol. 123, pp. 80-91.

See Abstract of Record, Vol. I for a plethora of this and similar testimony. An affidavit of Thomas J. Morgan attributes this statement to Denker regarding the anarchists, "... the police ought to have shot them down, ... they had no right in this country and if he were on the jury he would hang all the damned buggers." Abstract of Record, I, p. 27.

(Challenged for cause by defendants, but Grinnell interposes).

Grinnell (for State). If you were taken and sworn as a juror in the case, can't you determine the innocence or the guilt of the defendants upon the proof that is presented to you here in court regardless of your having any prejudice or opinion? A. I think I could. (Grinnell repeated this and the juror finally said, "Yes.")

Judge Gary overruled the defense and accepted the juror, Denker. The bullying tactics of Grinnell proved 1 successful.

After this lengthy examination of prospective jurors, the trial testimony began on July 11, 1886 and was completed eight days later. Much of this has already been considered, but certain aspects remain to be dealt with. The prosecution, proceeding under the theory of conspiracy, attempted to prove, by state witnesses and numerous citations from the Alarm and the Arbeiter Zeitung, that the defendants advocated the course of action followed by 2 the unknown bomb-thrower.

The star witness for the state was Harry L. Gilmer,

The editor of Die Fackel (June 27, 1886) wrote, "Every citizen who is a day laborer is 'excused.' The Prosecutor wishes only respectable men, bankers, manufacturers, and 'solid business men.'"

2 Abstract of Record, I, pp. 141-204.

who claimed to be a painter by trade. He declared that he saw Rudolph Schnaubelt, a brother-in-law of Michael Schwab, in company with August Spies and Adolph Fischer, throw a bomb over the heads of the crowd from a point on the south side of the Alley. This startling testimony was soon reduced by the witness' self-contradiction and the evidence of his own unreliability. When questioned as to whether he had spoken to Captain John Bonfield since the previous day, Gilmer denied it, but after the question was sharply repeated, he admitted the fact. The witness, who seemed little better than a tramp according to the affidavits of his neighbors, further admitted that he received little sums of money, ten cents, and sometimes as high as twenty-five cents, from the police when The theory that Schnaubelt he came over to the station. threw the bomb is still reiterated to this day, though the latter, who refused to trust himself to the tender mercies of Gary's justice, denied it emphatically from his place of exile.

Another theory of the state which undoubtedly influenced the jury was that Fielden had given the signal for

¹ Abstract of Record, II, pp. 140-1.

Possibly the identification of the bomb-thrower was known to several anarchists, but after the hanging of the four men, there was no inducement to bring him forward to share the fate of his comrades. When their hanging seemed certain, a telegram came from New York offering to present the actual bomb-thrower. This will be discussed in another connection.

the bomb-throwing. The explosion had followed his statement, "Why, officer, this is a peaceable meeting!" The prosecutor showed that on May 4, 1886, a single German word advertisement was inserted in the Arbeiter Zeitung, "Ruhe," which was translated as "peaceable," but is more properly rendered, "quiet," "repose." This slogan had been put in by the armed sections of the International Workingmen's Association and had nothing to do with the meeting. It was part of the claptrap of a small group of fanatics who used that slogan to warn their members to keep armed. Further testimony that Fielden had fired a pistol at the police was disproved by the statements of many bystanders.

The defense attorneys, in addition to the rebuttal of the foregoing testimony, argued that mere participation in an unlawful assembly does not make any person responsible for the independent crime of a participant; in order to hold the accused as accessories on the ground of conspiracy, the principal actor must be identified as a co-conspirator. They protested against the use of 160 peremptory challenges by the state as contrary to law, and

¹ Abstract of Record, II, p. 296.

objected to the rulings of Judge Gary.

When the evidence had been completed, the Judge, upon the motion of the defense, instructed the jury that there was no case against Oscar Neebe and that they were to render a verdict of not guilty in his instance.

Neebe had not been aware of the Haymarket meeting and was at home at the time. The jury returned, however, with a verdict of guilt for all of the defendants. Judge Gary thereupon semtenced the accused men to death except Neebe, who although declared guilty of murder, was sentenced to fifteen years imprisonment.

A crowd outside the courtroom cheered the decision.

A feeling of relief swept over the country. The defense attorneys now carried the case to the Illinois Supreme

Court on a writ of error, but were unsuccessful. Justice

Magruder defined socialistic principles as advocating theft of property and hence the juror was entitled to a prejudice against them and their exponents. He therefore reaffirmed the judgment of the Criminal Court of Cook

County. 3

The case now was brought before the Supreme Court of the United States. Roger A. Pryor, who acted for the

¹ Reprinted in Spies v. Illinois, Northeastern Reporter, 122, p. 908-9.

² Zeisler, op. cit., p. 33; Northeastern Reporter, p. 907.

³ Northeastern Reporter, Vol. 122, p. 992.

defense argued that the Illinois jury statute was not
"due process of law," as provided by the Fourteenth
Amendment, since it made competent a juror with a preconceived opinion as to the guilt of the accused. Justice
Harlan, who delivered the majority opinion of the court!
ruled in favor of the contention of Grinnell that no
federal questions were involved and that a reviewing court
ought not to set aside the findings of a trial court, unless the error was manifest, which was not the case here.

The hanging of the seven men, which could now be averted only by the Governor's action, aroused deep sorrow in many quarters. William Morris, the famous English 2 humanitarian wrote to Robert Browning:

I am much troubled by this horror. We all thought the Supreme Court would have granted the writ of error, and that a new trial would either have acquitted the men or justified their sentence, so as to prevent such a terrible disgrace as a judicial murder clinging to the robe of the Great Republic.

William Dean Howells, the outstanding American novelist of his day, who had closely followed the case and regarded the verdict as unjust, led a universal protest of all liberal elements and appealed for a popular movement which

¹ Spies v. Ill., U. S. Reports, Vol. 123, pp. 131-182.

² Letter in Appendix of Zeisler's book, op. cit.

would induce the Governor of Illinois to mitigate the Gglesby was overwhelmed by a flood of punishment. petitions from mass-meetings in the United States and England. Many famous men and women sent letters to the Governor, among them Walter Besant, Olive Schreiner, William Morris, Annie Besant, Oscar Wilde, Frederick Engels, and George Bernard Shaw. Thirty-two British Clubs wired resolutions to Springfield. Oglemby's mail became so great that it was no longer possible to consider more than a small part of these protests. In Illinois, a formidable movement aiming at a pardon or a commutation of the death sentence, developed under the leadership of George A. Schilling, Judge Samuel P. Mc-Connell, Lyman Gage, Henry Demarest Lloyd, and the defense attorneys.

Governor Richard J. Oglesby found himself at once the cynosure of two continents. His attempt to steer an impartial course in earlier industrial disputes and his refusal to use the militia in anarchist hunts had not

¹ Open Letter in New York Tribune, Nov. 4, 1887. Life in Letters of William Dean Howells, edited by Mildred Howells, Vol. I, pp. 393, 398-9. Howell's open letter was at the instance of Roger Pryor.

² Governor's Letter Book, Feb. 25, 1896, pp. 404-5. This is a summary of the letters which Altgeld's Secretary, Col. Dose, found in Oglesby's files. The Springfield Archives contain two huge cases of pleas for executive clemency. Enormous petitions containing thousands of names are inclosed.

endeared him to conservative newspapers. His father had been a Kentucky slaveholder, but young Oglesby had turned abolitionist and served in the Union Army. The popularity of "Uncle Dick" was great among the people who elected him three times to the gubernatorial chair. In 1872, he had been chosen as United States Senator to succeed Lyman Trumbull and in 1884, nominated by acclamation as Governor. Oglesby, if not as courageous as Altgeld, was no reactionary.

The condemned men, however, seriously complicated the Governor's problem. Several had lost the last vestige of respect for the processes of the judiciary and felt themselves as symbols of humanity on trial. Parsons, Fisher, Engel, Lingg, and Spies refused mercy and demanded their freedom or hanging. Only Samuel Fielden and Michael Schwab asked for a commutation of their sentences to imprisonment. Spies wrote the following pitiful letter to Oglesby:

> Take my life. I offer it to you that you may satisfy the fury of a semi-barbaric mob, and save the lives of my comrades . . . In the name of the traditions of our country I beg you to prevent a seven-fold murder upon men whose only crime is that they are idealists.

Elizabeth B. Ellis, "Richard J. Oglesby," Dictionary of 1

American Biography, Vol. 13, p. 648. Letter of Engel of Nov. 9, 1887 in the Chicago Histori-2 cal Society, Manuscript Pivision. Other letters in the Anarchist Papers, Ill. State Archival Division.

Letter reprinted in Joseph R. Buchanan's, The Story of a Labor Agitator, p. 388. Buchanan was an emissary for Spies to the Governor.

. . . If legal murder there must be, let one, let mine suffice.

On November 9, 1887, two days before the hanging a meeting of the friends of the condemned men was held in the State House under the leadership of George A. Schilling, organizer of an amnesty association. Every part of the country was represented by labor delegations. The Governor listened sympathetically to the appeals of Henry D. Lloyd and Samuel Gompers. He was impressed by the arguments, though he seemed to think that Lloyd was justifying the bomb-throwing. On several occasions, he was moved to tears.

The next day, Oglesby, while declaring himself convinced as to the guilt of all parties, decided that the sentences of Fielden and Schwab could be commuted to life imprisonment "without doing violence to public gustice." Louis Lingg committed suicide that morning in his cell which left four men to face the hangman's noose. That day a telegram came to Captain Black of the Defense Committee with this startling news:

I have proof showing Anarchists to be innocent. Guilty man in New York. Proof is under oath. How shall I communicate it?

¹ Samuel P. McConnell, "The Chicago Bomb Case," Harper's May 1934, p. 730. Samuel Gompers, Seventy Years of Life and Labor, II, pp. 178-181. Copy of "Open Letter to America" in the Lloyd Papers, Feb. 28, 1889.

² Letter of Commutation, Nov. 10, 1887, Anarchist Pardon Papers.

It was signed by August Wagener, a New York attorney whose standing was vouched for by a reporter from that city who was present. An appeal was made to Governor Oglesby asking for a reprieve of sixty or ninety days and a promise was made to turn the guilty man over in forty-eight hours. The Governor asked if this could be done in case he refused to grant the reprieve, but Black replied that he would then be helpless to do anything. At that, Oglesby, after a brief consideration, declared that he saw no reason for altering his decision.

Thus the matter ended. On November 11, 1886, the four condemned men, Parsons, Engel, Fischer, and Spies bravely met their death. They had fulfilled the tribal law of vengeance.

of the Defense wrote to H. D. Lloyd, "I want to say to you here and now, for reasons which are cogent to me, I have always had a great doubt as to whether that bomb was thrown by an anarchist at all; as to whether it was not thrown by a police minion for the purpose of breaking up the eighthour movement," July 22, 1893, Lloyd Papers.

CHAPTER IV

ALTGELD PARDONS THE ANARCHISTS

During the years following the execution, Schilling's Amnesty Association continued to work indefatigably for the release of the surviving Anarchists at Joliet Penetentiary. The cause of Neebe, Schwab, and Fielden became closely identified with the struggle of labor everywhere for better conditions. In Chicago alone, the Association gathered one hundred thousand members, chiefly from trade unionist bodies; by June, 1893, there were 375 branch lodges of the organization. Although the intervening administration of Governor Joseph Fifer had proved devoid of results as far as the imprisoned men were concerned, there were ample grounds for the widespread belief that the new Governor would act. Schilling initiated an appeal for a monster petition to the Governor. Preparations were made for a new descent upon Springfield with an Amnesty Committee consisting of prominent Chicago-Conservatives now feared the worst. ans of all classes.

This movement gained momentum with the adhesion of a large business and professional class element. Lyman J. Gage, president of the First National Bank and later

¹ The Chicago Tribune, June 27, 1893.

² Letter of Schilling to Lloyd, April 29, 1892, Lloyd Papers.

Letter of Charles Bary (Secretary of Amnesty Assoc.) to Lloyd, May 31, 1893, Ibid.

Secretary of the Treasury in McKinley's cabinet, took a prominent part. He declared to Schilling that the hanging had created a dangerous rift between classes and it was necessary to remove the resentment of the workingmen who placed the responsibility for the collapse of the eight-hour movement upon the shoulders of the middle class. E. S. Dreyer, another banker who had shared the common hysteria of 1886-7, proved of great service in the struggle for an executive pardon. The publisher and proprietor of the Chicago Inter-Ocean, William Penn Nixon, a prominent Republican, became the chairman of the amnesty committee. Liberals like Judge Samuel P. McConnell, Edward Osgood Brown, and Clarence Darrow acted persistently among those who came to see the Governor; Judge Murray F. Tuley, Lyman Trumbull, Edward F. Dunne, and William C. Goudy were likewise active.

At the time of the famous trial of the anarchists,
Altgeld, who was then a judge, refrained from comment
upon the case, though he sent money and clothing to the

Interview with George A. Schilling, December 8, 1935.
Zeisler, "Reminiscences of the Anarchist Case," op.cit.
p. 15. Zeisler declares that Dreyer became the most active of all the eminent figures who sought the pardon for the three anarchists.

³ Mss. of speech delivered by C. S. Darrow at a memorial meeting at the Auditorium, April 20.

distressed families of the defendants. During his election campaign and almost up to the moment of his message, he refused to commit himself as to what he would do regarding the anarchists. A labor delegation which came to see him while he was a candidate for Governor was given no definite answer on this matter and when one member 2 proved unpleasantly aggressive he was shown the door.

The Republican newspapers however pretended to be better informed. The editor of the Illinois State Journal declared that "Every vote for John P. Altgeld will be a vote for the pardon of the anarchists in Joliet Penitentiary."

Altgeld's remark during the campaign that he could see no harm in anarchists and socialists carrying red flags was bitterly attacked as an indication of the lawless 4 character of Democratic candidate.

Altgeld's humanitarian ideals were the sole basis for the belief that he would pardon the anarchists. During the late fall of 1891, he had protested against police brutality in the perennial raids to discover anarchist

¹ Darrow, The Story of My Life, pp. 99-100. 2 Interview with Schilling, Dec. 8, 1935.

³ Illinois State Journal, Nov. 6, 1892.

⁴ Ibid.

plots. In a letter to the chief of Police, Major R. W.

1
McClaughry, Altgeld expressed himself, strongly:

The American people are not prepared to substitute government by police ruffians for government by law, . . . We cannot for a moment admit that by simply applying an unpopular or obloquious name to men, whether that name be anarchist or socialist . . . an officer can be justified in depriving men of rights guaranteed by the fundamental law. . . . I will say to you that it will be an evil day for our country when the poor and the ignorant, misguided though they may be, shall feel that a bullet is the only minister of justice which can right their wrongs, and the conduct of your officers now, like the conduct of certain officers in the spring of '86, will certainly tend to create that feeling and to accelerate its growth. . . .

This protest reveals clearly Altgeld's understanding of the conditions underlying democratic government. Rule by ballot can exist only so long as it is effective in operation; otherwise there remains an undisguised tyranny. Police brutality, fostered in the interests of a united minority, is a preliminary to popular revolt. Altgeld's belief in the possibility of redressing the balance of social inequality by parliamentary methods is the key to much of his life.

Shortly after Altgeld's inauguration, an event occurred which brought a number of thoughtful men to reconsidering the entire anarchist trial. On January 19, 1893,

¹ Letter to McClaughry, Nov. 14, 1891, reprinted in Live Questions, pp. 200-202.

Coughlin, a trial for murder, ruled that a juror who had read about a case and formed an opinion that the defendant was guilty, was ineligible to act. In the anarchist case, that same court had decided otherwise.

Justice Magruder, who, as we have seen, delivered the majority opinion in the case of Spies versus Illinois, now declared that if the court was right in the Coughlin case, it was wrong in the anarchist case. To a good lawyer like Altgeld, the inference was plain: a sound legal argument on irrefutable grounds could be built up for the three men in Joliet.

Meanwhile the amnesty group began to feel impatient and wondered whether they had been deceived in Altgeld. Clarence Darrow went to see the Governor and told him that his friends were growing restless and disappointed; something should be done at once. Darrow further assured him that the pardon had been generally asked for by all the people and that it would not even create hostility toward him. No one could see any excuse for waiting.

"Mr. Altgeld turned to me deliberately," Darrow wrote later, "and calmly said:

'Go tell your friends that when I am ready I will act. I don't know how I will act, but I will do what I think is right . . .

¹ Edgar Lee Masters, "John Peter Altgeld," American Mercury, January, 1925, p. 164.

But don't deceive yourself; if I conclude to pardon those men it will not meet the approval that you expect; let me tell you that from that day I will be a dead man'

When the secrefary of the Amnesty Association wrote to Altgeld concerning the pardon after the first month in office, the Governor replied that he had been unable to give it any attention. The activity of the pardonseekers had impelled Judge Joseph E. Gary to review the case for the Century Magazine. In this he added nothing new beyond what had already been said by the States Attorney, Grinnell. The anarchists, he declared, were guilty of conspiracy to murder, not because they had specially instructed the bomb thrower, but for the reason that they had advocated this course by a general address to readers and hearers. This article occasioned considerable comment and was considered by some to be in poor taste, if not deficient in logic. It influenced to some extent the bitter note sounded by Altgeld in the pardon message.

The task of reviewing the monumental records of the Gary trial was a stupendous one. A greater lawyer than Altgeld would have hesitated to undertake it. The governor himself was keenly aware of him limitations

¹ Darrow, op. cit, p. 100.

² Letter of Altgeld to Charles Bary, March 1, 1893, Governor's Letter Book.

Joseph E. Gary, "The Chicago Anarchists of 1886," Century Magazine, April 1893, pp. 803-837. During the month of April, Clarence Darrow spoke on Gary's article in the presence of the Judge himself! C. S. Darrow

and looked about for some prominent lawyer to prepare the arguments for the prisoners. He sent his Secretary of Labor Statistics, George Schilling, who acted as the Governor's personal representative, to Chicago in order to sound out Lyman Trumbull on the matter. who had once been Lincoln's close associate and had enjoyed a brilliant national career since, had signed Judge McConnell's petition in 1887 requesting a commutation of sentence for the condemned men. He had declared to McConnell that the accused did not have a fair trial. Schilling was received hospitably and when the discussion came around to the trial, Trumbull compared it with a New England witch-hunt. Following such an encouraging response, Schilling asked if he would go to Springfield to present the case for a pardon before the Governor. Trumbull refused to undertake the task.

When the emissary returned to report his failure, Altgeld asked him what he surmised to be the real reason for Trumbull's rejection. To this Schilling suggested the fact that such lawyers owed their livelihood to corpora-

⁽cont.) to Lloyd, April 28, 1893, Lloyd Papers.

McConnell, op. cit., p. 730. Interview with Schilling, Dec. 8, 1935.

tions. Altgeld paused, and began pacing the floor thoughtfully, gazing intently at the portraits of early Illinois
statesmen.which covered the walls of the executive mansion.
He stopped before a picture of Lincoln, stafing at it
with his hands burrowed in his pockets. Schilling watched
the scene quietly and then remarked, "I would like to help
you, but the corporations have intimidated the great lawyers.
We ought to drop this case if you can't handle it yourself."
This spurred Altgeld into a determined reply, "We don't need
them, Schilling! We don't need them." Schilling recalled
this moment as one of the most sacred in his life.

The heavy research work on the anarchist case began at once. Affidavits were collected, newspapers were carefully scanned, hearsay statements were cautiously validated by other proofs, individuals concerned in the trial were interviewed. McConnell and Schilling worked hard to check upon this material. During a conversation with McConnell held in the Governor's library, Altgeld remarked, pointing to a stack of great volumes, "There is the record of the anarchist case. I have read every word of it and I have decided to pardon all three of the men and I want to read you my message."

The Judge criticized it as "too much Altgeld and not enough

¹ Interview with Schilling, Dec. 8, 1935.

² McConnell, op. cit.

Governor in it." He objected to the criticism of Judge Gary as entirely too personal. Altgeld agreed and promised to change it, but the pressure of subsequent affairs prevented his alteration of the message.

When the Governor's course became evident to the Secretary of State, William H. Hinrichsen, the latter asked, "Do you think it good policy to pardon them? I do not." To this Altgeld replied, "It is right!" and struck his desk emphatically with his fist. Later, after the message had been delivered, he remarked to Hinrichsen, "You are younger than I and will live to see my pardon of the anarchists justified."

Shortly before the pardon message was delivered, the press learned of Altgeld's intention. There prevailed a tense atmosphere of expectation in many quarters since it was understood that the subject would be dealt with in no orthodox fasion. On June 26, 1893, Altgeld's message was given to the press where it was in many instances reproduced in full.

2 Wm. H. Hinrichsen, "Illinois Giants I have Known," Chicago Inter-Ocean, March 16, 1902.

¹ Waldo R. Browne, Altgeld's biographer, states that McConnell is in error on this point because—so he claims—
Gary's article did not appear at the time of his interview with Altgeld. This is a curious correction since
Browne himself gives the date of the interview as
"a few weeks before the pardons were issued" and the
Century Article, as he must be aware, had already
appeared in April, 1893. Cf. Browne, Altgeld of
Illinois, pp. 112-13.

As the case has already been discussed in some detail, it will be sufficient to note Altgeld's specific contributions and his basic reasons for pardoning Fielden, Neebe, and Schwab. After a primary statement of the events of May 4, 1886, he outlined five aspects of the trial which deserved particular attention:

- 1. Was the jury 'packed?'
- 2. Were the jurors legally competent?
- 3. Does the proof show guilt as charged in the indictment?
 - 4. Is there any case against the defendant, Neebe?
 - 5. Did the judge grant a fair trial?

He refused to consider the argument that the defendants had been sufficiently punished. If the men were guilty then this was no case for executive interference. "Government must defend itself," he declared.

Proceeding to the jurors in the case, he showed that their names had not been drawn from a box containing many hundreds of them as the law contemplated. Instead an exceptional procedure of allowing the bailiff absolute power to select a jury had been followed, such a course had been sustained only in cases in which it did not appear that either side suffered thereby. In support of his assertion

The message is reprinted in full in Live Questions, pp. 365-400. "Reasons for Pardoning Fielden, Neebe, and Schwab, the So-Called Anarchists," June 26, 1893.

that the bailiff wilfully selected a large number of prejudiced jurors in order to exhaust the defense attorney's challenges, Altgeld cited the affidavit of Otis S. Favor which has already been discussed. He quoted extensively from the court record to indicate the prejudice of the jurors; the bullying tactics of the Judge and Prosecutor in getting jurors to say that they would try the case on the evidence alone; and that some jurors frankly stated that they had been pointed out to the bailiff by their employers to be summoned for jury duty.

The Governor then pointed out certain evidence that showed collusion between the State's Attorney, if not the Judge himself, and Otis Favor, the affiant. When the charge what Bailiff Ryce had packed the jury was made in court, Grinnell obtained Favor's refusal to make an affidavit upon this point which the defendants could use, and Judge Gary refused to intervene despite the fact that it was known Favor would testify if compelled to do so by subpoena. As a result, Favor's affidavit was not before the Illinois Supreme Court at the time it reviewed the case.

Regarding the competency of the jurors, he quoted the recent decision of the Illinois high court in the <u>People</u> versus Coughlin, known as the Cronin case. The Judge

delivering the opinion of the majority had made the following declaration:

It is difficult to see how, after a juror has avowed a fixed and settled opinion as to the prisoner's guilt, a court can be legally satisfied of the truth of his answer that he can render a fair and impartial verdict . . . Under such circumstances it is idle to inquire of the jurors whether they can return just and impartial verdicts . . . Nor can it be said that instructions from the court would correct the bias of the jurors who swear they incline in favor of one of the litigants.

Altgeld showed that the bias in the testimony of the Anarchist case was more extreme than in the Cronin Case.

When he dealt with the nature of the proof itself, he could not refrain from several caustic remarks concerning the failure of the Prosecution to show any connection between the defendants and the bomb-thrower. He attributed the apparently seditious utterances of the accused to the excitement of men who felt they had been wronged. According to his theory the bomb had been thrown by someone seeking personal revenge particularly against Captain Bonfield and his police. This was supported by letters, affidavits, and newspaper quotations showing the extreme brutality of Bonfield against laboring men and his indiscriminate clubbing of strikers and spectators. Even Michael J. Schaack, a

¹ At the trial, Barton Simonson, a travelling salesman, testified concerning Captain Bonfield, "I spoke to Captain Bonfield about the trouble at McCormick's (May 3, 1886) and he said that the greatest trouble the police had in dealing with the Socialists was that they had their women and children with them at

police captain, who was far from tender in his relations to strikers, wrote that Bonfield's course was brutal and uncalled for. If the theory of the prosecution was correct, reasoned Altgeld, that the bomb had been the outcome of a conspiracy, then several bombs, not one, should have been thrown.

Regarding the alleged prevalence of anarchist plots, the Governor introduced some highly important evidence to the contrary. With the cooperation of Captain Ebersold, who had been chief of police at the tim e of the Haymarket affair, Altgeld was able to validate a significant interview of the former published in the Chicago Daily News on May 10, 1889.

It was my policy to quiet matters down as soon as possible after the 4th of May. The general unsettled state of things was an injury to Chicago.

On the other hand, Captain Schaack wanted to keep things stirring. He wanted bombs to be found here, there, all around, everywhere. I thought people would lie down and sleep better if they were not afraid that their homes would be blown to pieces any minute. But this man Schaack, this little boy who must have

⁽cont.) at the meeting, so that the police could not get them. He said he wished he could get a crowd of about 3,000 of them together without their women and children and he would make short work of them." Abstract of Record, II, p. 176.

1 Ebersold, though a German himself, bitterly disliked the Anarchists of his nationality. When Spies was brought to him, he not only insulted him coarsely, but beat him up until Bonfield intervened. Testimony of August Spies, Abstract of Record, II. p. 296. Ebersold was induced to write out an account of the fake anarchist scares for Altgeld through the efforts of Judge McConnell, Interview with Schilling, Dec. 8, 1935.

glory or his heart would be broken, wanted none of that policy. Now here is something that the public does not know. After we got the anarchist societies broken up. Schaack wanted to send out men to again organize new societies right away. You see what this would do. He wanted to keep the thing boiling—keep himself prominent before the public . . . After I heard all that, I began to think there was, perhaps, not so much to all this anarchist business as they claimed. . .

This amazing evidence clears up a number of points.

in connection with the case. Though Altgeld did not include another matter closely related to this in his message, he knew that Schaack and others like him were being paid by worried citizens to watch the alleged anarchists of l Chicago. The opportunity for a police officer to obtain promotion in this manner is obvious.

The case against Fielden, as Altgeld demonstrated, was

Schaack had played a leading part in obtaining the evidence for the state. He claimed the chief credit for the final conviction. Boston Sunday Herald, August 22, 1886, clipping in A. R. Parson's Scrapbook. For a short time he posed as an authority upon anarchists. Michael J. Schaack, Anarchy and Anarchists, Chicago, 1889. Charles E. Russell gives a humorous example of a Schaack-inspired Anarchist hunt, "The Haymarket and Afterwards," Appleton's Magazine, Oct. 1907, p. 412.

¹ Two months later Altgeld declared, " . . . I have been informed at different times during the last seven or eight years, that some wealthy business men of Chicago were kept in such a state of uneasiness by this anarchist talk, that they were induced from time to time to pay money to those fellows for the ostensible purpose of watching the manoeuvers of a class of people who in reality had no existence . . " Interview in the Chicago Tribune, Aug. 31, 1893, reprinted in Live Questions, p. 405; also Chicago Times, Aug. 31, 1893.

For an early proposal of "business cooperation" see Chicago Daily News, Aug. 11, 1886.

based on the weakest of legal grounds. Police witnesses had stated that Fielden had urged his hearers to attack the police and had drawn a revolver, firing at them. witnesses were mutually contradictory on these points. Newspaper reporters, who were closer to the scene, denied the truth of these allegations. Judge Gary had written to Governor Oglesby that Fielden "was more a misguided enthusiast than a criminal conscious of the horrible nature and effect of his teachings and of his responsibility therefore: " he added that Fielden had a natural love of justice and in his private life was honest, industrious, and peaceable. The State's Attorney, Grinnell, during a conference at the home of Lyman Gage in the fall of 1887, declared that he had serious doubts whether Fielden every had a revolver. As for Schwab, the evidence against him was even less and his conduct during the trial had created a favorable impression upon the State's Attorney, who regarded him as a pliant tool of more designing people.

If the matter were not so tragic, the case against

Neebe would be laughable indeed. His two dollars worth of

stock in the Arbeiter Zeitung and his connection with its

management on the day after the Haymarket affair were the

only bits of evidence against him. According to the letters

of Mayor Harrison and Winston, the Corporation Counsel at

¹ Altgeld validated these details through Lyman Gage. Previously this material had been a matter of hearsay. Letter of Altgeld to Gage, May 13, 1893. Governor's Letter Book.

the time, Grinnell had declared to them in the courtroom that he did not think he had a case against Neebe and that he wished to dismiss him, but was discouraged by his associates who feared that this step might influence the jury in favor of the other defendants. While the others had been accused of using seditious language this could not be said of Neebe.

In his conclusion, Altgeld paid his respects to Gary and referred to the recent article written by the latter as "full of venom." He spoke of the Judge's "ferocity of subserviency" and compared him with Lord Jeffries. Altgeld admitted the personal nature of these charges but asserted that they were borne out by the record of the trial and the papers before him. He concluded with an absolute pardon for Samuel Fielden, Oscar Neebe, and Michael Schwab.

Brand Whitlock who was then employed by the Secretary of State, was asked to prepare three pardons with the official seal of the state. They were turned over to E. S. Dreyer, who had been active in the amnesty movement. At 11:20 p. m. that day, the prison gates opened for the newly 1 freed men. Whitlock remarked to the Governor, "Well, the

June 27, 1893. A poem was written by Voltairine
De Cleyre at this time to honor Altgeld's deed:

"A grating of the doors, and three poor men,
Helpless and hated, having naught to give,
Come from their long-sealed tombs, look up and
live,
And thank this man that they are free again!
And he--to all the world this man dares say,
Curse as you will! I have been just this day."

In Memoriam: J. P. Altgeld, Chicago Hist. Soc. pamphlets

storm will break now." Altgeld replied with an apparent pretense of indifference, "Oh, yes, I was prepared for that. It was merely doing right."

It would have been hard enough for the newspapers to accept a pardon on the grounds that the men had suffered enough. But for the Governor to override Judge, Jury, and public opinion; and to declare that the men had been unjustly tried -- that was too much. Even some of the amnesty people were appalled. The Chicago Inter-Ocean, whose editorpublisher was a chairman of the Amnesty committee, wrote that Altgeld's attack on Gary and Bonfield was without excuse and "positively outrageous." The Chicago Times, a Democratic journal which had been sympathetic to the pardoning of the anarchists, scolded the Governor for going beyond an act of executive clemency, and that it was not his prerogative "to pry into the motives" of judge, jurymen, prosecutors and witnesses." The editor charitably concluded that Altgeld had erred on the side of mercy. Scarcely a journal, outside of the ranks of labor, was willing to go beyond an icy condonation of the pardon message. The majority regarded the arguments used as an attack upon the sanctity of judicial processes. Americans have been loath to apply every day standards of conduct to those sheltered by the judicial ermine.

Brand Whitlock, Forty Years of It, p. 76. Chicago Inter-Ocean, June 26-27, 1893. Chicago Times, June 27, 1893.

If the friends of executive clemency were dissatisfied, the opponents, who objected to any form of pardon, were virulently hostile. The Chicago Tribune, characteristically a pioneer in such matters, led the pack. "Never," said its editor, "did the Governor of an American State -- with the exception of those Southern Governors who issued secession proclamations -- put his name to so revolutionary and infamous On the next day, the editor, noting the widespread denunciation of Altgeld with satisfaction, remarked that "the political remains" of Altgeld would draw the salary of Governor for forty two months longer. The Chicago Herald, the organ of the Walsh Democratic machine, published a severe condemnation of the pardon message. The editor of the New York Tribune professed to believe that Altgeld's pardon was evidence of a plot to deliver the criminal and anarchist elements over to the Illinois Democrats; the approval of several New York anarchists was cited In Milwaukee, where labor difficulties closely as proof. paralleled those of Chicago, the Sentinel feared that Altgeld's message would breed more anarchists "than all the speeches and writings of the men he has released."

Chicago Tribune, June 28, 1893.

Ibid., June 29, 1893.

Chicago Herald, June 26, 1893.

New York Tribune, July 9, 1893. Milwaukee Sentinel, June 28, 1893.

Washington Evening Star put up a mock political ballot for 1896 with Altgeld for president on a platform "We are 'agin' the Government." The Chicago Tribune collected a page of masterpieces of vituperation drawn from sixteen Illinois newspapers, and fifty three papers outside of the state, 2 ranging over the continent. In these editorials, the vocabulary of opprobrium attained new levels.

Powerful individuals and organizations joined in the hue and cry. Justice David J. Brewer of the United States Supreme Court, attacked Altgeld in an address delivered at Woodstock, Connecticut. Choosing as a text, economic individualism, he pointed to Altgeld as its arch-enemy in a struggle comparable to Civil War. "Is Governor Altgeld," he asked, "waiting to be the Jefferson Davis of tomorrow?"

Later, in the campaign of 1896, Theodore Roosevelt was to declare that "Altgeld's hands were dyed in blood and (he) had condoned murder." One Illinois Club rejected Altgeld's application for membership. Another attempted to expel

¹ Reprinted in the Chicago Tribune, June 30, 1893. The following year legislation excluding anarchists from entry was considered in Congress. Congressional Record, 53rd Cong., 2nd Sess., Aug. 4, 1894 (The Senate), p. 8215.
2 The Chicago Tribune, June 30, 1893. The hostile newspaper

² The Chicago Tribune, June 30, 1893. The hostile newspaper extracts are from such prominent metropolitan dailies as the New York Times, Herald, and World, the Washington Post, the Cleveland Plain Dealer, the Kansas City Star, and many others.

^{3 &}lt;u>Ibid</u>., July 5, 1893.

⁴ McConnell, op. cit.

⁵ The Chicago Tribune, Dec. 15, 1893.

him. Many were certain that Altgeld had committed political 2 suicide.

A small band of liberals drawn from Europe and America wrote letters of heartfelt gratitude to Altgeld, congratulating 3 him on his courageous action. Labor bodies passed highly eulogistic resolutions, commending the support of the Governor 4 to their cause. These were the saving remnant, for the majority stood aloof, inarticulate or frankly hostile. One friend of Altgeld wrote to him:

called liberalism and intelligence of the American people that millions still deliberately shut their eyes and stop their ears to keep from being convinced. The prejudices of the ignorant, aroused and steadfastly nourished by a corrupt press, are not easily overcome.

As if the cry of the pack was not enough, the Chicago Tribune printed an alleged expose of the personal motives which influenced Altgeld in pardoning the anarchists and his attack upon Judge Gary. This tale was widely repeated and evidently believed by many and therefore deserves some

¹ The Chicago Tribune, December 10, 1893.

The New York Times of June 28, 1893 is emphatic on this point; likewise the Illinois State Register of June 27 and June 29, 1893, a Democratic paper, conceded that he would lose many adherents of his party.

³ Letters in Governor's Executive Files for June 1893 and thereafter.

⁴ The Chicago Tribune, July 3 and July 17, 1893 shows the strong endorsement of the Chicago trade and Labor Assembly. Altgeld's action in the Lemont strike at this time likewise won their approval and angered conservatives everywhere. New York Tribune, July 4, 1893.

⁵ Letter of Wm. H. Holmes to Altgeld, Augustl, 1893, Governor's Executive Files. Walter Crane in London wrote to Lloyd,

notice. It appeared under the caption, "Altgeld Displays His Venom." During April, 1889, the Appellate Court of which Judge Gary was a member, had set aside a judgment of the Circuit Court of Cook County that awarded Altgeld, then Judge of the Superior Court, the sum of \$26,494. The Appellate judges, Garnett, Gary, and Moran, had attempted to sweeten their decision by declaring that the course pursued by Altgeld was fair, open, and free from any grounds for censure."

This attempt to give him a "certificate of character" seemed like adding insult to injury. Altgeld replied to the judges in a long letter protesting against the decision as a "moral outrage" and that it was an example of their setting aside settled questions on technical grounds. At no time did Altgeld regard judges as a class apart whom it was censurable taste, if not unpatriotic, to criticize.

The <u>Tribune</u> declared that since Judge Gary was the only one of the three judges now on the bench, Altgeld had sought to "get even with him" by pardoning the anarchists and attacking him personally. The editor remarked that any judge "even a poor judge like Altgeld" should have had a greater sense of propriety than he showed in addressing such a letter to brother-judges.

Altgeld, in keeping with his policy of silence beneath

⁽cont.) "I rejoice that a tardy act of justice has at last been done," July 14, 1893, Lloyd Papers.

1 The Chicago Tribune, June 29, 1893.

attack, refused to comment upon these charges except to say that they were ridiculous. While it is possible that Altgeld's attack upon Gary in the message was partly due to some incident such as the Tribune letter indicated, the pardon of the anarchists cannot be attributed to such narrow motivation. Altgeld's career and philosophy of justice cannot be reconciled with any theory that he acted here on any save the highest motives. His remarks concerning Gary seem justified by an examination of the court record.

To the newspapermen of Chicago and New York who asked him for his reaction to this abuse, Altgeld was defiant. He declared to a Tribune reporter, "I have done what I thought was right, and if my action was right, it will stand in the judgment of the people. . . It is a noticeable fact that my critics employ abuse and in no case reason." When a New York reporter asked him how he was enduring the criticism of the papers, he laughed and said, "Let them pitch

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¹ Such individuals as Jane Addams and Brand Whitlock have stated in their writings that they felt that the attack on Gary marred the pardon message. Even Darrow, who once referred to Gary as "the Lord High Executioner," holds a brief for the trial judge stating that the latter operated under difficult circumstances and that he was a "pretty good fellow." Interview with Darrow, June, 1935. Chicago Tribune, June 30, 1893.

in and give me the devil if they want to; they could not cut through my hide in three weeks with an axe."

He derided the talk of anarchist plots in Illinois and insisted that there never had been fifty anarchists in the whole state. The stories were the products of pseudo-2 detectives who were financed by wealthy business men.

Later in life, when asked whether he had ever regretted his pardon of the anarchists, he replied emphatically, "Never! Never! If I had the matter to act upon again tomorrow, I'd do it over again . . . I knew that in every civilized land, and especially in the United States, would ring out curses loud and bitter against me for what I did.

I saw my duty and I did it. There was no evidence to convict those men . . . The trial was a farce."

It is perhaps unnecessary to add that Altgeld suffered severely from the abuse and malignment of his motives. To Mrs. Altgeld, he remarked that it might not be long before the Altgelds took up their abode by the Wayside. He had

New York Times, June 28m 1893.

Interviews in Chicago Times, August 31, 1893; the Chicago Tribune, Oct. 27, 1893; also Live Questions, p. 405.
The Chicago Herald of Jan. 4, 1892 printed an account of a meeting of 300 prominent citizens who met shortly after the Haymarket Affair to subscribe \$115,000 to the police to stamp out anarchist plots and pledged \$100,000 annually for such purposes. This was paid until 1891.
The cessation of this payment inspired new anarchist scares and police raids. Nathan Fine, Farmer and Labor Parties in the United States, 1828-1928, New York, 1928, p. 114.

³ Letter of Emma L. Altgeld to Mrs. Lloyd, July 14, 1893, Lloyd Papers.

no illusions as to the effect of the message upon his career; nevertheless he attempted to put his case before the public by the circulation of his famous message. With Schilling and Henry D. Lloyd he arranged to distribute some fifty thousand copies to help the reform Democratic element. Trade unionist and populist support came readily. graphies of the Governor together with the message were printed in friendly newspapers. Schilling prepared to organize a bureau for the systematic distribution of the Altgeld's mail shows that these made many pardon message. converts to his cause.

That the Governor's popularity had not been wholly dissipated was indicated on "Illinois Day," Aug. 24, 1893, at the Chicago World's Fair. His arrival aroused general enthusiasm. During the afternoon, when he prepared to receive the citizens of the state in the main court under the dome, crowds poured in to shake hands with him. doors people fought to gain admission; a solid mass pressed about the square "as strong as the rock of Gibraltar." There was no place to move.

In the fall elections, the local Republican machine

Letter of Schilling to Lloyd, Aug. 15, 1893, Lloyd Papers. Letter of Henry Hell (editor of New York Tribune) to

Altgeld, Sept. 28, 1894, Governor's Executive Files. Letter of Schilling to Lloyd, Aug. 1, 1893, Lloyd Papers.

Chicago Daily News Almanac, 1894, p. 185.

decided to capitalize on the Gary issue. Judge Joseph E. Gary was persuaded to run as a Republican candidate for a sixth term as Judge of the Superior Court in a campaign that was obviously intended to undermine Altgeld. The editor of the Ohicago Tribune declared, "A vote for Gary is a repudiation of Altgeld and the pardon message." The issue, as stated by this journal, was whether the judiciary was dependent upon the executive power. During & Gary meeting held on October 25, former Governor Richard Oglesby took up the cudgels in behalf of the judge and described him as above partiality or prejudice. He gave an enthusiastic description of the city's fight against anarchy. One judge at this meeting referred to Altgeld as a man who had "disgraced our government." A special verse for this occasion was sung, "Pardon Altgeld has got to hide away."

This challenge was accepted by the Governor, who took charge of the opposition at his office in the Unity Building. Copies of his message were distributed among workmen. Henry D. Lloyd published an open letter to Gary, which was enthusiastically received by the liberal elements, but appeared

Chicago Tribune, November 4, 1893.

² Ibid., October 26, 1893.

too late for adequate circulation. Clarence Darrow assisted Altgeld in reprinting this letter in various Chicago newspapers. Samuel Fielden, one of the pardoned men, spoke at the Sunset Club to assist the reform Democrats. The local machine of his party saw no profit in following Altgeld in putting up good candidates, but preferred to support personal choices. Thus John Barton Payne, the able Democratic candidate, failed to receive support from this element. On election day, Gary won by a It was not a clear-cut victory, vote of 78,912 to 73,777. but the Republican newspapers interpreted it as a rebuke for Altgeld.

After the anarchist pardon, partisan newspapers attacked Altgeld's policy in the granting of pardons under any circumstances; they referred to him as "John Pardon Altgeld." Immediately after the June pardon, Whitlock approached the governor with the papers concerning a young man in the Joliet penetentiary who was dying of tuberculosis. His mother petitioned that he might die at home. At first, without looking at the papers, Altgeld shook his head, "No, No, I will not pardon any more. The people are opposed to it; they do not believe in mercy; they love revenge: they want the prisoners punished to the bitterest extremity." Later, he apologized for his outlook and asked

Letter of Altgeld to Lloyd, Nov. 7, 1893, Lloyd Papers. Letter of Darrow to Lloyd, Nov. 9, 1893, Ibid.

Chicago Tribune, Nov. 9, 1893.

1 for the papers. He was told that the boy had just died. The effect of such an incident upon the sensitive mind of Altgeld can easily be imagined.

At the time of Altgeld's death in March, 1902, William Hinrichsen, Secrefary of State during his administration, told several anecdotes which reveal that Altgeld's sympathies could easily by aroused by occasions of distress. A few of the pardons may have been due to his sympathy for the relatives of the condemned. Once a semi-literate Polish woman came to plead for her son--"a worthless, vicious youth -- and explained the case to Altgeld in her broken English. Hinrichsen described the scene:

> Inentered his office without knocking and found him and the old lady weeping together. He was trying to comfort her and had ordered a pardon issued for her scamp of a He seemed somewhat ashamed of his emotion, and said half in apology, "It is a bad law that punishes a parent for the sins of a child.

The suggestion of maudlinity as told by the former Secretary, who was somewhat envious of the latter's achievements, can be taken lightly. A study of the pardons, as will be shown, proves that Altgeld accepted this duty seriously, if he was inclined to temper justice with mercy. Another anecdote told by Hinrichsen corrects the earlier impression. That same week Altgeld refused

I Whitlock, op. cit., pp. 76-77.

2 Wm. H. Hinrichsen, "Illinois Giants I have Known," Chicago Inter-Ocean, March 16, 1902.

to interfere in the case of a man condemned to hang for choking his mistress to death. The defendant had power-ful friends who attempted to show that he had no murderous intention. In fact, so they explained, he had frequently choked the woman without causing injury. To this observation, the governor replied with grim humor, "He choked her once too often."

An examination of fifty-four pardon cases shows that Altgeld gave careful consideration to his decision in the The questions of social expediency and individual matter. rehabilitation always bulked large in his mind. With his special predilection for child welfare theories, he was generally lenient when dealing with minors. theories of social causation which he advocated in his writings brought him to consider each case from a clinical viewpoint. The subject of penology, which had interested him for many years, influenced him in the direction of experiments in individual reform, particularly with boys who had come into contact with hardened criminals. saw no harm in pardoning dying men and did so with a liber-An analysis of the reasons he gave for his pardons can thus be classified:

¹ Wm. H. Hinrichsen, "Illinois Giants I have Known," op. cit.
2 Based on Pardon Papers, Archival Division, Illinois State
Library; generally kept with Governor's Executive
Files.

1. Pardons recommended by the trial judge and the
State's Attorney, generally because of new evidence or
an excessive sentence
2. Pardons granted to dying men
3. Pardons granted because the innocence of the
prisoner seemed practically certain to the Governor .
4. Pardons granted because the prisoner had
been punished sufficiently, and had subsequently
shown good behavior; or because of the existence of
extenuating circumstances
5. Pardons granted to minors because of social
considerations, such as reform possibilities
6. Pardon granted, without recommendation of
trial officers, but because of injustice in trial
and new evidence

Imprisonment for trivial offenses found scant sympathy from Altgeld and he was apt to exercise the pardoning power in such cases. When a man was arrested for stealing meat in order to sustain a starving family and had been sentenced to five years imprisonment, Altgeld issued a pardon for his release. In a letter to the State's Attorney, E. G. King, the Governor sharply reprimanded the prosecuting officers and presiding

judges in such cases and urged that some care be exercised

in seeing that the punishment was made to fit the crime.

