

## THE POLITICIAN

Al Smith was fundamentally a politician; subordinate only to his faith and family, politics dominated his life.<sup>1</sup> Smith was, furthermore, a talented and shrewd politician, possessing a combination of natural gifts and acquired skills that made him a master at his trade. His experience in New York politics constituted an education that actuated his behavior in national politics, and his achievements testified to his political proficiency.

Smith possessed qualities common among successful politicians. He had a superb memory for faces and facts, an engaging manner, and a public personality that was widely recognized as a valuable asset. "If everyone in New York State had a personal acquaintance with Al Smith," one Republican said, "there would be no votes on the other side." Will Rogers underscored this point when he asserted that Smith could enter the strongest Klan town in the country, meet with the Klansmen there, and by the end of the week be elected "Honorary Grand Kleagle Dragon." Smith, moreover, recognized the need to keep political fences mended. He became aware early in his Assembly career how he was expected to serve his constituents: a favor, a private bill, or a discreet intercession for someone in difficulty. Realizing that the machine legislator was really but an assistant to his district leader and that the organization was his device for contact with his constituents, Smith appeared with his leader at the Hall every weekend to be available to the district's people. He made sure also that they could always reach him in times of immediate need.<sup>2</sup>

Although Smith exhibited many of the qualities found in the ordinary politician, he was in fact an uncommonly skillful campaigner and strategist. Yearly races for the Assembly, although victory was assured in his safe district, gave Smith the opportunity to perfect his campaign arts. Also, as Smith himself believed, his experience as an amateur actor helped in political campaigning, giving him unusual poise, presence of mind, ability to pause for effect, and rapport with his audience. Smith estimated that he had given about ten thousand speeches by 1928, and this experience, too, made him a formidable opponent.<sup>3</sup>

Smith was aware not only of the importance of the spoken word but also of his own forensic abilities. He had such a fine talent for translating complex and esoteric subjects, like state finances, into language that the typical citizen could comprehend that he acquired a reputation as an excellent popularizer. Smith had directness, the ring of sincerity, and earnestness, and his candor and ability to persuade were widely respected. He was exciting to watch as he gestured and moved around the platform, and he could arouse even so staid a group as the Bar Association of the City of New

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<sup>1</sup> See Norman E. Mack to Edward F. Goltra, October 5, 1925, Edward F. Goltra Papers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, Missouri (hereafter MoHS).

<sup>2</sup> Beverley Robinson Memoir, CUOHC, pp. 42-43; Bertram D. Cruger Memoir, CUOHC, pp. 28-29; NYT, July 28, 1928, August 22, 1928, November 2, 1928, January 2, 1955; "The Election," Outlook, CXXXII (November 15, 1922), 463; Editorial, Nation, CXV (November 15, 1922), 511; Will Rogers, "Duck Al! Here's Another Open Letter," Saturday Evening Post, CC (October 29, 1927), 133; Smith, Up to Now, p. 103; Hapgood and Moskowitz, Up from the City Streets, p. 75; Warner, The Happy Warrior, p. 61; Handlin, Smith, p. 33; Allan Nevins, Herbert H. Lehman and His Era (New York, 1963), p. 46.

<sup>3</sup> Moskowitz (ed.), Progressive Democracy, p. 52; NYT, July 1, 1928; Smith, Up to Now, pp. 43, 392; Josephson and Josephson, Smith, p. 50; Becker, "Smith," pp. 75-85.

York. Occasionally, the actor in Smith resurfaced for a time and he would perform a short monodrama for his audience.<sup>4</sup>

On the stump Smith was aggressive and hard-hitting; his tone was confident, and his words were often laced with sarcasm. Shirking no adversary, from William Randolph Hearst to Charles Evans Hughes, he always strove to draw his opponent into a direct or an indirect debate on the issues. Although relentless, he was usually scrupulously fair to an opponent.<sup>5</sup>