The editor of the Chicago Tribune persistently accused Altgeld of emptying the prisons by means of the pardon power. "So long as there is an unpardoned criminal remaining in the penetentiary, Governor Altgeld will not be at any loss to keep himself before the public." A case occurred that seemed to justify this accusation. During the latter part of May, 1895, two prisoners were lynched in Danville. The leaders of the mob gave as their justification the fear that the Governor would pardon the criminals. The grand jury failed to indict them since no witness would testify. One of the judges declared that Altgeld's abuse of the pardoning power was responsible.

The Governor defended himself by showing that his record of pardons was far smaller than that of his predecessors in office. Statistics later released from his office proved his claim. From January 1873 to January 1893, there had been an average of 1868 prisoners annually; during these twenty years, 1,673 pardons and commutations

¹ Letter of Altgeld to King, March 9, 1895, Governor's

Letter Book. An account of this affair is given in
the Chicago Times-Herald, March 10, 1895.

the Chicago Times-Herald, March 10, 1895.

Chicago Tribune, Oct. 27, 1894 and July 1, 2, 3, 1893.

Ibid., May 30, 1895. If any explanation for this lynching is needed at all beyond the brutality of its perpetrators, it would be the responsibility of papers like the Tribune for circulating a false impression of the pardoning power.

had been issued, or an average of 83-2/3 annually and the proportion to those in prison was $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. During the years of 1893-1895 inclusive, there was an average of 2182 convicts annually and a total of 216 pardons and commutations; which yielded an average of 72 annually or a proportion to those in prison of 3-3/10 per cent. Thus there was about 36-1/3 per cent more pardons and commutations on an average during the previous twenty years than since January 1, 1893. These figures were never disputed by the press nor by any other source as far as the writer is aware. Altgeld recommended to the legislature that a system of paroles be adopted that would obviate the necessity of a heavy burden of pardon duties on the governor's office. The adoption of this system during his administration is largely due to his unremitting efforts in fostering this legislation.

During his first two years of office, there were seven men hanged in Illinois. In two cases Altgeld commuted the death penalty to life imprisonment. He recommended

¹ Governor's Letter Book, Jan. 6, 1896, p. 59. These figures vary somewhat in the Biennial Message to the Legislature, Jan. 6, 1896. Altgeld refers to "the four years just closing" whereas—unless this is an error—only three years had been completed. Whether this accounts for the variations in figures is difficult to determine. At any rate, the generalization holds that he issued fewer pardons than his predecessor.

^{2 &}quot;We frequently receive from three to five applications for pardons a day, and the work this entails is so great

the abolition of capital punishment to the legislature as useless in principle, barbarous, and degrading 1 in effect.

One of Altgeld's pardons involved him in such difficulties as to threaten his legislative program by the withdrawal of certain reform elements. This was the pardon of two Democratic politicians, McNulty and Chapman, who had been prosecuted by the Chicago Civic Federation for alleged election frauds. The former was charged with assault and interfering with voters: the other with obstructing or delaying votes by means of unreasonable challenging at the polls. Despite the wellknown fact that these election crimes were commonplace and Republicans at least equally guilty, the Federation employed a large fund to prosecute the two Democrats, who were poor and without resources. McNulty protested his innocence, but after losing several weeks in court, he was told that if he would enter a plea of guilty, he would simply be fined and could go home. He agreed upon that condition, but after pleading guilty, the judge sentenced him to the penetentiary. He was refused a new trial.

⁽cont.) that it cannot be properly attended to by one man. Biennial Message to the Legislature, Jan. 9, 1895.

³ Laws of Illinois, 1895, p. 158.

¹ Biennial Message to the Legislature, Jan. 9, 1895.

Chapman's trial, according to Altgeld who quoted the statement of the judge in this connection, was in the nature of a private, partisan persecution conducted by a well-financed group of lawyers and private detectives.

Altgeld claimed that McNulty had not been fairly tried, whatever his guilt might be and that Chapman's offense was punishable by a fine of \$50 if committed outside of Chicago. He cited the case of two policemen who were guilty of a similar offense and had been released because they were Republicans after a jury had found them guilty and sentenced them to the penetentiary. The whole proceeding seemed to him the attempt of one political party to get an advantage over another by judicial machinery. To the charge of Giles that conditions in Chicago were rotten and corrupt, Altgeld agreed and added, " . . . let me ask, Who caused this rottenness and this corruption? Not the poor, not the great masses of the people. It was the corrupting hand of unscrupulous wealth which, no matter how infamous its work, always wore the glove of respectability."

He drove his point in further to unmask the mantle of reform assumed by certain members of the Civic Federation.

¹ Open Letter to William A. Giles of the Chicago Civic Federation, Dec. 11, 1895. <u>Chicago Tribune</u>, December 13, 1895; reprinted also in <u>Live Questions</u>, pp. 516-521.

He suggested that if Giles would examine the list of subscribers to the fund for the prosecution he would find the names of individuals who were connected with the attempts to secure or defeat legislation in Chicago and Springfield by means of bribery. Altgeld concluded his case with the statement that " . . . it is not the common people who destroy the institutions of government anywhere It is the class that clothe robbery with respectability, bribery with pretense, and corruption with patriotism."

Altgeld had no fear of alienating the genuine reform elements in the heterogeneous Civic Federation. Individuals like Jane Addams, Clarence Darrow, and the Settlement group continued to work in cooperation with the Governor in the movement for adequate social legislation. They knew that the pardoning power had become an instrument of justice in the hands of Altgeld. It was not the number of pardons issued that irked the conservatives, but the types of cases in which executive clemency had been exercised. These marked the Governor in their eyes as a dangerous radical whose philosophy aimed at nothing less than the subversion of civilized society.

¹ Live Questions, p. 521.

CHAPTER V

THE "DEB'S REBELLION"

With the descent of the great panic of 1893 upon the country, the average man became more concerned with economic problems than with the old political and personal issues. Many of that generation had already experienced the general insecurity and industrial warfare associated with the depressions of the seventies and the middle eighties. The phenomenal urban growth of this period which accompanied greater industrialization was reflected in the relative decline of the rural population and increased the sensitivity of the nation to the economic crisis. During this year, Frederick Jackson Turner, the historian, pointed out that America had completed an epoch with the disappearance of its free lands and the retreat of the frontier. The movement to the city is illustrative of a trend that was to alter the character of American Society. Under such conditions, the relations of labor and

During the decade 1890-1900, urban areas increased in population from 22,298,359 to 30,380,433; rural areas increased in numbers from 40,649,355 to 45,614,142. In percentages of the total population, urban areas increased from 35.4% to 40%; while rural territories declined from 64.6% to 60%. Chicago's population increased from 1,099,850 in 1890 to 1,698,575 in 1900. Though Illinois' population increased by 26% during this period, her rural counties showed an absolute decline. Abstract of the 15th Census of the United States, 1930, pp. 12, 14.

and capital suffered from new tensions and conflicts.

The march of unemployed armies upon Washington during the spring of 1894, though peaceful in intention, appeared as a novelty in our industrial history which aroused widespread apprehension. Jacob Coxey of Ohio seems to have originated the idea of a "petition in boots." Industrial "armies," totalling perhaps ten thousand men in all. marched across the country from Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, and the states of Montana, Oregon, and Ohio. movements of "Generals" Coxey, Frye, Randall, Kelley, and others became of front-page news importance. Though Coxey's army was covered with ridicule at Washington by invoking the law of trespass, many of the marchers, like Jack London, who was one of them, were not amused and turned toward more radical doctrines. Frye's men arrived exhausted after their trip from Los Angeles but were told that there was not the slightest chance of government aid and then referred to the local superintendent of charities.

Altgeld, who had advocated the free coinage of silver for years, attributed the depression to the depreciation of values arising from the inadequacy of the world's supply of money. He recognized other factors as well but thought

¹ The Chicago Tribune, April 23, 1894.

² The Chicago Daily News Almanac, 1895, p. 94.

they were secondary. In a speech to laboring men, he declared that all humanitarians would rejoice to see a better distributive system adopted, but there was no prospect of such a consummation for a long time to come; until then the foundations of a better order could be laid by intelligent progress. He believed that the depression would be a long one and would require heroism and fortitude. But no man would be permitted to starve in Illinois. To suggestions that the state government provide employment, he replied that little could be done because of constitutional limitations. The laboring class could improve its lot only by organization proceeding along legal lines. Each class must take care of itself in the struggle for existence. He declared that rioting was never a product of labor organizations but the work of "conscienceless men to defeat organized labor."

Trouble began at once in the large Illinois coal fields. Absentee ownership and the growing centralization of managership had necessitated a nation-wide organization of miners. Improved methods of production had increased the daily output of tons per man in Illinois from two in

¹ Labor Day Speech, Sept. 8, 1893, reprinted in <u>Live Questions</u> pp. 340-347. This was considered a laudable conservative pronouncement by the press, although several expressed skepticism concerning "Dr. Jekyl and Mr. Hyde." Reprinted in <u>Live Questions</u>, pp. 347-349.

1887 to two and eight-tenths by 1893. Though the total number of employed increased, a steady decline in the average number of days work occurred with sharp fall in income. The desperate conditions prevailing in such sections as Spring Valley have already been noted. As Lloyd pointed out in his expose of mining operators, these abuses were not confined to Illinois. In an effort to combat these conditions, the United Mine Workers of America, under the leadership of John McBride, inaugurated a huge coal strike which covered the mineral area from Pennsylvania to Iowa and from Indian Territory and Tennessee to Michigan. In these states the militia was called on repeatedly for assistance to the operators during the months of April, May and June, 1894.

In Illinois, where coal mines were scattered over an area three hundred miles long and one hundred miles wide, Altgeld was fully occupied in watching each local conflict. Reports of the march of four thousand strikers from Spring Valley, La Salle, Streator, and Peru upon Toluca, Illinois in order to compel the latter to join the strike aroused

Based primarily upon the <u>Illinois Blue Book</u>, 1933-4, p. 681.

Chicago Daily News Almanac, 1895, pp. 77 et seq. <u>Eighth</u>

Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics,

1894, pp. 442 et passim.

1 general fear Lieutenant-Governor Joseph B. Gill, who occupied the Governor's office while the latter was temporarily out of the state, investigated the source of these rumors and found the alleged rioting a myth intended to bring the state militia upon the scene. When Altgeld returned, he received amost daily requests for the militia, but refused to heed them unless there was actual proof of rioting. To the persistent sheriff of Marion County where no real damage had been done, he replied tartly, "I will suggest to you that if you have not the courage or Capacity to properly discharge the duties . . . of sheriff, then you resign at once, and let somebody take your place who can and will do it. " The sheriff in return expressed a hope that Altgeld's illness would make room for the lieutenant-governor, who, as he put it, "loves law and Finally upon the representations of the Mayor of La Salle and several sheriffs, Altgeld ordered out the militia. The arrival of the troops, according to the Tribune correspondent, surprised everyone and irritated the strikers. Some of the foreign workers, who were familiar with European types of repression, thought that the militia The Mayor expressed his intended to shoot them down.

¹ The Chicago Tribune during the latter part of April, 1894 printed a number of these scare-rumors, using in some cases, several pages.

² The Chicago Tribune, April 27, 1894.

³ Ibid., May 25, 1894.

⁴ Ibid., May 26, 1894.

gratitude to the Governor since "the moral effect" hadd l
been "very beneficial."

Finding that he had been tricked, Altgeld withdrew the troops and decided upon an open statement of his policy. On May 26, he issued general orders to the officers of the militia at LaSalle and Centralia.

act as custodians or guards of private property. The law authorizes them simply to assist the civil authorities in preserving the peace, quelling riots, and executing the law. Whenever troops are ordered and an owner of property feels it necessary to have it guarded, he must do so at his own expense, and in such case troops should be stationed near enough to promptly quell any disturbance if one should occur.

The order was intended to prevent the use of the militia as strike-breakers and private watchmen. During the course of the strike which lasted until the middle of June, the troops were sent to six or eight different points in the state. They arrived promptly and acted vigorously wherever any depredations had occurred. Altgeld in keeping with his theory of the governorship as a custodian of all interests, did what he could for the strikers, who were rapidly losing in the unequal struggle against an organization with more powerful support than theirs. He was frankly sympathetic to their cause and

¹ Letter of Mayor S. N. Matthiesen of La Salle to Altgeld, May 26, 1894, Governor's Executive Files.

² General Orders No. 8, May 26, 1894, Governor's Letter Book.

declared to the Legislature that the condition of the miners had been getting steadily worse and that the general strike was their vain hope of gaining a liveable wage. When Henry D. Lloyd wrote to him of outrages committed against the strikers, particularly in Spring Valley, Altgeld readily cooperated in an investigation of the charges and in arousing public opinion to the realities of the situation.

The governor recommended legislation to prevent operators from importing laborers to replace men already employed. As the Slav worker replaced the native and the negro replaced the Slav, each class was thrown out of employment and exposed to public charity. To the legislature, which was occupied with the passage of generous franchise bills for the benefit of the Gas Ring and Yerkes' traction interests, such legislation seemed a specious form of knight-errantry and was completely ignored.

One incident at this time, because of its bearing upon

Governor's Biennial Message to the Legislature, Jan. 9, 1895.

Governor's Biennial Report to the Legislature, Jan. 9, 1895.

Letter of Altgeld to Lloyd, June 6, 1894, Lloyd Papers.

Altgeld sent George Schilling to investigate mining conditions together with the mine inspectors. In the letter to Lloyd, Altgeld declared, "... the trouble is that the newspapers that reach most people will not publish anything that is not favorable to the operators. However, I will gladly do anything I can toward having the public thoroughly understand the situation. About a week later, Altgeld reported that steps were being taken to guard against the misuse of the troops and the attacks upon strikers. Letter of June 12,1894, Lloyd Papers.

the later course of the Federal government in the Pullman strike, deserves particular notice. The United States

Marshal complained to Judge William J. Allen of the

Federal district at Springfield that he was having trouble in carrying out some of the orders of the court. Allen then appealed to Richard Olney, the Attorney-General, for federal troops. Olney's reply sent on June 16 reveals an attitude which sharply contrasts with his later course:

I understand the State of Illinois is willing to protect property against lawless violence with military force if necessary. Please advice receivers to take proper steps to procure protection by civil authorities of the state. If such protection proves inadequate, the government (state) should be applied to for military assistance.

When the funds of the strikers were exhausted, the operators agreed to a conference at Columbus, Ohio.

The subsequent arbitral award proved disappointing to the few remaining hopes of the miners. There appeared no alternative however and the men who were not rejected for union activities returned to work.

This was but the prelude to one of the greatest labor conflicts in American history. As the center of industry gravitated westward, Chicago became the battlefield of industrial war. The Haymarket Affair had already established

Speech at Cooper Union, Oct. 17, 1896, reprinted in Live Questions, pp. 654-5; also in Biennial Message of 1895.
 Chicago Daily News Almanac, 1895, p. 78.

that city's reputation for militancy; now the Pullman strike was to overshadow it in extent and significance.

Instead of the shabby west side of 1886, the scene of 1894 was enacted in the "model" town of Pullman where flitting visitors occasionally paid homage to the benevolence of its founder. George M. Pullman.

The Pullman Car Company, which enjoyed a monopoly by virtue of its patent over the manufacture of railway sleeping-cars, was established in 1867 with a capital of one million dollars. In 1880, it had bought five hundred acres of land for its proposed model town and plant. Under the paternal care of George Pullman, the town was modern in design, well-kept, and had its own church and library. But the ingratitude of the residents was astonishing. stead of an eager citizenry, the employee-residents were totally indifferent to the aesthetic benefits derived. Settlement authorities like Jane Addams noted that rents, which were fixed by the Pullman Company, soared from 20 per cent to twenty-five per cent above rents for similar accommodiations in Chicago. Nor did the depression bring any reduction in rents, though a number of salary reductions were put into effect.

The history of the Pullman Strike can be drawn from unusually rich materials. Shortly after the Strike, through the efforts of Dr. Carroll D. Wright, Commissioner of Labor, a federal investigation was held in Chicago which examined the matter thoroughly.

Report on the Chicago Strike of June-July, 1894, by the United States Strike Commission Appointed by the President, July 26, 1894.

Few competent observers had any illusions concerning Pullman's advertised philanthropy. Taxation reformers in many states knew him as a notorious tax-evader who took a keen interest in the personnel of tax-boards in order to shift the burden to another class in the community. His model town was but a red-brick equivalent of the shanty company-towns with their feudal privileges and oppressive control. The Federal commissioners who later investigated the Pullman homes failed to be dazzled:

The conditions created at Pullman enable the management at all times to assert with great vigor its assumed right to fix wages and rents absolutely and to repress that sort of independence which leads to labor organizations and their attempts at mediation, arbitration, strikes, etc.

It has been assumed by some writers that with the financial panic of 1893, the Pullman Company was compelled to make certain retrenchments which were inevitable. Even this belief has been dissipated by the testimony of the officials themselves. Wages had been drastically reduced to avoid any possible inconvenience resulting from the depression, but the generous salaries paid to high officials remained untouched. During the year ending July 31, 1893, dividends of \$2,520,000 had been distributed and wages of \$7,233,719.51 paid; but for the year ending July 31, 1894, dividends rose

¹ Report on the Chicago Strike, p. XXIII

to \$2,880,000 while wages fell drastically to \$4,471,701.39.

The company enjoyed a paid-up capital of \$36,000,000 and 1 a lump surplus of \$25,000,000 in undivided profits. Few firms were as fortunate in weathering the depression.

The Reverend William H. Carwardine who lived near Pullman and was familiar with many employees who brought their woes to him noted that the average wage was about ninety cents a day. One car-builder declared that his piece-rate had netted him seventy cents a day out of which he was compelled to pay \$11.57 montly rent. Complaints of the brutality of foremen were common. Union activities were so strictly proscribed that few cared to bell the cat by direct complaints.

At length a committee of forty-six approached the management on May 7 to ask for the wages of June 1893. They were told it was impossible. Then they asked if they might have their rents reduced, but this too was unreasonable. Wickes, the Vice-President, declared that only three per cent was being earned on their rental investment and that the company was losing money on contracts for the purpose of keeping the mem employed. On May 10, three of the committee were discharged for alleged lack of work. That night the

Report on the Chicago Strike, p. XXI.
 William H. Carwardine, The Pullman Strike, Chicago, 1894, p. 80.

local unions agreed to strike.

On May 11, some two thousand men left their posts.

They had the assurance of the American Railway Union that their cause would receive support. At six p. m., the Pullman Company put out signs, "These shops will be closed until further notice." George Pullman issued a press statement that he had been operating at a loss in order to prevent suffering among his employees. After that he left for a fashionable resort. The Tribune editor was convinced as to the altruism of the manufacturer-philanthropist and satirized the strikers in a cartoon of a well-dressed worker with a banner reading, "If We Can't Have Pie We 2 Won't Have Bread."

The American Railway Union, which now came to the support of the Pullman workers had recently been victorious in the Great Northern Strike of April. The defeat of the redoubtable James J. Hill was an event in labor history. Under the able leadership of Eugene Victor Debs, who issued orders for a general railway strike which tied up transportation from St. Paul to the coast the American Railway Union compelled Hill to restore 75 per cent of recent pay-cuts. Eighteen

¹ William H. Carwardine, op. cit.; cf. Chicago Tribune
May 10, 1894. Both accounts are similar factually,
though divergent upon interpretation.

² The Chicago Tribune, May 13, 1894.

³ Chicago Daily News Almanac, 1895, p. 77; Chicago Tribune, May 2, 1894; Samuel Gompers, Seventy Years of Life and Labor, Vol. I, pp. 404-7.

days sufficed for this signal achievement. The conferences of Hill and Debs assumed legendary proportions in the retelling of how the young labor organizer dictated to one of the greatest industrial giants of the age. A new optimism filled the ranks of organized labor.

The Railway Union had been organized the previous summer with a membership of 150,000 railway employees. It came into existence on this scale because of the threat. frequently realized, of the General Managers Association to eradicate unionized labor. The latter, an employers organization which represented twenty four railroads aggregating a mileage of 40,933 and a capitalization of \$2,108,552,617, had begun its existence in 1886. Each member was assessed equally for activities associated with its function of furnishing strike-breakers, a national black-list, a general schedule of wages and to deal with related problems of employment. Discontented employees were regularly met by a committee of the Association rather than the heads of their particular plant. A total of 221.097 employees was subject to its rulings. It was

¹ Report of the Chicago Strike, p. XXVIII. Dr. Carroll
D. Wright, "The Chicago Strike," American Economic
Association Publication, 1894, pp. 33-50.

Virtually a national combination. As one of the Federal Commissioners remarked, "If we regard its practical workings rather than its professions as expressed in its constitution, the General Manager's Association has no more standing in law than the old Trunk Line Pool."

On June 21 the convention of the Railway Union voted to refrain from handling Pullman Cars on the twenty-sixth unless Pullman would consent to arbitrate. Debs explained the method of boycott that would be adopted in case Pullman refused. All members of the Union would refuse to handle the sleeping cars; inspectors, switchmen, engineers, and brakemen would not perform their duties as far as these cars were concerned. If attempts were made to replace the boycotters, every union man would strike.

The Pullman Company which entrusted its cause to the General Manager's Association refused to treat with the strikers. The American Railway Union was ignored. Wickes remarked, "As the men are no longer in our employ we have nothing to arbitrate." One of the Federal Commissioners

Report of the Chicago Strike, p. XXIX. "The Association is an illustration of the persistent and shrewdly devised plans of corporations to overreach their limitations and to usurp indirectly powers and rights not contemplated in their charters and not obtainable from the people or their legislators." Ibid., p.XXXI.

² Chicago Tribune, June 23, 1894.

^{3 &}lt;u>Ibid</u>.

later asked him, "Don't you think that the fact that
you represent a vast concentration of capital and are
selected for that because of your ability to represent
it, entitles him (the employee) . . . to unite with all
the men of his craft and select the ablest one to
represent their causes?" Wickes replied, "They have the
right; yes, sir. We have the right to say whether we
will receive them or not."

Eugene Debs was not as yet a Socialist in the

Marxian sense. Like other trade unionists he was influenced
by the teachings of Laurence Gronlund who advocated a

cooperative commonwealth with several of the main features
of state socialism. The theories of Professor Richard T.

Ely of the University of Wisconsin left a deep impression
upon him. He agreed with Ely's thesis that strict trade
union organizations had served their purpose in the past
but that the new conditions of corporate centralization
left employees defenseless. He hoped that the successful
issue of the strike would be a first step in the direction
of governmental ownership of the means of transportation
and communication.

The general boycott of Pullman cars was begun on

¹ Report on the Chicago Strike, p. XXVI.

² Testimony of Eugene V. Debs, Report on the Chicago Strike, p. 170.

³ Chicago Tribune, July 1, 1894, Whitlock, Forty Years of It, p. 91.

June 26 with an attempt to concentrate at first on the great through lines. The Illinois Central trains were the first affected. Switchmen ordered to attach Pullman cars refused and their discharge brought about the strike of the remaining union men. Debs! repeated injunctions against violence were scrupulously observed. By the next day, employees of the Northern Pacifid and the Sante Fe lines had joined the strikers. On June 29, the General Managers Association issued a declaration of war on the American Railway Union, announcing that all men refusing to perform their duties would be instantly discharged and never reemployed; no striker would ever be reemployed by the road whose service he left. As the strike spread over the country, the Association prepared for more drastic steps to bring about the collapse of the movement. private detectives of the Pinkerton type were bought into Chicago despite the Illinois law of 1893 forbidding it. Debs warned the strikers that the Association would employ tramps to set fire to a few old box cars as a pretext for calling out the militia. This prediction was subsequently verified on a larger scale than he imagined.

¹ Chicago. Tribune, June 27, 1894.

² Ibid., June 30.

³ Chicago Times, July 3, 1894.

⁴ Chicago Tribune, July 1, 1894.

All strikers were repeatedly instructed to abstain from violence in any form. Failure in this strategy would invite military intervention. The Pullman employees organized a committee to guard the company's property. Particular precautions had to be taken because Chicago was then filled with many vicious elements which had been stranded after the World's Fair. A spirit of apprehension was encouraged by the newspapers which magnified such incidents as chasing a crowd of boys off railway tracks into details of a murderous riot. So serious did this become later that the police were instructed to prevent newspoys on the streets from "crying the dangerous and incendiary character of certain publications. The General Managers Association, anticipating some trouble, asked for police protection on the twenty-seventh and received it.

On July 3, just previous to the despatch of federal troops to Chicago, the Times, then under the supervision of Carter H. Harrison (the younger), and Willis J. Abbot, declared:

There has been no rioting in or about Chicago; no blood has been shed; no one has

Report of the Superintendent of Police, Chicago Municipal Reports, 1894, p. 18.

² Chicago Times, July 3, 1894. As a result of its campaign for labor, Harrison's journal leaped forward in circulation at the expense of other city newspapers. In some sections of the country, railroad property was stoned, but the opinion of officials of the roads was that it was not done by strikers, but by hoodlums. Chicago Record, July 2, 1894.

been killed; and were it not for the clamorous utterances of a number of Chicago newspapers, which at this time seem anxious to
foment trouble through distorted reports of
the labor strike, the average citizen would
affirm that the great city of Chicago was
never in a more pacific mood than at present.

The editor pointed out that Blue Island, then outside of Chicago, was proving to be a good field for deliberate falsification of labor news. On July 3, the superintendent of railway mail in a telegram to Washington declared that "no mails had accumulated in Chicago, and that all trains were moving nearly on time with a few slight exceptions." During the evenings of July 2 and 3 the bulletins of the General Managers Association showed that all passenger trains were running, though freight was The lack of adequate crews was largely respondelayed. Chief of Police Brennan, in his official report sible. declared that "until July 4th there was little or no trouble at any point within the limits of the city of The plans of the strikers to avert military interference moved with precision.

The Chicago Herald, Feb. 27, 1895. Several trains were delayed at Hammond, Indiana, Washington Heights, Danville, and Cairo; the greatest delay at any time according to Supt. Troy, did not exceed eight or nine hours.

² Report of the Supt. of Police, Chicago Municipal Reports, 1894, p. 11. Chicago Herald Feb. 27, 1895. Governor's Biennial Report to the Legislature, Jan. 9, 1895.

³ Chicago Municipal Reports, 1894, p. 12.

Meanwhile, Richard Olney, the Attorney-General, was taking a deep interest in the situation at Chicago. On the twenty-eighth of June, he issued instructions to the Federal district attorney of that city, Milchrist, to see that the passage of mail trains remained unobstructed. Warrants were to be issued against persons guilty of delaying the mails. Milchrist replied on the thirtieth that mail trains had been stopped by strikers at Riverdale and Brighton Park and that the situation was getting worse. Olney then advised him to swear in extra deputies. Milchrist reported that he had attended the meeting of the General Managers Association and informed them of Olney's instructions. He asked them to report any interference with the mail trains.

That day, Olney appointed Edwin Walker, who was affiliated with the Managers Association, as special attorney for the national government. Walker was likewise counsel for the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railroad Company. As Darrow remarks, "The Government might with as good grace have appointed the attorney for the American Railway Union to represent the United States." In a

¹ Telegram of Olney to Milchrist, June 28, 1894, Annual Report of the Attorney-General of the U.S. for 1896, House Documents, 54th Cong., 2nd Bess., Appendix, p. 56. Similar telegrams were sent to other states in the strike area.

² House Documents, ibid., p. 57.

³ Darrow, Story of my Life, p. 61.

telegram to Walker, Olney revealed his intentions:

It has seemed to me that if the rights of the United States were vigorously asserted in Chicago, the origin and centre of the demonstration the result would be to make it a failure every where else to prevent its spread over the entire country. But I feel that the true way of dealing with the matter is by a force which is over whelming and prevents any attempt at resistance.

The next day Milchrist reported general paralysis of the railroads with little mail moving and the federal marshal, John W. Arnold, declared that the situation was desperate.

Despite the testimony of better authorities to the contrary, Olney appeared convinced. Instead of suggesting however that the federal officers apply to the local authorities, or if that failed, to Governor Altgeld, as he had done two weeks previously in the coal strike, Olney prepared to take direct measures from Washington. His plans called for a higher strategy.

The first step taken against the strikers was the issuance of a federal injunction of the blanket variety which tended to paralyze the leadership of the American Rail-way Union. It was largely based upon the Interstate Commerce Act of 1887; the subsequent indictments were obtained under the Sherman Anti-Trust Act of 1890. These acts which had been aimed at the unprecedented trend toward monopoly

¹ Olney to Walker, June 30, 1894, House Documents, op. cit. p. 60.

² House Documents, op. cit., pp. 60-61.

on the part of corporations and industrial combinations were speedily emasculated of their salutary provisions against the trusts and utilized as an effective weapon against labor. Senator Sherman, himself, at the time of enactment of his bill defined the intent of the framers as making it unnecessary to protect labor from its provisions by any amendment. "Combinations of workingmen," he said, "to promote their interests, promote their welfare, and increase their pay, if you please, to get their fair share in the division of production are not affected in the slightest degree, nor can they be included in the word or intent of the bill as reported! Olney later pleaded before the Supreme Court that the Sherman Act should be liberally construed against improper interference with commerce on anybody's part; and since labor organizations represented combinations of capital, they should be subject to its provisions.

The injunction applied to labor disputes arose from the practices of the English Chancery courts, but was shortlived in that country. When transplanted to the United States, it received a new lease on life. It was invoked

Quoted in Ex Parte Debs, U. S. Supreme Court, passim.

2 Ibid., p. 96. Clarence Darrow, counsel for Debs, declared that the injunction "would despoil one army of every means of defense and aggression while on the field of battle, and in the presence of an enemy with boundless resources and all the equipments of warfare at their command."

in Baltimore in 1883, in Iowa in 1884 and in the great railway strike of 1886. After that, to use Professor Frankfurter's expression, it "grew like a snowball."

Eventually, it was rationalized in American legal procedure to represent "time-honored principles of equity jurisdiction."

The Debs Case became an active precedent for the issuance of injunctions to defeat organized labor.

Olney gave instructions to Edwin Walker on July 1
providing for the issuance of the injunction on the following day. Judge William A. Woods of the United States
Circuit Court and Judge P. S. Grosscup of the federal
District Court readily granted this on demand. Grosscup,
who had some scruples on the subject, declared to a friend

¹ Frankfurter and Greene, The Labor Injunction, pp. 30-21.
2 Beckner, History of Illinois Labor Legislation, p. 46. The writer adds: "The use of the injunction in industrial disputes constitutes government by judicial discretion or judicial conscience—government by men rather than government by law. It is entirely arbitrary. There is no definite law governing the issuance of injunctions, consequently the bias of the judge is the determining factor... Under the rules governing equity procedure, a person is brought into court and must show why he should not be punished. Punishment is by fine or imprisonment or both, according to the discretion of the court. Jury trial is denied in these contempt cases and workmen are used to enforce a law which does not rest equally upon both parties to an industrial dispute. Ibid., pp. 49-50.

³ Report on the Chicago Strike, p. 180, Exhibit 5.

that he was not prepossessed in favor of the injunction method of repressing violence. "It is altogether wrong to call the Judges into the midst of such a turmoil and compel them apparently to take sides." The injunction prevented "Eugene V. Debs and all other persons" from sending out letters, messages, or communications "directing, inciting, encouraging, or instructing any persons what-soever," to interfere in the affairs of the railway companies, directly or indirectly; and to refrain from persuading any employees of these companies to strike.

The American Railway Union, observing the attempt of the Attorney-General to compel the attachment of Pullman cars to mail trains, passed a resolution on June 30 condemning his action. They declared that the railway officials who refused to forward mail trains unless Pullmans were attached were the real law-breakers. A resolution was passed that Governor Altgeld call upon the railroad officials to run their trains within twenty-four hours, as required by charters or forfeit these and the state proceed to operate the railroads. They had had experience with

¹ Letter of Grosscup to W. I. Gresham, reprinted in James A. Barnes, "Illinois and the Gold-Silver Controversy, 1890-1896," Transactions of the Illinois Historical Society, 1931, Vol. 33, p. 44.

² Report on the Chicago Strike, p. 180, Exhibit 5.

³ The Chicago Tribune, July 1, 1894.

an injunction in the Great Northern strike a short time previously and successfully ignored it. Debs telegraphed to a western branch of the American Railway Union, "It will take more than injunctions to move trains. Get everybody out. We are gaining ground everywhere." The Chicago Times, alone of the Chicago major newspapers, expressed indignation:

The injunction is becoming a menace to liberty. . . . Certainly if the restraining order issued by Judges Woods and Grosscup be good law there is no sense in maintaining labor organizations . . . Child-like trust in the benevolence and fairness of the employer must be the workingmen's future policy if this injunction be made an effective precedent.

Rarely has a legal precedent operated so quickly in effecting a fundamental change as the Olney injunction in the Pullman strike. Immediately after the issuande of the court order, telegrams poured into the office of the Attorney-General requesting an injunction "like the Chicago bill." It seemed as if every federal district attorney in the country appreciated the magic which had been performed at Chicago. Olney encouraged this reaction and furnished details as to the mechanism of the court order. Federal injunctions were issued in Southern Illinois, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky,

¹ In Re Debs, Petition for a Writ of Habeas Corpus.
2 The Chicago Times, July 4, 1894.

Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, New Mexico, 1
Ohio, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, and Wisconsin.

At the request of various railroad counsels, Olney obediently issued Federal injunctions on the Chicago model to outlying areas, frequently in anticipation of a strike.

Even while Milchrist was preparing the details of the injunction with the General Managers Association, Walker appeared dissatisfied. On July 2, he telegraphed Olney, "It is the opinion of all that the orders of court cannot 3 be enforced except by the aid of the Regular Army."

This idea was repeated in a later telegram that day as news came in from Blue Island. The United States Marshal, Arnold, reported to Olney during the day that crowds were preventing the passage of Pullman cars at the Rock Island tracks in Blue Island. He suggested that federal troops from Fort Sheridan be sent since he was unable to cope with the situation and the mail trains were in great danger.

The Marshal had received a request for assistance from the Blue Island authorities. The town was then outside of the Chicago city limits; highly colored journalistic accounts had given a widespread impression of general rioting in this

Based upon telegrams to Olney from these sections. House

Documents, Appendix (See Alabama to Wisconsin correspondence.)

² House Documents, ibid., p. 168 (New York telegrams).

³ Ibid., p. 63.

⁴ Ibidl p. 67.

area. It was clear that if the injunction order could be read under unfavorable conditions to a crowd, the overt act of defiance could easily be construed. Arnold proceeded to follow the farcical procedure of reading the long technical instructions of the Circuit Court to them. There were shouts of "Let her go! Let her go, but no Pullmans!" To this the Marshal retorted, "I want to say right here and now that any train, Pullman or no Pullman must go!" Shouts and hisses followed. A suggestion by a Blue Island official that Altgeld be called upon for state troops was ignored. Another type of strategy was evidently in the minds of the "federal" representatives who were meeting in an office adjacent to that of the General Managers Association in the Rookery Building.

Olney was highly pleased with the work of Walker, whose suggestions as to procedure seemed "eminently wise."

A railroad lawyer himself at one time, Olney appreciated the strike-breaking technique evolved by the new representative of national interests in Chicago. He wrote to Walker on July 3 the words that indicate that the correspondence submitted toCongress is incomplete upon essential points,

"Legal situation could not be improved. . . . Understand you think time for use of United States troops has not yet

¹ Chicago Tribune, July 3, 1894.

arrived . . . Rely upon you to advise me when the exigency 1 necessitates use of troops. The confiding nature of the Attorney-General merits comment and it is difficult to escape certain inferences as to conduct unbecoming a high public official. Another telegram on the same day reiterated his appreciation of Walker's services and again expressed solicitude as to the use of federal troops. Trust use of United States troops will not be necessary. If it becomes necessary, they will be used promptly and decisively upon the justifying facts being certified to me. In such case, if practicable, let Walker and Marshal and United States Judge join in statement as to the exigency.

Walker and his associates proceeded to follow Olney's suggestion as to a proper form for the request regarding federal troops. The Governor of Illinois and the local authorities still played no part in the details of the Walker-Olney arrangements, despite constitutional condiderations. It was evidently decided to use the Blue Island incident of the preceding day as the basis for military intervention. A report was drawn up by Arnold and reaffirmed by Walker, Milchrist, and Grosscup. The details were not only at variance with the accounts of the affair

¹ House Documents, p. 68.

² House Documents, p. 65.

published in the Chicago newspapers, but also with the Marshal's own telegram sent the day before.

In the new version a mob of some three thousand held possession of a point "in the city" near the crossing of Rock Island where a mail train had been ditched (?); and the mob prevented the passing of "any trains, whether mail or otherwise." So far the misstatements indicate a desire to base a request for federal troops upon the alleged obstruction of the mails in Chicago. The Marshal, who was displaying a legal acumen that reflected Walker's inspiration, added that no force less than the regular troops of the United States could procure the passage of mail trains or enforce the orders of the federal court. He "believed" that more workers were going on strike that day and would join the mob-an inference connecting the strikers with violence that is not in conformance with the facts. It was an obvious attempt to confuse the Blue Island and Chicago situations in the mind of President Cleveland for whom the telegram was intended. This document was later cited by Cleveland in justification of his Walker sent another telegram that military intervention. day declaring it of "utmost importance" that troops be

¹ Grover Cleveland, The Government in the Chicago Strike, p.18.

distributed at certain points within Chicago by evening.

Upon receipt of this telegram, the president took his cue from his Attorney-General. Cleveland informed Major-General Schofield of the plan to send troops to Chicago and issued orders to General Nelson A. Miles, in command of the Military Department of Missouri, to proceed to Chicago. General Miles, however, left at once for Washington to see the president and thus evaded these instructions. In a conference with Cleveland Miles declared that "he was subject to orders, but that in his opinion, the United States troops ought not to be employed in the city of Chicago at that time." Schofield. who treated Miles coolly, objected to this suggestion and supported the president's program of intervention. As a legal basis for the expedition, several statutes of Civil War and Reconstruction origin were invoked against "unlawful obstructions, combinations or assemblages of persons, or rebellion against the authority of the United

¹ House Documents. p. 62. It is to be noted that the documents cited in this correspondence were not made public until 1897 when a congressional resolution demanded their submission.

² John M. Schofield, Forty Six Years in the Army, New York, 1897, p. 497.

States. The constitutional provision that federal intervention in a state against domestic violence must be "on application of the legislature, or of the executive" (when the legislature cannot be convened) yielded precedence to archaic statutes. Arrangements were made for the transportation of the entire garrison at Fort Sheridan to the lake front in Chicago.

Professor McElroy finds an apt parallel between
this situation and Revolutionary times. When Benjamin
Franklin heard of the intention of King George to send
redcoats to Boston to put down rebellion, he remarked,
"If sent, they will not find a rebellion, but they will
create one." This came close to realization. Eugene
Debs, evidently overwrought by this threat to the strikers,

¹ Grover Cleveland, The Government in the Chicago Strike, p. 19. Cf. Browne, Altgeld of Illinois, pp. 164-169. One statute was a purely war measure of July 29, 1861 and the other a Reconstruction Act of April 20, 1871, popularly known as the Ku Klux Klan Act (Sections 5298-9 of the Revised Statutes of the United States). One writer declares that Cleveland remarked to Secretary Gresham and Olney, "Send the troops at once; we can discuss the legal questions later on." Stephen A Day, "A Celebrated Illinois Case that Made History," Journal of the Illinois Historical Society, July 1917, p. 197.

² Article IV, Section 4. 3 Cleveland, op. cit., 22-3.

⁴ Robert McElroy, Grover Cleveland, New York, 1923, Vol. II, p. 151.

predicted:

The first shots fired by the regular soldiers at the mobs here will be the signal for a civil war. I believe this as firmly as I believe in the ultimate success of our course. Bloodshed will follow and ninety per cent of the people of the United States will be arrayed against the other ten per cent. And I would not care to be arrayed against the laboring people in this contest, or find myself out of the ranks of labor when the struggle ended.

Events elsewhere as the strike spread over the country made the federal authorities wary of testing Debs' prophecy. The federal troops had instructions not to fire upon the crowds and the president of the American Railway Union continued his work unmolested by the court order. The General Managers Association expressed its satisfaction with the action of Cleveland and denied holding any conferences with the strike leaders. As one official explained to the press, its members stood "shoulder to shoulder." He added:

So far as the railroads are concerned with this fight, they are out of it. It has now become a fight between the United States government and the American Railway Union and we shall leave them to fight it out.

The unpopular railroad combines were now sheltered behind patriotic forces while the strikers appeared as alien

Interview of Debs in the Washington Post, July 5, 1894; reprinted in Allan Nevins, Grover Cleveland, New York, 1932, p. 623.

² New York Daily Tribune, July 5, 1894. (Statement of General Manager Egan.)

agitators seeking to overthrow hallowed institutions.

Anticipating trouble, the Chief of Police at Chicago ordered city policemen to guard the trains conveying the military to camp. His precautions were based on serious fears. During the night of July 3, the troops were brought into the city. "On July 4th trouble The workingmen had heard of the arrival of the federal troops and were incensed. . . . There was trouble at Halsted street and Emerald Avenue and on the Lake Shore tracks . . . " The General Managers Association appealed to the police--not the military--for protection. Crowds of the rough element "for the most part, not of railway strikers" enjoyed the opportunity for mischief under the prevailing excitement. Half-grown boys furnished fuel to the incipient riots. Although the federal commanding officer reported comparatively few difficulties on the fourth, General Miles declared on the next day that a mob of several thousand was moving east along the Rock Island railroad "overturning cars, burning station-houses and destroying property. " He asked Schofield for permission to fire upon mobs obstructing trains. By the sixth,

¹ Report of the Supt. of Police, Chicago Municipal Reports, 1894, p. 13.

² Schofield, op. cit., pp. 499-501. The Chicago Tribune reporting the events of July 5, used the captions, "Mobs Defy All Law-Make Night Hideous with a Reign of Torch and Riot" July 6, 1894. This referred to the burning box cars.

matters had become worse. Mobs threatened to hang the United States marshals and the policemen. Military reinforcements seemed necessary to support the position of the troops in Chicago.

To demonstrate the popular feeling in favor of the strikers, Debs asked all sympathizers to wear white ribbons on their coat lapels. This met hearty response. Jane Addams noted the prevalence of these ribbons as she pursued her way to Hull House. Debs urged his men to remain firm. To one union leader, he wired, "Calling out the troops is an old method of intimidation. Commit no violence Have very man stand pat. Troops cannot move trains. Not enough scabs in the world to fill places and more occurring hourly." In another telegram, he wrote, "Strong men and broad minds only can resist the plutocracy and arrogant monopoly. Do not be frightened at troops, injunctions, or a subsidized press. Quit and remain firm. Commit no violence. American Railway Union will protect all, whether member or not, when strike is off." The Chicago Times attacked Cleveland for obeying the behests of railroad magnates and declared that he sought to make the Gatling gun

¹ Jane Addams, Twenty Years of Hull House, p . Some newspapers expressed apprehension as to a possible war of the ribbons.

² Telegrams reprinted in the Alton Daily Sentinel-Democrat, July 18, 1894.

³ Ibid.

and the bayonet dominant in American affairs. The editor later declared that the presence of the federal troops in Chicago had done more to inflame passion than to suppress violence. Henry George, speaking before an enthusiastic crowd of workmen at Cooper Union, declared that he yielded to nobody in his respect for the rights of property, but he would prefer to see every locometive ditched, and every car and depot burned, rather than see them preserved by a Federal standing A meeting of citizens on Boston Common passed a army. resolution endorsing the strike and declaring that Olney had delivered the federal government to the railroad kings.

In guaging American public opinion concerning the introduction of federal troops, any reliance upon the newspapers exclusively is misleading. Most of the metropolitan newspapers were lined up solidly against the

The Chicago Times, July 5, 1894.

² Ibid., July 7, 1894. According to Mayor Pingree of Detroit, who played an active part in trying to bring about an arbitration of the dispute, the Federal officers agreed that there was no need whatever of their presence in Chicago but they were subject to orders. New England Magazine, October 1896.

³ Henry George, Jr., Life of Henry George, New York, 1900, p. 577.

⁴ House Documents, p. 126.

strikers; exceptions are few and difficult to find. On the other hand, Olney's correspondence with sheriffs, federal marshals, and judges from every part of the union reveal a belief among these men that the strikers' side was the popular one. The situation in California at this time is particularly instructive.

In an attempt to move the trains of the Southern

Pacific Railroad, the United States Marshal at Los Angeles

requested Olney to send troops to that section. This was

done about the same time as the soldiers were moving to

Chicago. The reason given for the introduction of troops

was that they were required to enforce the injunction.

As in Chicago, the use of troops awoke popular resentment.

When the militia of Stockton and Sacramento were called

out to fire upon the crowds, the soldiers removed car
tridges from their guns and refused to use the bayonet.

The widespread support given the strikers frightened the

railroad men who wired repeatedly for federal reinforcements

which were sent to the northern part of the state as well.

When the strike ended in California, after the loss of several lines and considerable destruction of property, a federal district attorney, Joseph H. Call, summarized the

¹ House Documents, p. 23. of. New York Daily Tribune, July 5, 1894 and the Chicago Evening Journal, July 3, 1894 for the situation in California.

affair in a frank telegram to the Attorney-General that must have caused Olney to wince. Call declared that there was an overwhelming sentiment not only against the railroads but against the Government as well due to a conviction that the laws of the nation were being enforced with great severity against laboring people and not against the corporations. He pointed out that the Southern Pacific Railroad, for example, with a charter in Kentucky, was operating thirty four railroads in obvious violation of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. He added this remark which is revelatory of a large phase of the Pullman strike:

I do not hesitate to speak plainly when I say that, in my opinion, if the United States Government cannot protect the people of the Pacific States against these monopolies, it will require a larger standing army than the Government now possesses to uphold the power and dignity of the United States.