Smith, who almost never employed a “ghost,” prepared his addresses carefully, using materials (chiefly clippings) that he had accumulated as well as contributions from advisers and selected outsiders. For hours, Smith studied intently the information that he wanted to impart to his listeners and mastered it so well that he could speak with the aid of only a few jottings on the backs of envelopes. Sometimes he would recite almost verbatim whole paragraphs of the formal advance text that he had dictated for the press, although his use of a more colloquial vocabulary was more likely. Smith’s need for careful preparation was one reason why he normally scheduled only a single, major address per day. Smith rarely gave “rear-platform” speeches since he thought that they had little effect on his listeners and that he needed an hour to develop his subject adequately.<sup>6</sup>

Smith’s speeches were carefully organized around a theme, most frequently a contrast between the Republican and Democratic records as Smith saw them. To enhance audience comprehension and interest, he used short, direct sentences and simple, often pungent words. He employed many metaphors but few allusions, and those few were to the Bible or to American history.<sup>7</sup>

On the platform Smith could be completely serious and dignified and use faultless diction, or he could behave quite informally. Depending on his audience, Smith could speak like a “lecturer” or like a “perspiring evangelist,” as Henry Moskowitz put it. Off the platform, too, Smith could be every bit the proper and responsible governor, or he could behave like a prankish, uninhibited extrovert. This dichotomous public behavior

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<sup>4</sup> Claude Bowers Memoir, CUOHC, pp. 75-78; NYT, February 8, 1925, October 31, 1926, November 10, 1927; “Governor Smith and the Vote in New York, Outlook, CXLVII (November 23, 1927), 360; Croly, “Smith of New York,” New Republic, LIV (February 22, 1928, 11; Vincent Sheean, “Alfred Emmanuel Smith,” Nation and Athenaeum (London), XLIII (June 9, 1928), 321-322; Alfred E. Smith, “Spellbinding,” Saturday Evening Post, CCII (May 24, 1930), 3-5, 141, 144; Alfred E. Smith, “Electioneering, Old and New,” Saturday Evening Post, CCIII (August 30, 1930), 10-11, 65-66; Smith, Up to Now, p. 392; Moskowitz, Smith, p. 109; Handlin, Smith, pp. 84-85; Maxwell, “The Progressive Bridge,” Indiana Magazine of History, LXIII (June, 1967), 94-95; Eldot, “Smith,” chapter 9 passim. For good accounts of Smith’s speaking style, see NYT, October 14, 1928; and James Lyle Jones, “An Analysis of Alfred E. Smith’s Speaking Using Aristotle’s and Toulmin’s Systems of Argument” (M.A. thesis, Cornell University, 1965), passim.

<sup>5</sup> Smith, Up to Now, p. 236; Smith, The Citizen and His Government, p. 140. Rarely did Smith strike an opponent below the belt, as he did Ogden L. Mills in 1926. See NYT, October 28, 1926.

<sup>6</sup> NYT, October 16, 1924, July 1, 1928; Smith, Up to Now, pp. 386-389; Moskowitz, Smith, pp. 108-109; Moses, A Tribute to Governor Smith, pp. 20-21; Handlin, Smith, pp. 84-85; Jones, “An Analysis of Alfred E. Smith’s Speaking,” p. 26. Smith sometimes published periodical articles that had been written for him. See NYT, May 17, 1928; and Pringle, Smith, p. 70.

<sup>7</sup> NYT, July 1, 1928; Handlin, Smith, pp. 84-85; James Lyle Jones, “Alfred E. Smith, Political Debater,” Quarterly Journal of Speech, LIV (December, 1968), 363-372; Jones, “An Analysis of Alfred E. Smith’s Speaking,” pp. 32-35, 48-53; Becker, “Smith,” pp. 75-85. Although on one occasion Smith ventured a quotation from Carlyle, one from Lincoln was more characteristic. NYT, November 3, 1922, November 2, 1924.

was more than a political technique, for descriptions of Smith in private also reveal a duality in his language and demeanor. It would appear, as Vincent Sheean noted in 1928, that Al Smith had two sides to his nature, “one . . . a raffish gamin, the slangy, light-hearted and irreverent apotheosis of a Bowery newsboy, . . . the other . . . the possessor of a political and administrative intelligence of the highest order.” Smith’s ability to sense and reflect the expectations of different segments of his constituency and to make effective use of both sides of his nature was one secret of his political success.<sup>8</sup>