Nor was the Illinois and California situations unique. In order to enforce the Walker-Olney type of injunction which was widely adopted, federal troops were sent to Colorado, Idaho, Indiana, Michigan, Montana, Nevada, New

House Documents, p. 35. It may be added that Olney refused to consider the bill against the Southern Pacific and suggested the ordinary remedies in the state courts. Since the Southern Pacific had been chartered previous to the passage of the Sherman Act, he thought that such a bill was illegal. Ibid., p. 37.

Mexico, Oklahoma, Utah, and Wyoming.

Neither the Mayor of Chicago, John P. Hopkins, nor the Sheriff of Cook County, Gilbert, had thought it necessary to call upon the federal authorities for assistance. One theory which was prevalent considered that since Hopkins was a Democrat and the Sheriff a Republican, neither wished to bear the onus of an uhpopular move. This is untenable in view of the active efforts of both in calling the police and special deputies wherever needed. Gilbert had even faked a strike alarm once in order to bring about Altgeld's military intervention. Hopkins had been a former paymaster for the Pullman Company and still retained a keen It is quite likely that dislike for his former employer. Hopkins was not averse to enjoying the discomfiture suffered by the Pullman Company, but even this attitude would not account for his course in the Pullman strike. The facts cited as to conditions in Chicago before July 4 and 5 would have prevented any mayor, save a friend of the General

¹ House Documents, p. 35. (Correspondence from Alabama to Wisconsin). In some cases where there was no provision for a state militia, the federal troops were called upon at once.

William T. Stead, Chicago Today, p. 222. Caro Lloyd, Life of H. D. Lloyd, Vol. I, p. 149.

Managers Association, from calling on Governor Altgeld or President Cleveland for troops.

Hopkins professed a deep contempt for the services of the regulars, who, he declared, sat on top of cars rather than do their duty as needed. They had been brought "for a purpose"—a sinister one—without his advice or consent. He testified later before the strike commissioners that up to the morning of July 6, the rail—road companies did not call upon him for additional protection. No complaints on this score had been brought to his attention.

As Hopkins and other observers noted, the regulars proved ineffective to combat mob violence when it did occur. The animus against them was undoubtedly one of the factors responsible. The editor of the London Times, observing these events, expressed his astonishment, "The strange thing is that, although large bodies of Federal Troops have been poured into the place, their presence has done so little to restore order, or to keep the bands of marauders in check." In reality, the Chicago police were compelled to undertake the brunt of the work of the industrial guards until the coming of the state militia. The circumstances surrounding Altgeld's course in the strike now require special consideration.

Testimony of John P. Hopkins, Report on the Chicago Strike, p. 352.

² The London Times, July 9, 1894.

CHAPTER VI

THE GENESIS OF NATIONAL ISSUES

The tense atmosphere in Springfield arising from the coal strike had scarcely been dissipated before the urgent problems of the Pullman atrike began to demand attention. In fact, the difficulties at Spring Valley, where absentee operators had locked out over thirteen hundred miners, continued to be a festering sore whose chronic eruptions required the constant surveillance of the state militia. As the railroad strike spread, Altgeld was compelled to devote much of his time to it. Brand Whitlock, who was then employed in the office of William H. Hinrichsen, Secretary of State, observed the mounting cares of the governor:

...down in the Adjutant-General's office at the State House there was the stir almost of war itself with troops being ordered here and there about the state and the Governor harassed and worried by a situation that presented to him the abhorrent necessity of using armed force.

Altgeld kept a huge map in his office during the strike with tacks and pins marking the exact position of militia

² Brand Whitlock, Forty Years of It, pp. 90-1.

and the strategy of rapid transportation routes. He was in constant conference with the Adjutant-General and other officers. As Henry Demarest Lloyd noted during his visit to the Executive Office, Altgeld was prepared to put 100,000 men into the city of Chicago inside of five days if it Although the state militia consisted became necessary. of less than six thousand men, the Governor had assurances of volunteers from the entire state. His confidence in the efficacy of the militia was warranted by their vigorous and prompt performance during his administration. At that time the Illinois militia consisted of private citizens engaged in various daily pursuits but prepared to respond instantly when called. They drew their compensation only during active duty. Altgeld himself had been a member of the Ohio militia when a boy and held a high opinion of the merits of a volunteer force "coming from the walks of civil life."

His experience with the demands of the railroads for troops was similar to the situation in the coal strike.

Attempts were made to utilize the militia in order to run trains whose crews had struck. This was thwarted by the

¹ Caro Lloyd, Life of H. D. Lloyd, I, pp. 147-8.

² General Message. . . 1895. Live Questions, p. 920.

Governor whenever possible. In one instance where troops were ordered to one point and found no riot but a line of trains without crews, several soldiers were compelled to act as engineers and brakemen to transport 1 the militia home. Sheriff Gilbert of Cook County applied to the Governor for arms which were promptly furnished. No further demands were made by the sheriff during the entire strike.

On July 1, Altgeld redeived a telegram from delayed railroad passengers at Decatur that the trains were obstructed and military assistance was necessary. In the newspapers, the situation at Decatur was pictured as anarchic. He wired at once to the sheriff of Macomb County asking for particulars and whether the railroad officials were making proper efforts to move the trains. The shefiff replied that he could hold out no longer and at his request troops were sent. The soldiers arrived to find that all was quiet, but that there were no men 4 Again, a fiasco.

¹ General Message . . . 1895. Live Questions, p. 924.

During the course of the coal and railroad strikes, the militia was sent to fifteen different points in the state.

Newspapers like the <u>Chicago Tribune</u>, the <u>Daily News</u>, the <u>Evening Journal</u>, and the <u>Inter-Ocean</u> of July 1-2,1894, carried long columns of this and similar alleged rioting.

³ Correspondence in <u>Live Questions</u>, p. 923 (General Message . . . 1895).

⁴ The Chicago Evening Journal, July 2, 1894.

Officials of the Chicago and Eastern Railway Company wired the governor that all mail trains had been forcibly obstructed at Danville during the last forty eight hours by a crowd of 2000 strikers and sympathizers. Altgeld reported this request to the local sheriff who replied:

As to the situation, there are from three hundred to seven hundred strikers on the ground and oppose the movement of any and all trains or cars excepting mail cars. They are usually quiet and duly sober, but very determined. I will advise you if I am not able to afford protection.

This report expresses the usual type of situation where rioting was alleged. Unemployed railroad men, disciplined by the strong centralized direction of the American Railway Union, refrained from violence but used every method possible to prevent strike-breakers from filling their places and thus by a complete paralysis of railroad traffic, apart from mail cars, to bring the General Managers Association to consider arbitration.

In the midst of these policing activities, Altgeld now learned that the Cleveland Administration had decided to ignore the state and local authorities by sending federal troops to Chicago. His indignation was at once aroused for he suspected that a deliberate attempt was being made

¹ Live Questions, p. 924.

to set a precedent by which federal troops could be sent to any state long before any violence occurred in order to intimidate strikers. He determined to request the immediate withdrawal of the troops. Although this meant a party schism since the national and Illinois administrations were Democratic, he was prepared for this step because he felt that Cleveland's responsibility for the repeal of the Sherman Silver Purchase Law in the fall of 1893 was a repudiation of the party platform of 1892. Like other western Democrats, Altgeld regarded the repeal act as a craven surrender to the eastern plutocracy. His protest against the presence of the troops therefore heralds the fundamental issues of the campaign of 1896. The subsequent reaction all over the country reveals the new alignment within the Democratic party. With few exceptions, the adherents of the gold and silver standards in 1896 were on opposing sides in the Altgeld-Cleveland controversy of 1894. This identification of men and issues, as we shall see, became pronounced in the Democratic Convention at Chicago which nominated William Jennings Bryan for president.

On July 5, Altgeld addressed a long telegram to Cleveland outlining the situation in Chicago and the state

as an indication of the unjustifiability of sending troops

here. He declared that the local officials had been

able to control the situation and that nobody in Cook

County, whether official or private citizen, had even

intimated to him that the assistance of the state militia

was desired. The application for federal troops was made

by men who had "political and selfish motives" for ignoring

the state government. When the federal marshal for the

Southern District of Illinois had applied to him in two

instances for troops to enforce the orders of the United

States Court, the request had been readily complied with.

The marshal for the Northern District had but to ask for

military assistance in order to get it.

He pointed out that the real reason that some of the railroads were paralyzed was not because of wilful obstruction, but because they could not get men to operate their trains. The outcry about obstructions was due to a desire of the railroad operators to divert attention and

The complete correspondence appears in Biennial Report of the Adjutant-General of Illinois, 1893-4, pp. XL-XLIV.

² The truth of this statement has already been noted. At Blue Island, where allegations of rioting had brought federal troops to Chicago, six hundred deputies had been sent, but as Walker explained to Olney, "The Rock Island Company is making no effort to move its trains at present, and cannot do so until new men have been found to take the place of strikers." House Documents, op. cit. p. 64.

thereby keep this fact from the public. He cited his experiences in the southern part of the state, which have already been noted, as illustrative of the truth of this statement. In a few cases, crowdshad detached Pullmans, but such troubles were easily dealt with by the State authorities. Although Illinois had more railroad men than any other state in the union, they were as a rule orderly; the newspaper accounts to the contrary were pure fabrications.

Altgeld now turned to the constitutional aspects of the effair. He did not revive the Calhounian doctrine of "States Rights" as his critics later declared, but based his argument upon the accepted theory of the federal character of our government. The statute responsible for the presence of the federal army, he declared, was a military measure of the Civil War and even this provided that the troops could be used only when "it shall be impracticable to enforce the laws of the United States within such States by the ordinary Judicial proceedings." This situation did not prevail in Illinois. The statute must

¹ This assertion is borne out by the versions of the General Managers Association and the newspapers. An attempt was made in the press to show the scant support of the strike by the workingmen. When Debs gave the white ribbon order, there was journalistic derision and questions such as, "Has anyone seen a white ribbon?" There was an obvious attempt to dishearten the strikers whose resources were scanty by misrepresenting the numbers of their group and concealing the fact that the railroads were unable to get sufficient men to run the trains.

be construed as authorizing federal troops only when the local community was either unwilling or unprepared to enforce the law. He declared that Cleveland had been imposed upon in this matter and concluded:

The question of Federal supremacy is in no way involved. No one disputes it for a moment; but, under our Constitution, Federal supremacy and local self-government must go hand in hand, and to ignore the latter is to do violence to the Constitution . . .

As Governor of the State of Illinois, I protest against this and ask the immediate withdrawal of the Federal troops from active duty in this State . . . Should the situation at any time get so serious that we cannot control it with the State forces, we will promptly ask for Federal assistance; but, until such time, I protest; with all due deference, against this uncalled for reflection upon our people . . .

President Cleveland, who later described this telegram as "irrelevant" and "frivolous," made a brief, formal reply that ignored the main point at issue. He declared that federal troops were sent to Chicago upon the demand of the postoffice department that obstruction of the mails should be removed and by a declaration of the judicial officers of the United States that the processes of the Federal courts could not be executed through ordinary means, and upon proof that conspiracies against interstate commerce existed. Therefore, the presence of federal troops was not only proper, but necessary and there was no intention of interfering with the local authorities.

¹ Grover Cleveland, The Government in the Chicago Strike, p. 51.

Although this reply seems to indicate a complete indifference on the part of the president to the issues involved, there are evidences that he was perturbed by Altgeld's protest. Its contents were made the subject of a cabinet conference before a reply was issued.

Several cabinet officers like Gresham and Olney later expressed their contempt for the Governor. The former declared that Altgeld's letter was "state's rights gone ad." Professor McElroy found an interesting comment upon an autographed copy of Cleveland's reply to Altgeld that reveals to some extent the influence of the Illinois telegram upon the president:

Mr. McNaught should be informed that whatever arrangement is made by the Company with its employees must positively be made without relying upon the Government for any guarantee whatever. The military power of the Government refuses to be drawn into any relation with the details of railroad management.

G.C.

But even the authority of the president of the United States was not enough to hush the outspoken Governor. Altgeld immediately replied with a second telegram which was almost as long as the first and made a detailed

¹ New York Daily Tribune, July 7, 1894.

² The Daily Inter-Ocean (Chicago), July 7, 1894.

³ Robert McElroy, Grover Cleveland, p. 457.

analysis of the few statements in the Cleweland letter.

It was much sharper in tone than the previous letter of protest. He declared that the president's answer involved "some startling conclusions." If the executive was to be the sole judge as to whether a disturbance existed in any part of the country, then he could send troops anywhere and keep them there as long as he pleased. "The kind of self-government that could exist under these circumstances can be found in any of the monarchies of Europe, and it is not in harmony with the spirit of our institutions . . ."

He declared that it was a fundamental principle in our government that except in times of war the military should be subordinate to the civil authority. State militia were instructed to act under the civil officers, but the federal troops were not even acting under the United States Marshal or any federal officers of the state. Their operations were conducted by the military headquarters at Washington. The request for troops came from officers appointed by, and therefore a part of, the Executive; hence, an Executive through his appointees could order troops to any point he desired.

"This assumption," he stated, "as to the power of the

¹ Biennial Report of the Adjutant-General of Illinois, 1893,4, p. XLII.

executive is certainly new, and I respectfully submit
that it is not the law of the land. The jurists have
told us that this is a government of law, and not a
government by the caprice of an individual, and further,
instead of being autocratic, it is a government of
limited power. Yet the autocrat of Russia could certainly not possess, or claim to possess, greater power
than is possessed by the executive of the United States,
if your assumption is correct."

He denounced the presence of the federal officers as an irritant to a large class of people and again requested the withdrawal of the troops.

Cleveland, who was temperamentally the antithesis of Altgeld, later said that his "patience was somewhat strained" by the "rather dreary discussion of general principles." His reply this time consisted of a single sentence:

While I am still persuaded that I have heither transcended my authority nor duty in the emergency that confronts us, it seems to me that in this hour of danger and public distress, discussion may well give way to active efforts on the part of all in authority to restore obediende to law and to protect life and property.

¹ Cleveland, The Government in the Chicago Strike, p. 44.

This, he hoped, ended the matter. In his account of the affair, Cleveland remarked that the discussion demonstrated "how far one's disposition and inclination will lead him astray in the field of argument." He knew the anarchist-governor of Illinois for what he was. The Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, Curtis, wrote to 2 Carlisle:

We are all very much bothered about the strikes at Chicago and elsewhere . . . I think Altgeld ought to be whipped. I had a long talk with the President yesterday at the Secretary's request. He proposes to stand up and stamp this out if it takes the whole army and militia to do it . . .

Shortly after the cabinet conference, Olney issued a public statement scathingly reviewing the Altgeld telegrams. He declared that the arguments were full of false premises and illogical non-sequiturs which were hardly worth-while to discuss. Nevertheless, he gave a newspaper column interview on the subject. The soil of Illinois was the soil of the

¹ Cleveland, The Government in the Chicago Strike, p. 45. 2 Letter of Curtis to Carlisle, July 7, 1894 Curtis Mss., reprinted in James A. Barnes, John G. Carlisle, New York, 1931, p. 332.

Interviews in the Chicago Tribune and the New York Daily Tribune of July 7, 1894. In a novel dealing with this strike, A Tame Surrender, Charles King puts this in the mouth of a character, "Well was it for Chicago and the nation that the President of the United States stood unmoved by the puerile protests of the demagogue in office." (Story of the Chicago Strike). Philadelphia, 1896, p. 195.

United States and for all national purposes, the federal government could be there with its courts, its marshals, and its troops, not by mere permission, but as a right. It was the paramount duty of the president to execute faithfully the laws of the nation, and in the discharge of his duty, he was not to be hampered or crippled by the necessity of consulting any Chief of Police, mayor or Governor. The notion--which he attributed to Altgeld-that the territory of any state was too sacred to permit the exercise thereon by the United States Government of any of its legitimate functions, never had any legal existence and as a rule of conduct became practically extinct with the close of the civil war. He hinted that if necessary the militia of other states might be brought The Administration together with Majorinto Chicago. G eneral Schofield were planning a further concentration of troops. Schofield was authorized by Cleveland to bring eight additional companies of regular infantry to Chicago.

Olney had clearly reversed himself since 1875. During the Reconstruction difficulties in Louisiana of the fall of 1874, the carpetbag Governor Kellogg applied to President

¹ New York Daily Tribune, July 7, 1894.

² Ibid.

Grant for troops which were sent. The federal troops were used to disperse the lower house of the Legislature and this action was supported in Washington. At one of the northern meetings held to protest this act in Boston, Richard Olney made this statement which is strangely at variance with his argument in 1894:

Apparently the administration meant to assert that the President might enter a State with troops, to suppress disorder and violence at his own discretion, upon his own view of the exigency, and without waiting for the consent or request of the State itself. No more glaring example of usurpation can be imagined. If successful it would revolutionize our whole governmental system; if successful it would clearly annihilate the right of local self—government by a State, which could be exercised thereafter only by the sufferance and kind permission of the Federal government . . .

He declared at that time that federal intervention was not warranted by an insurrection in the State alone but that the president and national government were power-less to act unless the state legislature, or the Governor, if the Legislature could not be convened, applied for such aid. He did not recognize the Kellogg government, which was the de facto government, as the rightful holder of power and hence its request for federal troops was not legally permissive.

Altgeld made a public reply in the press to Olney's

Reprinted in Live Questions, p. 677 (Cooper Union Speech, Oct. 17, 1896). Olney was then a member of the Massachusetts Legislature. His speech reported in the Boston Post, Jan. 16, 1875, is reprinted in Browne, Altgeld of Illinois, pp. 168-170. This was the Kellogg-McEnery rivalry for the Louisiana governorship.

attacks. Accustomed to using vigorous language, the governor portrayed Olney as a special representative of the great trusts and monopolies of the country who were plundering the public and were trying to use the government as a tool. The prevailing impression in the country, said Altgeld, was that Olney was responsible for the new departure of having the federal government interfere in labor troubles, in order to assist his clients—the railroads.

Greatly to Altgeld's distress, Thomas M. Cooley, the outstanding constitutional authority of the country and whose former teachings had been admired by the governor, came forward with a public indorsement of Cleveland's actions. In a letter to Cleveland, Cooley expressed his complete satisfaction with the course followed in the Pullman strike as a vindication of the national authority and the restoration of law and order. "I am especially gratified that a great and valuable lesson in constitutional construction has been settled for all time with remarkable little bloodshed. You and the Attorney-General have won the gratitude of the country . . .

Less than a year previously, Altgeld had paid a high

¹ The Chicago Times, July 7, 1894.
2 Letter of Cooley to Cleveland, July 15, 1894 in the Alton Daily Sentinel-Democrat, July 18, 1894.

Association, and remarked that he was not only one of the greatest jurists of the country, but a statesman who was unwibling to lend even a silent support to the plundering of his country by insatiable greed and corruption. Now in his present attack on Cooley he declared that the people must discriminate between the real Cooley and the later one. The latter was more redently under obligation to Cleveland for a handsome position on the Interstate Commerce Board in his old age. Altgeld pointed out that the language of the Cooley letter, particularly the words regarding constitutional construction implied that the powers exercised by Cleveland had hitherto not been thought clearly constitutional by the great jurist.

Meanwhile other governors found federal intervention in their states equally objectionable, and followed the lead of Governor Altgeld in condemning Cleveland. Governor Hogg of Texas wired to Washington that he would not tolerate federal troops in his state until he had been first consulted. He remarked, "Though the order to invade Illinois

Speech at Battery D. Sept. 26, 1893. Live Questions, p. 298.
 Interview on Judge Cooley, <u>Live Questions</u>, pp. 418-420.
 Cooley was now in retirement due to advanced age.

was given by a Democratic President, who is the chief of the party to which I belong, my spirit revolts at it . . . " Governor William J. Stone of Missouri, another Democrat, protested to Cleveland against the pretense of using federal troops to protect mails, but actually to set aside local authorities. He declared that there was no disorder that could not be put down by state and local authorities. In Colorado, Governor Davis H. Waite wrote a bitter letter to Cleveland declaring that the federal troops were carrying on war in that state and would permit no interference by county or state officials. Arbitrary arrests without any warrant were being made. He demanded to know by what authority the federal Marshal had suspended the writ of habeas corpus in the state. In a letter to a federal judge Governor Waite quoted the Marshal as admitting a willingness to use horsethieves, thugs, and hobos so long as they could fight. Likewise, protests came to Cleveland from Governors Pennoyer and Lewelling.

The press reaction to Altgeld's protest against federal

John Swinton, A Momentous Question, Philadelphia, 1895, p. 409.

The Inter-Ocean, Chicago, July 7, 1894; Appleton's Annual Encyclopedia, 1894, p. 495.

Chicago Evening Journal, July 6, 1894. New York Daily Tribune, July 7, 1894.

military intervention was almost uniformly adverse. editor of the New York Daily Tribune wrote, "In a moment of general insanity the people of Illinois elected a Governor who is the faithful friend of sworn enemies of society The Philadelphia Times declared that Altgeld was in open sympathy with anarchy and if he were not removed during the next session "from the office he disgraces," the legislature would fail in its most important duty. Chicago Tribune did its best with an editorial entitled, The Fanatical Demagogue Altgeld. The Chicago Evening Journal under the heading, "Altgeld Still the Anarchist" remarked "It is impossible for a leopard with a hide as thick as Altgeld's to change his spots. In concert with that other anarchist, Governor Waite of Colorado, he has raised his harsh voice against the employment of Federal authority in Various newspapers presented their respective states." long lists of hostile editorials drawn from every part of the country. Altgeld was condemned as an Anarchist, a Copperhead, a foe of law and order, a liar, a successor of Calhoun, and a victim of megalomania. Abuse, rather than

¹ The New York Daily Tribune, July 7, 1894. The editor added that Altgeld was "amply entitled to a larger share of contempt and execration than Stone or Pennoyer, Waite or Lewelling."

² Summary of editorials, "The Great Strike," Public Opinion, July 12, 1894, p. 330. Among the adverse editorials were the Washington Times, the New York Tribune and World.

³ The Chicago Tribune, July 9, 1894 and November 3, 1894.

⁴ Chicago Evening Journal, July 6, 1894.

⁵ See lists of the Chicago Daily News, July 7, 1894 and The

controvertive evidence, was the rule.

Labor leaders appreciated the efforts of Altgeld;

Debs always recalled him in after years with kindly words

of tribute. John Swinton, a leading Labor organizer,

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wrote:

As a matter of course, the organs of the money power burst into a fury against the Governor for defending the constitutional rights and franchises of Illinois; but they could not lessen the force of his appeals which will shine in American history long after all his assailants are forgotten.

The Chicago Times, pursuing its lone way among metropolitan dailies, commended Altgeld for his courageous
protest against the unwarrantable exercise of force by the
federalist authorities. "The snarling pack of mercenaries
yelping at his heels will have gone into oblivion long
before his ringing letters to President Cleveland loses
its place as an epoch-making state paper."

In Congress, a division occurred among Democrats that was ominous for 1896. A proposal was made by McCreary of Kansas indorsing Cleveland's action. The subsequent debates

⁽cont.) Inter-Ocean, (Chicago), July 7, 1894. Altgeld was condemned as an anarchist accomplice by the Brooklyn Eagle. the New York Telegram, Evening Sun, the Commercial Advertiser, the Post, the Morning World, the Times, etc. All the Washington (D.C.) papers attacked Altgeld likewise.

¹ Swinton, A Momentous Question, p. 200-201.

² The Chicago Times, July 6, 1894. Willis J. Abbot of this paper wrote a strong letter of appreciation to Altgeld, July 5, 1894, Governor's Executive Files; acknowledged July 10, 1894, Governor's Letter Book, pp. 676-679.

revealed considerable criticism of the president and the attorney-general. Pence of Colorado, Bland of Missouri, and Fithian of Illinois attacked the resolution. accused Olney of being a counsel for one of the railroad corporations, a stockholder in another, and a member of the Board of Directors of others. Bland protested against the arbitrary invasion of states, the arrest of sheriffs by federal officers, and the use of federal injunctions. George Fithian of Illinois paid a high tribute to Altgeld as a fighter against government by injunction and government by force. He declared that if the President had been a Republican he would have been impeached by the Democratic Despite the failure of these congressmen to block Congress. the resolution indorsing Cleveland, the strong support given Altgeld was deeply appreciated by the Governor. Cleveland resolution was proposed in the Senate by John W. Daniel of Virginia and passed. The president and the members of his administration were commended for their prompt and vigorous measures against lawless interference with the

¹ Congressional Record, July 16, 1894, 53rd. Cong., 2nd Session, p. 7544.

² Cong. Record, July 16, 1894, ibid., p. 7545.

³ Chicago Times-Herald, Feb. 27, 1895.

In reply to Altgeld's letter of appreciation, Fithian remarked, "I intend to give Mr. Cleveland a thorough ventilation for his unwarranted and unconstitutional interference with the rights of the states and will especially refer to his invading Illinois during the Chicago strike with Federal troops," Aug. 15,1894, Governor's Executive Files.

"due process of laws of the United States, with the transportation of the mails . . . and with commerce among the States."

Senator John Palmer of Illinois, who was later to head the Gold Democrats, severely arraigned the governor for his telegrams to Cleveland. He declared that if he were president he would send to Chicago every soldier whom he could spare from other points. He resented the analogies drawn between his protest against Grant's intervention in Chicago in 1871 when Palmer was governor and the course taken by Altgeld. A brief summary of that incident however reveals that it was fundamentally similar to the situation in 1894.

After the great fire of 1871, Lieutenant-General Philip H. Sheridan and a detachment of United States troops were sent by President Grant to maintain order. Governor Palmer immediately protested against the presence of the troops and declared that the state authorities were abundantly able to protect every interest of the people. Grant replied that he had acted in an emergency situation and did not intend to do anything that would reflect upon the integrity or ability of a state officer. Palmer then administered a sharp lesson in Constitutional law to the

Cong. Record, p. 8663.
Editorial, "The Great Strike," <u>Public Opinion</u>, July 12, 1894,
p. 330. The <u>Chicago Tribune</u>, July 7, 1894.

president:

It seems to be very well settled as a principle of American public law that the duty of protecting persons and property and the preservation of public order and peace against the efforts of disorderly persons, or from local internal disturbance, is the peculiar and exclusive duty of the states with which the government of the United States has no concern, and in which it cannot interfere except upon the application of the legislature or the executive of the state, as comtemplated by the fourth section of the fourth article of the Constitution . . .

Grant accepted this instruction humbly and withdrew the troops from Chicago. The Illinois Legislature passed a resolution cordially approving Palmer's protest. This gratifying appreciation never came to Altgeld. The remarkable reversal of opinion on this subject shown by such men as Olney, Palmer, and Cooley reveals the new trend of centralization which had arisen since the seventies.

As rumors of federal reinforcements came to Altgeld while conditions seemed to be getting worse in Chicago, the governor determined to force the hand of Hopkins. On the morning of July 6, a statement of the disturbing

John M. Palmer, <u>Personal Recollections of John M. Palmer</u>, Cincinnati, 1901, pp. 366-368.

² Appleton's Annual Encyclopedia, 1876, p. 400. For Palmer's later version of the affair see letter of Palmer to Elliot Anthony, May 1, 1891 in files of the Chicago Historical Society. Brand Whitlock, op. cit., p. 92.

³ For the earlier opinion of Thomas M. Cooley, which is in direct contrast to that of 1894, see "The Guarantee of Order and Republican Government in the States," The International Review, Jan. 1875.

situation in Chicago came from the General Superintendent of the Illinois Central Railroad. Altgeld was aware of the truth of these representations through the investigations of Assistant Adjutant-General Bayle of the militia. He wired to the president of the railroad, "Get the mayor to ask assistance from the State, or if both he and the sheriff refuse to do so, then wire that fact and we will furnish troops promptly." On the same day, July 6, Altgeld issued this telegram to his partner, John W. Lanehart, who represented his interests in Chicago:

The federal troops having accomplished nothing in Chicago so far, I want Hopkins to relieve the situation before they can get their reenforcements in, in order that the city officials and State troops may get the credit. It is very important for his administration that this should happen. Hopkins being on the ground will be worth more than a regiment of soldiers. The two country regiments will begin to arrive tonight. See him at once. Show him this telegram and insist on his acting along this line.

Altgeld was anxious to demonstrate the futility of the federal troops and hoped to rob them of any possible credit they might earn of political significance. By throwing in state troopers to assist Hopkins, the local authorities would prove the soundness of its contention that they were able to

¹ Letter of F. D. P. Snelling to Browne, Nov. 20, 1922, Browne Collection.

² Biennial Report of the Adj. Gen'l, 1895, p. XXI.

³ Altgeld to Lanehart, July 6, 1894, Governor's Letter Book.

deal effectively with any rioting that might occur and that the federal troops were unnecessary. Federal reinforcements must be obviated by the immediate presence of sufficient limitia at all threatening points.

The Mayor of Chicago found the situation steadily getting beyond control of his police. Many of the latter were in sympathy with the strikers and squads would disappear in the crowds without result. Hopkins threatened to discharge such policemen and finally did so. He issued a general proclamation of July 5 asking all citizens to stay away from crowded places and declared that extraordinary measures must be taken to preserve order. The lawlessness was chiefly along the line of mailways, where more than one hundred box cars had been destroyed, many railway stations demolished, and even telegraph lines were out. The federal troops were kept busy supporting the United State

Professor Allan Nevins believes that Altgeld erred in not making a prompt and vigorous announcement of his readiness to act early in the strike and in not ordering a few regiments to stand in readiness by July 3, This would have reassured the city and made Olney's interference more difficult. Grover Cleveland, p. 627. While this statement is justified by hindsight, there was no such feeling of alarm at the time to necessitate such a course. Besides it would have antagonized the strikers and weakened their case to say nothing of the conflict with the Democratic Mayor. The newspapers would have neutralized the effect of anticipative action. In view of Olney's attitude it is doubtful if Altgeld could have prevented the order for federal troops.

Chicago Evening Journal, July 6, 1894.
 The Chicago Tribune, July 6, 1894.

marshals in making arrests for violating the court injunctions. Of the twenty three roads centering in Chicago only six were unobstructed. General Miles reported that trains moving in and out the city had been stoned or fired upon by mobs; one engineer had been killed. At eleven-thirty a. m. of July 6, shortly after the instructions of Altgeld, Mayor Hopkins called on the Governor for five regiments of militia. He declared that the civil authorities, because of the large territory to be policed, were unable to restore order.

Altgeld complied immediately with this request which had been anticipated. He ordered the Chicago and Aurora brigades into action and shifted the Cairo troops to Springfield to be held in readiness. To Brigadier-General Horace A. Wheeler, who was stationed at Chicago, Altgeld wrote that he should relieve the situation before the Federal remanforcements arrived. He asked him to admonish all officers to avoid unnecessary bloodshed. "There is no glory in shooting at a ragged and hungry man," he declared, and added that it took real ability to control and disperse a mob without bloodshed. He instructed Wheeler not to order the guns loaded in the presence of crowds since it was a terrorizing act and should be done only in an extremity; besides it re-

¹ Gen'l Miles to the Secretary of War, July 6, 1894, in Cleveland, The Government in the Chicago Strike, pp. 31-33.

² Telegram of Hopkins to the Chicago Tribune, July 6, 1894 in Chicago Historical Society, Manuscript Files.

³ Ibid. Biennial Report of the Adjutant-General, 1895, p.XXI.

quired only a second to load. This man who opposed capital punishment and police brutality might be compelled to resort to force, but he would, at least, put limitations upon its use.

The situation which the militia was called on to solve was a difficult one. On July 5, the seven largest buildings of the World's Fair in Jackson Park were set on fire and resulted in the death of one mana and injuries The correspondent for the New York Daily to fiour others. Tribune reported that for the first time since the declaration of the strike, a feeling of alarm permeated the com-The militia were compelled to patrol a wide area munity. over the city and its suburbs. At the Union Stock Yards, where federal troops failed to move the meat up to that time, the militia succeeded in clearing the blockade, thus preventing a threatened food shortage. Reports from various parts of the state outside of Chicago indicated

Altgeld to Wheeler, July 6, 1894, Governor's Letter Book.

William T. Stead, the British publisher, who met Altgeld at this time had this comment to make, "John P. Altgeld, although of German origin, as his name implies, is as typical an American—and a western American—as I have ever met. He is not a tall man, but there was something about his face and appearance which irresistibly reminded me of Abraham Lincoln." Chicago Today, p. 249.

³ Chicago Daily News, July 6, 1894.

⁴ New York Daily Tribune, July 7, 1894.

⁵ Biennial Report of the Adjutant-General, 1895, p. XXVI

that the militia had overawed resistance.

On July 7, occurred the most serious affray of the strike. A crowd had gathered at 49th and Loomis streets to watch a wrecking crew raise an overturned car. A regiment of state militia stood on guard. They were hooted and stoned; several shots were fired at them. When ordered to disperse the crowd refused. The commander then ordered his men to load and gave the people three minutes to leave. Many did so, but others, emboldened by the attitude of the soldiers, knocked down four soldiers and the lieutenant. Orders were then given to fire at will. Four men were fatally wounded and twenty others seriously hurt. According to Lieutenant David J. Baker, a federal officer attached to the regiment, this incident virtually ended violence on any appreciable scale thereafter. Hopkins likewise attributed the restoration of order to the activity of the militia and the police.

A study of the available evidence concerning the responsibility for violence during the strike corroborates Altgeld's theory that the strikers were not the guilty ones. A reporter for the <u>United Press</u>, W. F. Guyon, who was a

Biennial Report of the Adjutant-General, 1895, Report of Lieutenant D. J. Baker, Chicago Tribune, July 8, 1894. Report of the Supt. of Police, Chicago Municipal Reports, 1894, p. 15.

² Ibid.,

close observer of events, later testified that the destruction of property was not done by railroad employees. He was even asked by the officials of the American Railway Union to help them in apprehending the rioters. Lieutenant D. J. Baker of the Twelfth United States Infantry reported that the burning of cars was done by toughs; tampering with switches and couplings, and the blockading of trains were done by strikers. The editor of the Chicago Record described the mob as of the "mischievous element which generally lies dormant in every large city until called out by some crisis like the present."

Whatever may be the explanation for motives, there can be little doubt that the hastily impressed United States deputies were responsible for much of the disorder. Chief of Police Brennan reported:

In some cases there were strong suspicions that the fires were set by Deputy United States Marshals who hoped to retain their positions by keeping up a semblance of disorder . . . While there were some honest men among them a large number . . . were toughs, thieves, and ex-convicts . . . Several of these officials were arrested during the strike for stealing property from rail-road cars. In one instance two of them were found under suspicious circumstances near a freight car which had just been set on fire . . They fired

¹ Alton Daily Sentinel-Democrat, Aug. 21, 1894.

² Biennial Report of the Adj.-Gen'l . . . p. 178.

³ Chicago Record, July 10, 1894.

⁴ Chicago Municipal Reports, 1894, p. 15.

into a crowd of bystanders when there was no disturbance and no reason for shooting . . . One of them shot and killed a companion by carelessly handling his gun and another shot himself.

The General Managers Association was aware of the type of deputies which was being appointed. On July 9, Walker wired to Olney, "At the risk of being thought meddlesome, I suggest that the marshal is appointing a mob of deputies that are worse than useless." Olney then reprimended the Marshal who replied that he had just ceased making appointments. Several deputies were arrested for murder but were defended upon the advice of Olney. The marshal had expended \$65,000 for these men up to July 11 and expected a daily expense of \$4500 until his force was reduced.

Another theory which merits consideration is that much of the destruction was the work of agents provocateurs upon the European model. In the notebook of Henry D. Lloyd appears the entry that Professor Edward W. Bemis of the University of Chicago was told that Mayor Hopkins, before leaving office, procured forty affidavits showing that railroad men (agents provocateurs) were guilty of moving the box cars outside of the city limits and then burning them, afterwards inciting bystanders to participate. Mayor

House Documents, p. 76.
 Caro Lloyd, Life of H. D. Lloyd, I, p. 102.

Hopkins in his official report pointed out the significant circumstance that despite the great outcry by the railroads that their property suffered considerable damage at the hands of the mob, there was not a single suit instituted against the city although Chicago was liable for such damages under 1 the riot act. Since the Illinois Legislature had passed this law after the Haymarket riot for just such occasions, the failure of the railroads to initiate proceedings under it suggests that there may be considerable truth to the charges of collusion in setting fire to box cars.

#355,612, of which \$338,972 was a single item on July 6.
When the fire department was unable to obtain adequate water connections at an outlying area. For the nation as a whole, Bradstreet estimated a total amount of property losses at eighty million dollars.

The rest of the state continued to occupy Altgeld's attention. On July 5, the Wabash Railroad at Springfield was unable to get its passenger train for Decatur out of the city. An imported engineer was loudly denounced by

¹ Message of Mayor John P. Hopkins, Chicago Municipal Reports, 1894, Section II, p. IX.

² Appleton's Annual Encyclopedia, 1887, "Illinois."

³ Governor's Message to the Legislature, 1895.

⁴ Carroll D. Wright, "The Chicago Strike," American Economic Association Publication, Vol. IX, 1894, pp. 33-50.

a crowd and soon quit. The Mayor of Springfield declared that the crowd could remain on the tracks as long as no overt act of violence was committed. The United States Marshal, Brinton, then called on Altgeld for troops which were sent at once to the station. Three days later. troops were ordered to Spring Valley where strikers were reported to be marching on the sheriff of La Salle County. On July 10, the militia fired into a crowd, killing one and wounding others. When Governor Claude Matthews of Indiana called upon Altgeld on July 8 for assistance in a joint military effort on the state line, the Illinois He wired to Hopkins that everything governor complied. was under control, and he could raise 50,000 more men if necessary for service in Chicago.

Meanwhile, Olney was pressing for federal reinforcements. He demanded impatiently of Walker, how long the state and local authorities were going to experiment with the situation. He wanted to be forewarned of the time for intervention, so that more troops could be sent promptly. Walker, however, who was working steadily on the case against Debs, had another idea in mind and declared that federal, state, and municipal authorities were working in

New York Daily Tribune, July 6, 1894.

Biennial Report of the Adjutant-General, 1895, p. XX. Ibid., XXV.

Ibid., XXVI

harmony and able to control the situation. In another telegram which is dated July 9, but may have been written before the presidential proclamation of July 8, Walker wrote:

Proclamation will be more effective to restrain the mob than the mayor, his police, and state troops. If mob again seriously interferes and prevents enforcement of the United States laws, I hope martial law will be immediately proclaimed . . .

On July 8, 1894, President Cleveland issued an Executive Proclamation in Chicago ordering rioters to disperse by twelve o'clock, July 9. He asked the people to remain in their homes, or at least to keep away from riotous gatherings. The recalcitrant ones were threatened with being regarded as "public enemies." The next day, the Proclamation was extended to certain points within North Dakota, Montana, Idaho, Washington, Wyoming, Colorado, California, and the Territory of New Mexico. To the strikers it appeared to be a preliminary to martial law.

Despite an initial rebuff the strikers continued to look for a possible basis for arbitration. Mayor Pingree of Detroit, a leader of a certain reform element within the Republican Party, was particularly active in an effort to bring the Pullman Company to a conciliatory frame of mind.

¹ House Documents, p. 74.

² Ibid., p. 77.

³ Cleveland, The Government in the Chicago Strike, . . . pp. 34-36.

Pingree claimed to have received telegrams from the mayors of fifty large American cities urging arbitration. Hopkins and a special Council committee conferred with the representatives of the American Railway Union regarding a settlement, but the General Managers Association refused to attend the meeting. George M. Pullman, who was basking in the cool sea breezes of the Atlantic, likewise refused to be concerned. He later explained to the strike commission that he opposed arbitration because it violated the principle that a man should have the right to manage his own property. His own salary and that of his management had not been reduced because "The wage question is settled by the law of supply and demand. When asked, how long should an employee work before he was able to earn an increase in salary, Pullman retorted, "How long a time should a man be with a company before he would be entitled to a gift of money?" This attitude embarrassed some of the conservative newspapers which were supporting him.

The mayor's committee that was sent to Pullman asked that the company select two members of an arbitral committee of five and that the circuit court appoint two others; the four would select a fifth member. The arbitral committee

Chicago Record, July 6, 1894.
Report on the Chicago Strike, p. 556. For Pullman's similar attitude early in the strike see The Daily News (Chicago), June 29, 1894.

was merely to pass on the proposition as to whether or not there were grounds for arbitration in the current dispute. Vice-President Wickes of the Company declared emphatically that under no conditions would the Pullman Company submit to arbitration. He resorted to the time-honored bluff of threatening to move the Pullman works from Chicago to New This seemed to be an effectual intimidation as Jersey. far as the newspapers were concerned. The General Managers came to the support of Wickes with a public statement which gave the controversy a peculiar interpretation:

> The issue is not whether the Pullman Car Company ought to have submitted to arbitration the question what wages it should pay to its employes. It is whether the American Railway Union shall determine when, under what conditions, on what railroads, and in what sort of cars the people of the United States may travel.

The matter was again raised to that lofty patriotic plane from whence it had been temporarily dislodged. "Dictator" Debs failed to appreciate the niceties of Pullman logic and declared, "We are merely contending for justice for our fellow-workers who have been reduced to want by a power that now defies public opinion." In an earlier statement defining the issue. Debs said,

Chicago Record, July 10, 1894.

The Chicago Journal, July 9, 1894.
The Chicago Times, July 10, 1894, from the Outlook, July 4, 1894.

The Chicago Record, July 11, 1894.

The New York Daily Tribune, July 6, 1894.

It has been asked what sense is there in sympathetic strikes. Let the corporations answer. When one is assailed, all go to the rescue. They stand together, they supply each other with men, money, and equipments. Labor, in unifying its forces simply follows their example. If the proceeding is vicious and indefensible, let them first abolish it . . . Let me repeat that we stand ready to do our part toward averting the impending crisis.

Debs issued a proclamation to the strikers urging the continuance of peaceful tactics despite the new provocation. He asked them to keep away from places where trouble was likely to occur. But organized labor under his leader—ship was aroused and determined to show resistance through an extension of the strike. Rumors of a general strike throughout the country set for Wednesday, July 11, spread consternation in the press. In Chicago, a wholesale exodus of union men occurred on the first day: teamsters, painters, cigar—makers, bakers, carriage—makers, wagon—makers, members of the building trades and the Knights of Labor. Each of these had special grievances of its own. An unprecedented situation of general strikes in American history occurred comparable only to the General Strike of 1910 in France and that of 1925 in Great Britain.

Now came the great stroke of Edwin Walker that he had

The Chicago Journal, July 10, 1894.

The Chicago Tribune, July 11, 1894; Chicago Daily News,
July 11, 1894. There are evidences of sympathetic
strikes as far back as organized labor history extends.
Most of them appear to be failures as far as immediate
objectives are concerned. In 18 91, there were four;
in 1892, three; and in 1894, twelve beside the twenty
four railroad organizations. Third Annual Report

been quietly preparing against the strikers. He ordered the arrest on July 10 of the American Railway Union officials, Debs, Howard, Rogers, and Keliher for contempt of the court injunction. Olney had wondered at Walker's deliberation in the matter and attributed it to a fear that the arrest of Debs would be inflammatory. The Attorney-General was still urging more troops and even suggesting that Governor Altgeld be induced to call upon the federal government for aid. But Walker was unwilling to act until he had collected the papers and telegrams of the strike leaders. The Western Union Telegraph Company was subpoensed to produce all telegrams sent by Debs and other officials during the strike. The officials of the telegraph company appeared in court toprotest this high-handed procedure. Olney wired to Walker asking a public disavowal of these proceedings and the return of the papers. "The Government cannot afford to be itself lawless, " he declared. telegram was obtained by the press and printed, much to Walker's anger. The latter replied:

This is not the time in my opinion to make

⁽cont.) of the Commissioner of Labor, 1887, (Strikes and Lockouts); Tenth Annual Report of the Commission of Labor, Vol. I (1894), pp. 164-260; Vol. II, pp. 1673-1678.

¹ House Documents, p. 78.

² Ibid., p. 74.

³ Ibid., p. 77.

⁴ Ibid., p. 80-81.

public apologies to any officer of the American Railway Union and I cannot understand why your telegram to me should be given to the public press, nor why my action in this matter should be publicly censured.

Olney immediately apologized and blamed the press agents for stealing the telegram. Walker appeared mollified and exulted in the effect of the grand jury upon the strike leaders which he thought more useful than the presence of 1 troops. Walker's course proved successful as Debs later 2 declared:

The strike was broken . . . not by the army and not by any other power but simply and solely by the action of the United States Court in restraining us from discharging our duties as officers and representatives of our employees . . . Our headquarters were temporarily demoralized and abandoned and we could not answer any message.

The final coup de grace to the strike was given by Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor, upon whom the leadership devolved. He had been opposed to the tactics of the American Railway Union as too radical and now declared that a general sympathetic strike would react unfavorably upon the cause of labor. The ballot-box seemed to him as the sole remedy in this case. On July 12, Gompers headed the American Federation of Labor committee which drafted a report declaring that the unions affiliated with the American Federation could not join in any general strike

¹ House Documents, pp. 81-82.

² Ex parte Debs, U. S. Supreme Court, p. 20.

and recommended that all return to work. The General

Managers Association then proceeded to reap the fruits of
its toil. They refused to receive any communications from
the labor leaders and marshalled their forces in such a
way as to insure to each road the maximum advantages in dealing with the returning men. The subsequent rejection of
active union men effectually cripped the Railway Union.

The Pullman employees continued to be in a pitiful plight. The strike had left them without resources; most of them were in arrears as far as rent was concerned long before the strike began. An appeal to public charity for the Pullman residents was made on July 6, when they were facing starvation. Governor Altgeld in cooperation with the Chicago Times decided to intercede in their behalf. An earlier investigation of December 1893 by the Times representatives had furnished an unusual picture of destitution. Wages were kept below the margin of subsistence for many classes of workers, particularly the unskilled. Even when the work was regular—and the piece—work system scarcely permitted this—rent and water rates consumed half of the

¹ Samuel Gompers, Seventy Years of Life and Labor, II, p. 411.

For Gomper's labor philosophy see the "Biography of Samuel Gompers," Labor Collection, Wisconsin State Historical Society.

² Report on the Chicago Strike, p. XLI.

The Chicago Daily News, July 6, 1894. Altgeld was appealed to for assistance on August 17, by a committee of Pullman employees in a letter which must have greatly moved the sympathies of the Governor. Live Questions, p. 421.

employee's income.