Smith’s street-urchin characteristics appealed to many of his New York constituents, first in the city and later in the state. Supplementing this image was Smith’s commonness. There was little extraordinary about Al Smith, in his origins, his appearance, or his manner, and so many New Yorkers, particularly the foreign-stock working population of New York City, easily identified with him. Smith’s wife Catherine, although coming from a somewhat higher social stratum than her husband did, probably complemented his appeal with her homey, motherly nature. Both Smiths had what the New York Times termed the “common touch.” They were essentially unexceptional, and this had great political value in the state.<sup>9</sup>

More than Smith’s roguish personality was responsible for his success, however. Smith recognized that to attract a broad range of independent and issue-oriented people he had to demonstrate his earnestness and his expertise as an administrator. He consequently tried to convince these people that he was familiar with New York, its government, and its problems, that he would talk straight and on a high level, and that, above all, he knew and worked hard at his job. Smith did, in fact, win support on this basis, and the two – personality and competency – were an effective political combination.<sup>10</sup>

In 1918, when Smith first sought to attract independents statewide, he adopted a significant strategic technique: he assured voters that he was more than a Tammany man. A test of the consequences of his machine identification was unavoidable once Smith was nominated for a statewide office, and the Tammany issue quickly became the keystone of the Republican campaign against him. Although Smith certainly had his machine’s support and probably conferred regularly with its leaders, the Smith campaign attempted to de-emphasize Tammany and Smith’s connections with it. Not only did Smith maintain that he would not be the Hall’s servant if elected, but also the organization’s leaders absented themselves from his acceptance ceremony, the campaign was run largely by upstaters, and headquarters were removed to Syracuse.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> NYT, July 1, 1928; Frank R. Kent, “A Good Look at Al Smith,” Colliers, LXXXI (March 3, 1928), 8-9, 51-53; Sheean, “Smith,” Nation and Athenaeum, XLIII (June 9, 1928), 321-322; Moskowitz, Smith, p. 109; Josephson and Josephson, Smith, pp. 27-28; Moses, A Tribute to Governor Smith, pp. 34, 50-51; Proskauer, A Segment of My Times, pp. 48-49; Villard, Prophets True and False, pp. 5-6. Not many governors would welcome President Calvin Coolidge to their states with the public admonition that he could “do anything he liked provided he didn’t get caught.” NYT, April 26, 1927.

<sup>9</sup> Editorial, NYT, November 11, 1926; Frederick L. Collins, “Mrs. Al Smith in the White House,” Woman’s Home Companion, LV (April, 1928), 10, 63; O’Connor, The First Hurrah, p. 32; Huthmacher, Massachusetts People and Politics, p. 169.

<sup>10</sup> Kerney, “A Personal Portrait of Governor Al Smith,” Scribner’s Magazine, LXXX (September, 1926), 249-250; Kent, “A Good Look at Al Smith,” Colliers, LXXXI (March 3, 1928), 8-9, 51-53.

<sup>11</sup> NYT, May 12, 1918, September 18, 1918, September 19, 1918, September 27, 1918, October 22, 1918, October 23, 1918, October 30, 1918; “Issues in the Coming Election,” Outlook, CXIX (July 31, 1918), 508; Eldot, “Smith,”

The most effective device Smith employed to minimize his Tammany connection and to show his broad appeal was the Independent Citizens' Committee. The Committee was apparently Smith's own idea; he knew the virtue of praise and support from reformers and citizens' organizations for he had profited from this sort of backing in 1915. The Committee included former Bull Moosers, supporters of the late reform-coalition mayor, John P. Mitchel, and other progressives, independents, and Republicans. Headed by Abram I. Elkus, it conducted a vigorous campaign to attract to Smith all those who might have balked at too close a relationship with Tammany or the Democrats. Smith also received the endorsements of a large number of other prominent reformers and nonpartisans, many of whom had a long-standing antipathy for Tammany.<sup>12</sup>

The Independent Citizen's Committee operated in a rather uneasy alliance with the regular Democratic organization, which was engaged in the dreary work of canvassing party voters. Smith wisely designated two old friends, John F. Gilchrist and George R. Van Namee, as liaisons to facilitate cooperation between the professionals and the amateurs. Smith's conception of the nature of the alliance between the two groups is revealed in his charge to the chairman of the 1920 Committee: "Leave the organization to me. You just get the independents." Both the Democratic regulars and the independents were included on Smith's "War Board" of strategy.<sup>13</sup>

The 1918 election set the pattern for both the strategy and the organization of Smith's subsequent state campaigns, as he continued to employ the technique of the Independent Citizens' Committee to underline his independence. Committee chairmen, in addition to Elkus, were Joseph M. Proskauer in 1920 and 1922, Raymond V. Ingersoll in 1924, and Herbert H. Lehman in 1926. Gilchrist remained the Committee's principal contact with the city organization, and Van Namee and James A. Parsons linked the Committees to the outstate party. The unofficial War Board also continued to function, and in every re-election campaign Smith maintained a personal headquarters separate from that of the Democratic Party.<sup>14</sup>

Smith's independent endorsers in 1918 had faith that in office he would be free from Tammany's domination, although some of them did worry about his possible backsliding under the machine's pressure. Once he became governor, Smith, however, continued to demonstrate that he was more than a Tammany man; and, although Republicans

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pp. 12-16. There were rumors in 1918 that Tammany was unenthusiastic in its support of Smith. See George Foster Peabody to E.J. West, September 30, 1918, George Foster Peabody Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (hereafter LC). In 1922, as in 1918, Murphy did not appear at Smith's acceptance ceremony. NYT, October 6, 1922. Undoubtedly, Smith's urban-New York City-immigrant-Catholic disadvantages were partially subsumed in the "Tammany" issue in 1918, and these disadvantages were reduced to the degree that that issue was.

<sup>12</sup> Peabody to J.A. Kellogg, September 20, 1918, Peabody to E.H. Tichenor, September 21, 1918, Peabody Papers, LC; Thomas Mott Osborne to George W. Kirchwey, September 23, 1918, Osborne Family Papers, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York (hereafter SyrU); NYT, September 12, 1918, October 17, 1918, Editorial, October 18, 1918, October 23, 1918; Hapgood and Moskowitz, Up from the City Streets, pp. 133-137; Josephson and Josephson, Smith, pp. 190-192, 197. Many prominent members of the Wilson Administration endorsed Smith in 1918. This aspect of the campaign will be considered in Chapter Three. William F. McCombs, Wilson's 1912 manager, handled the finances of the 1918 Independent Citizens' Committee. Smith, Up to Now, p. 163.

<sup>13</sup> NYT, October 26, 1967; Ernest K. Lindley, "Captains Courageous," Newsweek, XXIV (October 16, 1944), 40; Smith, Up to Now, p. 163; Warner, The Happy Warrior, p. 153; Proskauer, A Segment of My Times, pp. 40-42; Josephson and Josephson, Smith, p. 198. Smith's relationship with the War Board is unclear, but, since he was known to be his own strategist, he probably dominated it. See NYT, May 6, 1928, and July 1, 1928.

<sup>14</sup> NYT, September 20, 1918, October 2, 1920, October 10, 1922, October 4, 1924, October 1, 1926, October 15, 1926; Smith, Up to Now, pp. 292-293; Becker, "Smith," p. 68.

sporadically raised the Tammany issue, it came to be generally acknowledged that he was not beholden to the machine. Smith realized that partisan support had its limitations, and he aimed to build a broad base of support on a reputation for independence. He once told Frances Perkins of his belief that if a candidate could count upon a bloc of voters, he then had the freedom to appeal to independents and the disaffected opposition. Smith had this advantage in New York, and he skillfully made it a source of considerable strength through his tenure as governor.<sup>15</sup>

Smith's adroit handling of his major handicap, his association with Tammany Hall, is one evidence of his shrewdness and resourcefulness as a campaign strategist. Also, Smith, who served as his own chief strategist, knew how to plan an effective campaign. Possessing a fine sense of political timing – “the man on the street,” Smith once wrote, “has to be taken at the psychological moment” – he designed a short, intense campaign on “the record” that built to a proper climax. In addition, Smith believed that any opponent's campaign would “blow up before he [got] through,” and he was prepared to turn any error of the opposition to his own advantage. When a blunder did occur, Smith would quickly capitalize on it and seize the offensive. In keeping with the good fortune that marked his career, Smith's adversaries regularly provided him with indiscretions that Smith was able to turn into further evidence that “the record” favored him.<sup>16</sup>