On August 20, 1894, the city of Chicago was treated to the spectacle of a governor making a house-to-house canvass of the workingmen's homes at Pullman. In the company of two Pullman car representatives, Altgeld visited the kitchens and bedrooms of the people and found the distress as great as it was represented. To the press, he declared, hundred families at Pullman are on the point of starvation . . . I suppose I shall be abused whatever steps I take, but I don't care a ... These poor people shall not starve if I can prevent it and I shall see that I do prevent it." He refused to accept Vice-President Wicke's personal escort through the Pullman town. In a letter to George Pullman, which he took care to publish, Altgeld gave a vivid picture of conditions in the model town and called upon the "philanthropist" to cancel back-rents and aid in feeding the starving families of the town.

Pullman replied with obvious resentment at the unfavorable publicity thrust upon him. He declared his belief that some of these apparently in want had large personal bank accounts.

That was all he cared to say to the anarchist at Springfield.

Altgeld replied at once that he had assumed since the state

¹ For an expose of Pullman conditions before the Railroad strike, see The Chicago Times, Dec. 11,12,13,14,15, 1893.

^{2 &}lt;u>Ibid.</u>, Aug. 21, 1894.

³ Altgeld-Pullman Correspondence in the Chicago Times, Aug. 21-1894, and Live Questions, pp. 421-424.

⁴ Chicago Times, Aug. 21, 1894.

had been at large expense to protect Pullman's property, the latter would not permit the public to shoulder the expense of relieving distress in that town. However, since Pullman refused to do anything about the matter, he would appeal to the humanity of the people of Illinois. A proclamation was issued on the same day calling on everyone to aid the Pullman residents. He declared that the task was beyond the capacity of the local charities since only one-half of the old employees had been taken back. The strike-breakers had been retained in place of the former workers. Altgeld likewise called upon the Cook County Commissioners for assistance. Contributions came in steadily. The Governor took personal charge of the details of relief in cooperation with the local relief societies, particularly the Salvation Army which Attempts were made to transfer the unemacted vigorously. ployed to other cities where work could be had. Grateful letters of acknowledgement came to Altgeld from the Pullman The president of the Cook County Board, Struckman, went to investigate Pullman conditions just before relief had materialized and issued a public statement comparing the plight of the poor with the worst days of the blacks in the

¹ Live Questions, p. 424.

² The Ohicago Times, August 22, 1894.

³ Governor's Executive Files, August, September 1894.

post-bellum South:

I came away with the thought most impressed in my mind that such a town has no place within the United States of America; that if it could be swept into the lake and leave only the bare ground to show the site, the people of this country would be greatly the richer.

Newspaper opinion was divided on the subject of Altgeld's intervention in the Pullman town. The Milwaukee Sentinel characterized the Governor's action as "an impertinent intrusion upon private affairs" which would turn employers of labor into slaves. The Cleveland Plain Dealer took "small stock in the loud parade of distress" at Pullman. The Indianapolis News declared that Altgeld had not done much to commend himself to some people, but he did show up well in his correspondence with Pullman. Other newspapers were either lukewarm in tone or completely ignored the role of the Governor.

As the Debs' Case came before the court, the issue of government by injunction crystallized in the minds of Altgeld and his followers until it became a part of the Democratic platform of 1896. Henry D. Lloyd and Florence Kelley did what they could to reduce Debs' term in prison by a display of public interest. A meeting was arranged by Miss Kelley at

¹ The Chicago Times, August 23, 1894.

² Collection of Editorials, "Governor Altgeld and Mr. Pullman,"
Public Opinion, August 30, 1894.

Joid.

Zarter H. Harrison later wrote, "Grover Cleveland, Joseph Medill, John R. Walsh (owner of the Chicago Herald) could not have been more thoroughly aligned with the employer side of a labor difficulty like the Pullman strike had

ward W. Bemis, and others spoke in protest against government by injunction and rifles. Miss Kelley wrote to Lloyd, "Fancy an injunction that makes it a crime 'to attempt to induce by persuasion' any person to refrain from handling a freight car!" The W. C. T. U., under Frances Willard, which had reformist pretensions, refused to aid their "brother in black" (Debs) because of his drinking habits. Debs himself showed no impatience in his cell. He hoped that his imprisonment would call to the attention of the country "the flagrant abuses of corporate power of which working people have so long been the patient and uncomplaining victims."

Clarence Darrow who was eager to champion every cause that seemed worth-while from a humanitarian standpoint, resigned his position as a railroad counsel to defend Debs. Lyman Trumbull contributed his experience and prestige to the defense. When the case was brought to the Supreme Court of

⁽cont.) they been directors and managers of the interested company . . . I have never regretted the position taken by the <u>Times</u> judged by every rule of Christianity, of humanity. Stormy Years, New York, 1935, p. 51.

¹ Letter of Florence Kelly to H1 D. Lloyd, July 18, 1894, Lloyd Papers.

² Letter of Frances Willard to H. D. Lloyd, Nov. 27, 1895.

Ibid. She wrote of Debs, "No such leader can ever command any small influence that the White Ribbon women may have."

³ Letter of Debs to H.D. Lloyd, July 24, 1894, Lloyd Papers.

the United States, the sentence against Debs was sustained. Justice Brewer refused to discuss the Sherman Anti-Trust Act as a basis for the injunction, but suggested "broader grounds" for the contempt proceedings: "We hold that the Government of the United States is one having jurisdiction over every foot of soil within its territory and acting directly upon each citizen; . . . that to it is committed power over interstate commerce and the transmission of the mails." It was competent to remove obstructions by force. The doctrine of public nuisance and the federal powers of prevention under the circumstances were cited in support of the opinion. In the earlier criminal proceedings for violation of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, when the jury stood eleven to one for acquittal, a juror was reported to be ill and despite the protests of Darrow that he was willing to go on with eleven jurors or add a new man, the case was postponed and then dismissed. Debs stayed in prison to emerge later a determined Socialist, convinced that only a total displacement of the economic system could remedy the wrongs that the workers suffered.

For Altgeld, this case marked a turning point in history. He declared that the decision of the Supreme Court established a new form of government—rule by injunction. This he defined

¹ Ex Parte Debs, U. S. Supreme Court, Oct. 1894, No. 11.

² Darrow, The Story of My Life, p. 66.

as a procedure by which a federal judge sitting in a rear room could, on the motion of a corporation lawyer, issue a "ukase" forbidding anything he desired not specifically forbidden by law. Since the injunction proceedings did not require a jury, the federal judge became "legislator, court, and executioner." He declared that the decision of the highest court in the land indicated that this tribunal was "packed" in the interests of the corporations. "Forty years ago, the slave power predominated; today it is capitalism . . . It sits in the White House and legislates in the capitol. Courts of justice are its ministers and legislatures are its lackeys."

The issue which Altgeld was to carry to the Chicago
Convention of 1896 and demolish the evasions of "bloody shirt"
oratory was sounded and its reverberations proved contagious
among the reform elements of his party. During the elections
of 1894, Altgeld reiterated the importance of his cause to
all who would listen. At Aurora Turner Hall in Chicago,
2
Altgeld made his point:

I tell you, last summer hundreds of men, honest, sober, industrious men, violating no statute, infringing no law, were dragged from their homes and families and were thrown into prison—for what? for being guilty of contempt of court. . . It is the policy advocated by Alexander Hamilton one hundred years ago, stealthilly and quietly, as Jefferson said, mining and

¹ Interview on the Debs Case, June 2, 1895 (Chicago Tribune)
Live Questions, pp. 459-461.

² The Chicago Tribune, Nov. 2, 1894, Speech at Aurora Turner Hall, Nov. 1, 1894. This version differs stylistically from that in Live Questions, pp. 444-449.

sapping at the Constitution. It is the outcome of federalistic principles. . .

In his message to the Legislature in 1895, Altgeld outlined the case against the injunction which contains much more than mere rhetoric. He showed that during the strike, 191 men had been arrested under the injunction at Cairo and other points in the state, taken to Springfield, a distance of one to two hundred miles, and jailed for contempt of court; of these 121 were convicted and sent to prison for a period from thirty to ninety days. The rest who were found innocent of any violation of the injunction were left stranded in the streets without money or friends. The federal marshal for Northern Illinois arrested 450 men and, as far as Altgeld knew, less than twenty men had been convicted. The injunctions were in many instances intended simply to terrorize the men. He pointed out that the Inter-State Commerce Act which had been intended to protect the public had been nullified by the railroads in cooperation with the federal courts and now was used as a basis for many of the injunctions.

Another abuse which was prevalent during the Chicago strike, as he declared, arose from the operation of railroads by courts of chancery," whereby a court carries on a vast

¹ General Message to the Legislature, 1895.

business enterprise . . . and by an astounding fiction in the line of usurpation of power, the dignity and the sacred presence of the court is supposed to extend over the whole line of the road . . . Thus trespass and throwing a stone at such railroad property were equivalent to contempt of court and the injunction machinery was used to apprehend such violators. Bankrupt roads which had been put in the ah of the courts as receivers to freeze out stockholders enjoyed special privileges. Trial by jury for the accused was now obviated by the injunction.

Altgeld's last professional duty before his death in March, 1902 was his appeal in behalf of a laborer's union against the use of an injunction by a pewerful corporation. He contended at the time that courts of equity were created to protect the weak against the strong.

About a year after the Chicago Strike, Chauncey M. Depew, millionaire railroad director, politician, and orator, led a new attack upon Altgeld for his part in the strike. At a convocation held at the University of Chicago, Depew pictured the strike as an uprising which brought about a surrender of two Governors (Altgeld and Waite) and that the Mayor of

¹ Resolutions of the Chicago Hack, Coupe, and Cab Drivers, Local Union No. 1, on the Death of J. P. Altgeld, March 20, 1902. Ms. in Chicago Historial Society.

Chicago took his orders from the leader of the revolt.

In a later statement cabled from Europe, Depew declared that state autonomy reached a perilous stage when the governor of Illinois gave great moral support to the strikers by rebuking President Cleveland and thus virtually ordering the United States forces out of his territory. He made this significant statement:

The losses occasioned by the strike are enormous, but is destined to prove of incal-culable benefit to the country. The national idea has been strengthened and broadened. Safe anchorage has been found for persons and property.

. . Every vested interest is more secure and the rights of every one more safe. Legitimate labor (?) is better protected and more sure of its rights of justice(!)

Altgeld replied to Depew in a special newspaper interview. His language, as was usual under such circumstances, was quite free of restraint. He pictured Depew as a "red, white, and blue" patriot whose career as a lobbyist and corruptionist was notorious. Depew had taught the Vanderbilts "to construct a railroad near court houses and operate a line through State capitols," and was in consequence a high-salared official of the New York Central Railroad and the Union Stock Yards of Chicago.

¹ The Chicago Tribune, April 9, 1895.

² John Moses and Joseph Kirkland, <u>History of Chicago</u>, 1895, p. 600.

³ Interview of April 7, 1895, reprinted in <u>Live Questions</u>, pp. 482-484.

Another incident, trivial in itself, was made much of in the press as an evidence of Altgeld's lack of patriotism. At the Atlanta Exposition on Chicago Day, a correspondent for Harper's Weekly declared that Governor Altgeld flatly refused to appear in a parade in which Federal troops were to take part. This was accepted in the press as proof of its contention during the Pullman strike that Altgeld was un-American. The incident was emphatically denied by the Governor in an interview published in the Chicago Times-Herald. Lieutenant-Colonel D. J. Baker who was present at the time likewise denied its truth. Since denials rarely undo the effect of an original assertion, there was another unfavorable impression left in the minds of many.

¹ Harper's Weekly. Nov. 23, 1895.
2 Letter of Baker to W. R. Browne, May 31, 1923. Browne
Collection.

CHAPTER VII

ALTGELD THE REFORMER

The classic disparagement of the term reform as expressed by Roscoe Conkling during the civil service agitation of the early eighties has not been altogether without Tammany Hall, like the proverbial devil who foundation. was sick, knew how to play the contrite role of reformer when the popular reaction became too pronounced. Prohibition movements in various states were not averse to furnishing aid to nativistic organizations. Miss Frances Willard writing from her headquarters in Evanston made it clear to her disappointed friends that the White-Ribboned women were not to be involved in labor disputes. In Chicago, many of the members of the much-vaunted Civic Federation were notorious tax-evaders whose exemption could only have been the result of collusion. The case of Chapman and McNulty, as we have seen, illustrates the willingness of the Federation at times to play partisan politics for selfish ends. examples of this tendency in the period under consideration could readily by adduced.

But despite a superstructure of cant and hypocrisy,

^{1 &}quot;When Doctor Johnson said that patriotism was the last refuge of a scoundrel, he ignored the enormous possibilities of the word reform."

² The members of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (W. C. T. U.) who used the White Ribbon as an emblem.

genuine reform movements arising from the social and economic needs of the day took definite shape. Much of the work was to reach fruition in the important social legislation of the next decade. It is significant that the term "muckraker" soon lost its opprobrious meaning in spite of the virile pronouncement of Theodore Roosevelt. Many of the causes and personalities whose work contributed to the era of social-consciousness have been noted. prolonged industrial panic of 1893 and the nation-wide strikes such as the Coal and Pullman struggles furnished the basis for a reform movement that was to snap party ties and create more progressive alignments. Hazen L. Pingree, Mayor of Detroit and a Republican candidate for Governor of his state, labored within his party for a new dispensation. Men like LaFollette, Beveridge, and Roosevelt whose chief accomplishments fall within the next decade were beginning to identify themselves with the revised concepts of social justice. The liberalizing of the Democratic party under the leadership of Bryan, Altgeld, and Stone, of Missouri, is the most marked political phenomenon of the nineties.

Although Altgeld was willing to grant important posts in his administration to Single-Taxers, Socialists, philosophic anarchists, Populists, and reformers of various schools of

thought, he himself advocated the liberalism of Jefferson to whom he attributed the basis of his philosophy. with the newer social and industrial trends which had transformed the nation since Jefferson's day, Altgeld recognized that much of the old agrarian philosophy had become archaic. The poverty which surrounded his youth and the bitter struggles of his early manhood had left an indelible impress upon his character which the relatively few years of wealth could not efface. To him "the people" was more than an oratorical abstraction; it was a vivid reality from which he had never severed himself. His letters, speeches, and writings reiterate his contempt for the "fashionable", the hypocrisy which frequently underlaid respectability, the time-serving politicians, and the "criminal wealthy." He accepted the evolutionary concept of continuous progress based on a popular movement from the mass rather than a superimposed reform development of the private club variety. In a letter to the Christian Endeavor Society of Chicago, Altgeld wrote:

Under the fierce law of competition any upward struggle encounters resistance from the elements above. In some cases the crust had become so hard and formidable that it could only be broken with human blood. But under republican institutions there should be such a constant upward movement from the people and such a development that no formidable crust could be formed to resist further growth.

¹ Letter of Altgeld to S. L. Mershon, Jan. 3, 1896, reprinted in Live Questions, pp. 522-525.

In accordance with these ideas, his advocacy of state intervention as an active agent of reform can be easily understood. The question was no longer that of Jeffersonian liberty, but rather of redressing the balance of social inequality which was accentuated by monopolistic development.

As Governor of a leading industrial state, Altgeld found ample opportunity for the practice of his social idealism in the midst of a society distrubed by the serious dislocations wrought by the industrial revolution.

Among the most obvious abuses which attracted considerable attention were those in the shops and factories of the state. Callous exploitation of Child labor, long hours for women workers, and appalling conditions of sanitation existed without any attempt at regulation. Legislative remedies generally remained a dead letter. Even in the older industrial states like Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, and Pennsylvania agitation for child labor legislation which began in the early part of the century did not achieve results until nearly the end of the century. A committee of the federal Senate which sought an explanation for the regular failure of salutary legislation to be enacted declared in its report:

Time after time in each of these industrial states the sentiment of the public was aroused.

¹ Commission on Industrial Relations, Final Report, Sen. Doc. No. 465, 64th Cong., pp. 38-55.

organization was effected, and well-drafted bills were introduced only to be killed in committee, emasculated, or killed on the floor of the legislature, or passed with exceptions which rendered them entirely ineffective. Even the attempt to reduce the hours of children below twelve per day was bitterly contested and met by every known trick of legislative chicanery.

In Illinois there had been efforts at child labor legislation in 1877 and again in 1891, but failure to provide state inspectors to enforce the law rendered the acts ineffective. The only child labor law in the state which had any provision for enforcement, was secured by the coal miners' unions and was confined to children employed in mines. There was no statistical information available at the time on Chicago's industrial conditions, but daily evidence was visible to all who cared to see that a sweating system had arisen which was closely analogous to that of the worst urban industrial sections of Europe. A need for a careful investigation became apparent particularly to the Hull House settlement group whose activities brought them in contact with many of the victims of the industrial conditions . Jane Addams in her autobiography has minimized her efforts to obtain adequate factory legislation, it is evident from her letters to Henry D. Lloyd that she was a prime mover in the

¹ Industrial Conditions in Springfield, Ill. (Russell Sage Foundation), \$916, p. 141.

² Jane Addams, Twenty Years at Hull House, p. 201.

³ Ibid.

events which culminated in the Factory law of 1893.

Without Florence Kelley of Hull House, however, it is doubtful whether any such legislation would have materialized during Altgeld's administration. Although the daughter of "Pig-Iron Kelley", famous tariff Congressman, she was quite different from her father. Professor James Weber Linn, who knew Mrs. Kelley well, characterizes her as "the toughest customer in the reform riot; the finest rough-and-tumble fighter for the good life for others that Hull House ever knew. Any weapon was a good weapon in her hand--evidence, argument, irony, or invective. " Her letters reveal a resourceful character and a keen sense of humor which must have attracted many to her cause. Although a professed Socialist, she was too eager to achieve immediate and tangible results to remain irreconcilable before opportunities to promote reform by cooperation with major political parties. tually she became a strong supporter of Altgeld without sacrificing her original convictions. Her assistance to Debs following the Pullman strike has already been noted.

Mrs. Kelley suggested an investigation into child labor conditions to the Illinois State Bureau of Labor, then under the administration of George Schilling. The recommendation

James Weber Linn, Jane Addams, New York, 1935. Florence Kelley retained her maiden name and although married to a Mr. Wisniewski, she is spoken of as "Mrs.Kelley."

was not only accepted but she was made head of an investigation committee. She conducted a campaign of public education in behalf of a law covering every phase of the subject.

Even before Altgeld's election, she had worked persistently
to bring the public to appreciate the importance of child
labor legislation through pamphlets, speeches, and studies.

"Agitating," as she expressed it, was her chief joy. During
the summer of 1892, she prepared a survey of recent enactments of Massachusetts and New York particularly for use as
the legislature met. She collaborated on the subject with
Carroll D. Wright, the liberal Commissioner of Labor whose
investigation of the Pullman strike was to shock conservatives.

When Altgeld came into office, he declared in his inaugural address that the sweating system imperilled the health of the community and that the employment of children in shops and factories, where they became stunted in body and mind, called for more thorough legislation. The subject was among the earliest dealt with by his administration. Plans were laid to win over the legislators, the majority of whom were either indifferent or hostile.

¹ Jane Addams, op. cit., p. 202.

² Letter of Florence Kelley to Lloyd, June 30, 1892, Lloyd Papers.

^{3 &}lt;u>Ibid., Nov.</u> 28, 1892.

⁴ Inaugural Address of the Governor, Jam. 10, 1893, Live Questions, p. 316.

Most effective in the struggle for this legislation were Clarence Darrow, Henry D. Lloyd, and Mrs. Alzina P. Stevens, a Populist editor and a resident of Hull House. During the latter part of May, 1893, Darrow visited Representative Meyers in Chicago who promised to exercise pressure upon those men "under obligation" to him. Meyers thought that the bill would pass. In Springfield, Governor Altgeld noted that the situation was discouraging and sent a letter covering the details to Henry D. Lloyd. The latter promptly transmitted a copy of this to Alzina P. Stevens asking for suggestions. Mrs. Stevens attempted to see Darrow and persuade him to go ot Springfield in order to direct the campaign for the bill. She wrote to Darrow on May 30 concerning Altgeld's appeal and was evidently successful. kater Darrow reported that the bill would be enacted into law. It is amusing to note that Lloyd shrank from dealing personally with the sordid types who filled the Legislature and so the details were entrusted to Darrow who was less fastidious in such a cause.

Although the act of 1893 was regarded by Altgeld and the reformers as a measure far behind the statutes of Massa-chusetts and New York, it marked the extension of state control

¹ Letter of A. P. Stevens to Lloyd, May 22, 1893, Lloyd Papers.

² Ibid., May 30, 1893.

^{3 &}lt;u>Ibid.</u>, June 7, 1893.

over industry that has been almost continuous. The common responsibility for industrial conditions, despite the later adverse court decision nullifying part of the law, was now recognized. The Sweatshop law was primarily a sanitary measure rather than a general hazard act. An examination of its provisions reveal the compromise nature of the 2 statute:

(1) The manufacture of certain articles of clothing in apartments, tenement houses, and living rooms was prohibited except by families living therein. In the latter case, the premises were subject to strict rules of sanitation and inspection. Food manufacturing was omitted from the list. The importation of infected or verminous clothing was to be closely observed and condemned. (2) Children under fourteen years of age were prohibited from being employed in any manufacturing establishment, or workshop. The employment of children between fourteen and sixteen was permitted only after an affidavit of the parent or guardians as to the child's fitness and a birth certificate. Health certificates might be demanded by the inspectors. (3) No female could be employed in any factory or workshop more than eight hours in one day or more than forty eight hours in any one week.

¹ For a general discussion of this act see Beckner, <u>Illinois</u>
<u>Labor Legislation</u>, pp. 261-264.

² Laws of Illinois, 1893, p. 99. "An Act to Regulate the Manufacture of Clothing, Wearing Apparel, and Other Articles in this State and to Provide for the Appointment of State Inspectors to Enforce the Same." For a

A register of all children under sixteen years of age was to be kept for the inspectors and posted as well as the hours of labor for women. These provisions did not apply to mercantile establishments, laundries, and offices.

Penalties for violations ranged from three dollars to one hundred dollars for each offense. In practise the minimum penalty proved more popular with the courts than the maximum one. (4) The act provided for the appointment of a factory inspector at an annual salary of \$1500 and an assistant inspector at \$1000 annually; ten deputy inspectors, of whom five were to be women, were each given \$750 a year. The chief Inspector was to hold office for a term of four years and the others during good behavior. Annual reports to the governor were to be made. Expenses of \$28,000 were allowed for the enforcement and administration of the act.

A comparison of this law with present-day statutes would be unfair. Despite the shortcomings of the act, it was a radical advance over anything that had been attempted in Illinois before. Governor Altgeld was determined to raise its efficacy by a thoroughgoing administration of the provisions. As a first step in this direction, he appointed Florence Kelley as the Chief Inspector and the Populist Hull-House resident, Alzina Parsons Stevens, as assistant to Mrs. Kelley. In reply to a business man's complaint con-

⁽cont.) discussion of its shortcomings, see <u>The Third</u>
Annual Report of the <u>Factory Inspectors of Illinois</u>
(Prepared by Florence Kelley), Springfield, 1896, pp. 1-11.

was appointed because she was regarded as one of the ablest persons in America to deal with the subject, having had a large experience in other cities. He praised her work highly. Mrs. Kelley was exuberant as she wrote to Lloyd:

Governor Altgeld made my boy a good birth-day present without knowing it when he mailed yesterday the commission which assures us four years of permanent useful employment . . . I only hope I may have the insight to make the most of the huge opportunity he has given me. . . Any gray matter that you're willing to squander might be profitably employed by way of suggestions!

Altgeld directed Mrs. Kelley to make an investigation of the general conditions of life for employed children and their families particularly in the glass works of Alton. Employers and the press had predicted dire suffering for the widows who had been dependent upon the children's earnings. At this time the abuse of the Governor for his pardon of the Haymarket anarchists was at its height and had a serious effect upon the administration of the factory law. Fortunately, Mrs. Kelley proved more successful than Altgeld in winning a favorable press for her efforts. She obtained the cooperation of the Chicago Herald which made no pretence

¹ Letter of Altgeld to Chalmers, Feb. 15, 1895, Governor's
Letter Book. The Governor remarked in this letter that
the law was far milder than those of "all the civilized
countries of Europe."

² Letter of Florence Kelley to Lloyd, July 13, 1893, Lloyd Papers. Mrs. Stevens was editor of the Vanguard, a Populist paper.

³ Florence Kelley, Some Ethical Gains Through Legislation,

Record. The Board of Health, the medical profession, and the Board of Education furnished assistance in response to her request. She was highly pleased with the attitude of Altgeld:

Governor Altgeld is doing everything in his power to back the law, and has authorized me to engage counsel for continuous prosecutions. I have engaged counsel and am gathering testimony and hope to begin a series of justice court cases this week.

A business man from Aurora came to the governor's office at Springfield at this time and declared that he would close a large factory putting over the door, "Closed because of the pernicious legislation in Illinois." Altgeld failed to be impressed and suggested that he would be quite willing to close this factory if he might be permitted to write, "Closed in the interests of the children of Illinois." This incident was told to Jane Addams by Mrs. Kelley.

The special report of the Chief Inspector to Altgeld coverning the investigation he had requested revealed such an appalling condition of factory life as to be fully comparable to the worst of British abuses uncovered by the famous Ashley Report of 1842. In the Illinois Glass Company of Alton, the

⁽cont.) New York, 1905, pp. 46-47. Also Jane Addams, Twenty Years at Hull House, p. 207.

¹ Letter of Florence Kelley to Lloyd, Oct. 10, 1893, Lloyd Papers.

² Letter of Jane Addams to W. R. Browne, March 9, 1922, Browne Collection.

largest employer of child labor in the state, children of seven and eight years worked during the evening shift to three o'clock in the morning. Their task, described as "light and easy" by the president of the company, consisted of carrying various objects running between fires, the child often reaching exhaustion. After leaving this heated atmosphere, the children would go scantily clad to their homes in tents and boats beside a frozen river. None of the children had gone to school. For this labor they would obtain an average of forty cents a day. The president declared that there were no unemployed boys in the town, and when shown otherwise added, "who are willing to work for \$2.70 a week." The Glass Company ruled the town of Alton. Mayor Breholt was a counsel for the company; and a school director likewise represented it. When a woman and her little son, under the legal age, applied to the Mayor for relief, they were sent to the glass works and set to work. Florence Kelley protested to the local charity superintendents, two ministers, who however refused to make any appeal in behalf of the children "which might seem to reflect upon the glass company the suggestion that it had been employing pauper labor. employers threatened to close down if the labor provisions were enforced, but soon receded from their position.

¹ Third Annual Report of the Factory Inspectors, Jan. 10, 1895, p. 17.

In Chicago, Mrs. Kelley and her assistants found things no better. She anticipated in some respects the terrible picture of conditions in the Stock Yards which Upton Sinclair was to write in "The Jungle." Young children acted as butchers, sorted entrails, packed meat, and made tin cans for shipment. In several cases a boy was at work at a dangerous machine because his father had been disabled by it, and was keeping the place pending recovery. A casual acquaintance with the Stock Yards even today confirms Mrs. Kelley's conclusion that "no child could remain in that dreadful environment without injury to body and mind."

Sweatshop conditions were even worse. During the rush seasons when men as well as women would faint at their garment machines, in a day which extended from seven a. m. to four a. m. the next morning, young girls shared the work. Those who complained were told that there were others who would be willing to do their work—a true statement, unfortunately. Medical examiners found 72 out of 125 children fit to continue work. The others suffered from spinal curvature, organic lesion of the heart, tuberculosis, enlarged glands, defective sight and hearing, mutilations, hernia, anaemia, and other serious defects and ailments. There was no protection given the employees against fire or accident despite repeated mishaps. Employers protected themselves from prose—

cution by obtaining "releases" signed before employment
was given and which waived the employer's liability.
The 721 children found by the inspectors in the sweatshops
of Chicago were illiterate and a majority of them could not
speak English. Such vital matters as ventilation, sanitary
facilities, fire escapes, securities for elevators, and adequate hoists were left to the kindness of the employer and
consequently dispensed with. There was no law on these
subjects in Illinois. Epidemics endangering the entire
community, fires, accidents, diseases of all types flourished
in such an environment.

The reception of this condemnatory document which arraigned the entire industrial system of Illinois was not as effective as had been hoped. A few elements among whom Mrs. Kelley had effectively "agitated" came to her support. The Chicago Herald declared, "The report of the Illinois factory inspectors should arouse public opinion concerning the extent and nature of child labor in a commonwealth boastful of its progress . . . Something is radically wrong with its industrial and social conditions." The Reverend William G. Clarke of the Chicago Civic Federation made the report a subject of his sermon. Governor Altgeld, unfortunately, issued his biennial message just prior to the factory report and his

¹ The Chicago Herald, Feb. 4, 1995.

account of the progress made was more optimistic than the last that a last the last than the last th

But the manufacturers had not yet begun to fight and they now proceeded to do so. Some protested directly to Governor Altgeld; others, more realistic, began to organize a giant lobby against the law. The Illinois Manufacturers Association, consisting of all the wholesale clothing concerns of Chicago and large corporations like Selz-Schwab and the Elgin Watch Company, was formed to repeal the child-labor and tenement manufacture act. They engaged the able lawyer Levy Mayer, to argue the case for the association. The chief point which was presented before the courts was the right of citizens to contract for their labor as they chose.

Governor Altgeld appointed an outstanding attorney of Chicago, John W. Ela, as special counsel for Illinois. Ela was then a member of the Board of State Commissioners of Public Charities and a state leader in the Democratic Party.

¹ General Message on Assembly of Legislature, Jan. 9, 1895,
Live Questions, pp. 966-7. Altgeld declared, "The
foul sanitary conditions have been almost wiped out.
More protection against accidents has been enforced,
and the scene of thousands of little children stunting
their lives by working ten hours a day in a factory,
doing the work of adults for a mere pittance, no longer
disgraces the State." Ibid. In a succeeding message

The indefatigable Mrs. Kelley was now studying law to try her own prosecutions and expected to be admitted to the lar in July 1895. Pig-Iron Kelley's daughter had all the determination of her father with much more of social vision.

The case of <u>Ritchie v. the People</u> which came before the state Supreme Court is a notable one in the history of labor legislation and holds a prominent place in text-books on the subject. So momentous were the issues at stake that the judges deferred their decision for ten months. Some of the arguments presented for the Association, as Mrs. Kelley observed, had been discarded by the British Parliament in the fifties. The supporters of the factory law pointed out that other states like Massachusetts and New York had succeeded in passing such a measure without interference by the courts. In the former state, the Supreme Court had upheld the constitutionality of a similar act.

The Illinois Supreme Court which denied trial by jury to the Anarchists in 1887, though reversing itself in the subsequent Cronin murder case, remained true to its traditions. On March 15, 1895, the eight-hour section of the

⁽cont.) Altgeld evidently had access to Mrs. Kelley's report and the situation is more adequately presented.

For a full-length biography of Mayer, see Edgar Lee Masters, Levy Mayer and the New Industrial Era, New Haven, 1927.

³ The Chicago Times-Herald, March 15, 1895.

¹ Letter of Florence Kelley to Mrs. Lloyd, October 3, 1894, Lloyd Papers.

factory law dealing with women's labor was struck out as unconstitutional. The court declared that it was not impressed by the arguments regarding the health of women under the prevailing system. The fourteenth amendment which did yeoman work in behalf of corporative privilege was invoked to support woman's right as a "person" under the first section of the amendment to make and enforce contracts for her labor. Thus the benefits of liberty and equality were conferred upon women, guaranteeing them the right to be exploited for as many hours as the factory system demanded. Countries like England, France, and Germany--heathen states without the law--recognized the eight-hour prohibition for women and curtailed the sacred rights of the individual.

Reform sentiment crystallized in a bitter denunciation of the decision. The editor of the Chicago Times-Herald 2 declared:

What a mockery it is to read that the supreme court has demolished this humane, this civilizing law on the plea that it robs the poor of their right to sell their labor as they will.

William T. Stead, English publisher and reformer, wrote:

Legislative restrictions which even the most reactionary, hard-hearted capitalist in England admits to be indispensable for the protection of

¹ For the complete decision of the case and a general discussion of the issues involved, see The Third Annual Report of the Factory Inspectors, 1896, Appendix A. Ritchie V. the People, 155 Ill., 98.

² The Chicago Times-Herald, March 16, 1895.

³ W. T. Stead, If Christ Came to Chicago, p. 402. This book

labor are unconstitutional according to the state of Illinois.

Florence Kelley prepared a special report on the case and demanded new legislation dealing with the subject. The Chicago Times supported this demand. Governor Altgeld, who was stunned by the action of the court, agreed with the request for action and prepared a recommendation on the subject to the legislature. In his proclamation of June 17, 1895 recalling that body into special session, he complained:

Since the recent decision of the Supreme Court relating to the factory inspection law, thousands of children under fourteen years of age are being crowded into factories and stores, often doing the work of adults for a pittance, stunting their lives and growing up to be inferior men and women, and yet nothing has been done to prevent this degeneration.

Nothing came of this. The Governor had just inconsiderately vetoed the great monopoly bills of Yerkes and the Gas Ring thus rendering a serious pecuniary loss to many members of the legislature. His recommendations were ignored. After the adjournment of the legislature without action on this subject nor most of the other vital recommendations of the Governor, Altgeld gave a scorching interview to the press.

⁽cont.) is an excellent expose of social conditions in Chicago during the middle nineties and created considerable furor at the time of publication.

¹ Proclamation of the Governor Illinois, June 17, 1895, Live Questions, pp. 947-950.

Interview on the Drift of the Republican Party, August, 1895, reprinted in <u>Live Questions</u>, p. 496. (Newspapers and exact date not given.)

He declared that although the Republicans had an over-whelming majority in both Houses, they showed an utter incapacity or unwillingness to do anything. "Some of them treated the serious questions flippantly by contemptuously speaking of them as 'chestnuts' and 'old timers'... The lobbyists and the slimy 'go-betweens' who represented the corruptionists of the State seemed to be able to defeat any measure which they disliked."

Nevertheless, Altgeld persisted in reminding the legislators of their duty. Since the Governor's messages were reprinted in all the leading Illinois newspapers, this publicity was useful to the reformers cause. final message, he reviewed the history of factory legislation in England comparing the struggle in Illinois with that of Parliament. He attacked "the interests which were coining the lives of women and children into dollars" and their combination to resist the law. The decision of the Supreme Court holding a portion of the law unconstitutional made it difficult to enforce any of its provisions. He declared that the Constitution was not intended to be an insurmountable barrier to all corrective legislation. Although the decisions of the Supreme Court were conclusive in cases rendered, they did not become a rule of political action, nor could they deprive the people of their power to regulate their affairs. This attitude, he pointed out, was the one adopted by Abraham Lincoln after the Dred Scott

decision. Judges were after all human with the same prejudices and weaknesses of ordinary men. The life of the
republic depended upon the intelligent criticism by the
people of all branches of the government. He concluded
with a statement that the necessary legislation could be
enacted without serious difficulty as to the question of
constitutionality.

With the termination of Altgeld's term in January. 1897, Governor Tanner, his successor, removed both Mrs. Kelley and Mrs. Stevens from office. The new Chief Inspector was a man who had been for twenty seven years previously on the payroll of the Illinois Glass Company at Alton, the worst offender against child-labor laws in Thereafter no prosecutions against the Alton the state. The new governor, who is considered by company were made. many authorities as the worst official to hold that office in the history of the state, used his messages for the usual platitudes and the child labor law remained unamended. Public resentment however led to a newer agitation which culminated in more effective factory regulations. the Illinois Supreme Court reversed itself and upheld a ten-hour law for women.

Another labor reform which appeared of primary importance

¹ Final Message to the Legislature, Jan. 6, 1896, Live Questions, pp. 966-969.

² Florence Kelley, Some Ethical Gains Through Legislation, p. 57; J. Seymour Currey, Chicago: Its History and Its

in Altgeld's program was industrial arbitration. Since the great strike era which preceded the Haymarket affair, Altgeld had advocated compulsory arbitration of labor disputes. During the Pullman strike, the need for some mechanism of adjustment was apparent to all. The oft-repeated statement made by employers like Frick and Pullman that "there was nothing to arbitrate" revealed a degree of arrogance incompatible with public security. The major purpose of the great railroad boycott of 1894, it will be recalled, was to compel Pullman to submit to arbitration rather than to enforce a definite series of demands. At that time organized labor as a whole fully supported the belief that the state should intervene in industrial disputes just as it did in personal conflicts. The Knights of Labor declared in the eighties that such an element of compulsion was preferable to strikes and boycotts. At a state labor convention of various organized bodies of Illinois workmen held in Springfield in February 1885, the recommendation of an arbitral board was made with power to settle all disputes and impose their decision as a final one. After the Haymarket affair,

⁽cont.) <u>Builders</u>, Vol. 3, p. 356.

3 <u>Ritchie v. Wyman</u>, <u>244 Ill.</u>, <u>509</u>. Commission on Industrial Relations, Final Report, <u>Sen. Doc. No. 465</u>, <u>64th Cong.</u> pp. 38-55.

¹ Beckner, op. cit., pp. 73-5.

² Appleton's Annual Encyclopedia, 1885, p. 490.

C. C. Bonney, a prominent Chicago attorney, had drafted such a bill for the Illinois Legislature providing for a state board of labor and capital. Despite public approval, the opposition of employers brought about the failure of the bill and the legislature of 1887 adjourned without action although certain other anti-labor bills were enacted into law. Here the problem rested.

In an interview given to the Chicago Evening Mail about a week before the bomb was thrown near the Haymarket, Altgeld outlined a system of compulsory arbitration which can only be fairly estimated in the light of the favorable sentiment of labor at the time for its enactment. Today it would have few proponents among labor leaders or employers. He declared that the State had the constitutional power to compel arbitration independent of the will of the contending parties. The doctrine of laissez-faire which dictated that the State remain idle while the public interests suffered seemed monstrous to him. To the action of an arbitration board there would be certain well-defined limitations. The employer could not be compelled to run his plant nor could the employees be forced to go to work against their will. Board must be divorced from politics and be chosen jointly be employers and employees in each dispute. The decision was to be carried out at once although dissatisfied parties

might seek a reversal before a special board of appeals.

Compulsory investigation into the dispute was recommended as useful because of its effect upon public opinion. The entire cost would be borne by general taxation.

In evaluating this plan it is to be remembered that labor had favored such an idea and the conception of state compulsion was desirable in view of the weak position of organized labor. Henry D. Lloyd and other reformers recommended such an arrangement. Today, the abuse of compulsory arbitration in Fascist countries has greatly disperedited the idea in many eyes as a proper mechanism for a democratic country. A glance at the labor literature of the eighties and nineties, however, reveals the popularity of the subject at that time. Exaggerated beliefs of its efficacy were widely held by authorities. The realization of a country without strikes seemed near.

This plan was strongly presented in the Governor's Inaugural Address. He suggested that the state could compel an employer who disregarded the decision of the arbitral board to pay for any protection he might receive. If employees refused to go to work under the decision then the state could give its entire power to protecting the employer

¹ Interview in the Chicago Evening Mail, April 26, 1886, reprinted in Live Questions, pp. 107-116.

² H. D. Lloyd, A Country Without Strikes, passim.

in hiring new men. Further study brought Altgeld to modify his views. In his General Message of January, 1895, he admitted, "Many advocate compulsory arbitration, but no practical method of enforcing a decree of award in avery case of this character has yet been found. He now fell back upon the idea of compulsory investigation under a voluntary arbitral procedure.

It is probable that Altgeld's recommendation for an

l Inaugural Address, Jan. 10, 1893, reprinted in Live Questions, pp. 315-16.

² General Message, Jan. 9, 1895, ibid., p. 919. Under the leadership of Altgeld, the Illinois Democratic Convention of 1892 indorsed the plan of a Board of Arbitration. The Chicago Tribune, May 15, 1893. Laws upon arbitration in labor disputes were already in existence by 1895 in California, Colorado, Iowa, Kanaas, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. State boards of arbitration, however, were adopted in only six states of the above. The Massachusetts law was the model for reformers. Here the Governor appointed three competent persons to serve on the board, an employer, an employee, and a mutual choice. The Chicago Daily News Almanac, 1895, p. 90. The federal government passed an act in 1888 covering mediation and arbitration for interstate commerce carriers. Only once--in the Pullman Strike-was an investigating commission appointed and on that occasion took no action in settling the strike. J. R. Commons and J. B. Andrews, Principles of Labor Legislation, p. 150. European countries like Great Britain. France, Portugal, Spain, and Switzerland had long subcribed to the principle of arbitration. With the advent of the strikes accompanying the depression of 1893, many countries adopted new laws on the subject. New Zealand and South Australia inaugurated compulsory arbitration in 1894. The French law of 1893 seemed to be encouraging to its advocates by its early results. Industrial Committee on the Chicago Civic Federation. Congress on Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration, Nov. 13-14, 1894, Chicago. In England, however, the lack of compulsion seriously weakened the law in practice.

arbitration board would have gone unheeded as many of his other proposals did if the Civic Federation had not intervened. Jane Addams of the Executive committee dealing with the subject played a leading part in arousing public opinion in its favor. Among the other leaders who sponsored the measure were Professors Edward W. Bemis, Graham Taylor, Albion W. Small, E. R. L. Gould, and civic leaders like Lyman Gage, Mrs. Potter Palmer and E. S. Dreyer. A Congress on Industrial Concilation and Arbitration was held in Chicago on November 13, and 14, 1894. Experts were summoned to discuss the subject at length. A draft of an Arbitration bill was prepared and introduced to the Illinois Legislature by Representative Hogan.

The Legislature however adjourned without action and with it apparently went the hope of any further legislation until 1897 when a new body would meet. Altgeld thereupon called a special session despite the unusually hot weather and demanded an arbitral measure among others. Strong interests and political hostility however combined to defeat or weaken the bill. When it was finally adopted during the closing hours of the special session, Altgeld complained that the board was so limited in powers as to almost destroy it. In his final message he asked for further legislation that would

Congress on International Conciliation and Arbitration (Civic Federation of Chicago), Nov. 13-14, 1894.

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make the board more effective.

The new law followed the Massachusetts model in many respects. A State Board of Arbitration was established consisting of three members, an employee, and employer, and a neutral member. When a strike threatened and no application for settlement was made, the Board was to attempt to mediate in the dispute and settle the strike in conference. If an employer requested the services of the Board, there must be a promise that no lockout would take place until the decision of that body was made; if an employees' organization made the request a corresponding pledge was made to refrain 2 from striking.

After seventeen months of trial, Altgeld was able to report that the Board had mediated successfully in thirty eight of forty one cases. In the other three "the employers haughtily refused to take any notice of the board or its friendly efforts." Two cases were arbitrated and the decision accepted by both parties. The forty controversies adjusted involved 5780 employees. Jane Addams, who acted as a member of an arbitration committee during a garment workers' strike in Chicago, found great difficulty in administering the new technique of industrial adjustment. Only after

¹ Final Message to the Legislature, Jan. 6, 1896; reprinted in Live Questions, p. 961.

² First Annual Report of the State Board of Arbitration, March 1, 1896. Laws of Illinois . . . 1895.

³ Ibid., Also Final Message . . . p. 960-1.

repeated mass meetings of workmen in favor of the new law law were the arbitrators able to apply their solution.

Civil service reform, although successful in a number of eastern states, had left no impression upon the statute books of Illinois. Altgeld condemned an appointive system based on partisan politics and declared in his inaugural that the time had come for a classified civil service for attendants in state institutions and the employees in the various city governments. Wherever an executive was not directly responsible for the acts of his subordinates, the employees should be chosen by competitive examination.

Although this recommendation left a large element under the spoils system it marked a radical step forward.

Altgeld's appointive policy, while favorable on the whole to "deserving Democrats," as already noted, was based on a scrupulous regard for efficient service. One of his early special messages recommended the abolition of all useless offices. Among these were the Fish Commission, the Commission on Claims, and the State Geological Department. The last-named, he wrote, ought to be transferred to the

¹ Jane Addams, op. cit., p. 214.

² Inaugural Address, Jan. 10, 1893, reprinted in Live Questions, pp. 313-314.

³ See Chapter II.

University of Illinois where it would be of service to research. Although these suggestions proved fruitless, he persisted in advocating reforms in appointive methods. In his biennial message of 1895, he declared that the importunity for office had become so great as to test the powers of physical endurance. The current economic depression with its multitudes of unemployed accentuated the difficulty.

Again the Civic Federation came to his assistance and prepared a civil service bill designed particularly for the city of Chicago. The issue became complicated by the mayoral election in that city and the certain knowledge that George B. Swift, the Republican candidate, would be the victor. Pressure was exerted at Springfield by Swift's adherents to insert a clause providing that the incoming mayor should be given between forty and ninety days grace before inaugurating the new civil service regime. Altgeld strongly objected to this arrangement because of its opportunities for the evasion of the law. He suggested that the bill be put into effect at once and thus compel the new administration to carry its provisions out completely. "But the gentlemen representing this bill were opposed to this,"

¹ Special Message to the Legislature, March 23, 1893, Live Questions, pp. 893-894.

² Live Questions, p. 911.

³ The Chicago Times-Herald, March 21, 1895 and April 6,1895.

"They claimed that the politicians did not favor any bill, and that if the bill were to go into effect immediately there might be such a combination of politicians as would defeat its adoption by the people; that therefore it was necessary that the newly-elected Mayor could, if he wanted to, make appointments."

Other suggestions by the governor concerning the bill were likewise refused and it became a question of accepting this plan or having no legislation at all on the subject. Altgeld preferred to yield under such circumstances. His assumption regarding Swift proved correct. The new administration filled all positions under the former spoils system and escaped the inconvenience occasioned by the introduction of a civil service law. But a firm basis had been laid for civil service in the succeeding administration.

The Act of March 20, 1895 provided for a Civil Service Board of three Commissioners in each city who were to be appointed by the mayor. Provisions for periodic reports and investigations were made. The classified service was extended to all except elected officials, clerks and judges of elections, members of boards of education, school teachers and superintendents, and the heads of the principal depart-

John P. Altgeld, "The Civil Service Law," 1897, Live Questions. pp. 725-726.