Smith could adjust to new political factors, as he did to the advent of the woman voter. Despite his early opposition to women's suffrage, when the times and the Democratic Party's position changed he led the fight for the female vote in New York and welcomed female participation in party affairs; and in 1918, when New York women voted for the first time, Smith enthusiastically supported the Nineteenth Amendment. In this and every subsequent state contest he showed his awareness of the importance of women voters by frequently speaking before women's groups and by accepting their campaign services. In office Smith continued to cultivate the woman's vote, and women responded both with support for his humanitarian programs and with votes at election time.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Osborne to Peabody, November 13, 1918, Osborne Family Papers, SyrU; Peabody to Tichenor, September 21, 1918, Peabody Papers, LC; Editorial, NYT, September 19, 1918, October 20, 1918, October 20, 1920; Hapgood and Moskowitz, Up from the City Streets, p. 192; Josephson and Josephson, Smith, p. 216. Already in 1920 Smith was counting on the independent vote for his margin of victory. Without this vote in that year Smith would have been buried with the rest of the Democratic ticket. Proskauer, A Segment of My Times, pp. 42-43.

<sup>16</sup> Smith to Peabody, April 15, 1931, Peabody Papers, LC; NYT, July 1, 1928; Hapgood and Moskowitz, Up from the City Streets, pp. 159-160, 215-217; Pringle, Smith, p. 232; Becker, “Smith,” p. 44. A good example of Smith's ability to exploit an opponent's mistake came in 1924 when Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., erred on a football result and Smith turned the inexperienced Roosevelt's query “Who told me that?” into an illustration of his general ignorance of state affairs. Hapgood and Moskowitz, Up from the City Streets, p. 216.

<sup>17</sup> NYT, May 8, 1918, September 21, 1918, September 27, 1918, October 17, 1918, March 22, 1920, October 5, 1920, September 30, 1922, October 22, 1922, July 13, 1928; Smith, Up to Now, pp. 126, 195; Josephson and Josephson, Smith, p. 194; Joseph P. Lash, Eleanor and Franklin (New York, 1971), p. 289. As governor, Smith often spoke before women and emphasized his belief in equal opportunities for the sexes. NYT, March 22, 1920, October 11, 1926. Smith also praised suffrage leader Carrie Chapman Catt, and, to encourage quick action by other states, he called an immediate special legislative session for the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment. NYT, August 28, 1920; Moskowitz, Smith, pp. 65-66. Fifteen per cent of Smith's appointments went to women. Becker, “Smith,” p. 101. Frances Perkins wrote that Smith later recalled that he had named her an Industrial Commissioner partly to attract women voters. Perkins, The Roosevelt I Knew, pp. 54-55. Smith was reportedly the first politician to make use of talking movies. See NYT, June 18, 1924.

Smith's political skills and training served him well when he took office as governor. In four terms he proved himself competent as the head of the state government, influential with the legislature, and accomplished as a manipulator of public opinion.

Although Smith always believed the legislature to be the equal of the executive, he thought that the governor should establish the policies of the state government and should lead the state. The administrative reorganization that Smith achieved and his personal example as chief executive enlarged the powers and influence of the governor of New York. Smith enhanced his effectiveness as administrative head of the state by surrounding himself with able personnel. An excellent judge of people, Smith attracted and made effective use of some very capable persons, employing them both as personal advisers and in official positions. He allowed his appointees great latitude in the exercise of their powers; he refused to interfere with their decisions, even unpopular ones, when he was satisfied that they had reached the decisions conscientiously. Encouraging innovation, he listened to their ideas and enthusiastically supported many of the projects that they proposed to him. His corps of advisers and administrators considered Smith to be frank and loyal, a man who never reneged on his word. They were devoted to him – often fiercely so – and made invaluable contributions to his success as chief executive.<sup>18</sup>