² Ibid. The spoils system under Swift despite the civil service law evoked comment from many reformers.

ments of the city. Other provisions—pious hopes in viewof subsequent events in Chicago alone—forbade anyone to solicit political contributions from city employees, the abuse of official influence, and certain other fraudulent practices. A subsequent amendment regarding Cook County gave that Republican stronghold considerable discretion as to the appointment of county employees.

Despite the shortcomings of the bill, Altgeld declared himself optimistic as to its influence for good government. He thought that its provisions ought to be gradually extended over the counties of the state except in rural districts where the opportunities for intimate contacts between the people and their administrators were great enough to afford a check on the abuses of the spoils system.

The reform of the courts, particularly in Chicago, strongly appealed to Altgeld because of his experience on the Bench.

Some of the prevailing abuses in judicial procedure which amounted to a denial of justice have already been noted in another connection. This became the subject of a special message on May 31, 1893. After pointing out the unnecessary delays and heavy expenses of current litigation, he recommended that a commission be appointed to revise the general practice

^{1 &}quot;Act to Regulate the Civil Service of Cities," Laws of Illinois, 1895, pp. 585-594.

² The Chicago Times-Herald, April 6, 1895.

act, that five more judges be added at once and as many more later that was necessary, and that the chief justice of each court be required to distribute the business of the court to each judge. In a subsequent message on this subject, he declared, "We borrowed our system of jurisprudence from England more than a century ago, when it was loaded down with absurd distinctions and formalities. We have clung tenaciously to its faults while England long ago brushed them aside." The police courts of Chicago which permitted its officers to keep fees seemed particularly reprehensible to him. "This is the very foundation upon which the whole structure of fraud, extortions, and oppression rests. No man's bread should depend upon the amount of business he can 'drum up' around a so-called court of justice."

The fundamental nature of his criticism escaped the legislature. During the first session a mild bill on the subject was enacted which increased the number of judges in the Circuit and Superior Courts of Cook County and provided for court sessions at definite periods for various 4 classes of cases. The Chicago Tribune and other hostile

¹ Special Message to the Assembly, May 31, 1893, Governor's Letter Book, May 31, 1893, p. 348.

² Message of Jan. 9, 1895, Live Questions, p. 912.

³ Ibid.

^{4 &}quot;An Act to Provide for an Increase in the Judges of the Circuit and Superior Courts of the County of Cook,"

Laws of Illinois, 1893, pp. 93-94.

newspapers misrepresented the governor's attitude:

the professed object of the supporters of the measure could be accomplished only by reforming the law and the practice. As a Governor and a politician, he knew that it would not do to deprive his party of six new judicial offices and of positions as bailiffs, clerks, etc...

To organized labor, as we have seen, Altgeld was unremitting in his efforts to advance its cause. He laid down the policy that only union men would be employed upon public works. His private secretary, Colonel Dose, explained this to a disappointed contractor, "The Governor has leaned toward this policy for the reason that his own experience in extensive building operations has convinced him that union labor is always the best labor." An act was passed to protect employees from dismissal because of their membership in labor organizations. Employers or their agents who threatened to discharge any worker because of his connection with such unions were guilty of misdemeanor and subject to a fine of one hundred dollars or six months imprisonment.

The Chicago Tribune, June 28, 1893.
Letter of Col Dose to Yaeger, April 20, 1896, Governor's Letter Book. This policy came to the attention of the public when the asylum at Anna was destroyed by fire. Altgeld insisted that it should be rebuilt by union men. The Chicago Tribune, December 14, 1895.

^{3 &}quot;Act to Protect Employees and Guarantee their Right to Belong to Labor Organizations," Laws of the State of Illinois, 1893, p. 98.

CHAPTER VIII

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST MONOPOLY AND PRIVILEGE

As the economic depression of 1893 deepened, the popular antagonism to the ever-increasing consolidation of big business found new expression. A common resentment against the Southern Pacific Railroad and its monopolistic practices which received judicial protection brought the people of California to the verge of revolt during the Pullman Strike. Reports from other states to Attorney-General Olney at the time revealed a similar situation elsewhere. The spectacle of the Pullman company enjoying an undisturbed monopoly of sleeping-car manufacture and using this position to starve its employees united many popular elements throughout the union. Rockefeller's Standard Oil interests, despite repeated'exposures', hostile court action, and the attack of independent refiners, continued to enjoy rising dividends.

In Illinois, monopoly thrived in other fields than sleeping-car manufacture. A federal Senate committee reported that the ownership of the Union Stock Yards, representing in itself a giant combine, was identical with the principal stockholders of the great railroads. Henry D. Lloyd published his startling Wealth Against Commonwealth in 1894 to trace the contemporary process of business feudalization. He pointed out that in Chicago, for example, there were fewer

wholesale dry goods stores in 1894 for a population of 1,600,000 than there were in 1860 for 112,172 people. The growth of many large concerns was attributed to the fostering care of such privileges as railroad rebates and legislative "influence". The absentee ownership of the recrudescent Spring Valley coal fields in Illinois, as Lloyd revealed in 1890, was masked by organization titles which hid the identity of certain great eastern railroad magnates, The conditions in the Illinois coal fields, for example, contributed to the combination movement by the constant introduction of labor-saving devices, the relative decline of employment opportunities, and the consequent union offorces against organized labor. Company towns or cities dominated by a single economic interest reflected the common attempt to realize the benefits of monopoly. In Chicago the rise of the Gas Trust and the Yerkes traction organizations took a heavy toll from consumers and labor and paralyzed the structure of municipal self-government.

To meet this situation, Lloyd and Altgeld cooperated to crystallize public opinion throughout the nation against the trust menace. An anti-trust convention had been called in the spring of 1893 by the Legislature and Governor of

¹ H. D. Lloyd, Wealth Against Commonwealth, New York, 1894.

2 Appleton's Annual Encyclopedia, 1891, p. 366.

Minnesota. Chicago appeared as the logical place for a national conference on the subject and it was arranged for the early part of June. Altgeld applied to Lloyd for a list of members to represent Illinois and the delegates eventually included Clarence Darrow, Jesse Cox, Thomas J. Morgan, E. O. Brown, Mrs. Alvinah P. Stevens, and Lloyd l himself. These had been active in furthering the most important social legislation of Altgeld's administration.

A pre-convention discussion of principles between
Lloyd and Brown revealed that they were not in favor of such restrictive legislation as would make trusts and combinations criminal and unlawful. Brown wrote to Altgeld declaring that he believed that the activities of such organizations could be regulated and thus remove their capacity for evil. He offered to resign from the delegation if his opinions were not acceptable to the governor. The latter upheld his appointees whose opinions were after all close to his own.

At the Convention, despite the carefully laid plans of Lloyd and his friends, measures had been taken by the trusts to make the meeting innocuous. Railroad attorneys and coal combination agents packed the Central Music Hall

2 Letter of E. O. Brown to Altgeld, May 30, 1893, (copy)
Lloyd Papers.

¹ Letter of Schilling to Lloyd, May 25, 1893; letter of Altgeld to Lloyd, June 3, 1893; letter of Col. Dose to Lloyd, June 3, 1893, Lloyd Papers.

and organized a clique which they styled the "Anti-Trust Association." A proposal was made by the reform element to nationalize the coal mines as a means of ending the coal trust. This proved to be the rock upon which the convention split. Separate reports were adopted by the opposing wings and the possibility of concerted action a disappeared.

At Springfield a campaign against the trusts had begun. On February 24, 1893, an investigation of the Whiskey Trust was ordered. This organization known as the Cattle Feeders and Distilling Company was capitalized at forty five million dollars and had its headquarters at Peoria. It was accused of terrorizing consumers and of using an elaborate system of rebates on the Standard Oil 2 model. Subsequently a new law was passed defining trusts and conspiracies on a broad basis. Price fixing, limitation of production, and pooling agreements were forbidden. Comporations chartered in Illinois which violated these laws were to forfeit their charters. Foreign corporations held

Letter of Lloyd to Frank Parsons, March 21, 1895, (copy),
 <u>Ibid.</u> The <u>Chicago Tribune</u>, June 7, 1893. Among the leading reformers in the Convention were General Weaver who presided and Ignatious Donnelly.

 Laws of Illinois, 1893, p. 192.

as violators were to be punished by exclusion from the state in addition to fines and other penalties. To facilitate prosecutions it was declared to be sufficient to prove that a trust or combination as defined in the statute existed and that the defendant belonged to it or acted in connection with it. It was unnecessary to prove that all of the alleged members belonged to the trust nor to produce any written instrument of agreement upon which it was based. Nothing is so illustrative of the impotency of the antitrust legislation as the fact that such stringent measures could be easily evaded.

The most sensational battle against monopoly of Altgeld's career occurred in the late spring of 1895. In a determined movement to break through the legal shackles which hampered consolidation and special privilege, the gas, traction, and elevated interests of Chicago attempted to secure an undisputed position of monopoly through state legislation. A summary of the most salient features of this development reveals the significance of Altgeld's opposition.

During the nineties, the street railways were under the control of the financial freebooter, Charles Tyson Yerkes, who had led an unsavory career in Philadelphia before coming to the Illinois metropolis. The son of a banker, he had be-

¹ Laws of Illinois, 1893, p. 182.

gun employment as a grain commission clerk and eventually purchased a bank himself. This institution failed and he was later found guilty of misappropriating funds received from the sale of city bonds belonging to the city of Ehiladelphia. He served seven months in a Pennsylvania penetentiary before he was pardoned by the governor. Theodore Dreiser, who made a close study of Yerkes as a basis for his famous trilogy, has drawn an unforgettable picture of a man who was completely amoral in all phases of his life. The technique he was to apply so successfully in Chicago was acquired in Philadelphia.

In 1885, Yerkes was a Chicago stock broker of limited means but possessing extraordinary plans and ideas. At that time the horse-car system was in vogue and as far as the few ultra-conservative millionaire owners were concerned it was there to stay. Yerkes saw the possibility of immediately transforming the slow-going horse-car lines into well-equipped cable roads. Using his exceptional ability to borrow money, he was enabled during 1886-6 to obtain an option on one share

George Marshall, "Charles T. Yerkes," Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, Vol. XV, pp. 513-514; Henry K. Webster, "From Yerkes to Dunne," American Illustrated Magazine, April 1906; Edward F. Dunne, "The Story of the Street Car Companies of Chicago," interview reprinted in Papers of Dunne, edited by William L. Sullivan, 19

² Theodore Dreiser, The Financier, The Titan. These books are social documents based on innumerable interviews with the principals and a study of Chicago and Philadelphia newspapers. Letter of Theodore Dreiser to the writer,

over a majority of the stock of each railway corporation and organized the North Chicago Street Railway Company and the West Chicago Company which were capitalized at a combined total of \$15,000,000. With the assistance of his friends, P. A. B. Widaner and Stephen B. Elkins, he succeeded in gaining control by stock manipulation of the existing companies. No actual investment was involved since Yerkes issued securities with a generous hand. Fortunately for his purpose. the development of the city more than kept pace with the muchwatered issues and he was able to consolidate his holdings. By 1892, the stock of the West Chicago Company sold as high as \$232. for each original hundred-dollar share. In order to control the outlying area about Chicago where passengers could not be carried with the desired profit under the mandatory five-cent fare, Yerkes organized a number of auxiliary companies--"dummies" to be sure. Thus Cicero, Evanston. the North Shore, and other suburban areas came within his orbit.

One authority declares, "Yerkes was probably the first to discover that large profits could be derived from reorganizing and pyramiding street railway companies and capitalizing the franchises of growing cities." Frank A. Vanderlip, a

⁽cont.) July 23, 1935. Among those interviewed were Victor Lawson, H. H. Kohlsaat, and Lauderback, an assistant of Yerkes.

Ninth Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of Illinois, 1896, subject, "Franchises and Taxation."
George Marshall, op. cit., p. 514.

financial editor of the Chicago Tribune who had made a close examination of the traction holdings, said in an address before the Political Economy Club of the University of Chicago that of the \$61,690,000 capitalization in 1896 at least \$31,000,000 of the railway stock issues were of the watered variety. Not only were the passengers overcharged but the service was wretched, the cars overcrowded, and the equipment poor.

Yerkes was anxious to secure an extension of the twentyyear francise granted by the city council to the street
railways as the maximum period permitted to such organizations.
The limitation was intended to protect the public by permitting a reconsideration of rates and other changes every
twenty years. On the other hand corporations could be chartered
for ninety-nine years, an arrangement which Yerkes was determined to get for his own companies. A ninety-nine year
franchise would greatly increase the value of the street
railway bonds by enhancing their attractiveness as an investment. To realize this desirable goal it was necessary to go
to Springfield in order to obtain the required powers for the
pliable City Council. Yerkes, like the cynical English Prime
Minister Walpole, was certain that every man had his price. So
far, to be sure, he was right.

¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics, op. cit, p. 61.

Carter H. Harrison, in his recent autobiography, recounts a conversation with Yerkes which is illustrative of the latter's low opinion of human nature. Mayor Harrison, during his first term of office, led a strong movement against Yerkes and his works. The traction magnate, evidently interpreting this as a politician's subtle request for a bribe came to Harrison and asked, "Tell me, Mr. Mayor, what do you want anyhow?" Harrison replied, "If . . . I construe your query correctly, let me say that there is not enough money on God's footstool to induce me to vary my position in the slightest degree." The Mayor gave his subordinates instructions that he was never to be let alone with Yerkes, but that some third party should be present.

While Yerkes prepared his bill for the state legislature, the Gas Trust came forward for the right to legalize and strengthen the monopoly they enjoyed. This organization, like Yerkes', consisted of cleverly contrived dummy companies and other devices which gave monopoly the appearance of legality. In April 1887, a group of shareholders in four Chicago gas companies, the ownership of which was probably vested in Philadelphia or other eastern capitalists, incorporated under the laws of Illinois as the Chicago Gas Trust Company with a capital stock of \$25,000,000—almost twice

¹ Carter H. Harrison, Stormy Years, pp. 148-149.

its actual value. The title of the organization was a challenge itself and in 1888-9 the courts ordered it dissolved. This judicial set-back does not seem to have caused more than inconvenience because the trust was able to realize its aims by pre-arrangement. Even the offices were still kept together. They were able to issue dividends of \$38.25 on each \$25 share from which it may be inferred that business was exceptionally good.

When the gas-owning syndicate had virtually completed its monopoly of the gas business in Chicago, it took the next logical step. The price of gas was sharply raised. Instead of the price of one dollar per thousand feet which had prevailed before the trust had been formed, the new rate became \$1.50. This situation was too flagrant a violation of popular feelings to escape protest and a Citizen's Association of Chicago was organized to commence proceedings preventing the gas companies which constituted the former trust from buying or selling the stock of other companies.

¹ Ninth Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1896, p. 258. This report prepared by George Schilling exposing the traction, gas, and elevated interests aroused such widespread interest as to assume the proportions of a best-seller. Thousands of pamphlet abstracts were printed and distributed widely by the reform element. Its facts apparently have never been controverted and the author received many indorsements from economists and other specialists. The Chicago Times-Herald, March 15,1895; First Annual Report of the Central Councilof the Civic Federation of Chicago, May 1895, pp. 58-61.

George Hunt, the Attorney-General, conducted the case against the gas trust. The Illinois Supreme Court in 1891 supported the state's contentions but the litigation proved fruitless since the matter was not followed up by a judgment.

The gas companies proved so highly appreciative of the Attorney-General's abilities that they employed him upon his termination of office as their counsel. With the helpful assistance of the Chicago City Council during the administration of Mayor Hempstead Washburn the gas companies were able to surmount the inconveniences of adverse legislation. written agreement was drawn up on June 17, 1891 with each of the seven gas companies composing the trust--thus tacitly recognizing their corporate existence -- by which the rate was set at \$1.25 per thousand feet with an annual dedrease of five cents per year until the dollar rate was reached. On February 27, 1892, an announcement came from New York that the stock of one gas company not yet in the trust had been acquired by the same parties interested in the other gas properties of Chicago and that the entire Indiana natural gas interests had been also acquired. The City Council, evidently aroused by public opinion, attempted to declare the franchise of this company forfeited but the gas interests were able to obtain a court decision preventing this. Thus the Gas-Trust entrenched itself still further.

In 1894, during Altgeld's administration, the Attorney-General, Maurice T. Maloney, began proceedings against the gas companies to carry out the early decisions of the Supreme Court. The former Attorney-General Hunt, now representing the trust, seemed to show greater abilities than before. Little was accomplished of direct value. Subsequently, Judge Tuthill granted an injunction prohibiting the trust members from paying any dividends to the Philadelphia gas company, evidently the parent concern. This did inconvenience the trust which now separated its offices, but their stock continued to be quoted as "Chicago Gas" on the New York Stock Exchange. The law was again circumvented. However, the companies failed to perfect their scheme for the payment of dividends in violation of court orders and they attempted to consolidate under existing laws. They were confident of ultimate assistance from the state legislature.

The last of this monopolistic triology which demanded special privileges of the legislature was the group of elevated railways in Chicago. By this time there were five such railways either completed or in the process of contruction. Like the gas and traction monopolists, the elevated railways thrived upon highly watered stock which was disposed of to gullible investors. Although \$53,500,000 of stock had been issued only one company ever contemplated putting any money into the treasury of their organization.

The technique adopted was a familiar one. A construction company was organized by the elevated railway companies and a contract made with it to build a road, the former to receive all the stock and bonds of the others in payment. Thus the construction of these roads was financed from the proceeds of the bonds alone and the venture remained exceptionally inexpensive to its promoters. Yerkes managed to gain control of at least three of these companies and possibly acquired a dominant position in the affairs of others. One of his methods of breaking into the elevated railway business was to threaten to build a trolley line underneath the elevated structure and thus deprive it of traffic.

To the bi-partisan alliance of Republicans and Democrats in the Chicago municipal government and the state legislature, the cause of the monopolists transcended all party ties and divisions. Lincoln Steffens, who made a close study of this period in politics found a stereotyped procedure of legislative graft which although not peculiar to Illinois alone, reached a high point of perfection in that state. The "system" was working smoothly in 1895. The City Council—with the exception of a small group of honest men—belonged to the Democrats as far as certain sources of graft was concerned. The Republicans lived upon the special perquisites of Cook

Ninth Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1896, pp. 62-69.

County. There the Republican sheriff was left undisturbed in his horse-racing graft in return for immunity to the Democratic police ring in the lucrative vice "shakedowns;" and to secure safety for their county contracts, the Republican leaders delivered over to the Democrats their aldermen in order to vote with the combine that sold out municipal franchises and other special favors.

Although the city aldermen received an allowance of only \$156 annually, they were able to supplement this amount in devious ways, sometimes by bartering away the property of the Board of Education and, best of all, by the sale of corporate franchises. The planning and execution of such projects made certain saloons like that of Alderman Powers virtually branches of municipal government. A bi-cameral arrangement was effected by two "rings" -- a greater and a smaller -- with the "boss" as chief executive. The support of both "chambers" was necessary when an ordinance was to be passed over the mayor's veto. Secret conferences between the aldermen and intermediaries arranged the size of the bribe and the details of payment. The mechanism of this corruption has been carefully described by a competent observer, William T. Stead:

¹ Joseph Lincoln Steffens, The Struggle for Self-Government, New York, 1906, pp. 50-55.

² W. T. Stead, If Christ Came to Chicago, pp. 180-183.

An ordinance usually drawn up by the corporation which proposes the steal, is intrusted to one of the gang who introduces it with such garnishings as he deems desirable. If the franchise is not very objectionable on the face of it, it usually goes through. Aldermen are bound to oblige each other and as the city property has been chucked away every month without protest, it is quite possible for the ordinance to pass without serious debate... The opposition is generally aided by one or more of the boodling Aldermen who oppose the ordinance with a view to putting up their price.

Stead met a railway lawyer who claimed to have bought out the entire City Council on one occasion. One applicant for a franchise who was determined not to bribe was refused by the Council and when Stead, who was anxious to convict the corruptionists, suggested that they cooperate in getting evidence against the aldermen, the other replied:

All very fine, and what would become of any hope of my getting a franchise hereafter? . . . I might get two men sent to Joliet, but forty-eight men would remain in the Council, every one of whom would regard it as a personal question to refuse me my franchise if I wanted it.

This was the hey-day of Michael (Hinky Dink) Kenna and "Bathhouse John" Coughlin who controlled the first ward.

Hinky Dink organized the hobo element into a powerful constituency while Bathhouse John helped to control the lodging house vote. Carter H. Harrison who knew them well, later

¹ W. T. Stead, op. cit., p. 189.

wrote, "Nothing that could be said of them would seem too lextravagant." When the great franchise project for the gas interests came up for consideration in 1895 competitive interests raised the amount of bribe money to new heights. John Lanehart, Altgeld's law partner and cousin who was an official of the Ogden Gas Company, admitted to George Schilling that his organization had bribed the aldermen in order to forestall similar efforts on the part of a rival group.

Such a corrupt political machine could not hope to escape public condemnation, but the protest was surprisingly short of the realities of the situation. A mass meeting of reformers was held in March of that year and was presided over by Lyman J. Gage. Among the other prominent figures in this movement were Henry D. Lloyd, C. C. Kohlsaat, Clarence Darrow, Dr. William R. Harper, Theodore Brentano, and Marshall Field. Speeches were made expressing general indignation at the corrupt influence exercised by the gas companite and the Yerkes ring. Lloyd made a sensational statement which was later fully substantiated:

3 The Chicago Times-Herald, March 4, 1895.

¹ Carter H. Harrison, op. cit., p. 131. Bathhouse John acquired his peculiar appellation from the fact that he had once been a rubber in a turkish bath.

² Interview with Schilling, Dec. 8, 1935. Schilling tells of meeting a certain Chicago alderman, a saloon-owner who had been hopelessly in debt until the bribe-money for the gas ordinance had been distributed. The latter admitted the fact but remarked, "What would you do in my position?"

I have better authority than street gossip for the statement that the gas trust paid a sum rising into the hundreds of thousands of dollars to extinguish the Universal Gas Ordinance. I am informed that powerful influences are already marshaled to secure from the State Legislature the passage of a law which will confirm the gas trust, it hopes forever, in its monopoly of Chicago by taking from the Council the power to grant franchises.

A reform administration in Chicago would threaten the privileges of the great monopolies. It was necessary therefore to remove whatever powers for good that were held by the municipal authorities through state legislation. Consolidation and long-term franchises could only be obtained by action at Springfield. The "system" worked even better here than at Chicago. As Steffens observed, "The railroads and other great corporations of the state had built it up and it was theirs . . . They were vulnerable to taxation but they controlled the State Board of Equalization (an assessment body) . . . To complete the legislative system, the Governor should be either a figurehead or the boss." Unfortunately Altgeld was neither a boss nor a figurehead. The venality of the state legislators was even worse than that of the aldermen. A former city official remarked to Stead, "You can buy up the Legislature of Illinois at much less per head than you can the City Council of Chicago."

¹ Steffens, op. cit., p. 55.

² Steffens, op. cit., p. 226.

The session of 1895 proved particularly prolific in corrupt legislation as a swarm of lobbyists descended upon Springfield like the locusts of old. Dr. J. A. Vincent of that city, representing the Illinois Homeopathic Medical Association, testified that an amendment in which his organization had been interested was defeated because he refused to pay three thousand dollars for its passage to certain state legislators in both houses. Representative Pickerell of Anna made a public statement that a bribe of several hundred dollars had been offered him by a fellow member to "keep his mouth shut about an alleged attempt to bury in Senate Committee the bill to regulate and fix the charges of express companies of Illinois and to declare all such corporations or companies common carriers. He declared that the bribes were tendered through the chairmen of the various committees. The agents of the corporations met in Chicago, St. Louis, or elsewhere to arrange all details. Rumors of a three hundred thousand dollar corruption fund of the gas trust were common.

On March 14, Representative George W.Miller, Republican, of Chicago introduced House Bill 618, the Gas Trust Bill, "An Act to Regulate the granting of franchises and special privileges by cities, villages, and incorporated towns."

¹ The Chicago Tribune, May 16, 1895.

² Ibid., May 2,3,4, 1895.

³ Journal of the House, 1895, p. 366.

It was announced in a low tone by the chairman of the appropriations committee to give the impression that the bill was a minor appropriations matter. Consequently it passed the House by a vote of 111 to 5 and the Senate by 39 to 11.

Some of its supporters perhaps thought that it was intended as a rebuke to the corrupt city council. Its provisions made it illegal for the city council of Chicago at any future time to grant a franchise for heat or light without the consent of the owners of a majority of the land frontage of each block in which gas pipes or electric wires might be laid. By controlling the majority of a single block, the gas trust could prevent any new company from intruding upon its monopoly. It aimed to achieve by indirection what could not be done and a sunder the law.

Meanwhile the Yerkes' bills originated in the Senate under the careful guidance of Senator Crawford who also directed the course of the Gas Trust bill. Senate Bill 137 was "An Act concerning elevated railroads and to regulate the same" and the twin bill 138, "An Act Concerning street railroads and to repeal a certain act therein named." Both of these bills, as will be noted later, were intended to legalize and protect the existing monopoly for ninety-nine years—the life of a corporation. These were passed during the beginning of March.

The Chicago Times-Herald, May 2-3, 1895.

² It is interesting to note that the Gas Trust of New York City was attempting to obtain similar legislation at the same time in Albany. The Chicago Tribune, May 18, 1895.

At first these bills attracted little attention except among a small well-informed element. During the beginning of May, the Chicago Times-Herald led in an expose of the true purpose of the gas and traction bills. W. A. Giles, chairman of the Civic Federation, remarked that if the Miller bill became law it would be impossible for another gas company to get a franchise in Chicago. Mayor Swift agreed in this opinion. The fact that John W. Lanehart, who was so close to Altgeld, was afiliated with the Ogden Gas Company an organization which would profit by the Miller bill, made it appear that the governor would sign the bill. Altgeld's refusal to commit himself at once appeared ominous to certain reformers.

So far Yerkes' cynical estimate of mankind had proved fairly accurate in his dealings with the politicians of Chicago and Springfield. The expected profits from the passage of the traction bills disposed him to be generous to those who were willing to do his bidding. He was now prepared to bribe the governor of Illinois himself. A certain Chicago politician came to see Lanehart on March 13 at the Unity Building and told him he had a large sum of money to deposit in the Safety Vaults of that building. He asked Lanehart's help in counting the money. It was five hundred thousand dollars. The politician left the key to the vault in Lanehart's possession and remarked, "If Governor Altgeld decides not to interfere with

The Chicago Times-Herald, May 3, 1895. Lanehart admitted to a reporter that his company would profit, but he refused to reply to the question as to whether he had been asked to use his influence with Altgeld to sign the bills. Ibid. May 4.

those bills tomorrow, I don't want that key back." The tender of the bribe was obvious, but Lanehart decided to consult at once with his cousin and took the train for Springfield. Altgeld listened intently to the story and then remarked. "Hang on to the key for dear life!" Lanehart who was astonished at this, exclaimed, "You intend to let the bills go through!" "No," replied the governor, "I shall veto the bills tomorrow."

This version of the famous bribery incident seems to conform to the most prominent details of other fairly trustworthy accounts. Altgeld told Judge Samuel P. McConnell, who thought that the bills should pass, that he had been offered half a million dollars to sign the bills. The earlier version referred to a million dollar bribe. Former Governor Dunne brings further confirmation of the bribery case:

> After his term as governor had expired and when he was in straitened circumstances, I met him one day in a cheap restaurant where he was taking his midday meal and I said to him that I had heard from reliable sources that he had been offered a bribe of a million dollars to refrain from vetoeing a certain bill. He told me in answer that I was misinformed but afterwards he admitted that the bribe tendered was a half million instead of a million.

Altgeld replied to the corruptionists with a threebarrelled veto which consigned the Yerkes and Gas trust bills

¹ E. F. Dunne, <u>Illinois</u>, p. 146. 2 E. F. Dunne, <u>MAddress</u> at the John P. Altgeld Memorial at the Garrick Theatre, " March 10, 1907, Pamphlet of the Chicago Historical Society. W. R. Browne, Altgeld's biographer has reprinted in full the version of the bribery case

to oblivion as far as his administration was concerned. On May 14, 1895, he returned Senate Bills 137 and 138 and House Bill 618 to their respective chambers of origin without his approval. He pointed out that all these bills involved the same principle--legislation of monopoly. Each of the first two bills, by giving the City Council power to grant an ordinance for ninety-nine years, he declared, bartered away the rights of this and future generations without any provision for adequate compensation or protection. repealed the law which provided that ordinances to build street railways could only be granted if the company would pay all damages sustained by owners of the abutting property and proceed by the laws of eminent domain. A proviso had been added which would effectually prevent the competition of new railways. An outsider could not begin construction in either the street railway or elevated trains without being restrained by the law suits of a few property owners in the state and federal courts. Another provision further guaranteed the existing roads against new competition by preventing access to the downtown district. When the elevated 'loop' should be constructed, as was then contemplated, new railways would be unable to compete with the old since they would be excluded from the heart of the city. Each of the bills authorized con-

⁽cont.) given in the Chicago Tribune, Altgeld of Illinois, pp. 235-41. Altgeld is "Cal Peavey."

¹ Veto of the Monopoly Bills, May 14, 1895, Live Questions, pp. 940-943.

solidation on the part of any number of roads—an express legalization of monopoly. As for House Bill 618, he pointed out that the Gas Trust would actually prevent any competition by controlling the majority of the signatures of the owners of one block. "Had the bill provided in express terms that the existing companies should for all time have a monopoly of furnishing gas, electric light, etc. in the city of Chicago it could scarcely have been more effective," he remarked.

The latter part of the veto message was devoted to a consideration of the principle involved -- the acceptance of monopoly. All civilized countries, he declared, condemned the legalizing of such a situation. It was the business of government to protect all interests alike; if any group deserved protection, it was the weak rather than the strong. The bills were a "flagrant attempt to increase the riches of some men at the expense of others by means of legislation." Their passage would instantly increase the value of their properties by millions of dollars without any exerted effort. Altgeld admitted that a monopoly existed in Chicago and would continue whether the bills were vetoed or not but added that there was a great difference between enduring an unavoidable evil and deliberately "taking it into your arms." He citted instances to show how the trusts were responsible for injuring the public by extortionate rates. Anti-Trust laws had largely proved a dead letter.

As a remedy to these conditions, he suggested a law permitting municipalities to acquire their own electric, gas, and similar plants and the municipal ownership of street car and elevated lines. In many of the best-governed cities of Europe, he declared, this had been done successfully. As a possible alternative to such legislation, if the public was unwilling to accept municipal ownership as yet, he suggested legislative protection against extortionate rates or heavy taxation of the corporations involved in public utilities. If it was true that the days of competition were over then the State should take steps to protect its citizens.

At 10:20 a. m. that day Altgeld's private secretary appeared at the door of the House and was efficially announced. Everyone now knew what he had to say and a half dozen members set up a cheer. Others declared their intention of derailing much of the governor's social legislation. Frantic efforts were now directed to passing the bills over his veto.

The newspapers were almost unanimous in applauding
Altgeld's courageous act although the details of the bribery
case were not yet known. The Chicago Tribune, despite the
fact that the Governor had publicly attacked that newspaper
on two occasions during the past five months, added its praise

The Chicago Tribune, May 15, 1895. A large commendatory cartoon of Altgeld slaying the octopus of monopoly was drawn with the legend, "Well done, Governor Altgeld—for once."

to the others:

It is not often that the Tribune is able to commend any of Governor Altgeld's official acts; for they are generally the outcome of the anarchistic demagogical side of his nature. But it can approve heartily of the substance and the spirit of the three-barrelled veto message sent by him to the Legislature yesterday.

The true merit of Altgeld's act was not known at the time save by a very few intimate friends. His investments in the Unity Building and elsewhere had collapsed as a result of the prolonged depression, the expenses of his political campaign in 1892, and his inability to supervise his business interests properly because of his gubernatorial duties. Nicholas Vachel Lindsay, the famous poet who was a neighbor of Altgeld's remarks:

Had Altgeld signed these bills, he might have retrieved his broken fortunes; . . . might have gone to associate and conspire with other such characters in the Federal Senate and instead of being denounced as a reactionary demagogue, been lauded as a progressive statesman.

Instead, Altgeld obeyed his sense of justice, vetoed the bills, ruined his chances for reelection as Governor as well

The Chicago Tribune, May 15, 1895.

N. V. Lindsay, "The Altgeld Temperament," The Public, May 24, 1912, p. 496. Francis F. Browne wrote in The Dial:

"...like Thomas Jefferson, he went into public life a rich man and came out a poor one . . . and that too after the fully authenticated rejection of the most enormous bribe ever offered a public servant," Oct. 1,1904, p. 214. For a similar judgment see E. F. Dunne, "Address at the Unveiling Ceremonies of the Altgeld Monument,"

Sept. 1915, pamphlet of the Chicago Historical Society.

as election to the Senate, and retired a poor man. His veto of the monopoly bills probably had a more serious effect upon his political future than even the Anarchist pardon. The interests that he antagonized saw to it that he lost his formerly extensive holdings. Soon the Unity Building, which he cherished as a monument to his work, passed to other hands.

Meanwhile, desperate efforts were being made in the Legislature to secure the necessary two-thirds majority to override the veto. In the Upper House, Senator Crawford postponed a vote on reconsideration seven or eight times, members were canvassed. Finally the Senate passed Bills 137 and 138 by votes of 35 to 9 and 36 to 9. In the House, however, where Speaker Meyers and former-speaker Crafts labored in behalf of the vetoed bills, there was serious difficulty in obtaining more votes. Brand Whitlock, who was then in Springfield as a secretary in Hinrichsen's office, tells of the methods of the lobbyists in gaining converts. One of the older members from Little Egypt -- the extreme southern part of Illinois -listened to alobbyist argue that the bill concerned only Chicago and that rural Illinois need not worry; besides, he ought to think of how much two thousand dollars would mean to a poor man like him. Only a few more votes were then needed. The old man

¹ Darrow, op. cit., p. 105.

² Journal of the Senate, pp. 636 et passim.

replied:

I reckon you're right. I'm poor and I've got a big family . . . And God knows what's to come of my wife and my children. I'm going home to them tomorrow and on Monday I'm going to hunt me a job in the harvest field. I reckon I'll die in the poorhouse. Yes, I'm going home—but, (he stopped and looked the lobbyist in the eye), "I'm going home an honest man".

On June 15 the last supreme effort was made to pass the monopoly bills in the House. The rumor was general that only two more votes were needed to pass the bills. The House managers continued to play for time until they could succeed. clock was turned back for two hours while several tired and sleepy legislators cried for adjournment in that stifling atmosphere. At last the managers were forced to confess defeat for the vote of 89 to 55 failed of the required two-After the end of the session, when Speaker thirds majority. Meyers died, a large sum in new thousand dollar bills was found Although a demand for a thorough in his safe deposit box. investigation into Meyer's official acts was made the opponents succeeded in using the sentiment of chivalry to the dead as a shield to protect the corruptionists.

Altgeld assisted in the reformer's attack upon the bribery ring in Springfield. He published an attack upon the corrupt element within his own party, singling out Clayton E. Crafts

¹ The Chicago Times-Herald, June 15, 1895.

² Steffens, op. cit., p. 55. 3 The Chicago Times-Herald, July 24, 1895.

as chiefly responsible for the operations of the "boodle gang" in the legislature. Crafts managed to obtain the Democratic nomination for the Speakership as a result of a "snap" caucus. The governor urged the Democrats to bolt the decision of the caucus: "Harmony in the party is certainly desirable, but the Democratic Party does not want the harmony of death." He called a council of his supporters to defeat Crafts, but the boodlers had had enough of the governor and they supported the former Speaker who was elected. A motion to secure an investigation failed of a necessary two-thirds vote (59-33).

The final attempt of the gas interests to obtain favorable legislation took the form of the Lowenthal Bill which endeavored to achieve some of the long-desired aims of consolidation. This proved futile, despite its passage in both houses, for Governor Altgeld vetoed it on June 24 and took occasion once more to present a ringing indictment of selfish monopoly. He declared himself willing to accept the current trend of concentration and consolidation so long as certain advantages in cheaper production and other economies to the consumer could be realized. In the measures before him, however, the public was injured rather than benefitted and therefore he refused to accept any such arrangement. His was not the myopia of the anti-monopolists

The Chicago Tribune, July 10-11, 1895.

² The Chicago Times-Herald, July 24-25, 1895.

³ The Chicago Tribune, June 25, 1895.

who desired a return to a primitive and unproductive economy; rather he wished to harness the useful new forces of business concentration to raise the standard of living for the average man.

Since the legislators refused to turn the spotlight of a special investigation upon their activities, the reform element, led by H. H. Kohlsaat and Colonel Jonathan Merriam of the Chicago-Times Herald as well as Altgeld himself, obtained a general investigation. Although the subsequent revelations confirmed the earlier charges of bribery, little was done and the agitation subsided.

Yerkes did not admit defeat. It seems almost certain that the Tanner boom for Governor on the Republican ticket which supplanted the candidacy of the more conscientious ex-Governor. Fifer was a direct result of the support of the Yerkes' element. Tanner and Lorimer were leaders of the legislative revolt against Altgeld following the famous veto message of May, 1895. It is a generally accepted belief that the political influence of Yerkes was a leading factor in the defeat of Altgeld in 1896. The next year Yerkes came back to Springfield where Governor Tanner proved a more gracious host to the new monopoly bills. They were passed but met resistance in Chicago. Mayer Carter B. Harrison prevented the measure from enactment in

The Chicago Times-Herald, August 2-3-4-5; Chicago Tribune Sept. 18.

the City Council after that body passed it. A popular revolt now drove Yerkes from Chicago but not until he had disposed of his holdings profitably. He left for London where he began to apply his old methods of stock-watering and control to the new Subway system of that city.

The evils of unfair assessment in Illinois seemed to Altgeld to represent a "giant of injustice." Every governor in Illinois for the past three terms had urged revision of the revenue laws and condemned the prevailing methods of taxation as a huge fraud. Nothing however had been done. Local real estate taxation pressed with undue force upon the small home owner because intermediaries between the Assessors and wealthy men arranged to reduce taxes between five thousand and twenty-thousand dollars in many instances in consideration of a cash payment. Pessonal property assessment at best was wholly unscientific. Assessors practically guessed at the value of household furnishings in the absence of a witten statement of the owner.

Living in a handsome mansion on Michigan Avenue furnished in regal style, Yerkes had his household goods and other 4 personal property valued at only one thousand dollars.

¹ E. F. Dunne, "The Story of the Street Car Companies of Chicago," Dunne, Judge, Mayor, pp. 214-215, edited by Wm. L. Sullivan.

² George Marshall, "Charles Tyson Yerkes," op. cit., p. 514.

³ Biennial Message of Governor, Jan. 61, 1896, Live Questions, pp. 963-964.

⁴ Stead, op. cit., p. 202. Of the sixty eight Chicago Aldermen only eight paid any taxes at all, wealthy men like Powers paying nothing. Ibid., Appendix B., p. 446.

Thirty mansions, ranging in value from \$20,000 to \$1,300,000 and nearly all owned and occupied by members of the Civic Federation were assessed at a small fraction of the lawful assessment rate. As one critic remarked, there were no millionaires in Chicago according to the Assessors. The Secretary of Labor Statistics, publishing many pages of individual instances of under-assessment, declared:

The policy is tacitly encouraged, if not actually promoted by the rich of Chicago, and, intended or not, it operates with crushing force against the poor all over the State, whether in city or country, whether workingmen or farmer.

The taxation of corporations which was intrusted to the State Board of Equalization operated with singular disregard of the most elementary notions of justice. Governor Altgeld declared to the Legislature that in the case of a few corporations in Chicago alone fully \$200,000,000 worth of property secaped taxation of every kind. Yerkes properties, particularly were grotesquely under-taxed. Upon his own appraisal of the street cars that he owned, he should have paid, \$116,500; instead, he paid \$16,726.87. George Schilling, in a humorous comparison of the revenues derived from the street railways and the dog license tax, wrote:

l James Malcom, "A Remarkable Statistical Report," The Arena, Sept. 1896, Vol. 16, p. 585.

^{2 &}lt;u>Eighth Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics</u>, 1894, p. 348.

³ General Message to the Legislature, Jan. 9, 1895, Live Questions, pp. 915-916.

⁴ Ninth Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1896, p. 69.

In 1886 (when Yerkes entered the railway business), the dogs paid \$27,948 for the few privileges they enjoy, while the street car companies paid \$30,530.85, but soon afterwards, the dogs having less influence in legislative halls than certain financiers, had to bear the larger burden.

One of the chief sources of injustice was the tendency of great corporations to get special legislation at Springfield changing the method of listing its property thus making uni-formity of assessment impossible. The corruption and inefficiency of the State Board of Equalization were notorious. This taxing Board operated on the theory that each member was elected to protect its own district but its chief activity was to throw the burden of taxes upon some uninfluential portion of the state. One student, commenting upon the history of this Board up to 1914, says that "it seems incomprehensible that the Board should continue to exist." He adds that the annual struggle of the members for a low classification of their counties bears out Altgeld's charges of injustice in their methods of assessment.

One of the worst offenders among the tax-evaders was the Pullman Company. The members of the State Board of Equalization enjoyed free passes upon the Pullman cars. The editor of the Illinois State Register pointed out that Pullman's contribution of \$100,000 to the Republican campaign fund in 1892

¹ Robert Murray Haig, A History of the General Property Tax in Illinois, Ph. D. Thesis, Columbia University, 1914, p. 179.

^{2 &}lt;u>Illinois State Register</u>, Oct. 5, 1892.

was a factor in the light tax assessments by the Board whose 1

members belonged to that party: Mayor Hopkins of Chicago
had refused to continue the existing Pullman water contract
on the ground that this corporation enjoyed a profit of 350
per cent on its extortionate charges to the citizens of that
2
town. Pullman's interests extended to many states where they
pelicy of tax-evasion was practiced successfully as in Illinois. Altgeld's correspondence with the various states, and Canada, where Pullman had penetrated, revealed that the company
paid nothing on over \$40,000,000 worth of property. In Chicago
it was assessed at \$1,561,955 when it should have been
\$8,000,000, with over \$500,000 of annual taxes. Complaints
from various parts of Illinois came to the governor's office
regarding the privileged position of Pullman.

The responsibility of George Pullman in the great strike of 1894 and his callousness toward his former employees after the strike created a popular demand for this chastisement. The revelations of the Federal Strike Commission concerning the comfortable financial condition of the Pullman Company laid a strong factual basis for assessment revision. Altgeld carried the case before the State Board of Equalization, an experience which developed a cynical attitude on his part toward such bodies. He quoted the statement of assets from

¹ Illinois State Register, Oct. 5, 1892.

² The Chicago Times, Jan. 16, 1894.

³ Biennial Message to the Legislature, Jan. 6, 1896, p. 964.

Address to the State Board of Equalization, Sept. 25, 1894, 1894, Live Questions, p. 425. The Chicago Times, Sept.

Strike Commission and presented a tabulated statement of Pullman assets based on his correspondence with the state auditors of every state in the union and the Dominion of Canada. The facts were irrefutable, nevertheless Altgeld was obliged to confess:

I appealed to the board to right this wrong and compel this company to bear its share of the public burdens. But my appeal was in vain. The board left the assessment practically as it was. I was subsequently told that the only effect of my address was to cause some of the members of the board to raise their price and force the Pullman Company to come and see them.

An attempt to persuade the Legislature to reduce the rates to the public of the Pullman car service, which had remained stationary while the general price level had gone sharply downward, likewise failed. Altgeld's veto of the monopoly bills undoubtedly removed the last chance of passage for the sleeping-car bill which had a short life in the Legislature. Not until 1901 by court mandamus was the Pullman assessment increased; then it was raised by 1100 per cent over its 1894 valuation. The Peoples Gas, Light, and Coke Company, a similar offender, had its assessment raised by 3900 per cent. The governor cooperated with Schilling in a successful attempt to obtain a second edition of 20,000 copies

⁽cont.) 26, 1894.

⁵ Interview with Margaret Haley, June 24, 1935.

¹ Address to the State Board of Equalization (note appended), Live Questions, p. 427.

² General Message to the Legislature, Jan. 10, 1895, Journal

of the report on taxation which revealed the glaring iniquities of the assessment system to the public. Subsequently, the Democratic State Convention at Peoria on June 23, 1895 declared for an amendment to the State Constitution permitting home rule in taxation.

Altgeld had suggested in his inaugural address that constitutional revision was necessary for an adequate reconsideration of the revenue system. This was one of the earliest moves for revision of the state constitution which had been drawn up in 1870. During the session of 1893, a resolution was introduced in the Assembly calling for a constitutional convention "to remove the obstacles that stood in the way of redeeming their pledges to the people." Although a vote of 37 to 1 was obtained in the Senate, the House voted 67 to 64 and thus prevented the required two-thirds vote.

Certain favorable legislation however resulted. An inheritance tax which Altgeld had suggested from the beginning
and constantly advocated was passed governing gifts, legacies,
and inheritances over five hundred dollars in value. A
graduated scale of taxes was drawn up ranging from two dollars
to six dollars per hundred. A law of June 15, 1895 provided
for a graduated scale of tax fees on corporations ranging

⁽cont.) of the Senate, p. 26; Proclamation of June 17, 1895, Live Questions, p. 948.

Joel R. Moore, <u>The Taxation of Corporations in Illinois</u>, Univ. of Ill. Studies in the Social Sciences, Urbana, 1913, pp. 100-101.

¹ James Malcom, op. cit., pp. 585-586.

² Journal of the Senate, 1893, p. 265.

³ Laws of Illinois, 1895, p. 213.

from \$30 to \$50 plus one dollar on each thousand dollars of capital stock issued over five thousand dollars. This brought a large revenue into the state coffers. Another law was passed to aid the individual whose property had been forfeited for taxes. Hitherto personal property had been sold to the individual who, in return for the amount due for taxes, offered to accept the least quantity of the tract; the new law made the successful bidder the man who, while paying the tax, would agree to exact the least percentage of penalty from the original owner should the latter wish to redeem his 2 property.

One of the corporations whose acts were particularly obnoxious to Altgeld was the Chicago Tribune Company. This newspaper organization had been unsparing in its criticism of the governor almost wholly upon partisan and personal grounds. A special portion of its editorial page was devoted to a frequent abuse of Altgeld. The program of reform was misrepresented, his motives vilified, and the opponents correspondingly exalted. It is not improbable that Altgeld's campaign against the Chicago Tribune for tax-evasion derived much of its force from the considerations mentioned, but it is undeniable that

¹ Biennial Report of the Secretary of State of the State of Illinois, 1894-6, Springfield, 1897.

² R. M. Haig, A History of the General Property Tax in Illinois, p. 170. Laws of Illinois, 1895, p. 298.

the public exposure of that newspaper was to the common interest and welfare.

In a special message of March 6, 1895, Altgeld showed how the leasing of public school property to such organizations as the Tribune represented a loss to education in that the rental charged was far below the corresponding rentals for similar property. He charged that as a result of the improper action of certain parties in preventing a revaluation of the school property, the Chicago Tribune was pocketing an annual sum of \$25,000 that should have gone into the school fund. From this point, he went on to demonstrate how this newspaper Company escaped a fair assessment for public taxes and was under-taxed to the extent of some forty thousand dollars. He demanded emergency legislation which would deal with such abuses. "Waving the flag with one hand and plundering the public with the other is a form of patriotism that is getting to be entirely too common and is doing infinite harm to our country."

This situation had been briefly outlined in the first biennial message, but, as the Tribune explained exultingly, "it (the message) produced no more impression on the popular mind than the flinging of a dead cat into a stagnant mill pond."

Special Message on the Leasing Out of School Property in Chicago, March 6, 1895, <u>Live Questions</u>, pp. 938-940.
 The <u>Chicago Tribune</u>, May 1, 1895.

This was probably true of the Legislature, for it refused to act.

A later incident gave the governor another opportunity to castigate the Tribune. A former employee of that newspaper, Louis A. Hilliard, confessed in 1893 to embezzling about thirteen thousand dollars and losing it in unfavorable stock transactions. He was sentenced to four years at Chester Penitentiary, but served eighteen months before petitioning for a pardon. It was granted on a consideration of his extreme youth, his good record in the past, and that he pledged himself to repay the remainder of the sum which he had not yet returned. Altgeld declared that justice had been served and that society would benefit if he were given employment and a fresh start in the world.

This pardon message was given to the newspapers. The Governor took occasion to denounce the lax morals displayed by the Chicago Tribune, whose acts as a tax-evader were known to young Hilliard and had fostered a cynical attitude on his part towards crime. That newspaper, Altgeld declared, should have been assessed not less than \$600,000 on its cash market valuation of \$3,000,000, but an assessment of only \$18,000 had been made and taxes of \$40,000 had been evaded.

¹ The Chicago Tribune, May 1, 1895.

The <u>Tribune</u> replied with a scathing attack upon Altgeld's motives under the captions, "Altgeld's Latest Splutter" and "He Vents His Spite." The editor declared that the rental of the school property was determined by the Board of Appraisers with whom they had nothing to do. Taxes had been paid in full compliance with the law. The comfortable conclusion was reached that "To be reviled by Altgeld has come in these days to be a distinction which good citizens and even the ignoble do not shrink from."

One of the administrative reforms which Altgeld introduced to halt official corruption was a demand for full publicity. of salaries in all state institutions. This had been promised 2 during the campaign of 1892. He was responsible for a law compelling an annual accounting for interest on public funds at two per cent. Three-fourths of the interest was to go to the state and the remainder to the custodian. Afterwards Altgeld ignored all claims made by treasurers to exemption from this law by removing all recalcitrant appointees.

Men who had formerly been eager toserve as custodians of public funds without a salary lost their enthusiasm for this sort

¹ The Chicago Tribune, May 1, 1895.
2 Illinois State Register, Oct. 16, 1892. Also Governor's

Letter Book, Jan.-June, 1893,

³ Laws of the State of Illinois, 1893, p. 136.

⁴ The Chicago Tribune, Feb. 4, 1895.

of an arrangement. Unfortunately, this policy, although salutary in effect, gave Altgeld's opponents the plausible argument that the Governor was using the law to obtain personal loans and removed the appointees when he was refused. This accusation obtained considerable ground during the campaign of 1896.

¹ The Chicago Herald, Feb. 4, 1895. During February, Altgeld removed the treasurers of the Lincoln and Anna Asylums on the ground that they would not turn over the interest money on funds to the state as required by law.

CHAPTER IX

LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS

Among the duties prescribed by the Illinois Constitution was the difficult one of decennial apportionment. The creation of a gerrymender was almost a foregone conclusion. As long as the Republicans were in power the existing gerrymender required only minor adjustments. But with the victory of the long-suffering Democrats in 1892, the opportunities for a wholesale revision of the state districting in their own favor proved irresistible. Altgeld's demand for a fairer apportionment clashed with the prevailing sentument in the legislature. The Bloomington Herald remarked:

They call him Czar Altgeld. The obliteration of the old gerrymander and the smashing of the rings is to the bread and butter brigade more despotic than transportation to Siberia.

In response to the request of a special legislative caucus, Altgeld appeared in the meeting to urge the fulfillment of the party campaign promises. Although this was followed by renewed activity in insignificant legislation there was no real effort to follow the governor for the redistricting act continued to absorb the energies of the legislators. The Chicago Tribune attacked the Democrats

¹ Reprinted in the Illinois State Register, June 23, 1893.

² The Chicago Tribune, March 9, 1893.

for their inactivity:

Why do not Governor Altgeld, Speaker Crafts, and the Democratic leaders at Springfield show as much zeal in their efforts to pass some useful legislation this year as they do in the effort to force through the gerrymandering apportionment bill?

One of the most flagrant examples that is cited of this gerrymander of 1893 was the senatorial redistricting in the northern part of the state. Four Republican counties, Lee, DeKalb, Kendall, and Grundy were organized into a single district of almost 113,000 people, while Will, another Republican county of about 62,000 people, constituted separate district. An examination of the congressional districts reveals the tendency to group strong Republican districts together and to nullify Republican strength wherever possible by allying such counties with those having Democratic vote sufficient to outweigh their Republican companions. the Republican counties, Bureau and Livingston, possessing a population of 73,400, were yoked to the Democratic counties La Salle and Woodford with a combined population The Republican counties at the southern end of 102,100.

1893-1918, The Centennial History of Illinois, Vol.V, Chicago, 1922, pp. 292-3.

¹ The Chicago Tribune, May 1, 1893. 2 E. L. Bogart and J. M. Mathews, The Modern Commonwealth,

Based on a comparative study of The Official Note of the State of Illinois at the General Election Held November 8, 1892, Laws of Illinois (Reapportionment Act), and The Twelfth Census of the United States (Population)

⁴ Ibid.

of the state were made a single congressional constituency with a composition of eight Republican counties and one small Democratic county.

The constitutionality of this act was soon challenged before the Illinois Supreme Court. (The People ex rel Thompson). The Court however upheld this act and declared that it would be unconstitutional only if the constitutional requirements of compactness of territory and equality in population had been "wholly ignored." Professor Paul S. Reinsch has briefly described this situation:

In Illinois as in a number of other states the conflicting parties have been competitors in freak apportionment, the Democratic gerrymander of 1893 rivaling its Republican counterparts of 1881 and 1901.

Altgeld's acceptance of this bill, it seems likely, was the price extorted by his party for the enactment of certain of the reforms he had proposed. At any rate, once its passage had been assured, there was comparatively little difficulty in the relations of the Governor and his party. Only with the new Republican majority of the following session did fresh difficulties arise.

During the second session, the Republican leaders

John R. Tanner, soon to be governor, William Lorimer, then

¹ Bogart and Mathews, op. cit., p. 293.

² Paul S. Reinsch, American Legislatures and Legislative Methods. New York, 1907, p. 202.

entering his notorious public career as a representative of Yerkes and other special interests, and Speaker Cochran united to discredit Altgeld, particularly after the latter's courageous vetoes of the Yerkes' Monopoly bills and the Gas Ring bills. The Legislature refused to appropriate sufficient funds to meet the expenditures it had levied and thus threw the onus of a deficit upon Altgeld's Administration.

A shortage of nearly two million dollars occurred as alresult. Altgeld was obliged to reconvene the Legislature in a special session in order to meet the state expenses.

Instead of removing the deficit, the legislature voted only part of the required amount and left a shortage of over one million dollars which the subsequent Tanner administration attributed to Altgeld's improvidence and general inefficiency.

The administration of the state prisons afforded many difficult problems to the governor. Chief among them was the question of convict labor. It is the opinion of a special student of the subject that until Altgeld's administration, the prison system in Illinois was marked by inefficiency, vagueness of objective, and certain harmful practices which a nullified remedial social legislation. From 1839 to 1867 a lease system of convict labor prevailed which put full responsibility for the maintenance, restraint, and management of the prisoner upon the lessee. This was attacked by the

¹ For Altgeld's account of this, see his Springfield Speech,

citizens of Alton as being unfair competition with free labor. During 1867-1871, the State Account system was introduced which placed convict labor directly under state supervision, but this was abandoned as uneconomical. From 1871 to 1886, the contract system was in use permitting contractors definite labor contracts on the prison grounds at a very low sum per day—about forty cents for each man. Organized labor opposed this system and a constitutional amendment of 1886 abolished it. When Altgeld entered into office, many of the long-term contracts were still in force.

This subject had been studied by Altgeld for a number of years. In his booklet on "Our Penal Machinery and Its Victims," he devoted considerable space to various aspects of prison labor. The essay shows an easy familiarity with the best thought on the subject, the experiences of various prison reformers and administrators, and the statistical background of prison studies. His conclusions embody an original application of highly progressive principles. The reasoning may be thus summarized: Each man who is sent to prison represents a loss to society of over half his productive powers. The dependents of the prisoner are especially heavy sufferers. Under an enforced labor system which offered him almost

⁽cont.) July 12, 1898 in Live Questions, p. 820. The adjournment of the session of 1895 was brought about by the arbitrary methods of Tanner, Lorimer, and Cochran. The Chicago Tribune, August 2, 1895.

Wiley B. Sanders, The History and Administration of the Prisons of Illinois, Ph. D. Thests, Graduate School of Social Service Administration, U of Chicago, 1929.

Beckner, Illinois Labor Legislation, p. 140.

incentive for self-betterment. Thus the prevailing system of penology failed to provide for the social rehabilitation of the individual and inflicted a sharp loss upon society. Altgeld's plan provided for sufficient earning opportunities to the prisoner which would enable him to support his dependents, set aside a surplus for his future, and produce socially-useful work without undue competition with free labor. The convict was to him simply a maladjusted individual who required the assistance of the state in finding his place in society. Brutality such as most prisons involved broke the spirit of the prisoner and retarded his development.

When a number of convicts were left unemployed in 1890 by the expiration of existing contracts, the Penitentiary Commissioners entered into new agreements with the contractors 2 under a piece-price system. During the campaign of 1892, Altgeld declared that it was a well-known fact that the Commissioners were profiting from their contract arrangements and were responsible for lobbying in the Legislature in order to prevent all remedial legislation on convict labor. The piece-price system, as practiced then in Illinois, was no

John P. Altgeld, Our Penal Machinery and Its Victims, Chicago, 1884; reprinted in Live Questions, pp.7-89.

Appleton's Annual Encyclopedia, 1890, p. 427.
 Speech at Battery D, Chicago, Sept. 26, 1892, Live Questions, p. 289.

different from the old contract labor regime because of the element of collusion between Commissioners and contractors, Altgeld explained the operation of the piece-price system in this manner:

They do not agree in advance upon the price which the contractors should pay per piece made by the convict, but they give the contractors as many convicts as he wishes to work, and at the end of the month, they ascertain the number of pieces that they have made and then they fix a price per piece which would require the contractor to pay the same sum per day for each convict that he formerly paid under the contract system.

When the Penitentiary Commissioners protested against this attack, Altgeld elaborated upon his indictment with a detailed history of the failure of penitentiary legislation and defined the prison investigations as 'formal junketings."

Altgeld had the facility and determination of the muckraker in uncovering abuses, and he was outspoken in his denunciation of them. While a candidate for governor he was the recipient of a number of intimate reports regarding the details of corrupt jobbery in the state institutions.

As he examined the situation during the spring of 1893, he found that certain aspects of the prevailing system were responsible for serious competition with free labor. In

¹ Speech at Battery D, Sept. 26, 1892, Live Questions, p. 289.

² Altgeld to the Penitentiary Commissioners (no date), files of the Illinois State Historical Society.

³ E. g. letter of Edward F. Merrill to Altgeld, Oct. 15, 1892, Governor's Executive Files.

some prison industries there were from 250 to 400 men employed. The new Commissioners were instructed to reduce the number of convicts employed in any one industry to as near one hundred as possible and the remaining convicts were to be absorbed by the introduction of new industries. This was only an administrative makeshift pending more thorough legislation on the subject. In his final message to the legislature, the governor repeated his earlier requests that the prisons should in no way compete with free labor and declared that it was unnecessary to keep the prisons self-sustaining. This recommendation however failed to receive any legislative consideration.

One of Altgeld's acts concerning convict labor was open to much misconstruction. During the second session, a bill was passed in the legislature with the support of the cigar-makers' union which abolished the manufacture of cigars in prison. Protests from a number of labor organizations came in about the same time demanding the abolition of convict-labor in their particular industry. In reply to such a protest from the president of the cigar-makers' organization, the governor refused to leave the prisoners wholly without em-

General Message of January 9, 1895, Live Questions, p. 904.

Also A Brief Review of the Official Acts of John P. Altgeld (pamphlet), Democratic Campaign Document of 1896.

² Final Message of Jan. 6, 1896, <u>Live Questions</u>, pp.952-953; <u>Chicago Tribune</u>, June 24, 1896.

³ Governor's Executive Files, May-June, 1894.

ployment and explained that his policy was to reduce prisonlabor to a minimum. When the cigar bill passed, Altgeld
promptly vetoed it despite the outcry of several labor
unions. He remarked bluntly:

This bill smacks a little of politics. It seeks to relieve one industry from the competition of prison labor, but it increases the burden of other industries just that much . . . This question of prison labor must be treated on a higher plane and must be solved in such a way as to relieve all free labor of competition with prison labor.

He pointed out that there were only fifty eight prisoners working in the cigar shop and other industries were affected more directly. "But as long as the law compels the prison officials to keep the prisoners at work this bill would simply aggravate the situation." While the Republican leaders in the legislature were eager to discredit Altgeld in the eyes of labor by promoting such bills, they refused to permit any movement for adequate legislation. The reasonable position assumed by the governor was apparent to central labor bodies like the Illinois State Federation of Labor which supported him.

Among the host of valuable suggestions which the governor made to the Illinois legislatorn was the idea of the indeterminate sentence for prisoners. Instead of a fixed period of

¹ Letter of Altgeld to Pres. Perkins, June 12, 1894, Governor's Executive Files.

² Veto of Bill to Stop the Making of Cigars in Penitentiary (Senate Bill 106), in <u>Live Questions</u>, pp. 946-947.

confinement, he wished to have the court refrain from imposing the exact duration of the sentence, but to let the maximum term as provided by law be modified by the subsequent good behavior of the prisoner. This idea, already in successful operation in other states, had been repeatedly advocated by Altgeld in his writings and addresses as a step forward in scientific prison administration. The incentive to reform furnished by the prospect of a diminished term of imprisonment as a consequence of good behavior was believed to 1 be a powerful one.

This time the legislature accepted the recommendation.

A law was passed which embodied this idea and provided facilities to make a close study of the individual prisoner. The Penitentiary Commissioners were empowered to act as a parole board. When the prisoner left on parole he was given suitable clothing, transportation to his place of employment, and ten dollars in cash. Violation of the conditions of parole was punishable according to the rules for escaped convicts. A fresh crime committed during the period of parole would mean a new sentence added to the length of the unserved remainder

¹ For a discussion of the indeterminate sentence see Altgeld's,
"Our Penal Machinery and Its Victims," Live Questions,
pp. 52-63; and The Report of the Board of Managers of
the Illinois State Reformatory, Oct. 1, 1894 (particularly The Report of the General Superintendent at Pontiac)

of the previous one.

The advantages enjoyed by those who came to the Illinois State Reformatory under the new law were extended to other deserving inmates by Governor Altgeld upon the advice of the Board of Managers. During the first year of its operation in that institution, the law permitted 146 to be paroled; of these fifteen violated the parole rules and became fugitives. Six of these were soon apprehended.

The success of the new system as a whole can be appreciated by its widespread adoption at this day.

In order to remove an unnecessary source of humiliation for the prisoners, Altgeld abolished the traditional striped uniforms, with their ignominious associations, for the plain gray suits that are in use today. He thought that the much-hated striped suits tended to crush the remaining self-respect of the prisoner. To young law-breakers, Altgeld gave unusual privileges. They were placed on a special footing so as to avoid the stigma of the penitentiary. In order to escape the possible consequences of the newspaper attack upon his pardon policies, the governor made a special arrangement for the release of deserving inmates which dispensed with the pardon procedure. He instructed Superintendent McClaughry of the

Laws of the State of Illinois, 1895, p. 158.

Report of the Gen'l Supt. at Pontiac, Oct. 1, 1894.

³ Biennial Message to Legislature, Jan. 6, 1896.

Illinois State Reformatory to find private homes for the 1 boys. They were to be retrained, not punished. Male criminals between the ages of sixteen and twenty one, by an act of 1893, were permitted to go to the Reformatory instead of the Penitentiary upon their first offense. There they were given training of a vocational type in fully-2 equipped schools.

The task of administering the numerous charitable institutions of the state was a serious one to Altgeld. On two occasions he summoned all the trustees and superintendents to Springfield for a general conference upon the details of administration, thus inaugurating a useful departure in the relationship between the Chief Executive of the state and his appointees. Altgeld outlined a vigorous program of thoroughgoing inspections, the abolition of the purchasing agents and their replacement by a system of competitive bidding for supplies, the improvement of the bill of fare in each institution, and the choice of competent subordinates free from the spoils system. When he thought that these instructions

¹ Letter of Altgeld to McClaughry, Oct. 20, 1893, Governor's Letter Book.

Laws of . . . Illinois, 1893, p. 168. The reports to the governor from the various penal institutions indicate wholesale changes in building equipment, new sanitary facilities, and more kindly treatment of prisoners.

E.g. The Report of the Southern Illinois Penitentiary, Sept. 30, 1894, p. 5 at passim. During the session of 1893 an appropriation of \$75,000 was made for the erection of a home for Juvenile Female offenders. Laws of Illinois, 1893.

³ Address . . at Springfield, Nov. 28, 1893, Live Questions, pp. 354-360.

were not fully complied with, he summoned the officers a second time to emphasize the seriousness of his purpose and demanding the resignation of any one who was unwilling to carry out the principles of the new reforms. He desired that the diet in each institution be kept equal to that of the average self-supporting citizen of Illinois, that all institutional funds not in actual use be turned over to the State treasury, and that arigid supervision be kept over the institution's pay rolls.

Despite the fact that the new Commissioners of State Charities were without previous experience in their administrative role, they proved to be like Altgeld himself of a real reform temper. Miss Julia C. Lathrop of Rockford was a particularly wise appointee. Her subsequent career as a child welfare leader and an able associate of the Hull House group has demonstrated the unique personal qualities which she brought to her task. The reports of the Commissioners became startling exposes of criminal neglect particularly in the insane asylums where the treatment was still on the crude unscientific level of the early nineteenth century.

The four institutions for the insane took care of some five thousand inmates while two thousand others were scattered over the state in private buildings which were utterly devoid of equipment. An examination of the latter revealed a lack

¹ Second Address to Trustees, June 8, 1894, Live Questions, pp. 412-418. The new purchasing system of competitive

of elementary arrangements in sanitary facilities, unheated rooms despite the winter, poorly clad patients, and brutal devices of restraint. Sometimes the insane women were permitted to keep their children with them. In Iroquois County, an old man who was suicidal in tendency was tied to a tree in summer and shackled in his room in winter. The attendants and superintendents had become callous to these instances of cruelty and neglect. Conditions among the epileptics of the state were particularly deplorable.

As an early step in dealing with these abuses, Altgeld requested the new superintendents and the medical staff of the state hospitals for the insane to prepare a report dealing with the most advanced methods for the care and treatment of these unfortunates. It was noted that the insufficient number of attendants and their lack of preliminary training created a stereotyped procedure that was not conducive to the recovery of the patient. Recommendations were made for a reorganized medical staff, free of political influence, and on a civil service basis. The necessity of another hospital for the insane was apparent. Various systems of treatment then in use in progressive European hospitals were outlined

⁽conf.) bids proved highly successful from the standpoint of economy and efficiency. E.g. The Reports of the Trustees, Supt., and Treasurer of the Northern Hospital for the Insane, July 23, 1894, p. 12.

¹ Report of the Board of State Commissioners of the Bureau of Public Charities, Oct. 1, 1894, <u>Ill. Reports</u>, Vol. 9, pp. 32-42.
2 Ibid.

and sent to the governor.

That the governor was aware of these conditions before entering office is apparent from the vigor of his recommendations in his inaugural address. He had examined the earlier reports of various state hospitals and found startling instances of some two hundred and fifty sudden deaths in an institution during seven years without any investigation being When the legislature appropriated made as to the causes. \$240,000 for the enlargement of two existing asylums, Altgeld vetoed the bill as a log-rolling measure that was hopelessly inadequate for the problem of scientific management. demanded more hospitals that would be free from overcrowding and provide a wholesome atmosphere for recovery. Previous efforts to found new institutions, he charged, had been defeated by the representatives from the localities where the existing institutions were situated. In a special message of January 22, 1895, he asked that epileptics and the hopelessly insane be separated from cases in which there was a possibility of To do this a separate institution was necessary. improvement.

Results were soon forthcoming. Before the end of his

bly, 1895, pp. 77-78.

Inaugural Address, Live Questions, p. 316.
2 Mss. of Altgeld Speech (about 1890), files of the Illinois
State Historical Library.

Veto of Bill to Enlarge Asylums, Live Questions, pp. 896-897.

Special Message to the General Assembly, Jan. 22, 1895,

Journal of the Senate of the Thirty Ninth General Assem-

term, two new state hospitals had been established, one at Peoria and the other at Rock Island. Several new buildings were added to the old institutions. The Southern Hospital for the Insane at Anna, which had been partly destroyed by fire, was rebuilt, and at the demand of Altgeld, given fireproof structure and its specifications placed under supervision of the governor. The policy was announced by the governor that all future state buildings be fireproof. In laying the cornerstone of the new hospital for the insane at Rock Island, Altgeld reviewed the progress of civilized states in the provisions for the mentally afflicted. "Man has finally recognized, at least in part, that he is his brother's keeper, " her remarked.

At the request of the State Board of Charities he placed women physicians in all the state hospitals for the insane.

Internes, appointed by competitive examinations, were assigned to the various institutions. Women nurses, assisted by male orderlies, were put in charge of violent wards and every effort made to treat the insane scientifically. The new civil service

¹ Biennial Message to Legislature, Jan. 6, 1896, Live Questions, p. 956.

² Laws of . . . Illinois, 1895, p. 27. This progress in social legislation is unique. Few states have organized two state hospitals in a single session. See H. M. Hurd, et al., The Institutional care of the Insane in the U.S. and Canada, Vol. II, p. 264.

³ Speech at Rock Island, Sept. 1896, Live Questions, pp. 608-612.

⁴ Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Cor-

At the state hospital in Kankakee particularly there came highly encouraging reports. Dr. Adolph Meyer, an authority upon the pathology of the brain, gave courses to the medical staff along new lines. Superintendent Gopen declared, "Rarely I believe in the history of American hospitals has there been a more united or spirited effort made to attain high scientific and philanthropic results." The Chicago Herald, which had scant sympathy for Altgeld, gave the suprising compliment:

The outcome is that the charitable institutions never before were in as good condition as now and they never before were managed at so small an expense in proportion to the number of inmates.

When one considers that this was a period of great economic depression when state revenues suffered along with private industry, the record of institutional progress is truly remarkable.

One of Altgeld's acts which won him particular commendation among social reformers was his attempt to remove dependent children from state institutions to private homes. The demoralizing influence of the over-disciplined "homes," or charitable institutions for children, upon the young had been brought to his attention by the Bureau of Public Charities. Enforced silence at mealtimes, a severe training of

⁽cont.) <u>rections</u>, Boston, 1895, pp. 342-343.

5 Report of Julia Lathrop, <u>Ibid</u>., 1896, p. 34.

¹ Report of the Supt. for the Eastern Hospital for the Insane at Kankakee, Sept. 1, 1894. Illinois Reports, Vol.9,p.22.

² The Chicago Herald, January 11, 1895.

the militarized type, and a complete lack of provisions for the vocational needs of the child when leaving the institution, were among the commoner evils! There were 1,758 boys and girls kept in four schools organized under state laws and regulations, though not receiving funds from the state.

The governor, though himself childless, was particularly susceptible to any situation involving the exploitation of youth. He made a personal investigation of the institutions of this type and concluded that the entire system was a failure. Mrs. Julia Lathrop, who examined the Industrial School for Girls in South Evanston, wrote to him that the place was ill-kept and filthy. Brutal punishment was tendered for such crimes as talking. The school enjoyed a low opinion among Evanstonians. In an effort to gain favorable publicity for his plan of obtaining state-wide legislation, Altgeld revealed the situation at the South Evanston school to the newspapers and wrote an open letter to the president of the Children's Aid Society of Chicago asking for his cooperation. He issued a release to each girl of the Industrial

Report . . . Bureau of Public Charities, Oct. 1,1894, Illinois Reports, Vol.9(p. 66.

² Letter of Julia C. Lathrop to Altgeld, Aug. 7, 1895, Governor's Executive Files.

School and transferred them to private families. To President Harvey B. Hurd of the Aid Society, he wrote:

They (the children) soon become institutionalized, which means that they are forever disqualified from making their own living. During the impressionable part of their lives their character is shaped, their habits become fixed and the spirit of self-reliance is either destroyed or dwarfed, so that when they leave the institution they are helpless . . .

He suggested that the best method for dealing with homeless children was to place them at once in private homes where they would be treated as members of the family. This analysis is quite similar to those of recent authorities upon the family and child welfare. George H. Shibley, who had succeeded during the previous session in securing the passage of a bill keeping dependent children out of poorhouses, congratulated Altgeld upon his stand and sent him material dealing with the subject.

Legislation of this type met the determined opposition of the training school officers who feared the end of a lifetime career with the passage of a law transferfing children from their jurisdiction. The act which Shibley

4 Letter of G. H. Shibley to Altgeld, Oct. 11,1895, Governor's Executive Files.

¹ The Chicago Tribune, Oct. 11, 1895.
2 Ibid., reprinted in Live Questions, pp. 501-503.

At a White House Conference on child health and protection held in 1930, the conclusion was reached that "institutional care for the most part has produced uninspired individuals poorly adjusted to the outside world." Nimkoff, The Family, p. 94.

and others of Altgeld's friends had managed to put through provided that children in poor farms under the age of fourteen, when no parents or guardians were living, were to be released to any person or organization that could provide the child with a private home. State supervision was given to the fulfillment of the educational and other requirements of the child. Several other acts of 1895 protected children in the custody of others from ill-treatment and exploitation. Altgeld hoped to obtain the enactment of more far-reaching legislation during the next session, evidently expecting to be reelected for governor.

One of the greatest monuments of the Altgeld administration is the rise of the University of Illinois. Although he was not a college man himself and even shared some of the 'self-made' man's prejudices against the college graduate, he recognized the unmistakable force for good that the university represented. The possible alliance between scholarship and wealth occasionally caused him serious misgivings.

Nor were these fears without foundation. Henry D. Lloyd's sensational blows against John D. Rockefeller, whose funds were developing the University of Chicago laid that university under suspicion. When President Harper dismissed Professor Edward W. Bemis, an outspoken liberal and reformer, from the

Department of Political Economy, competent observers like Richard T. Ely began to refer to "John D's University."

At Northwestern University, where Altgeld declared that splendid work was being done, a minor scandal resulted when the trustees invited the governor to the commencement expercises and then refused to permit him to speak because of his alleged radicalism. Altgeld, lacking the hindsight furnished by present-day tendencies, believed that the business and denominational affiliations of both institutions were a bar to independent research. The chief task appeared to him to be that of building a great state institution which would be free of these influences.

Professor Ely, then at the University of Wisconsin, was in full accord with Altgeld's idea. He had been unpleasantly surprised by Dr. Harper's action in the Bemis case. Writing 1 to Lloyde on this matter, he declared:

It seems to me one of the great things to do at the present time is to build up the state universities which are under public control and thus more plastic and freer from plutocratic influences. There is a great opportunity to do something in Illinois in building up the state university.

He urged Lloyd to work with Altgeld towards this end.

The governor scarcely needed this pressure, for since the beginning of his term he had striven indefatigably to help

¹ Letter of R. T. Ely to Lloyd, Nov. 9, 1895, Lloyd Papers.

the state university. In the era before 1895 when Dr. Draper became head of the institution, the University of Illinois (or the Illinois Industrial University as it was known before 1885) remained primarily attechnical school whose graduates entered "practical" vocations. states like Ohio, Michigan, and Wisconsin were making rapid progress educationally, Illinois, a wealthier and more populous state, was sending a disproportionately large number of students outside for training.

Despite his preoccupation with other tasks, the governor found time to attend important meetings at the University as an ex-officio member of the board of trustees. At his instigation, an appropriation was made to advertise the advantages of the state institution to all who were interested During the legislative session of 1893, a in education. special appropriation of \$80,000 was voted for a new engineering building and almost as much given to other needs of the Since forty thousand dollar appropriations had university. hitherto been considered exdeptionally generous, the new figure was unprecedented.

E. g. Appleton's Encyclopedia, 1881, "The Illinois Industrial University," p. 410.
Allan Nevins, Illinois, New York, 1917, p. 159.

Seventeenth Report of the Proceedings of the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois, year ending 1894,p. 265.

Laws of the State of Illinois, 1893, p. 64.
Letter of J. E. Armstrong to W. R. Browne, 1923, Browne Coll.

But Altgeld had merely begun in his efforts to raise the institution which had less than eight hundred students to a position of leadership. To the legislature, he used a page of his message to outline the needs of the university—and urged a liberal policy. When Dr. Draper became president of the university in May 1895 and as a conservative Republican was somewhat apprehensive of the anarchist governor, he was speedily reassured by Altgeld's attitude. He wrote in later years concerning his interview with the governor on his first day of presidential service:

He talked of the things he wanted done; they were good things to do and showed that his sympathies were genuine and that he had given not a little thought to an involved and rather depressed situation. He wanted more buildings, more teachers, more students, more carrying of liberal learning to all the people and all the interests of the State, and much more money to do things with. It was a little surprising to hear a live Governor talk like that.

At the installation of Dr. Draper, Altgeld outlined his ideal of a great university. "A college or university is not a simple machine . . . Its character is a force that creeps silently over the land, and by day and by night molds

General Message .v. . Jan. 9, 1895, Live Questions, p. 910.

Nevins, Illinois, p. 157. Professor Nevins remarks, "It was a large factor in the success of Dr. Draper's first years that John P. Altgeld was in the Governor's chair when he took his seat." Ibid.

the sentiment of men. It is this character by which an institution is judged. Above all, it should represent the common people and befriend the toiling masses.

President Draper, whose political affiliations were closer to the new legislative majority than the governor's now prepared an address to the Assembly in which he gave detailed consideration to the recommendations of Altgeld. He asked for extensive libraries, shops, laboratories, seminaries, new and larger fire-proof buildings for the library and museum collections, an agricultural building, a small astronomical observatory, a central heating and lighting plant, and the purchase of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Chicago. A program of curriculum expansion was elaborated. The itemized list of desired appropriations reached the new high level of \$512,300.

When the bill reached the House, the appropriations committee struck out the library item of \$150,000. The university administration leaders became alarmed at the danger to their program and President Draper, accompanied by two other members of the institution, took a night train for Springfield. Arriving there, they phoned Altgeld and asked him for advice. The governor promised to bring the Democrats

¹ Installation of Dr. Draper as President of the Univ. of Ill., May 1895, Live Questions, pp. 484-486.

^{2 &}lt;u>Eighteenth Report of the Proceedings of the Trustees of the Univ. of Ill.</u>, Sept. 30, 1896, pp. 61-66.

on the appropriation committee into line if the university leaders would split the Republican opposition. The manoeuver was carried out successfully. Altgeld had furnished similar assistance in the first session. The library and most of the other projects were saved, the total appropriation reaching \$434,000.

As his term neared its end, Altgeld redoubled his efforts to add new departments to the university in order to make it complete in every branch. He wrote to Dr. Draper that he wished free lectures could be given in law and medicine as a basis for future departments in those subjects in the fall He volunteered to assist in securing competent of 1896. His negotiations were largely responsible for lecturers. the acquisition of the pharmacy school of the Chllege of Physicians and Surgeons in Chicago. A decade later, President James of the University remarked to Judge Edward O. Browne:

> Governor Altgeld raised this institution from a comparatively insignificant country college to the rank of a great school of learning, the foundations of which are broad and deep.

Although the state university remained his pet project in the field of higher education, Altgeld was fully solicitous

Nevins, Illinois, p. 160. Laws of Illinois, 1895, p. 30.

Letter of Altgeld to Draper (copy), March 6, 1896, files of the <u>Illinois</u> Historical Library.

Letter of Altgeld to M. W. Robinson, Jan. 28, 1895, Live Questions, p. 463-464.

E. O.Browne, John P. Altgeld, pamphlet biog. sketch of Dec. 5. 1905, Chicago Historical Society.

regarding the welfare of the state normal schools. Two
new Normal universities were established at Charleston and
De Kalb. Generous appropriations were requested and obtained
for the existing two normal schools. Libraries, museums,
laboratories, new buildings of progressive activities, and
additional equipment were obtained for these institutions.

Altgeld took a personal interest in raising the standards of
these schools. He intervened against the prevailing practice
of admitting high school students to teacher's colleges and
retained only sufficient numbers of young children needed
for model practice classes. His recommendations were complied with by the school directors.

The problem of live stock inspection in Illinois was of national importance because of the dominating relation—ship between the Union Stock Yards of Chicago and the rest of the union. Contagious cattle diseases endangered the health of consumers as distant as Europe and Canada as well as in the United States. Many thousands of dollars were lost annually as a result of epidemics of diseases among cattle. The existing system of small appropriations for inspection permitted only one agent in the yards to represent the interest

General Message, Jan. 9, 1895, <u>Live Questions</u>, p. 909;
 Biennial Message, Jan. 6, 1896, <u>Live Questions</u>, p. 956.
 <u>Laws of Illinois</u>, 1895, p. 31, p. 50.
 Letter of Altgeld to President John W. Cook, Illinois State

² Letter of Altgeld to President John W. Cook, Illinois State Normal, June 1, 1895, Governor's Letter Book.

whereabouts of the agent, unprincipled cattle dealers were able to shift the diseased cattle along the innumerable gates and pens of the Stock Yards. They were thus enabled to take the cattle away and sell them to butchers of a similar lack of principle. Vast amounts of money were made in this loathsome traffic.

The discouraging nature of this attempt to inspect cattle was reported to Altgeld. The Live Stock Commissioners declared that the authorities of the Union Stock Yards took an indifferent attitude and refused to cooperate. The governor acted promptly and sent a strong protest to the Chicago Live Stock Exchange:

Information has come to me from time to time in regard to the live stock inspections at the Union Stock Yards, Chicago, and I have had investigations made, and am forced to the conclusion that the State inspection in the manner in which it has been conducted in the past is considerably of a farce . . . So far the inspection seems to have served the purpose only as a kind of cloak under which many diseased cattle were killed and put upon the market, while at the same time the impression was made upon the public that the inspection was rigid. . . I am not willing to have a regime continued there which is largely farcical. Either the inspection should be thorough and all diseased cattle condemned or else inspection should cease entirely.

He proposed further that the Stock Yards authorities refuse

¹ Report of the State Board of Live Stock Commissioners, Oct. 31, 1895, Illinois Reports, Vol. 9, pp. 1-6.

² Ibid., p. 7.

them on their scales and hold them for State agents. To
this letter, the officials of the Yards replied that the
cattle were consigned to individual buyers and hence intervention would be illegal and the officials would be subjected
to prosecution. This appeared as a crude evasion to Altgeld
and he replied in a sharp note that he was not satisfied
and that reports came to him that at no time did the Stock
Yard officials cooperate effectively with the inspectors.
He was not asking the Union Stock Yards to confiscate any
cattle, but to inform the state agent of cattle which appeared
to be diseased. Several other suggestions of how cooperation
could be assured were made. He repeated his threat to stop
all efforts at inspection if "actual and substantial assistance"
was not forthcoming.

Instead of relying upon the philanthropic motives of the Yard owners, Altgeld left for Chicago to attend the meeting of the Chicago Live Stock Exchange on January 3, 1894. In an address before this body, the governor attacked the prevailing system of inspection as a farce and that permitting diseased cattle to slip through was considered excellent sport by the dealers. He declared that he would not sanction a system which

Letter of Altgeld to Vice-President Sherman of the U. S. Y., December 20, 1893, Governor's Letter Book.

put diseased animals on the market. To force the hand of the hostile merchants, Altgeld met withhis Board of Live Stock Commissioners and specific rules and regulations were drafted for the benefit of the Exchange members who controlled operations in the Yards. A detailed system was elaborated to prevent the purchase or disposal of any suspected animal until it had been inspected by an authorized agent. This was adopted by the Exchange and put into force on July 23.

The results were immediate. Under the former system, during a twenty eight-week period, only 1525 cattle had been inspected and 565 condemned as unfit for food; under the new arrangement, operating for fourteen weeks, 2313 cattle had been examined and 622 condemned. When the federal Secretary of Agriculture later proclaimed a large area of quarantine due to the outbreak of Texas fever, Altgeld gave effective cooperation in administering the provisions against the importation of cattle from the condemned area.

A strong evidence of Altgeld's democratic sympathies is his profound concern in extending recreational facilities such as a larger park system to the common man. During 1896, he had protested against the creation of parks in inaccessible

The Chicago Times, Jan. 4, 1894.
Report of the Board of Live Stock Commissioners, Oct. 31, 1895, p. 28.

places such as the business section of Chicago on the Lake

Front. He believed that the revenue that could be derived

from that area would be large enought to furnish large parks
in various parts of the city where all could enjoy its ad
vantages. Edward O. Brown, who acted as a legal adviser

of the Lincoln Park Commissioners during Altgeld's term and

came into frequent official contact with the governor later

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remarked:

I can bear witness from the most intimate personal knowledge that the great pleasure grounds of the people were the subject of his constant and watchful care . . . That the Lake Shore, which had been largely lost to the public south of the Chicago River, should be preserved north of the River to the northern limit of Lake View as the basis of suitable recreation grounds to be built on the submerged shallows of Lake Michigan for the use of the countless multitudes who are to follow us, was one of the projects closest to his heart.

The governor took particular pride in the expansion of Lincoln Park which seemed to him the finest recreational area of its type upon the continent. He hoped that it would eventually be extended to Evanston. This plan was based on the reclamation of the shallow submerged areas which reached twelve hundred feet to the shore. He declared to the legistature that the only expense involved would be the construction

¹ Interview in the <u>Chicago Herald</u>, July 5, 1890, reprinted in <u>Live Questions</u>, p. 205.

² E. O. Brown, "Biographical Sketch of Hon. John P. Altgeld," op. cit., pp. 30-31.

of a breakwater and a driveway. An act to authorize such a proposal was passed in 1893 but found afterwards to be defective; but the Assembly passed a similar law in 1895 accompanied with a full machinery of administration to make The new law laid the basis for the present it effective. elaborate park structure of Chicago. Since 1885, boards of park commissioners had existed by virtue of various special acts and levied a light tax on property to meet certain ex-The new law divided the city into park districts with penses. elected commissioners who were granted general powers of Broad provisions were included which empowered the taxation. commissioners to regulate, control, and improve public streets leading to parks and for the creation of driveways and the enlargement of existing parks from the submerged lands.

Due to various vexations disputes arising from owners who claimed riparian rights and political difficulties, the Altgeld administration ended before the fruits of his policy could be realized. A contract made by the former Lincoln Park commissioners with the riparian owners along the Lake Shore for the extension of a driveway from Oak to Ohio streets over lands

<sup>Biennial Message . . . Jan. 6, 1896, Live Questions, p. 960.
R. M. Haig, A History of the General Property Tax in Illinois, Ph. D. Thesis, Columbia University, 1914, p. 188.
Laws of Illinois, 1895, pp. 187-201.</sup>

Altgeld refused to consider this and called a meeting of the Board for suggestions. His plans encountered the objection of several members who were called upon to resign. One of them, Robert A. Waller, president of the board, carried the matter to the newspapers and it was insinuated that he and the others were removed on political grounds. Such difficulties seriously delayed the work, but a firm foundation had been laid for future administrations.

One of Altgeld's special messages to the Assembly dealt with the subject of land transfer legislation which he thought of "transcendant importance." He submitted a report of the Land Transfer Commission whose recommendation appeared satisfactory to him. This subject was especially familiar to him as a large real estate operator. The question of land titles has never been too simple, but the constant subdivision of large tracts into small lots further complicated transfer of title. In each instance it was necessary to obtain an expensive abstract of title showing the record of ownership from its original grant by the federal government. Sometimes this was obviated by copies of old abstracts, but in any event it was

3 Special Message to the Senate, Mar. 1, 1893, Governor's Letter Book.

Moses and Kirkland, History of Chicago, Vol. II, pp.513-514,518.

Carter H. Harrison in his autobiography declares that Waller was removed because he refused to stuff payrolls at the behest of the Democratic machine. Stormy Years, p.

Waller subsequently received an appointment in Mayor Harrison's administration. The truth of Harrison's statement is open to serious doubt.

necessary to get a "continuation" made—a reexamination
of title which was required at each transfer no matter how
many times it hadbeen done before. The expensive continuation
was necessary even in the case of small loans on a house and
lot.

and other realty organizations favored the <u>Torrens System</u> of registering land titles. This provided for an elective Registrar of Title competent to examine and determine the status of the applicant's title without recourse to the former expensive procedure. It had been introduced in South Australia in 1858 by Sir Robert Torrens and was extended to all other parts of the British Empire successfully.

The Torrens Law was passed during the second session.

By its provisions, the purchaser who received an assignment of a certificate of registration was assured that the validity of his title could not be destioned. Unfortunately, its immediate effect was impaired by a Supreme Court decision which ruled that it was unconstitutional because it attempted to confer judicial power upon a non-judicial officer, the County Recorder of Deeds. In the succeeding session of 1897, under the administration of Governor Tanner, the bill was reenacted

¹ Biennial Message to Legislature, Jan. 6, 1896, Live Questions, p. 965.

² Torrens Bill as Reported by the Land Transfer Commission, 1895; letter of Pres. Dunlap Smith, Chicago Real Estate Board, to the Conservative Building and Loan Association 1895,

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in modified form and passed.

A much needed reform of the existing schedule of freight rates was carried out by Altgeld and his Railroad and Warehouse Commissioners. The freight classification had not been changed in twenty years. The granger movement had come and gone in Illinois but many of the evils complained of remained. Eastern railroads were able to enforce rates that were cheaper between Cleveland and central Illinois than between Chicago and that part of the state. discrimination in favor of the long-haul naturally reacted against the interests of the Chicago area. Protests to the railroads merely evoked the response that it was an interstate matter. Altgeld claimed that thousands of men were ruined by this rate discrimination while correspondingly great fortunes were being accumulated in other parts of the country. To remedy this evil, a thorough revision of all freight charges and a new classification were prepared by the Railroad and Warehouse Commission which tended to bring Illinois rates into closer conformity with eastern railroad charges. This enabled the Chicago business men, according to the governor, to again compete in territory in which they had

⁽cont.) files of the <u>Chicago Historical Society</u>.

3 "Act Concerning Land Titles . . " <u>Laws of Illinois</u>, 1895.

The <u>Chicago Times-Herald</u>, April 1, 1895.

⁴ Bogart and Mathews, The Modern Commonwealth, p. 334.

¹ Laws of Illinois, 1897, pp. 141-165.

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been formerly at a disadvantage.

A number of Altgeld's salutory suggestions failed as already noted due to the unwillingness of the Republican majority to follow his leadership and the conflict of special interests represented in the legislature. Occasionally, as in the Factory Law and the Torrens Act, the Illinois Supreme Court either destroyed or emasculated important legislation. One of the rulings which invalidated indispensable social legislation was that concerning the miners. Altgeld had congratulated himself prematurely that at last an adequate law had been passed protecting the miner from the prevalent short weight abuses and for thorough inspection of conditions 2 in the mines. This was annihilated by a Supreme Court decision although subsequently other administrations were able to enact useful legislation along these lines.

Altgeld's administration marks a departure in Illinois history of the number of vetoes used by a governor in that state. In only one case was the Assembly able to override his veto, a rare instance in any event in Illinois. Dr. Niels H. Debel has prepared a useful chart which illustrates the sharp increase in the use of the veto power which began with Altgeld's administration:

¹ General Message . . . Jan. 9, 1895, Live Questions, p. 918;
Biennial Message . . . Jan. 6, 1896, Live Questions, p. 959.

² Laws of Illinois, 1895, pp. 250-255; Biennial Message, Live Questions, pp. 965-966.

³ Niels H. Debel, The Veto Power of the Governor of Illinois, Ph. D. Thesis, University of Illinois, 1917.

	<u>Vetoes</u>	Laws Enacted
Palmer Beveridge Cullom Hamilton Oglesby Fifer Altgeld Tanner Yates	11 5 9 3 0 7 23 7	241 238 496 115 313 330 293 368 388
Deneen Dunne	128 63	1009 (two terms) 511

The administration of Governor Tanner which proved a highly advantageous one from the standpoint of monopoly interests is the only throwback on this list. Altgeld's vetoes, as already noted, were not merely of captious criticism or the overriding of unimportant issues, but based on broad considerations of policy and the conservation of all interests. In his hands the veto became a powerful weapon to combat injustice and privilege.