As governor Smith was remarkably successful in dealing with a predominantly Republican legislature.<sup>19</sup> He profited in this respect from his own experience in the Assembly. Smith had entered the lower house in 1904 totally unprepared for the responsibility, and at first he had little understanding of what was happening or was supposed to happen. In his first several years in Albany, Smith had no committee assignments, few friends, and no influence. He did not speak on the floor until 1907 and before then had done little more than introduce a handful of unsuccessful minor bills for his constituents. He was an insignificant Tammanyite, merely representing his district and its leader.<sup>20</sup>

As an Assemblyman, however, Smith began to educate himself in state affairs and to cultivate his colleagues. His perseverance, as he pored over official documents and bills, became an Albany legend; and at the corned beef-and-beer lunches that he regularly convened, he learned about other legislators and their districts' concerns while

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<sup>18</sup> Farley, Behind the Ballots, pp. 43-49; Handlin, Smith, pp. 92-93; Josephson and Josephson, Smith, p. 342; Moses, A Tribute to Governor Smith, p. 36; Cleveland Rodgers, Robert Moses: Builder for Democracy (New York, 1952), pp. 58, 329; Eldot, "Smith," pp. 242, 250-252. Although certain incidents cited by Robert Moses qualify the generalization that Smith always insisted upon competency, Smith tried as a rule to eliminate unfit appointees. See Moses, A Tribute to Governor Smith, pp. 35-38; and Josephson and Josephson, Smith, p. 298. One reason for Smith's success as an administrator was his willingness to select advisers and appointees without regard to their politics. Smith, Up to Now, p. 176; pp. 32-37 below. It is to Smith's credit that he accomplished so much operating as he did before 1927 with an antiquated state administration. Eldot, "Smith," pp. 126-131; Silveri, "The Political Education of Alfred E. Smith," pp. 137-142.

<sup>19</sup> The Republicans controlled the Assembly all eight years that Smith was governor and the Senate as well except for 1923-1924.

<sup>20</sup> Croly, "Smith of New York," New Republic, LIV (February 22, 1928), 10; Christian Gauss, "How Governor Smith Educated Himself," Saturday Evening Post, CCIV (February 27, 1932), 22-23, 108-110, 112; Smith, The Citizen and His Government, p. 51; Frank Graham, Al Smith, American (New York, 1945), p. 52; Josephson and Josephson, Smith, pp. 76-81; Silveri, "The Political Education of Alfred E. Smith," pp. 29, 32; Feldman, "The Political Thought of Alfred E. Smith," pp. 26-27. Smith was so slow to learn his way about Albany that he walked up the stairs to the Assembly chamber for two weeks in 1904 before he found out there was an elevator. Fowler, Beau James, p. 65.

acquainting them with his ideas and the needs of his district. Smith also learned how to bargain and bestow favors, how to fashion a compromise bill, and how to balance the various factions of his party and in the Assembly. Despite his prowess as a political manipulator, those with whom he dealt regarded Smith as fair and absolutely honest. Independents and reformers were pleasantly surprised to find that Smith, unlike most machine politicians whom they encountered, was reliable, helpful, and candid. If political expediency demanded a particular stand, he said so; if he could not keep an agreement – and this was rare – he was frank to explain the circumstances.<sup>21</sup>

Hard work and integrity gained for Smith the attention and confidence of influential members of the Assembly and others in the state government. By the time he left the lower house in 1915, he understood the inner workings of the legislature and the operations of the state, and he knew how to influence those who ran both. Smith was widely acclaimed for his knowledge of both state affairs and practical politics, and he had himself become one of the most influential persons in the Assembly.<sup>22</sup> When Smith became governor he put this knowledge of the legislative process to good use, augmenting it with the ability to focus public opinion on the legislature. His skills made him an executive to be reckoned with.