CHAPTER X

THE ILLINOIS BACKGROUND OF THE CAMPAIGN OF 1896

In an era of political opportunism, devoid of any larger purpose, with the last gasp of bloody shirt oratory revealing the paucity of genuine issues, national leadership was indeed at a low ebb. McKinley entered the campaign of 1896, despite the Democratic Convention at Chicago, with the comfortable conviction that the trusty tariff issue would continue to reflect the chief concern of the nation. Increasing unemployment, the discontent engendered by the serious defeat of labor organizations as in the Pullman strike and the conviction that the forces of government, irrespective of party, were aligned against the workman and farmer presented issues which the old-line politicians were unprepared to deal with. Populist ideas, arising from the farmers' woes, played havoc with the common allegiance to the old parties. The debtor's complex, dating back to days long before Daniel Shay, sought expression in a free silver panacea.

Against this background, the sudden emergence of Altgeld of Illinois to a position of national leadership can be more readily understood. His titanic blows against injustices of every description resounded throughout the nation. Even the most conservative newspapers and periodicals of Massachusetts and New York could not avoid an intermittent consideration of what the governor of Illinois was doing. Altgeld's role in the Pullman strike, his

unique pardon message of 1893, his battle against monopoly and corruption were matters of national interest. As the Democratic Party broke away from Cleveland's leadership it was evident that John P. Altgeld had taken the president's place within the party.

The governor's opinions on the leading questions of the day assumed a new importance. This was particularly clear after the famous Income Tax decision of 1895 which invalidated that measure. Justice Fuller, in rendering the majority opinion of the Supreme Court, declared that the purpose of the apportionment tax requirement of the Constitution was "to prevent an attack upon accumulated property by mere force of numbers." In a newspaper interview which was widely quoted Altgeld delivered the most virulent attack of his career upon the Supreme Court and its decisions. He pointed out that for more than a century in several decisions, the Court had held an income tax law to be constitutional. The present reversal seemed to him a new construction based on the prejudices of the judges and the controlling influence of the times. He declared:

Before the war the slave power and the South dominated the court. Since the war concentrated wealth and the East have dominated the court, and the time will come when justice and the great Mississippi Valley will dominate the court.

Chicago, 1932, pp. 252-259.

Interview on "The Supreme Court and the Income Tax,"

Live Questions, pp. 464-466.

¹ Pollock v. Farmers Loan and Trust Co., in <u>Cases on Constitutional Law</u>, edited by Henry Rottschaefer, Chicago, 1932, pp. 252-259.

Sardonically, he suggested that the Supreme Court should have delivered a stinging rebuke to the growing discontent of the times and thus teach patriotism. The black gowns of the judges were useful medieval relics "to make little men seem great" and convey the impression of infallibility. Each judge ought therefore to wear two gowns until the storm blew over.

The Venezuela Message of 1895 and the current agitation over Spanish atrocities in Cuba revealed a strong nationalistic side to Altgeld. He was pleased with the reassertion of the Monroe Doctrine although he suspected Cleveland of seeking a diversion in foreign policy from a drab domestic situation. His advocacy of American intervention in Cuba made him a useful instrument for the jingoistic policies of William Randolph Hearst of the New York Journal. Hearst had already solicited Altgeld's opinion for the Journal in the Venezuela crisis. He now came forward with a request for an expression on the Cuban situation. Altgeld replied with a strong plea for intervention and compared the Cuban struggle with the American Revolution:

Interview in the Chicago Tribune, December 18, 1895. Cf.
Speech at Central Music Hall, April 13, 1898, Live
Questions, pp. 783-809. Altgeld later noted that the
Monroe Doctrine was not actually involved, but that
Cleveland had acted without knowing the facts.

² Letter of W. R. Hearst to Altgeld, December 17, 1895, Governor's Executive Files.

Jetter of Altgeld to W. R. Hearst, March 7, 1896, Governor's Letter Book. Also article on "Spanish Barbarities in Cuba," New York Journal, March 8, 1896, reprinted in Live Questions, pp. 530-531.

The nations of the earth recognize the right to interfere in foreign matters in cases where the moral sense of the civilized world is shocked as in cases of cannibalism and the slavetrade. But these are innocent amusements compared with the atrocities which the Spanish have practised for over a century in Cuba.

However Altgeld might be mistaken in furnishing fuel to Hearst's commercialism and irresponsible war-clamor, his motives were undeniably humanitarian. When the true situation became evident after the Spanish-American War, Altgeld's influence was a prime factor in organizing the Democrats against imperialism in the election of 1900. The last act of his career, when a sudden stroke disabled him, was a vigorous attack upon British imperialism in the Transvaal.

During the battlefield ceremonies at Chickamauga,
Tennessee on September 18, 1895, Altgeld was invited to
speak upon the same platform with Vice-President Adlai
Stevenson and William McKinley, then Governor of Ohio.
Instead of dwelling upon the customary glorification of
military exploits like the other speakers, Altgeld launched
an attack upon the social and economic evils of the day:

Born of vast concentration of capital in unscrupulous hands, corruption is washing the foundations from under us, and is tainting everything it touches with a moral leprosy. It seeks to direct official action, it dictates legislation, and endeavors to control the construction of our laws... To be an eligible candidate now often means to stand for nothing in particular and to represent no definite principle, but to be all things to all men and, in the end, be contemptible. Thirty four years ago the call was for men

¹ The Chicago Tribune, September 19, 1895.

to fight an open enemy in the field; today our country is calling for men who will be true to republican institutions at home.

It was necessary, he declared, for such men to have sufficient courage to face vilification and unpopularity.

As the economic crisis deepened. Altgeld became convinced that the currency question was the most fundamental of the day. For years he had been an earnest advocate of bimetallism but with the repeal of the Sherman Silver Law in 1893 and the episode of the Morgan bonds, he became convinced that a widespread conspiracy of the creditor class existed to enforce an iniquitous gold standard. Free silver however was not a panacea in his eyes but a necessary economic measure to remove the sufferings of monetary deflation from the debtor class. The repeal of the Silver Act of 1890 revealed the Democratic cleavage of 1896. All of the influence of the administration and the obvious nature of the crisis were required to bring about repeal. The result was far from a solution. As Professor F. W. Taussig, a gold advocate pointed out. "... The currency of the United States was left in a position of complete rigidity ... The volume of the whole mass of the paper and silver money was so settled as to be in no way responsive to the varying demands of

¹ Today the old controversy finds reiteration in the eloquent, if plagiaristic, speeches of Father Charles Coughlin of the Shrine of the Little Flower. Some of the old silverites like George Schilling find the spirit of the Bryan campaign of 1896 in the radio utterances of Father Coughlin.

the community for its use in circulation." However illogical the silver advocates might be many gold standard supporters were even less realistic in that they refused to recognize the nature of the defects in the prevailing standard.

If the revolt of 1896 is interpreted purely in terms of free silver, then the social and economic conditions underlying it fail to find adequate explanation. Many, if not most, trade unionists and urban elements considered free silver illusory as a panacea, but were willing to support Bryan. Nor is the explanation to be sought in the personality of the Democratic standard-bearer for many thoughtful men who voted for him considered Bryan a superficial if eloquent, orator unacquainted with the deeper issues of the day. Rather, the most probable interpretation of the campaign of 1896 seems to be that of a mass movement against those phases of injustice that Altgeld had been fighting in Illinois. Labor, which had repeatedly denounced free silver and populism as measures of the relatively well-to-do farmers, was willing to espouse a cause that promised an end to injunctions against strikers. the reform of a conservative Supreme Court which upheld the jailing of labor leaders and prevented the equalization of the tax burden on an income basis, and the defeat of those monopolists who had chained the press and the

F. W. Taussig, The Silver Situation in the United States, New York, 1896, p. 140.

government itself to the interests of the powerful few. For the farmers it was the last great battle of agrarianism against the increasing dominance of industry.

In Illinois, silver had long had its stamping grounds and originated as an issue in the granger agitation of the seventies. A Democratic State Convention of August 26, 1874 passed a resolution in favor of a bimetallic standard. At the Convention, John M. Palmer, later candidate for President on the gold Democratic ticket, presided as permanent Chairman. A similar resolution had been accepted in the state Convention of 1892. So long as the tariff issue seemed uppermost and the realization of free silver remote, both gold and silver Democrats were willing to work together. Altgeld's break with Cleveland over the sending of federal troops to Chicago laid the basis for a new alignment within the party. As the congressional elections of 1894 drew near, the governor read Cleveland out of the party as far as Illinois was concerned. At Mattoon, Illinois on October 30. Altgeld differentiated between the acts of the Democratic party and the national administration. Cleveland had opposed the income tax law; he was responsible for military despotism, judicial usurpation, and for the repeal of the silver act. These acts, he declared, were opposed to the policies of his party. As for the chronic

Walter A. Townsend, Illinois Democracy, Vol. I, p. 314.

Ibid, p. 157.

tariff issue, it was "now settled for a considerable time:

No possible good can come from further agitation." He

sounded the doom of the old issues and asked for every

Independent in politics to join with the Democrats in

bringing about the realization of the new program of re
form. Two days later, he expressed similar sentiments

at Aurora. On November 3, at the Stockyard section of

Chicago, Altgeld attacked Cleveland as the betrayer of

his party.

For a time the silver issue continued to be treated as a subordinate one. The Republicans of Illinois preferred to favor the old personal issues. At their convention in Springfield on July 25, they declared, "We arraign the present Democratic Governor of Illinois as the most conspicuous case of misfit in high official life... The people await with undisguised impatience the expiration of his term of office." Election day brought a Republican landslide in Illinois and elsewhere over the country. This victory brought in twenty Republican congressmen from Illinois and only two Demo-

¹ Speech at Matoon, Oct. 30, 1894 <u>Live Questions</u>, pp. 428-444.

Speech at Aurora, Nov. 1, 1894, Ibid, pp. 444-449.
The Chicago Tribune, Nov. 4, 1894. The editor of the Tribune theorized, "Since July 1894, Altgeld has been ready to do anything or be anything to spite Cleveland. He would not have been a free silver shrieker if Cleveland had not been for honest money." Ibid, June 23, 1896.
Appleton's Annual Encyclopedia, 1894, p. 362.

crats. The rebuke was unmistakable.

In several interviews upon the elections, Altgeld attributed the defeat to the widespread dissatisfaction with the Cleveland Administration, particularly its course in the Pullman strike. He accused the Cleveland "gold-bug wing" of his party of using the patronage as a means of compelling Democratic conventions to accept unpopular policies. "For a great many years the Democratic party has practically stood for no definite principles. We seemed to be doing business under what was a sort of political false pretense."

It was clear that unless the Democrats could free themselves from the unpopular Cleveland influence, it was doomed to defeat in 1896. Charles R. Tuttle, investigating the political situation in every part of the state for the Democrats found that many of his party had voted Republican or Populist. "I found that the money question was the one great subject of discussion amongst the people particularly the farmers and laboring men. I found that they did not care to talk about the tariff." He proposed to Governor Altgeld in whose political sagacity he had great confidence, that the Illinois Democrats hold a silver convention. The Governor considered the matter for several days and then approved the plan. There was fear that the newly organ-

The Chicago Tribune, Nov. 6, 1894.

Charles R. Tuttle, Illinois Currency Conventions,
Chicago, 1895.

ized National Silver Party at Washington, representing a bipartisan alliance of silverites, might disrupt the Democratic party. In order to forestall them, the time for the silver convention of the Illinois Democrats was set for an early date, June 5, 1895. Although other silver meetings were being held in various parts of the union, the idea of a special Democratic state convention, called for the sole purpose of passing free silver resolutions was utilized for the first time in Illinois rather than the Western silver states. This fact was of great significance in the capture of the national Democratic Party by the silver forces.

Altgeld's action in calling a silver convention alarmed some Democrats like Governor William J. Stone of Missouri who feared that the party would split upon this issue. The avowed intention of the Illinois governor to break with the Cleveland wing by calling a national convention of the party on silver if necessary seemed somewhat precipitate. "The question is," wrote Altgeld, "how can we prevent the delegates who are to be selected to attend next year's Democratic convention from being controlled by the Eastern manipulators who use the Democratic party only as a convenience." Only an active

Letter of Altgeld to Gov. Stone, June 20, 1895, Live

Questions, pp. 486-488.

Marian Silveus, The Antecedents of the Campaign of 1896, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1932. The Democratic State Convention at Kansas City, Missouri, declared for free silver on May 15, 1894 by a vote of 423 to 109, Appleton's Annual Encyclopedia, 1894, p. 495.

agitation could defeat the party spoilsmen. He hoped to win over all the silver Republicans of the state by declaring at once for silver. As far as the Illinois Democrats were concerned, Altgeld declared, there were not five per cent of the rank and file who would leave the party because of free silver.

To prevent a sudden coup by the Cleveland leaders, he had desired that the silver convention be held on May 15. Rumors that the gold men were going to bring President Cleveland to Chicago to head off the silver movement were rife. The governor however was confident that the farmers and laboring men of Illinois were united against "gold-bugism and monopoly." An invitation had been sent by the Illinois gold Democrats to Cleveland that the President be a guest at an important political gathering. The latter expressed his regrets at being unable to come but issued a public statement contrived to hearten the conservative faction and define the issue. He attacked the spread of reckless discontent and wild experimentation. "Disguise it as we may the line of battle is drawn between the forces of safe currency and those of silver monometal-Cleveland believed that in accordance with Gresham's law the cheaper metal would drive out the other and hence a condition of monometallism would result.

¹ The Chicago Times-Herald, April 6, 1895.

² Letter of Grover Cleveland to William T. Baker, April 14, 1895, <u>Ibid</u>, April 15, 1895.

Senator John M. Palmer of Illinois, representing the Cleveland forces, attempted to gain the support of the Crafts wing of the party which had fought the governor on the monopoly bills and the issue of corruption. An Honest Money League was organized which soon included some of the more disreputable elements of the party. Judge Lambert Tree, although a leading gold man, refused to deal with the League which he found to contain the discredited leaders of the old Democratic organization. He wrote to Senator F. Vilas, a leading gold Democrat of Wisconsin:

The Honest Money movement here is thus far a miserable fiasco and the practical part of it in the hands of men whose motives are more than suspected.

In order to spread dissension among the silverites, the League spread the story that Altgeld was actually a gold man. As proof of their contention they cited the fact that the governor insisted upon interest payment in standard gold coin from his lessees in the Unity Building. Although it was well-known that this requirement under such circumstances was an iron-clad one, the gold newspapers took up the story as an example of Altgeld's hypocrisy. Eventually the League went to the extreme of indorsing the governor for renomination in order to strengthen the impression that he was straddling the issue. When news of this step came

The Chicago Herald, Feb. 22, 1895.

² Letter of Lambert Tree to W. F. Vilas, May 28, 1896, Vilas Papers.

Chicago Times-Herald, May 1, 1895. The Chicago Tribune, particularly repeated this story frequently during the campaign.

to Altgeld's ears, he indignantly rejected the indorsement.

The struggle was now carried to the Iroquois Center of Chicago which was the leading Democratic center west of New York. A program was arranged by the gold Democrats for Jefferson Day to indorse the Cleveland administration. Altgeld was invited but refused to cooperate in any such scheme. In his reply to the Iroquois Club chairman, he pointed out that several of the scheduled speakers had been connected with homestead robbing operations in the north-west and corrupt lobbying for a railway pool. As for Cleveland--"To laud Clevelandism on Jefferson's birthday is to sing a Te Deum in honor of Judas Iscariot on a Christmas morning."

A month later, the gold advocates in the club introduced a surprise resolution in favor of the single currency standard and it passed by a vote of 48 to 22.

Clarence Darrow and Mayor John Hopkins, who was to become a gold leader in the campaign of 1896, led the silver faction in the ensuing discussion. Darrow, particularly 4 was vehement:

¹ Interview of April 19, 1896, reprinted in Live Questions, p. 536.

Among the members were Judge Lambert Tree, Samuel P. Mc-Connell, Carter H. Harrison, Levi C. Leiter, Walter C. Newberry, Cyrus H. McCormick, Clarence Darrow, Sigmund Zeisler, William C. Goudy, George Schilling, Mayor Hopkins and Altgeld himself. Iroquois Club Pamphlets, Chicago Historical Society. Before Oct. 4, 1891, the Club was known as the Chicago Democratic Club. Altgeld became amember in 1884.

³ Letter of Altgeld to Ela, March 27, 1895, Live Questions, p. 467.

⁴ Chicago Times-Herald, April 24, 1895.

I voted three times for Grover Cleveland, but I'm ashamed of it. No Democratic President up to the days of King Grover denied the constitutionality of gold and silver. He is simply doing the bidding of his masters. (Cries of "shame"). A fig for your cries of shame; it is true. These stories of calamity are goblin stories invented by nursery maids.

One silver advocate shouted that the action of the gold men meant the disruption of the Iroquois Club. A group of silver members seceded and organized another 1 club. Altgeld, who did not resign until the following year, thought that the resolution on gold did not represent the real opinion of the club. William Hinrichsen, Secretary of State, predicted that this incident would insure a solid silver delegation from Cook County.

As the day of the silver Convention drew near, the sentiment for silver became increasingly favorable. The Chicago Times-Herald, conducting a poll on the subject in the Illinois legislature found thirty eight Democratic representatives avowed silverites and only one opposed; of fifteen Democratic senators, nine were for silver and only three absolutely opposed. Even among the fifty five Republican legislators who were polled, twenty six were for silver and four opposed; the remainder were either non-committal or for some compromise measure. A strong silver element was thus evident in both parties. Within the

Interview with Darrow, Aug., 1935. Altgeld's letter of resignation from the Iroquois Club, Dec. 2, 1896, in the files of the <u>Chicago Historical Society</u>.

² Chicago Times-Herald, April 24.

^{3 &}lt;u>Ibid</u>, April 6, 1895.

Democratic National Committee, the metallic heresy gradually won over a majority of the membership.

On June 5, 1895, a group of 1076 Democratic delegates from every part of the state gathered at Springfield.

Hinrichsen, Chairman of the State Central Committee, and Altgeld were in full control of the situation. Judge Samuel P. McConnell, a close friend of the Governor's, was chosen as permanent chairman. Hinrichsen, apparently eager to advance the presidential aspirations of his friend and student days, had invited William Jennings Bryan to the Convention. Senator Palmer watched the proceedings in a vain hope to head off the silver movement.

After popular insistence that he address the delegates, Altgeld responded with a spirited presentation of the silver issue. He pictured the current paralysis of industry, the debtor's plight, the mechanic's enforced idleness, and widespread poverty. These conditions he attributed in large measure to the deflationary policy of the government and the financiers. The restoration of the purchasing power of the producing masses could not be brought about unless silver was restored to its rightful place. An indignant people were aroused to right a great wrong. The Democratic party must represent the masses and not fear a split in its ranks. "Stand by the question of principle--

¹ The Chicago Times-Herald, June 5, 1895.
2 Townsend, Illinois Democracy, I, p. 191, Chicago Tribune
June 5, 1895.

³ Chicago Times-Herald, June 5, 1895; Chicago Tribune June 5-6, 1895.

and there is no power in America that can withstand your onward tread."

The Convention adopted a resolution recommending a strong educational program for free silver and accepted Altgeld's plan for independent action on a sixteen to one ratio of coinage regardless of the national party organization. If the National Committee refused to call a Silver Convention before August, 1895, then a program of concurrent action with other state committees would be adopted. A resolution indorsing the Altgeld administration was withdrawn at the request of Hinrichsen who claimed to represent the desire of the governor in this matter. This move was probably due to a fear of dividing the ranks of the silver forces and unnecessarily complicating the issue.

Bryan attracted considerable attention and applause by his powerful oratory in behalf of free silver. He declared that the currency question would be the chief issue of 1896. Popular feeling pointed clearly in that direction. "We are confronted with a conspiracy greater than that attacked by Jackson ... international in extent and destined in its consummation to produce more misery

¹ Altgeld's complete speech in the Chicago Times-Herald, June 6, 1895 and the Chicago Tribune, June 6, 1895.

² Ibid, June 6-7, 1895.
3 Ibid, June 6. The editor commented maliciously, "The ratio of silver resolution to Altgeld indorsement --was about 16 to 0. "Altgeld was" the Jeff Davis of the Democratic silver secession."

than war, pestilence, and famine." A six minute ovation followed the speech.

Both Altgeld and Bryan sounded the true tone of the campaign of 1896. Free silver was not to be a popular lesson in economics, but a vivid dramatization of the contemporary struggle between the classes. The campaign was to ring with the significant phrases, Wall Street, Money Power, International Conspiracy, The Crime of '73, Corrupt Plutocracy, the Masses against the Classes,—terms which did not degenerate into triteness until the succeeding generation.

Bryan became acquainted with Altgeld for the first time at the silver convention. He wished to impress the Illinois governor with his availability as presidential material. The other was wary, though kindly, and refused to commit himself. Bryan hoped for better results later and telegraphed enthusiastically to his newspaper, The Omaha Herald:

Springfield is the Sumter of the great contest for the restoration of the coinage of the Constitution. The Illinois Convention of yesterday was the most important political gathering ever held since the days when the preliminaries were arranged for the perpetuation of the Union.

The gold Democrats worked desperately to stem the tide.

John R. Walsh and many 'sound money' bankers contributed

to the gold cause. Senator John Palmer delivered an attack

upon Altgeld and the Convention. "The Governor evidently

¹ Ibid.
2 The Chicago Tribune, June 7, 1895.

believes there is in this country a poor class which he kindly consents to call the 'common people', of which class he unnecessarily avows himself the champion."

The Cleveland administration recognized the pivotal character of Illinois for the gold issue and determined to checkmate Altgeld. John G. Carlisle, Secretary of the Treasury, came to Chicago on April 5, 1896 and delivered an emphatic defense of the gold standard at the Auditorium. For a time, it seemed as if he had weakened some of the local enthusiasm for silver.

To meet this attack Altgeld decided to draw attention to the weakness of Carlisle's arguments by refuting them in the same Auditorium where the Cleveland leader had spoken. On May 16, 1896, he made his first important silver speech of the campaign. It is unnecessary to follow his arguments for free coinage—so trite have they become today. He showed that many of the gold leaders, like Carlisle himself and the Chicago Tribune had radically changed their position since the seventies. Practically all the important arguments later used during the campaign by silver orators appear in this speech. The exact ratio for gold and silver, he declared, need not be determined as yet. It was necessary to decide now for bimetallism with or without an international agree—

¹ The Chicago Tribune, June 6, 1895.

James Barnes, Carlisle, passim.
Speech at the Auditorium, May 16, 1896, Live Questions, pp. 541-570. The Chicago Tribune, May 17, 1896.

An enthusiastic audience which filled every part of the huge Auditorium greeted each point appreciatively.

Meanwhile the question of deciding upon a state Democratic ticket called for an immediate solution. Altgeld, whose personal finances were in a critical state, desired to retire to private life in order to save the remnant of his formerly extensive holdings; besides, his health, ever precarious, seemed even worse. In an interview of November 18, 1895, the governor insisted in positive terms that he was through with politics and desired to retire at the end of his period of This was a shock to many of his followers and office. a tribute came from Republicans and Democrats alike. Several days later, a gubernatorial boom for Altgeld started with the Cook County Democrats under the leadership of Thomas Gahan, a strong supporter of the governor. Altgeld refused to advance his candidacy and showed more interest in obtaining the leadership of the Illinois silver delegation to the National Convention than in the guber-He predicted that the state's natorial nomination. delegation would hold the balance of power in that Convention. It became increasingly apparent to many poli-

3 Ibid, May 21, 1896.

The Chicago Times-Herald, Nov. 20, 1895. One of Altgeld's friends who attempted to persuade him to
reconsider his decision, You alone have a fighting chance for the Governorship, for a large independent vote (especially in the country districts) will support you for any office... Letter of J. W. Hill to Altgeld, Nov. 18, 1895,
Governor's Executive Files.

² The Chicago Tribune, Nov. 24, 1895.

tical observers that Altgeld would lead all the silver forces of the national Democratic party.

During May, 1896, former Mayor Hopkins, who had been working secretly with the Cleveland Democrats, became the Chairman of the Honest Money Committee which was determined to defeat Altgeld. James H. Eckels, Controller of Currency and a personal friend of Grover Cleveland, was chosen to contest the party gubernatorial nomination. An attempt to discredit Altgeld as a silver leader by giving him the indorsement of the Cleveland forces failed. The governor declared that he was not a candidate for any position and did not want the indorsement of anyone.

The Republicans held a state convention at Spring-field on April 29. Whatever claims ex-Governor Fifer had upon his party for renomination were speedily set aside by the Yerkes forces who counted on John R. Tanner of Clay County to put through the monopoly bills that Altgeld had vetoed. Tanner had led the disgruntled legislators in punishing the governor for his vetoes by adjourning the assembly while Altgeld's social legislation was pending. He was now chairman of the Republican Central Committee and "came as near being a state boss as any man in Illinois politics and he was 'safe'." The new candidate was chosen by a large vote. He delivered

The Chicago Tribune, May 1, 8, 11, 1896.

Interview of April 19, 1896, Live Questions, pp.536-537.

Lincoln Steffens, The Struggle for Self-Government, p.54.

a strong defense of sound money and reviewed the acts of Altgeld in a hostile spirit. The latter's protest against Cleveland's intervention during the Pullman strike appeared to Tanner "like a groan from the grave of a dead and buried rebellion."

The Democratic State Convention met at Peoria on June 23, 1896. Altgeld's nomination was a foregone conclusion. Carter H. Harrison, who attended as a delegate, later declared:

Naturally in all except the less vital matters, the proceedings were cut and dried, Altgeld was to be named for governor, was to select his running mates; as a matter of course to him was conceded the right to name the issues on which he was to make the campaign.

Again, as in the Silver Convention of 1895, Judge McConnell, Altgeld's old friend, became chairman. Nicholas E. Worthington of Peoria was desired as a candidate for Lieutenant-Governor by Altgeld, but Worthington refused; consequently Monroe C. Crawford was nominated instead. Altgeld was chosen as gubernatorial candidate and as delegate-at-large to the National Convention. The other delegates were for the most part closely associated with the governor. As the Chicago Tribune put it, "howls for the governor" arose and Altgeld responded with an address. He emphasized the fact that the currency issue, not the

The Chicago Tribune, April 30, 1896.

Carter H. Harrison, Stormy years, p.

² Carter H. Harrison, Stormy years, p. 70.

3 The Chicago Tribune, June 24, 1896. Among the delegates chosen to the National Convention were McConnell, George W. Fithian, Hinrichsen, and Carter H. Harrison.

tariff, was to be the chief contention of the campaign. The Republican National Convention at St. Louis was characterized as "Mark Hanna's Trust." As for himself, he requested that some other man replace him as the party nominee. He was not in a position, physically or financially, to stand for reelection. The Convention refused to consider this proposal and renominated him by acclamation.

A summary of Altgeld's platform on national issues reveals its similarity to the National Democratic platform and the extent of the governor's influence in drawing up the latter document:

- 1. The free coinage of silver.
- 2. Tariff for revenue only; denunciation of the McKinley Law.
 - 3. Abolition of government by injunction.
- 4. Denunciation of Federal interference in local affairs by ignoring local authorities. (e.g. Pullman strike).
- 5. A Federal amendment to the Constitution permitting the levying and collecting of the income tax.

These five issues later appeared, through Altgeld's influence, in the Chicago Platform of 1896 and represent the leading issues of the ensuing national campaign. Some of the state problems which found expression at Peoria were

¹ The Chicago Tribune, June 24, 1896.

given national scope in the Chicago Convention:

- l. An indorsement of Altgeld's administration, as economical and efficient particularly praising his timely exposure and veto of the monopoly bills.
- 2. The revenue system of Illinois was declared a monstrosity and reform demanded.
- 3. The General Assembly was condemned for so crippling industrial arbitration laws as to make them ineffective.
 - 4. An adequate child labor law.
- 5. The removal of convict labor competitition with free labor.
- 6. New mining laws to replace those nullified by the Supreme Court.
 - 7. A road-building program.

The delegates were instructed to support only those candidates for president who were in "full and pronounced sympathy" with this platform.

As the National Convention day approached, presidential aspirants came hat in hand to the powerful Illinois governor whose leadership of the silver forces was now undisputed. It is the opinion of many political experts that Altgeld himself would have obtained the nomination for president if he had been eligible. Governor James S. Hogg of Texas wrote to him about this

¹ The Chicago Tribune, June 24, 1896.

matter. In reply, Altgeld declared:

I feel highly flattered by your inquiry, but I am glad to be able to say that I am not eligible to the presidency. I was born in Germany and came to this country when I was three months old.

He was known to be favorable to Bland whose views on silver were congenial to him; besides the Missourian had been among the few in Congress to defend Altgeld's protest against federal intervention. Bland sent a representative to gain the Illinois delegation for himself, claiming that with the forty eight votes of the state, his election would be assured. Altgeld refused to commit himself however. Another persistent contender for Altgeld's favor was Horace Boies, formerly governor of Iowa. His case was sadly compromised however by his action during the Pullman strike in condemning Altgeld's attitude and the tactics of the trade unionists. The

3 Ibid, July 23, 1896.

Letter of Altgeld to Hogg, June 8, 1896, Live Questions, pp. 525. Senator Shelby M. Cullom wrote: "Had he (Altgeld) been eligible, I believe he would have been the nominee of his party for the Presidency, Fifty Years of Public Office, p. 271. Prentiss, when nominating Altgeld for governor declared, "Were it not for the fact that he was born in a foreign country, Governor Altgeld would be the unanimous choice of the producing people of this country for the highest office in the world today."

The Chicago Tribune, June 24, 1896, Similarly, Francis F. Browne, "The Presidential Contest,"

National Review (London), Dec. 1896, pp. 452-473.

and Wm. H. Hinrichsen in The Chicago Inter-Ocean, Mar. 16, 1902; letter of Wm. Sulzer to W. R. Browne, --1923, Browne Collection; Melville E. Stone, Fifty Years a Journalist, p. 42.

² The Chicago Tribune, July 5, 1896.

Bland men were adroit in circulating the stories of Boies' anti-labor attitude. In an interview with David B. Hill of New York, Altgeld was asked to support William R. Morrison of Illinois. The free coinage platform would be acceptable to the east if the conservative Morrison was the presidential candidate. He replied that according to a telegram written by Morrison the latter was not in agreement with the Illinois Democrats on silver. This ended the boom for the state's candidate and Morrison used his influence during the ensuing campaign to defeat Altgeld.

Despite the neglect of the leading politicians who favored Bland or Boies for president. Bryan continued to offer a determined fight for the nomination making repeated bids for Altgeld's support. His friend, Hinrichsen, did what he could to advocate the cause of the young orator from Nebraska. At the Silver Convention at Springfield on June 5, 1895, Hinrichsen had declared optimistically:

> Mr. Bryan for President is not a possibility, but a strong probability. Why not? He is a Western man, a native of Illinois, a son of the people, a Jeffersonian democrat. young, gifted, magnetic and popular with the masses...

A letter written to the Nebraskan by George A. Carden. who represented Bryan's interests in Texas, reveals the

¹

Fred. Haynes, Third Party Movements, p. 360.

Despatch from Chicago, July 4, 1896, St. Louis Republic, (Notes of Prof. F. D. Scott). 2

The Chicago Times-Herald, June 6, 1895. 3

influence of Altgeld's decision upon that state:

Now what I desire to do is to fix this delegation from Texas as well as I can for you and if you can write me just what attitude Altgeld is going to assume in the Convention (who will be his first choice and whether he will be favorable to your nomination) it would help me. In case he is I would write to Illinois to obtain the assurance of some person who would be recognized as knowing the facts and it would go a considerable way in helping me here.

Bryan tried to draw some expression of opinion from Altgeld as to the former's candidacy and sent a copy of his speeches to him. Altgeld replied with a graceful compliment as to the able treatment of the subject and added a remark that was discouraging to the aspirations of Bryan, "These speeches will give you a much more enduring and brilliant fame than has been made by most presidents."

This was clearly unsatisfactory and Bryan wrote to him more directly upon the subject. Altgeld replied in this telegram:

Since seeing you I have canvassed presidential situation. Find everywhere great admiration for you but an almost unanimous sentiment that you are not available for President this time. All feel you should be in new cabinet if we succeed. Now situation looks dangerous because of possible divisions among silver men... We must practically nominate before Convention meets or we may yet be defeated. The enemy will try to divide and conquer. I would like to have consultation and will pay expenses if you could run over.

¹ Letter of Carden to Bryan, June 8, 1896 in Silveus, op.cit., p. 206. Texas later voted for Bland rather than Bryan, a possible reflection of the latter's failure to get Altgeld's support.

² Letter of Altgeld to Bryan, June 9, 1896, in Silveus, op. cit., p. 207.

³ Ibid., p. 208. Also James Barnes, Carlisle, p. 53.

Altgeld later wrote to Bryan that he favored Bland for President but suggested the possibility of obtaining the Vice-Presidential nomination. This was unsatisfactory and Bryan continued to hope for the higher Office. Altgeld considered Bryan somewhat superficial in makeup and told his friend William Sulzer, later Governor of New York, that the Nebraskan never comprehended the fundamentals of the money question. Bryan arrived in Chicago several days before the Convention but found the outlook discouraging. The prevailing sentiment was largely for Bland, Boies, and Governor Matthews of Indiana. To a reporter of the Chicago Tribune he declared that he was not a candidate for the presidential nomination "in any sense of the word."

For a year preceding the Convention, William H.

Harvey ("Coin Harvey") led the doctrinal forces for free silver attracting considerable attention in the press.

To meet his arguments, the gold forces employed Professor J. Laurence Laughlin of the Department of Political

Economy at the University of Chicago. Against Harvey's assertion of the Crime of '73 which was responsible for the demonetization of silver, Laughlin demonstrated its fallacy by citing the congressional debates and evidence from the Director of the Mint that there had been no de-

¹ Memoirs of William Jennings Bryan, Chicago, 1925, p.101. 2 Letter of William Sulzer to W. R. Browne, --1923, Browne

Collection.

Memoirs of William Jennings Bryan, Chicago, 1925, p.103.

The Chicago Tribune, June 26, 1896.

mand for silver dollars between 1840 to 1873. The country, he declared, was actually on a monometallic basis previous 1 to 1873 when silver was dropped. Professor Laughlin's arguments proved so attractive to the gold cause that he was used as a foil against Altgeld's speeches.

"Coin" Harvey, who was eager to promote free silver by cooperation with the Populists and Silver Republicans, suggested to Altgeld that each group be promised certain cabinet positions as a guaranty that the silver platform be carried out. The governor, however, disagreed remarking that this action would give the appearance of a political trade and thus furnish fuel to the enemy. If Bland were selected and wished to give such assurances privately to a man like Teller or the other Western leaders of the Silver Republicans. This would be satisfactory. An open selection of cabinet officers in the Convention would prejudice many popular elements.

¹ Chicago Herald, May 3, 1895.

² H. H. Kohlsaat, From McKinley to Harding, New York, 1923, pp. 52-53.

Letter of Altgeld to Harvey, June 25, 1896, Live Questions, p. 526. An interesting illustration of the alarmist side of Coin Harvey's nature is revealed in a letter written to Altgeld at the time of the coal strikes of 1894. He reported that a revolution was impending and suggested that he be made Commander of a Commonweal Home Reserve which could be incorporated in the militia and thus preserve the peace and turn the revolution to the ballot box. Altgeld gave scant attention to Coin's vagaries and pencilled the letter with a comment that the governor had no authority to incorporate any army in the militia. Letter of Wm. H. Harvey to Altgeld, April 25, 1894, Governor's Executive Files.

The campaign of 1896 rang with abuse of Altgeld and Senator Ben R. Tillman of South Carolina, both of whom were coupled together in the press. There does not seem to have been any intimate connection between the two. ing the apring of 1895. Tillman wrote to Altgeld regarding the question of cooperation on the silver issue. The latter replied with a general statement of agreement that "all men in this country who think alike on the silver question and other economic questions" should march together shoulder to shoulder. This type of cooperation was urged repeatedly by Altgeld. It is a far cry however from the clear intellectual and humanitarian ideas of the Illinois statesman to the chaotic policies of "Pitchfork" Don Dickinson wrote to Cleveland shortly before the Convention:

> Tillman and Altgeld in Convention and in evidence will be worth everything to us in discrediting the opposition and in shaming their delegations into coming over to decency.

This was over-optimistic for the silver delegates refused to be ashamed by the actions of either Tillman or Altgeld. Judge Lambert Tree reported disconsolately to Senator Vilas, "Altgeld will hold the convention in the hollow of his hand." Tree was heartily ashamed of the tactics of the honest money men and refused to cooperate

¹ Letter of Altgeld to Tillman, June 20, 1895, Governor's Letter Book.

Letter of Don Dickinson to Cleveland, June 12, 1896, Letters of Grover Cleveland, edited by Allan Nevins. Letter of L. Tree to Wm. F. Vilas, June 3, 1896,

Vilas Papers.

with them.

The significance of Altgeld and Illinois in the campaign was enhanced by the choice of Chicago as the site for the Democratic Convention. St. Louis had been a close rival for the honor, but a group of Chicago merchants led by L. Z. Leiter outbid their rivals. Judge Adams A. Goodrich argued successfully for the city on the lake by pointing out that the party had never elected a Democratic President who was not nominated in that city since 1856. Although it would be difficult to demonstrate that the coincidence had been more than fortuitous, the argument seems to have appealed to the Committee.

The scene in Illinois, particularly the events of the past year in which Altgeld had largely figured, was watched closely by Republican observers. Robert W. Patterson, managing editor of the Chicago Tribune, evidently believing that the tide could be deflected but not stemmed, suggested to McKinley that a modified form of bimetallism be accepted. This proposal was stoutly opposed by Melville E. Stone, president of the Globe National Bank of Chicago, who favored an acceptance of the issue and a fight upon the merits of the gold standard. McKinley had no settled opinion on the matter and declared that the financial question would be forgotten and the tariff be the center of the campaign. Stone seems to have prevailed in the insertion of a gold

¹ Official Proceedings of the Democratic National Convention, 1896, p. 28.

plank in the Republican platform. The explanation is a significant:

The thing that had happened and which forced me to believe that the silver question and not the tariff was to be the issue, was the action of the Peoria²Convention of the Democratic party in Illinois... The controlling force in that convention was a very astute politician Governor John P. Altgeld of Chicago. He had thrust the issue of bimetallism into the Peoria Convention and secured the passage of a resolution declaring for a 16 to 1 standard.

It is evident that the adoption of the gold plank by McKinley which was directly responsible for the secession of the silver Republicans came originally as a correct estimate of the influence of John P. Altgeld upon his party in forcing the silver issue as the foremost one of the campaign of 1896. Subsequently, the influence of eastern financiers who desired a gold plank was sufficient in carrying the Convention for monometallism. The Republican platform stressed economy in government, protectionism, and intervention in Cuba. As the "sound money" plank was accepted, Senator Henry Teller of Colorado, although a Republican since 1856, bolted the party with some thirty three others. The issue was now clear and the battle of the standards had begun.

¹ Melville E. Stone, Fifty Years a Journalist, pp. 41-42.
2 This reference is undoubtedly to the Silver Convention of 1895 which was held at Springfield, not Peoria.

The regular state convention of the Illinois Democrats was held at Peoria on June 23, 1896 but after the Republican National Convention of June 16, 1896.

3 The Chicago Tribune, June 18, 1896.

CHAPTER XI

THE CAMPAIGN OF 1896

During the days immediately preceding the Chicago Convention, silver leaders took every precaution to wrest the control of the issues at stake from the National Committee which contained a majority of gold men. cratic Bimetallic League, representing the silver sentiment of the party, chose as its sub-committee to deal with the selection of a silver man for Temporary Chairman of the Convention: Governor Altgeld. Senator Jones of Arkansas, Senator Daniel of Virginia, Governor Stone of Missouri, and Senator Turpie of Indiana. It was taken for granted by many that Altgeld himself would be given the position or else the Permanent Chairmanship. This was denied by the Governor who declared that he would not consent to his name being used for either position. He desired an active role on the floor of the Convention where his leadership would count for most.

The National Committee, in which Illinois continued to be represented by a gold man, Ben T. Cable, who had been selected with the others at the preceding Convention, met in the parlors of the Palmer House at noon on July 6. William F. Harrity of Pennsylvania presided. Altgeld and and the three other members of the Bimetallic sub-committee

¹ The Chicago Tribune, July 1, 1896.

² Ibid, July 2.

appeared to deliver their warning to the gold majority. Senator Jones, acting as spokesman, declared that they were authorized by the silver delegates to the Convention who represented a majority of its members to request that the position of Temporary Chairman be given to "some gentleman of well-known silver views; whose name would be presented by a member of the National Committee in sympathy with the free silver movement." This defiance of its authority was keenly resented by the Committee. In the ensuing vote, David B. Hill, a gold man of New York, was chosen over John W. Daniel of Virginia, the silver candidate by a vote of 27 to 23. The gold forces having won the first skirmish, the contest was carried to the Convention.

Next day, July 7, when the Convention opened formally at the Coliseum, the silver members of the National Committee presented a minority report demanding the replacement of Hill by Senator Daniel. A motion for a roll-call by states was made. Altgeld's policy of no-compromise required that the keynote speech as well as all subsequent proceedings be entirely in the interests of free silver. Any other course, he thought, would be fatal. Marston of Louisiana expressed the prevailing determination on this matter:

It is not that we love David B. Hill less, but we love Democracy more. We would not cast

¹ Official Proceedings of the Democratic Convention, 1896. p. 68a.

² Ibid, p. 70.

³ Ibid, p. 86.

any aspersion upon our eastern friends... We state to the Democracy of the United States that we are on top and mean to assert our rights.

The vote upon the substitution of Daniel for Hill was decisively in favor of the silver leader by 556 to 349. An overwhelming coalition of western and southern states defeated the eastern bloc. Nebraska was kept in line by the gold forces who were still in control.

Before the Convention met, Altgeld had made it clear to the Illinois delegation that the state could exercise a strong influence upon the outcome of the battle for silver:

The least concession in my judgment means defeat for us... We are so situated that Illinois will wield a great influence in the convention. The individual delegates from Illinois will wield a great influence on delegates from the West and South. Ours is a pivotal state.

He desired that the two-thirds rule be abolished as a relic of slavery days and that the Illinois delegation act if the opportunity offered. When the Bland element in the delegation attempted to obtain a vote upon the presidental preference of the group, an Altgeld leader moved that the meeting adjourn. The governor was opposed to an advance committment to Bland in the hope that a stronger candidate might develop during the campaign. Hinrichsen, however, polled the delegation while Altgeld was absent and found 33 of the 48 for Bland; only one, Dr. Felix Rignier of Monmouth, was for Bryan; the remainder were largely for Adlai Stevenson and Boies. The governor agreed to vote

¹ The Chicago Tribune, July 1, 1896.

² Ibid, July 5.

with the majority and Illinois was declared as a unit for Bland.

A friendly journalist, Francis F. Browne, telegraphed this account of Altgeld's role in the Convention to the National Review of London:

From the very opening of the Convention, its leader and dominating spirit was John P. Altgeld, Governor of Illinois. He was the brain and will of the Convention as Bryan was--very literally--its voice. Bryan's nomination was in the nature of an accident. Altgeld's leadership was in-evitable from his position and his personal qualities--from his abilities, his courage, and his practical political sagacity. Even before the Convention assembled, he had done more than any other man to forecast its character, to create the situation, and shape the issues which were there developed.

This appraisal was later echoed by William H. Hinrichzen, who was close to Altgeld throughout the Convention.

Darrow, also an active participant, complained at times that the governor's methods of exercising pressure upon the delegates were too high-handed. Altgeld regarded his goal as justification of his course in this matter.

In the battle over the report of the Committee on Credentials, he took a leading part particularly in challenging the vote of Michigan. The struggle of the silver men against the gold majority led by Don Dickinson of that state was closely watched by Altgeld through confidential reports of his friends. Allegations were made to him that

¹ Francis F. Browne, "The Presidential Contest-Altgeld of Illinois," The National Review (London), December, 1896.

² The Inter-Ocean (Chicago), March 16, 1902.

³ Interview with Darrow, August, 1935.

the gold majority was the result of fradulent voting.

The controversy was carried to the floor of the Convention when Stevenson of Michigan cast the state's vote in favor of seating the gold men. A great demonstration was made by the gold delegates.

Suddenly Governor Altgeld got upon his chair and faced the Convention. His pale face was silhouetted against the royal purple standard of the Illinois delegation and his long lean arm was extended appealing for recognition. Cockrell of Missouri, Martin, and Stone were about him. He could not be heard but secured recognition, through the medium of a messenger, 'I arise to a point of order and in that connection desire to challenge the vote of Michigan. We are proceeding here under the rules of the House of Representatives. Under the rules of the House, no member can vote upon any matter in which he is personally interested. Consequently no member of this convention can vote upon a question in which he is personally interested'.

A roll call was ordered and the silver men won the 3 Michigan delegation by a vote of 558 to 368. Senator Stephen M. White of California was selected by the Committee as Permanent Chairman and presented with a solid silver gavel. As the silver forces won successive victories, an appreciative demand for a speech from Altgeld came up repeatedly. The governor desired that David B. Hill speak first, evidently hoping to attack the arguments of the gold man, but upon the motion of an Iowan delegate, and the comsent of the delegates, he rose to address the Convention.

¹ Letter of Q. A. Smith to Altgeld, June 9, 1896, Governor's Executive Files.

^{2 &}lt;u>Illinois State</u> <u>Journal</u>, July 9, 1896.

The preceding quotation taken from the Illinois State Journal is supplemented by the Official Proceedings report.

His speech was similar to that given in Peoria at the State Convention with more emphasis on the currency issue. Some of his remarks betrayed the marked anti-English bias that developed after the Venezuela crisis; thus he spoke of English greed, English cunning, and the gold standard as a product of an English conspiracy. These comments were enthusiastically received, but his description of the plight of the unemployed and the farmers made a sensational As he continued to speak his face grew flushed appeal. and his gestures more rapid. Soon the Convention fell entirely beneath the sway of his oratory. His appeal for free silver as a relief to the hungry men and women of the nation evoked a great demonstration. When he descended from the platform, crowds of delegates from many states surrounded him as he attempted to make his way along the aisles. From the serried lines of spectators in the galleries. enthusiastic shouts arose to fill the Coliseum. The keynote of his speech -- no compromise on the currency issue-was the major note of the Chicago Convention.

Most important of his contributions to the Convention was his role in dictating the platform of the party. Although he could have been on the platform committee if he had desired it, he chose the active leadership on the floor

Speech of July 8, 1896 in Live Questions, pp. 585-590;

Chicago Tribune, July 9, 1896, Illinois State

Journal, July 9, 1896. Official Proceedings...

p. 124.

^{2 &}lt;u>Illinois State Journal</u>, July 9. F. F. Browne, op. cit. pp. 470-473.

of the Convention and left the expression of his viewpoint to Worthington of Peoria, a close friend of the governor's, whom the latter desired as a Vice-Presidential candidate.

Besides, the platform committee, after the withdrawal of its gold members, was organized with Senator Jones, an associate of Altgeld's, as chairman. Altgeld frequently consulted with Jones as to the details of the Platform.

Darrow later remarked:

Without him (Altgeld) the Democratic Party would never have placed in its platform its warning to the country against federal courts or its strictures upon government by injunction.

Hinrichsen stated in 1902 that Altgeld "laid out the program of the Convention, dictated the platform, and impressed his personality upon the policy adopted." After the adjournment of the Convention, according to Hinrichsen's account, he complimented the governor upon his influence on the deliberations. Altgeld replied that he did everything but nominate himself and that was prevented by an accident of birth and a clause in the Constitution.

^{1 &}quot;Recollections of Charles S. Thomas, ex-Governor of Colorado and Senator," in Browne Collection -- Letter of George H. Shipley to Browne -- 1923, Browne Collection.

² Interview with Darrow, April, 1935.
3 C. S. Darrow, "Memorial Petition on John P. Altgeld, April 20, 19--," (Ms.)

The Inter-Ocean, (Chicago), March 16, 1902.

Tarter H. Harrison, a Convention delegate, later wrote,
"Altgeld, rather than Bryan, or any other, was responsible for the clarion Chicago utterance. (Bryan)
was little more than the silver-tongued mouthpiece of
the thinker." Stormy Years, p. 70. Another observer,
who evidently knew Altgeld exceptionally well, wrote,
"On the Coliseum floor and in the secret caucuses
outside, Altgeld was cajoled, threatened, challenged,

Conclusive evidence of the extent of Altgeld's influence upon the Democratic platform of 1896 is afforded
by a comparison of the Illinois platform written the preceding month at Peoria and the product of the national
platform committee. A summary of the latter with the exception of several minor points is almost a reproduction
of the Peoria document:

- 1. The free coinage of silver at a ratio of sixteen to one.
- 2. Tariff for revenue only; denunciation of the McKinley Law.
- 3. Indorsement of the federal income tax. Suggestion of an amendment to the Constitution.
 - 4. Abolish pauper immigration.
- 5. An anti-trust plank; enlargement of powers of the Interstate Commerce Commission.
- 6. Industrial arbitration in labor disputes between employers engaged in interstate commerce and their employees.
 - 7. Economy in government.
- 8. (Most elaborate of all, except free silver) Denunciation of "arbitrary interference by Federal authorities in local affairs as... a crime against free institutions."

⁽cont.) and browbeaten by leaders of different factions, but in spite of it all he stood firm and to him more than to any one man was attributed by leaders of the free silver element the power which finally secured the sixteen to one platform." Chicago Chronicle, March 13, 1902.

¹ Official copy of Platform, Official Proceedings... 1896, p. 250. Several of the minor planks are omitted.

- 9. Denunciation of "government by injunction as a new and highly dangerous form of oppression..."
- 10. Recommendations on civil service, sympathy for Cuba, improvement of waterways, and no third term for a President.

The Republican platform which emphasized protection and a vigorous foreign policy is anachronistic in contrast with the Democratic program of 1896. The platform of 1892 upon which Cleveland had been elected, although including a silver plank, differs from the later pronouncement in spirit by the exact measure of Altgeld's influence. To some, the Chicago platform of 1896 was an "anarchist manifesto"—the creed of Altgeld. The New York Tribune wrote:

The makers of the platform have indeed carried candor to the point of hardihood, and laid bare in glaring distinctness their whole programme of political and financial revolution... The new Western and Southern leaders, who have grasped the reins of party power have at least the courage of fanaticism, and all the levelling features of their creed.

Meanwhile, the silver-tongued orator of the Platte was preparing his trusty metaphors of the cross of gold and the crown of thorns which had operated successfully upon the emotions of political gatherings on several previous occasions. A portion of his famous speech, delivered on July 9, is of interest because of the emphasis on the platform;

4 Official Proceedings...1896, p. 229.

¹ The Chicago Tribune, July 9, 1896. The Republican and Democratic programs are placed in juxtaposition.
2 New York Tribune, July 9, 1896.

Memoirs of Wm. Jennings Bryan, op. cit., p. 103. Bryan tells how he laid the treasured metaphors aside "for a proper occasion."

They tell us that this platform was made to catch votes. We reply to them that changing conditions make new issues; that the principles upon which rest Democracy are as everlasting as the hills; but that they must be applied to new conditions as they arise... They tell us that the income tax ought not to be brought in here; that is not a new idea. They criticise us for our criticism of the Supreme Court of the United States... If you want criticisms read the dissenting opinions of the Court. That will give you criticisms.

The tremendous demonstration of enthusiasm lasting fifteen minutes which followed the cross of gold climax brought Bryan forward as a leading opponent of Bland. The Illinois delegation, which was restless as thirty one standards joined the Nebraska delegation, was held in check by Altgeld. The first four ballots showed that Bryan was gaining at the expense of the Missourian:

t	Bryan	Bland	Boies	Pattison
1.	137	235	67	99
2.	197	281	37	100
3.	219	291	36	97
4.	276	241	35	97

At this point, Altgeld signalled for the retirement of the Illinois delegation. Bland had lost fifty votes and Bryan had gained fifty-seven. Altgeld's leadership might turn the tide. The Chicago Tribune reporter wrote:

When Illinois went out for consultation it seemed as if the whole convention knew what was

¹ The Chicago Tribune, July 10-11, 1896, Illinois State Journal, July 9-10.

² Ibid, July 11.

going on and a terrific shout went up, one that would shake the rafters of a country barn.

Altgeld, as already noted, was not predisposed in Bryan's favor. According to Darrow, he sat abstractedly during the famous speech of Bryan and remarked next day to the former. "I have been thinking over Bryan's speech. What did he say At the time of Bryan's death in 1925, a reporter for the New York Times told a story which would indicate that Altgeld had prepared the way for Bryan's nomination. Shortly before the cross of gold speech. James A. Campbell of the Philadelphia Times was taking a drink with Altgeld's "chief lieutenant" and asked for a "tip." The latter replied after some hesitation, "Keep your eye on William Jennings Bryan of Nebraska." Thinking that Bryan was to be chairman of some important committee. Campbell telegraphed his paper to get a picture of Congressman Bryan. It is possible that the position referred to was Permanent Chairman of the Convention which Bryan could have had rather than Senator White who was chosen. If Altgeld favored Bryan so early in the Convention, he was quilty of gross doubledealing with the friends of Bland and was plainly inconsistent with the attitude he had taken in his correspondence with Bryan as noted in the previous chapter. Finally, Bryan himself was unaware of any Altgeld influ-

¹

Darrow, The Story of My Life, pp. 91-92. Charles Willis Thompson, "How Bryan Picked His Issues," New York Times, August 2, 1925.

The Chicago Tribune, July 7-8-9, 1896. 3

ence in his direction. He wrote to W. R. Browne in 1922:

As you doubtless know, he (Altgeld) was opposed to my nomination, being a supporter of Mr. Bland. He was influential in holding the Illinois delegation to Mr. Bland after my convention speech but was an active supporter of my candidacy after the nomination.

Behind closed doors, the delegation deliberated in an excited atmosphere. Bland and Bryan men were active in gaining pledges for their respective candidate. An early roll-call was smothered in confusion. Finally a delegate proposed that since Governor Altgeld had more at stake than any other person in the room, he should be allowed to name the man the delegation would vote for. This offer was emphatically refused by Altgeld who stated that he would not vote but would abide by the action of the majority. Only when the roll-call was almost over and Bryan led with four votes did Altgeld cast his vote with the majority. Under the unit rule, the delegation was pledged for Bryan.

Returning to the Convention, Hinrichsen announced that Illinois' forty-eight votes were now cast for Bryan. Thereupon Ohio announced a switch from McLean to Bryan. Ex-Governor Stone of Missouri read a letter from Richard Bland in which he instructed the Convention to withdraw

¹ Letter of Wm. J. Bryan to W. R. Browne, June 9, 1922,

Browne Collection. Bryan also wrote that previous
to the Convention, he had received but one letter
from Altgeld.

² William Prentiss in <u>Prominent Democrats of Illinois</u>, 1899, p.104; a similar account in Townsend, <u>Illinois Democrats</u>, I, p.194 and The Chicago Tribune, July 11,1896.

his name whenever any other acceptable free coinage candidate had a majority. Missouri's vote then went to Bryan.

A stampede in typical Convention manner followed and the vote for Bryan was made unanimous.

Carl Snyder, writing in Leslie's Weekly, declared:

Governor Altgeld indeed comes very near to taking the President's place in the regard of the Democratic masses. From perhaps the most unpopular man in the United States, the Governor of Illinois... is now very near to the recognized master of the Democratic party.

This judgment is supported by the important position which Altgeld occupied in the Campaign. Next to Bryan himself, Altgeld attracted more national attention than any other Democrat. He was singled out as a special object for attack by such prominent men as Benjamin Harrison, Carl Schurz, Albert Beveridge, and Theodore Roosevelt and by the leading periodicals of the day. Altgeld himself stressed national issues and largely ignored the local campaign in Illinois. The Republicans recognized his ability and chose prominent speakers in many instances to counteract the influence of Altgeld's arguments. Labor, particularly trade-unionist sentiment, strongly indorsed the acts of the Governor. H. H. Kohlsaat, the new owner of the Times-Herald complained to Horace White of the New

¹ Ibid. Official Proceedings of the Democratic Convention, p. 265.

² Carl Snyder, "The New Masters of the Democratic Party,"

Leslie's Weekly, July 16, 1896. This journal like many others characterized the platform as "anarchy."

³ E.g., The Thirteenth Annual Convention of the Illinois Federation of Labor passed a resolution praising Altgeld for his attitude toward labor problems. Chicago Tribune October 12, 1895.

York Evening Post that "Altgeld is extremely strong with the labor people..." Free silver might not appeal to the wage-earner, but Altgeld's program had embraced far more than a currency idea. The Socialist-Labor party, then under the leadership of the fiery, though erudite Daniel DeLeon, refused to compromise with the free silver issue, but this attitude was restricted to the radical wing of the labor movement.

The State Populist Party met at Springfield on August 12 and endorsed the administration of Governor Altgeld. Their program consisted largely of reform in taxation, abolition of convict labor, and a system of direct legislation within the state. The national Populist leader, Marion Butler, whose organization supported Bryan, declared that the Populists had not become Democrats, but that the Democrats had become Populists. The Chicago platform of 1896 gave credence to this statement. A section of the Populists -- Middle of the Road Populists -met at Chicago to nominate a complete state ticket, except for Governor which was left blank. Henry D. Lloyd was nominated as Lieutenant-Governor.

The strategic importance of Illinois among the middlewestern states in revolt against the old political

¹ H. H. Kohlsaat, op. cit., p. 45. 2 Appleton's Annual Encyclopedia, 1896, p. 349.

³ Ibid. Chicago Daily News Almanac, 1897, pp. 249-250.

⁴ The Chicago Chronicle, October 31, 1896.

⁵ Appleton's Annual Encyclopedia, 1896, p. 350.

leadership was readily appreciated by the Republican leaders as well as by their opponents. While it might be satisfactory for a personality of McKinley's type to make front-porch campaigns realistic politicians like Marcus Alonzo Hanna recognized that the war must be carried into the enemy's country. Chicago, therefore, rather than New York City, became the center of the contest. During the campaign, over 100,000,000 political pamphlets were shipped from the Chicago office of the Republican party and only one-fifth as much issued from New York. Charles G. Dawes of Chicago took a leading role in the campaign of "education." Hanna and James J. Hill went on their famous collection tour of Wall Street and other financial centers to raise an unprecedented war chest. If the populous state of Illinois could be won, the effect upon the neighboring doubtful states would be beneficial to McKinley's cause. Francis F. Browne, who studied the campaign closely. wrote that the Republicans adopted the tactical policy of emphasizing Altgeldism by a concentrated effort and "to bear down with him the presidential candidate." There

¹ Herbert Croly, Marcus Alonzo Hanna, New York, 1912, p. 214.

² F. F. Browne, op. cit., p. 470. He remarks, "So prevalent was this antipathy that it was usually taken for granted that any respectable citizen was against him; for anyone to avow himself a friend of Mr. Altgeld in any Chicago or New York Club; for example, would have been to risk at least a very disagreeable reception."

is considerable evidence for this hypothesis, judging by the type of opponents selected to attack the Illinois governor.

While Bryan was ridiculed, Altgeld was vilified. The Cartoonist, W. A. Rogers, of Harper's Weekly, pictured Altgeld with the torch of anarchy in front of the shade of Guiteau, the assassin of Garfield and underneath was the caption. "Guiteau was a Power in Washington for one Shall Altgeld be a power there for four years?" week later the editor wrote that if elected Bryan would be as clay "under the astute control of the ambitious and unscrupulous Illinois Communist who had become the leader of all the disturbing forces in the country by reason of his defense and pardon of the Chicago Anarchists." Abbott denounced Altgeld from his pulpit as "the crowned hero and worshipped deity of the anarchists of the Northwest." Henry Cabot Lodge declared him "one who would connive at wholesale murder" and "substitute for the government of Washington and Lincoln a red welter of lawlessness and dishonesty as fantastic and vicious as the Paris The New York Daily Tribune editor thought that the deathly pallor of the Illinois governor was a lean and hungry look suggesting the conspirator of the Cassius The Reverend Cortland Myers of New York chose as type.

¹ Harper's Weekly, October 10, 1896.

² Ibid, October 17, 1896.

³ F. F. Browne, op. cit., p. 459.

⁴ New York Daily Tribune, October 18.

his text a subject relating to "Anarchy in the Chicago

Platform." He attacked the plank denouncing Federal in
terference in strikes and riots:

That platform, if it means anything means the privilege of another Altgeld to promote pillage and turbulence without any interference of a higher authority. It is the plank laid by traitorous hands.

Unfortunately for Altgeld, the Chicago Times-Herald, which in the hands of James W. Scott, had been a source of kindly encouragement amidst the wilful misrepresentations of his enemies, now passed into the hands of the Republicans. H. H. Kohlsaat, who took a leading part in the campaign against free silver, now became the proprietor of the paper. Thus the Democrats of Chicago were left without a newspaper.

Despite the failing health which marked his tenuous grasp upon life, Altgeld plunged himself into the hardest campaign of his career. His unique oratorical abilities were comparable to Bryan's in effectiveness although wholly unlike the latter in presentation and delivery. Carter Harrison describes Altgeld on the platform as "a homely, clumsy man possessed of a voice of neither strength nor beauty." Nevertheless his clear enunciation, vigorous language, and a sincerity that was convincing gave him a measure of popular appeal that totally eclipsed his more

¹ Chicago Tribune, September 28.

² C. R. Tuttle, Illinois Currency Conventions, pp. 50-51.

³ C. H. Harrison, op. cit., pp. 65-66.

polished rivals. He had the knack of identifying his cause with the deepest aspirations of the masses who were his audience. The heartfelt response which followed his speeches, described even by hostile journals, indicate how well he could capture the imagination of his listeners. More than one observer has remarked that Altgeld could embody a trite remark with a significant connotation.

On August 29, he opened his platform tour with a speech at Girard. Illinois. The issues he dealt with were almost entirely national in character -- the currency question, the tariff, and hard times. Only in his concluding statements did he briefly summarize the situation in the state. Believing firmly with most silverites that depressions such as those of 1873 and 1893 were directly produced by the demonetization of silver, he drew a dark picture of the "crime of '73" and its results. It is more than probable that his humanitarian tendencies were a conditioning factor upon his economics. The anomaly of want and natural abundance puzzled him as it did others several decades later. Hence he reasoned, "The causes of our distress are not natural but are artificial. It is governmental policy that is the mother of our sorrow." The gold standard in his eyes marked the American people as slaves of English bondholders. His speech closed with the plea:

¹ Speech at Girard, Aug. 29, 1896, Live Questions, pp.591-604
The Chicago Tribune, August 30, 1896.

...if there are Republicans here who feel that they must in part support their ticket, then I say to you with all the earnestness of my soul, go into the booth, vote for Mr. Tanner for Governor, and then think of your families; think of the future of your children... and cast a vote for Bryan and humanity.

He was cheered enthusiastically by the crowd. The appeal had not been primarily on the complex plane of economics, but a popular presentation of the antagonistic interests of a "money power" and the common men. Altgeld, like Bryan and other leaders of 1896 were fully aware of the historical significance of Jackson's war on the bank in 1832 and occasionally quoted the precedent.

Two days previously, at Carnegie Hall in New York
City, Benjamin Harrison delivered a strong attack upon
Altgeld and the Chicago platform. He declared that no
issue of the campaign was so important as that raised concerning the powers and duties of the national courts and
the Chief Executive. The atmosphere of the Chicago Convention seemed to him "surcharged with the spirit of revolution." Government by the mob was given preference
over government by the law enforced by court decrees and
by executive orders. He emphasized this note:

My friends, whenever our people elect a president who believes that he must ask of Governor Altgeld or any governor of any state, permission to enforce the laws of the United States, we have surrendered the victory the boys won in 1861.

Benjamin Harrison, <u>Views of an Ex-President</u>, Indianapolis, 1901.

More formidable than Harrison's attack upon Altgeld was the lengthy gold-speech delivered by Carl Schurz at Chicago on September 5. As a respected representative of reform and a German-American, Schurz might be expected to act as the necessary neutralizing agent for Altgeld's appeal among the latters strongest supporters. The former was far from being an admirer of McKinley but felt that Bryan's free silver ideas were much more dangerous than McKinley's protectionism ... Powell Clayton, former senator, brought Schurz to Chicago as a guest of the Honest His long speech which filled almost Money League. twelve columns of the newspaper in small print attacked all the assumptions of the free silver advocates. Bryan panacea seemed to him like "jumping out of the frying pan into the fire," although he admitted the seriousness of the depression. The fall in the price of silver, he declared, was due to overproduction not governmental intervention. The gold standard was desirable because it was relatively stable. Other arguments, frequently reiterated during the campaign, were adduced for gold. the whole, his speech was considered one of the best presentations of the gold cause.

Altgeld could not ignore such a challenge and prepared a strong refutation of Schurz's arguments. Two weeks later at the Central Music Hall, Chicago, he delivered his

¹ Claude M. Fuess, Carl Schurz, New York, 1932, pp.336-337.

² Chicago Tribune, September 6, 1896.

reply before an audience which filled the galleries to overflowing. It is unnecessary to follow the lengthy arguments that he presented. If his interminable statistics did not establish his own case, it did at least indicate that Schurz' arguments were poorly supported. In one instance, Altgeld demonstrated that Schurz had relied upon a Treasury report which had been subsequently declared wrong by the director of the mint. He attacked the cost of production theory of the other as inadequate. His concluding remarks were devoted to a refutation of Cochran, who had delivered a gold speech the week previously.

Edgar Lee Masters, who listened to Altgeld's reply to Schurz and Cochran, declared that the speech was the masterpiece of that campaign. During its delivery, a wit in the gallery interrupted to shout, "Oh, you old anarchist!" To which Altgeld retorted with a smile, "Our friend up yonder has had sixteen and one." This sally was greeted by wild applause. In late October, Schurz replied to Altgeld and, as the former's biographer, Claude Fuess, has it, "completely demolished Altgeld's sophistry." Modesty would forbid a judgment upon this point.

¹ Answer to Schurz and Cochran, September 19, 1896, Live Questions, pp. 612-647. Chicago Tribune, Sept. 20.

² Edgar Lee Masters, "John P. Altgeld," American Mercury, January, 1925, p. 170.

³ Fuess, op. cit., pp. 337-338.

To carry the fight to the East, Altgeld prepared to go to New York and present the Chicago platform apart from the currency issue. A German Democratic organization invited him to speak on October 17 at Cooper Union. Tammany Hall appeared somewhat disturbed by the invasion of the dangerous governor of Illinois. John C. Sheehan, a Tammany leader, disavowed responsibility for bringing Altgeld to New York City. The latter had "drastic, vigorous opinions" which Tammany could not indorse without antagonizing various elements. When Sheehan asked Altgeld about the Democratic possibilities of carrying Illinois, implying that the latter was reckless in coming to New York, Altgeld replied that they would not only carry Illinois but obtain a majority far exceeding the one given in Cleveland in 1892.

On the platform of Cooper Union Hall Henry George paid a high tribute to Altgeld declaring that he had come nearly halfway across the continent to hear the famous governor. Pictures of Altgeld decorated the hall and the band played, "Hail to the Chief" in his honor. William Randolph Hearst and the New York Journal gave him generous publicity and crowds of people pressed forward to catch a glimpse of the much discussed statesman of the middlewest. William Sulzer introduced Altgeld to the audience as "the most abused man in America, but armored in a righteous

¹ The Chicago Tribune, October 15, 1896.

² New York Journal, October 18.

cause he bids defiance to the hosts of error." The crowds l cheered "as if mad" as he came into view.

The Cooper Union speech was the most ambitious statement of his position so far made in the campaign. of dwelling upon the currency issue, he spent most of his time upon the question of government by injunction and federal interference. With most of his treatment of the coal and Pullman strikes we are already familiar. He cited telegrams, official reports, and other documentary proof as to his course during the labor difficulties of 1894. His review of the Supreme Court was an excellent historical presentation of the attitude of such men as Jefferson and Lincoln to some of the great controverted questions of that tribunal. He declared that the people must not surrender the right of self-government to the Supreme Court nor concede to the President the right to send Federal troops in any neighborhood at his pleasure. These Cleveland policies, he said, had been taken over by a group of men who nominated McKinley and used him as a tool. "Mr. McKinley is scarcely a factor in this campaign. Mr. Mark Hanna and the agents of syndicates and trusts constitute the power that is subverting free institutions." He concluded with an appeal for a new Declaration of Independence to free the country of de-

^{1 &}lt;u>Ibid</u>, October 19. Some of the material for the Cooper Union speech was obtained by Willis J. Abbott.

Letter of Abbott to H. D. Lloyd, October 12, 1896,

Lloyd Papers.

pendence upon other countries in currency affairs.

The eastern newspapers professed to see in this speech a manifesto of revolution. The New York Sun remarked. "Governor Altgeld ... is the real leader of the revolution and it would be foolish to underestimate the qualities which make him dangerous." The Brooklyn Eagle wrote, "He believes that there is a great social revolution in progress and that he is its leader, or at any rate, that fate has made him one of the instruments to relieve many of the ills from which his countrymen are suffering." Other papers spoke of Altgeld's venomous political methods, his "conspicuous charlatanry" and "his curious effort of rehabililating his own character." Mark Hanna was shaken from his customary complacency to complain, "Why doesn't he attack Mr. McKinley? I am not running for office." Benjamin Harrison stressed the Altgeld phase of the campaign in Indiana. He declared that Bryan was merely a puppet of the Illinois governor. Democratic silverite papers expressed satisfaction. Henry George praised Altgeld highly in the New York Journal "for the speech in which he set forth ... the most important of the issues of the campaign."

¹ Speech at Cooper Union, Oct. 17, 1896, Live Questions, pp. 647-690. New York Journal, Oct. 18.

² New York Sun, Oct. 19.

Brooklyn Eagle, Oct. 19.

⁴ New York Press, New York Advertiser, Chicago Chronicle, Oct. 19, 1896.

⁵ The Chicago Tribune, Nov. 1.

⁶ Ibid. Speech at Ligonier, Ind., Oct. 31.

The New York Journal, Oct. 19.

The Republican managers evidently were alarmed by the deep impression Altgeld had made. Theodore Roosevelt. who was originally scheduled to cover the West Virginia and Maryland territory, was shifted to Chicago and other middlewestern points. In a letter to Henry Cabot Lodge, Roosevelt reported his Chicago experiences. "I never addressed a more enthusiastic crowd; and I let myself go and hit at Tillman and Altgeld just as hard as I knew To Albert Beveridge was entrusted the chief task of replying to Altgeld's Cooper Union Speech. The thirty-four year old orator, whose star was definitely on the ascendant, championed the doctrine of Hamiltonian centralism as firmly as Altgeld accepted Jeffersonian democracy. On October 29 at Chicago, Beveridge delivered a powerful attack on the principles of the Cooper Union speech.

Were the American people, Beveridge asked, a nation or an aggregation of localities? Was it necessary for the national government in enforcing its laws, first to get the permission "of local satraps called governors"? "...

The destiny determining issue (is) whether American institutions as Hamilton destined them, as Marshall defined

¹ Letter of Theodore Roosevelt to H. C. Lodge, Oct. 21, 1896, Selections from the correspondence of Theodore Roose-velt and H. C. Lodge, 1884-1918, Vol. I, p. 238.

² Claude G. Bowers, Beveridge and the Progressive Era, p. 60.

³ Speech in the Chicago Chronicle, Oct. 30, 1896.

them, as Lincoln consecrated them, shall continue in their clear and single course or whether they shall be changed, corrupted and dissipated into the channels that John C. Calhoun marked out and John P. Altgeld has resurveyed."

He compared Altgeld with Jefferson Davis and demanded.

What excuse have you Governor Altgeld, for calling from Appomatox this ghost of treason? Do you answer as you did in New York that the workingmen, the masses who toil demand it? I deny it. It was the producing millions who made us a nation... Law is labor's only friend and when law is dead, labor becomes slavery.

He accused Altgeld of desiring to defile the Supreme Court by choosing judges not on a consideration of learning and impartiality but for definite promises before appointment to decide cases in a pre-arranged manner. His speech reverberated with the concepts of Hamilton:

We want government strong enough to obey its own Constitution, strong enough to execute its own laws, strong enough to be supreme within its own dominions. We want a government so strong that it does not have to await the command of some cowardly, or treasonable, or mistaken governor to act.

The speech fired the imagination of his audience. Much of Beveridge's appeal was due to his identification of himself with the new rising trend. A friend congratulated him, "You have made a fine impression upon Senator Quay and other men of power in the eastern part of the country." Beveridge attributed his entrance to the Senate two years later to the

¹ Bowers, op. cit., p. 61.

effectiveness of his reply to Altgeld. For the Illinois governor there was no such recognition by the "men of power." His path to the Senate was easily blocked by a time-serving politician of Illinois who had not attempted to articulate the unexpressed desires of the masses. The secret of political success Altgeld found, lay in reducing oneself to an intellectual and moral zero and thus increasing one's "availability" to those who held the reins of power. This theme is frequently reiterated in his speeches and writings.

Meanwhile Altgeld was not giving adequate attention to his enemies in Illinois. Occasionally he attacked Tanner, the Republican candidate for governor, as being responsible for the premature adjournment of the last legislative session in time to prevent much-needed tax reform. Tanner did this, he claimed, in behalf of those who were depriving the state of millions in taxation.

Kohlsaat, although a Republican himself, wrote to a friend that "Tanner... is so thoroughly unfit for the position that decent God-fearing people are almost in open revolt against him." Some of Tanner's enemies circulated posters portraying him as a murderer with a noose about his neck. This had reference to a sensational

l Ibid. The biographer remarks, "It stamped him as a militant champion of centralization -- as a Hamiltonian without compromise -- as a protector of property rights against the mob." p. 62.

² The Chicago Tribune, Oct. 2, 1896.

³ H. H. Kohlsaat, op. cit., p. 46.

murder with which he was popularly connected. This attack was attributed by the Republican papers to Altgeld although the latter firmly denied responsibility.

Strongly undermining the governor's position, the gold Democrats persisted in "revelations" concerning Altgeld's dishonesty. The National Gold Democrats had met at Indianapolis and nominated John Palmer of Illinois as President. Many of the gold leaders were Illinoisans whose attacks were primarily directed at the governor for his "apostasy" in delivering the Democratic party into the ranks of the Populists and Silverites. The Indianapolis platform denounced Altgeld's protest against Cleveland's use of troops in Chicago. Senator Vilas, gold leader in Wisconsin, investigated gold sentiment throughout the country and found that many opposed the Chicago platform not so much because of the silver plank as on account of the "Altgeld planks." The idea of reforming the Supreme Court was considered revolutionary and the product of cranks. One gold man wrote to Vilas, "I most respectfully decline to act with a lot of anarchists who have usurped the name of democrat." The Chicago resolution concerning Federal intervention seemed a "defiance of law and endangering of human lives, just because the Governor of a state happens to be in sympathy with (the rioters)."

The Chicago Chronicle, Oct. 30.

Campaign Textbook of the National Democratic Party,

1896, (Indianapolis).

Letter of G. Stevens to Vilas, Aug. 17, 1896, Vilas Papers. Various letters in Vilas Papers, July-Aug., 1896.

Towards the end of August, William S. Forman, the gold nominee for governor, released a sensational interview to the newspapers in which he charged that Altgeld had borrowed state funds to pay his personal bills and removed the treasurers of several institutions who had refused to let him have the money. Besides, he said, Altgeld deposited state funds in pet banks. charges were vehemently denied by the governor as malicious lies deliberately brought up at the time to affect the election. In an open letter to Forman. Altgeld exposed the motives of the other as emanating from the fact that Forman had recently been discredited by the party and refused an interview by the governor concerning an appointment. He accused Forman of being in a compact with Tanner to elect the latter governor.

Altgeld's policy of removing the custodians of state funds who refused to account for the interest now demanded by law made him particularly susceptible to such charges. The Forman accusations were now taken up by William R. Morrison of Waterloo, Illinois whose presidential aspirations had been seriously damaged through the governor's influence. During the latter part of September, his friend, George R. Wendling, wrote to Morrison:

¹ The Chicago Tribune, Aug. 25, 1896. Repeated in New York Daily Tribune, Oct. 17.

² Letter of Altgeld to Forman, Aug. 27, Live Questions, pp. 604-608.

³ Letter of Wendling to Morrison, Sept. 19, 1896. Notes of Prof. F. D. Scott. Also in Barnes, op. cit., p. 53.

I want to see Illinois defeat Altgeld. I like Bryan, ... but being honest, he will pay his debts to Altgeld, Tillman, Stone, Peffer, Cyclone Davis, and that crowd, and that will bankrupt him and the country; therefore I shall not vote for him.

He suggested that a ringing denunciation of Bryan and Altgeld some time in October would be "a glorious thing for Morrison." This idea with the exception of that concerning Bryan whom he favored was in accord with the latter's hope of making a "literary contribution to the cam-On October 19, he wrote a letter to Judge B. R. Burroughs of Edwardsville which was given to the press. He attempted to substantiate Forman's charges that Altgeld "sanctioned approved; and encouraged the use of the money in the hands of the state treasurer and other officers for safekeeping by way of loans and deposits at interest for their own use." This, he claimed, was an "open secret." Altgeld had unlawfully opened the safe of the state treasurer to remove the funds and had discharged two state officers who had refused to permit the governor to withdraw such money. Morrison declared that Altgeld's record as a reformer was hypocritical and that the state was under Such attacks were eagerly taken up by the his domination. Forman sent a letter expressing his by the partisan press. gratitude to the "idol of Egypt." Ben R. Cable, another

letter of Morrison to Wendling, Oct. 28, 1896, Notes of Prof. F. D. Scott.

² Letter of Morrison to Burroughs, Oct. 19, 1896, Chicago Chronicle, Oct. 22.

³ Letter of Forman to Morrison, Oct. 23, Notes.

gold leader remarked that the Morrison letter was worth about 20,000 votes and that "The Governor's goose is cooked." The Jacksonville Journal wrote:

> The 'Idol of Egypt' whose word is regarded by many around here as the law of the Medes and Persians makes his letter a knockout for Altgeld in this part of the state where Altgeld thought himself strong.

The local Republicans in the southern part of the state took advantage of this opportunity by circulating copies of the Morrison letter.

Altgeld replied with a stinging interview rebuking Morrison's motives:

> The fact is he wanted me to swing the Illinois delegation for him in the Chicago Convention and thought I ought to secure his nomination at the head of the ticket. But the people of this state would not have it and he had no chance whatever.

Morrison's charges did not include a statement of his sources of information. At all times, as already noted in his correspondence with Judge Wall, he was ready to malign Altgeld's intentions and knew that his prestige, rather than additional facts, would tell against the governor. An analysis of the election returns reveals the fact that the Morrison letter did no more than lose a handful of votes for Altgeld. Nevertheless, the gold orators accepted the

The New York Tribune, Oct. 23.

The Jacksonville Journal, Oct. 24. Letter of George Leverett of Edwardsville to Morrison,

Oct. 30, Scott Notes.

The New York Daily Tribune, Oct. 23.

See Chapter II. 4

Altgeld and Bryan both carried Morrison's county, Monroe, despite the attempt to "knife" the ticket.

"revelations" upon faith and attempted to weaken the hold of the governor upon the workman. James Eckels, particularly, led in the abuse:

This great man, this immaculate Governor ... stripped of the robes of his hypocrisy ... is not a village Hampden ... but instead is a lawless, reckless, swashbuckling Cain, marching at the head of a motley marauding band upon a capital city for purposes of plunder and private gain.

A similar attack was made by Senator Palmer who accused Altgeld of organizing all the lawless elements of the community into a party to advance his own political interests.

"Altgeldism" was the central issue among the "gold bugs."

The defection of Henry Lloyd from the Altgeld supporters was a serious one since he carried many with him. Lloyd, while not opposing the Governor directly, was lukewarm in his support due to the insertion of the silver issue. In thought, he was sympathetic to the Fabian socialism then enjoying a strong growth in England, but was antagonised by the German Socialists who laid emphasis upon the doctrine of the class struggle. He therefore joined the Populist Party. Soon he became the nominee of the Middle-of-the Road element for Lieutenant-Governor. His attitude can be seen in the following letter to A. B. Adair:

vantages of 33 and 63 votes respectively ahead of Altgeld. Madison County was lost to both. Scott county, containing Jacksonville went to both equally. Official Vote of the State of Illinois, Nov.3, 1896.

¹ The Chicago Chronicle, Oct. 31, 1896.

² Ibid, Oct. 29.
3 Letter of Lloyd to Pres. George A. Gates, May 23, 1895,
Lloyd Papers.

⁴ Letter of Lloyd to A. B. Adair, Oct. 10, 1896, Ibid.

The Free Silver movement is a fake. Free Silver is the cow-bird of the Reform movement... I for one decline to sit on the nest to help any such game... I may vote for Bryan as the knight of the Disinherited like Ivanhoe, but he will not be the next President, and I am content. But Altgeld's defeat I should regard as a great misfortune.

Lloyd eventually voted for the Socialist candidate for President. His action reveals the success of some of the radical organizations in convincing many of the futility of free silver as a panacea for the prevailing ills. Florence Kelley, who was closely attached to the Altgeld cause during the campaign, wrote to Lloyd:

We miss you very much in the campaign. Things are badly muddled and Governor Altgeld's friends seem few indeed in this time of need. The Socialists and the labor skates are knifing him alike. The Silver populists and the straight trades-union vote seem to be his main hope besides the farmers. And if the working people allow him to be defeated now, in the face of his record, surely they deserve to have no other friend... So long as you do not come out for Governor Altgeld or do not at least formally declare yourself out of the race, your name will continue to be used to fool workingmen...

This appeal was effective. Lloyd withdrew his name from the Middle of the Road Populist ticket. Other factors, however, were more seriously against the election of Altgeld.

Mrs. Kelley wrote to Lloyd several weeks before election 2 day:

The coercion is so wholesale and the Forman charges so damaging, that I think the State is lost. Hence my conviction is strong that Tanner's election means the turning back of the labor movement in Illinois even more than the bomb did.

¹ Letter of Florence Kelley to Lloyd, Oct. 1, Ibid. 2 Ibid. Oct. 15, 1896.

Altgeld later declared that there were arrayed against the people all of the financial interests, most of the great papers and every influence that money could buy.

Laborers were coerced by employers to vote for McKinley and Tanner in Illinois and similar scenes took place else—
where. During the weeks preceding election, leading business men marched in gold standard processions followed by their employees. Banks declined to make loans as a new business paralysis developed. Fear took possession of the community. Hanna's war chest, representing the greatest campaign fund accumulation in the history of the United States up to that time, told heavily in favor of McKinley.

The election returns gave the Republicans the victory, although the margin was not great. McKinley obtained 271 electoral votes to Bryan's 176 votes, but the popular vote gave the former 7,035,638 and the other 6,467,946, or respective percentages of 50.88 and 46.77. In Illinois Bryan polled 464,523 votes and McKinley 607,130. Altgeld exceeded Bryan's state total by obtaining 474,256 votes, but his opponent, Tanner received 587,637. The other tickets were relatively insignificant.

In Chicago, the news of McKinley's victory gave cause for excited hilarity among the great merchants. Kohlsaat noticed that "one of the world's greatest merchants" started

¹ Speech of July 5, 1898 in Kings County, New York, Athena Debate, July 6, 1898.

² Kohlsaat, op. cit., p. 53.

³ Official Vote of the State of Illinois, Nov. 3, 1896.

the game of "Follow the Leader" in a fashionable Chicago Club crawling over sofas, chairs, tables, and finally dancing in each other's arms. Willis J. Abbot, an Altgeld man, reported that the far western silver leaders were blaming the "injection of Altgeldism" into the platform for the defeat of Bryan. Altgeld expressed continued optimism and wrote to Bryan:

You have done a work for humanity which time will not efface and while we were not able to batter down all the fortified strongholds of plutocracy and corruption in our land, I am convinced that another assault will drive them from the land.

Several eastern newspapers were particularly jubilant over the defeat of Altgeld. The New York Tribune editor-4 ialized:

... the overthrow of Altgeld the Anarchist is cause for National rejoicing ... It is a sorry day for burglars and bomb-throwers and mail robbers--and all criminals in general, in Illinois and elsewhere.

One of the newspaper's contributors thought that the 5 sentiment required rhyme:

Altgeld to Debs:

Eugene V. Debs, my jo, 'Gene, When we were first acquent You ran the Railway Union strike And dared the Government, While I released the Amerchists And freely bade them go,

¹ Kohlsaat, op. cit., p. 53. 2 Letter of Abbot to Lloyd, Nov. 10, 1896, Lloyd Papers.

³ Letter of Altgeld to Bryan, Nov. 9, 1896, reprinted in Barnes. op. cit., p. 488.

⁴ New York Daily Tribune, Nov. 5, 1896.

⁵ This improvement upon Burns' poem appears in The New York Daily Tribune, Nov. 12, 1896.

Ah! What a high old time we had. Eugene V. Debs, my jo!

Accusations of wholesale fraud in the election of 1896 were frequently made by the Democrats. Carter H. Harrison later wrote that in the spring of 1897, in Chicago, over 60,000 names of phantom citizens were found on the election registry and used to deliver the huge Illinois majority to McKinley and Tanner. Altgeld estimated 100,000 fraudulent votes had been counted in Illinois alone and that fraud had been so great in other states that Bryan was actually the winner.

Altgeld was glad to retire as far as he was personally concerned. His health had long before demanded it. He now prepared to leave the Governor's Mansion with a gracious farewell speech to his successor and sent a letter to the new governor offering the escort to the inauguration ceremonies of himself and Mrs. Altgeld. This courtesy was rudely ignored. Tanner instructed the House managers to refuse Altgeld permission to speak at the ceremonies, although a senator had proposed that the customary privilege The new governor proceeded to remove the be granted. taint of reform from his administration. Yerkes was given the desired bills, the factory owners were extended free-

Harrison, op. cit., p. 73. Address at Tremont House, Jan. 8, 1897, Live Questions, pp. 693-697. For the other statements on this subject see "Election Frauds of 1896," Ibid, pp. 706-722.
Letter of Altgeld to Tanner, Jan. 10, 1897, Files of the

Illinois State Historical Library.

For the retiring speech of Jan. 11, 1897, never delivered but given to the press, see Live Questions, pp.697-700.

dom from the demands of the zealous Mrs. Kelley, and the old political machine was returned to its former supremacy.

Louis F. Post has left a suggestive conclusion to 1
Altgeld's career:

While he lived it was necessary to discredit him in order to keep open the channels for respectable and legal plunder; and a hint was taken from the method of housebreakers who poison the watch dog in the yard before venturing to climb into the dwelling at the window.

louis F. Post, "John P. Altgeld," The Public, March 22, 1902.

CONCLUSIONS

In an era of mediocre statesmen who were content to explain the challenging social and economic problems of the day in terms of the perennial tariff issue, the decisive acts of Altgeld of Illinois appeared in startling relief against a background of meaningless partisan oratory. Few men of either conservative or radical tendencies displayed his keen awareness of the social revolution wrought by technological advances and industrial concentration. An increasingly integrated society, in which contralization of control was a paramount feature, continued to think in agrarian terms belonging to an earlier era. The failure of the antimonopolists to break down industrial combinations was not accepted as an undeniable fact. Even with the later campaign of the muckrakers, the legislative results were pitifully short of realities.

As already indicated throughout this thesis, Altgeld was not a champion of the independent producer as such. That wing of the anti-monopolists which sought to legislate the combination trend out of existence found scant sympathy from him.

On the other hand, he was not too credulous of those who argued that there was an <u>inevitable</u> correlation between monopoly and consumers! economies. Against the latter viewpoint, he could cite the instances to the contrary offered by the Chicago Gas ring, the Yerkes traction interests, the Pullman Company, and

similar enterprises throughout the union. Only intelligent legislation, backed by an alert public opinion, and aiming at a thorough supervision and regulation of monopolistic industries in the public interest could cope with the new conditions. To achieve this goal, Altgeld undoubtedly desired to extend the regulatory functions of the state beyond the point commonly accepted in his day. As the failure of regulation became evident to him, he embraced municipal ownership as a step forward to the adequate control of the forces of concentration. He was hospitable to Henry George's arguments for the Single Tax and to the advocates of socialism but believed that these radical changes did not pertain to his generation.

Labor phenomena like the huge strikes of 1885-6, 1893-4, and great militant organizations like the American Railway
Union appeared to many of the laissez-faire school as a threat to individual liberties despite the parallel combination movement in industrial control. It seems fairly clear that men like Cleveland, Olney, Palmer, and Depew treated the problems of labor in the medieval spirit of charitable concession—something to be withheld at the will of the granter—rather than a realistic recognition of the social contribution of the workman's toil. Altgeld's insistence upon the rights of labor to organize and to a fair wage, his advocacy of effective state intervention in bwhalf of the exploited workers in industry, and his

policy of pillorying the anti-social elements of the day ran against the grain of the dominant economic pattern of contemporary society. The famous anarchist pardon message is a powerful example of Altgeld the propagandist who used the press as a pulpit to arraign those responsible for acts hostile to labor and for judicial murder. Jane Addams and others who deprecated the attack upon Judge Gary failed to appreciate the proselytizing motives of Altgeld which made the biased judge a symbol of injustice. His letters of protest against Cleveland's use of the military in the Pullman strike, although moderately phrased, form a severe condemnation of the enemies of labor.

No other individual in American History has battled so valiantly against the evils of the labor injunction. It was Altgeld who brought the issue of government by injunction into the national forum by injecting it into the Chicago platform in 1896. Whatever liberalizing influence shown by the Democrats in 1896 and afterwards may be attributed in larger measure to Altgeld tather than to Bryan. The fact of the former's leadership of the national party in that year is recognized by contemporary opinion and evident from his role in the Convention and subsequent campaign. His pre-convention strategy did more to determine the character of the ensuing struggle than any other independent factor. The populistic trend of the times, resting upon the support of the discontented

West, received effective expression as a result of the initiative of Altgeld in bringing about the reorganization of his party. Even outstanding silverites like Governor Stone of Missouri were not prepared in 1895 for the drastic action urged by the Illinoisan. Altgeld stood for no-compromise on the populistic issues of the day and his task was not an easy one. The conservative gold forces had the advantage of patronage and other support from the Cleveland administration. Many of the gold men would have supported Bryan, as is evident from Senator Vilas' correspondence, if it were not for Altgeld's influence in writing a platform that challenged the fundamentals of conservative Democratic thinking. The silver issue was far from being the only one in the campaign. To many the presidential candidate of the Democrats was a symbol of the disinherited rather than of a currency reformer.

Altgeld's unusual record as a social reformer reveals the unique quality of a special factor in history—humanitarianism.

Any attempt to explain his motives in purely economic terms would fall far short of the most fundamental drives of his existence. Like Zoroaster of old, he saw life as a battlefield between the eternal principles of good and evil. All of the emotion of his peculiar temperament, aggravated by the sufferings of an incurable ailment, found expression in his perennial struggle against injustice. It is perhaps not wholly an accident that his last pleas were in defense of a labor union against an injunction and for the cause of the Boers against British

imperialism.

Clarence Darrow, speaking from a full heart at Altgeld's 1 funeral in 1902, drew this touching picture of the inner man:

John P. Altgeld, like many of the earth's great souls, was a solitary man. Life to him was serious and earnest—an endless tragedy. The earth was a great hospital of sick, wounded, and suffering, and he a devoted surgeon, who had no right to waste one moment's time and whose duty was to cure them all. While he loved his friends, he could live without them, he could bid them one by one good—bye, when their courage failed to follow where he led; and he could go alone, out into the silent night, and, looking upward at the changeless stars, could find communion there.

Remarks of Clarence Darrow at the Funeral of John P. Altgeld, Friday, March 14, 1902.

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