Smith liked to employ the personal approach in dealing with legislators. Using to good advantage his exceptional familiarity with both party machines, he bargained and granted trivial favors where they would be most effective. Many of the Democratic and Republican legislature leaders, with whom he conferred regularly, were, he related, “intimate and real personal friends,” and Smith brought his considerable persuasive powers to bear on them.<sup>23</sup>

In dealing with the legislature as a body, Smith summoned all the powers and prerogatives at his command. Perhaps following the example of President Woodrow Wilson, he revived the practice of personal appearances before the legislature, and he expertly applied the threat of a veto or a special session. His ultimate weapon was a threat to take an issue to the people, whose support he could mobilize to overcome the opposition of the rotten-borough legislature. Smith realized that, although it was possible to influence legislators on a personal basis, it was sometimes more effective to form a favorable public opinion and to focus it on the legislature. Smith’s usual technique was to portray the legislators as obstructionists and to force them to explain to the people why they refused to cooperate with him. Smith also used the support of prominent Republicans, or simply the information that he had consulted with them, to embarrass recalcitrant Republican legislators or party leaders.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> NYT, March 23, 1925; Duffus, “Al Smith: An East Side Portrait,” Harpers, CLII (February, 1926), 323; Proskauer, A Segment of My Times, pp. 40-42; Marsh, Lobbyist for the People, pp. 20-22; Hapgood and Moskowitz, Up from the City Streets, pp. 79-80, 97, 266; Moskowitz, Smith, p. 35; Roosevelt, The Happy Warrior, pp. 3-6; Handlin, Smith, p. 31; Josephson and Josephson, Smith, pp. 1-2, 87, 90-92, 136; Fowler, Beau James, pp. 101-103; Freidel, Roosevelt: The Apprenticeship, p. 101; Alden Hatch, The Wadsworths of the Genesee (New York, 1959), p. 166; Silveri, “The Political Education of Alfred E. Smith,” p. 157.

<sup>22</sup> Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, On Active Service in Peace and War (New York, 1947), pp. 67-68; Handlin, Smith, p. 31; Diskint, “Smith,” pp. 72-74; Feldman, “The Political Thought of Alfred E. Smith,” pp. 45-49.

<sup>23</sup> Smith, Up to Now, p. 181; Handlin, Smith, pp. 93-94; Josephson and Josephson, Smith, pp. 324-326; Becker, “Smith,” pp. 87-96. Herbert Pell’s charge that Smith bought Republican votes in the legislature with patronage may very well be true. Pell Memoir, CUOHC, pp. 310-318.

<sup>24</sup> Frederick C. Tanner Memoir, CUOHC, p. 76; NYT, April 20, 1919, January 13, 1920, September 14, 1920, April 5, 1925; Smith, Up to Now, pp. 149-150, 322; Stimson and Bundy, On Active Service in Peace and War, p. 109;

To facilitate contact with the public, Smith held a Tammany-like open house in several cities in 1919, but he quickly found this too wearying. Smith did, however, conduct a series of speaking tours to promote his legislative program or constitutional amendments that he supported. He chose his audiences carefully, concentrating on civic and business groups (often predominantly Republican in composition) in the hope that those influential people would pressure their legislators.<sup>25</sup>

On several crucial occasions, Smith sought to influence New York voters by radio. Realizing that the new device had to be used sparingly if he was to avoid overexposure, Smith found that he could bring his personality to bear on a wide audience by talking directly to them. His “heart-to-heart” talks were in fact precursors of his successor’s more famous “fireside chats” and were given in the same intimate manner. Since Smith’s impromptu delivery and his reliance on audience contact were not suited to the new medium, he had to alter his speaking style somewhat for his radio talks. Observers, nevertheless, judged Smith a capable radio speaker, and the effectiveness of his radio talks in New York State was widely recognized.<sup>26</sup>

The radio helped to offset the failure of upstate New York newspapers adequately to cover Smith’s speeches and other public statements. This did not, however, mean that Smith was negligent regarding newspaper coverage and support; indeed, the reverse is true. He had learned in his Assembly years that he could use his personality to win the attention and sympathy of reporters, and he had made the same effort to cultivate correspondents as he had his colleagues in the lower house. As governor, Smith maintained a cordial, even affectionate, relationship with reporters; he enjoyed contacts with them and trusted them, and they delighted in his presence. A token of their regard is the fact that Smith was the first governor ever elected an honorary member of the state capital correspondents’ association. More significantly, reporters overlooked slips or errors – with one major exception that will be related in the next chapter – that Smith made in press conferences. Despite this warm relationship, however, and despite Smith’s appreciation of the value of friendly press coverage, the Governor’s daily press conferences usually provided more entertainment than they did news. Preferring formal news releases to off-the-cuff remarks on important subjects, Smith was guarded when speaking for the record. Apparently, he relied on his personal influence to insure that his administration was favorably interpreted by these reporters.<sup>27</sup>

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Handlin, Smith, pp. 93-94; Josephson and Josephson, Smith, pp. 324-326; Eldot, “Smith,” pp. 70-73, chapter 9 passim; Becker, “Smith,” pp. 87-96. Smith undoubtedly was influenced regarding public opinion by Belle Moskowitz, who had had public-relations experience and who devoted much of her time and talents to eliciting favorable publicity for Smith and to influencing public opinion in his favor. See Pringle, Smith, pp. 69-72; and Karg, “A Short Life of Mrs. Henry Moskowitz,” p. 13.

<sup>25</sup> NYT, January 12, 1919, January 18, 1919, March 2, 1920, March 20, 1923, April 5, 1925; Smith, Up to Now, pp. 172-173; Josephson and Josephson, Smith, pp. 239-240; Eldot, “Smith,” pp. 51-55, 64-67.

<sup>26</sup> NYT, March 15, 1925, Editorial, March 17, 1925, April 5, 1925, June 12, 1925, April 17, 1927, March 13, 1928; Smith, “Spellbinding,” Saturday Evening Post, CII (May 24, 1930), 144; Smith, Up to Now, pp. 340-341. It is a misapprehension that Smith could not remember to remain behind the “pie-plate” microphones when a public address was being broadcast. Rather, he found that the microphones obstructed his visual contact with his audiences. Alfred E. Smith, “Campaign Business,” Saturday Evening Post, CCV (July 30, 1932), 60.

<sup>27</sup> Stoddard Memoir, CUOHC, pp. 107-108; Editorial, NYT, March 17, 1925, March 9, 1928; Smith, Up to Now, pp. 374-377; Pringle, Smith, pp. 212-214; Josephson and Josephson, Smith, pp. 89, 155-156; Becker, “Smith,” pp. 95-96. Reporters even agreed, in response to Smith’s request, not to pounce on a particularly blatant stupidity uttered by Mayor John F. Hylan when Smith was serving under him. Pringle, Smith, pp. 34-36.

Smith attempted to cultivate not only reporters but also the persons who made newspaper policy. He visited editors and owners to enlighten or to correct them, and from about 1923 on he held private annual conferences with editorial writers and publishers from around the state in order to generate support for his program.<sup>28</sup>

Smith exercised all of his political skills in seeking any major objective. He usually began with a body of facts and testimony compiled by experts – Smith had learned even before 1918 that “expert” was a word that carried great weight. He had also learned that a commission of prominent citizens added prestige to any study, and so he often established such commissions. To supplement his efforts to get the legislature to act, Smith would design an “educational” campaign that, through his own speeches and other publicity devices, focused press and public opinion on the need for change and, if necessary, on legislative inaction. The classic application of Smith’s method was his appointment in early 1919 of the Reconstruction Commission and his subsequent efforts to see that its broad-ranging recommendations on subjects like tax reform, housing, and administrative reorganization were put into effect. Smith especially championed reorganization, and, although it took him nearly a decade to complete the reconstitution of the state administration, an accomplishment of this magnitude could not have been attained without Smith’s skillful manipulation of the legislature and public opinion.<sup>29</sup>

Smith thus revealed himself to be as great a master of politics in office as he was in standing for office. His enviable record of accomplishment leaves no doubt about his effectiveness as a political leader. Observers noted how much more successful he was, even with a legislature controlled by the opposition, than President Calvin Coolidge was with a Congress at least nominally controlled by his own party.<sup>30</sup>

Republican opposition to Smith began in early 1919 when the legislature refused to fund the Reconstruction Commission. This was the pattern of state politics during the eight years Smith was governor, for obstructionists controlled the Republican leadership and the Republicans controlled both houses for six of those eight years. As Smith was preparing to begin his second term, several progressive Republicans made public their belief that their party should not simply oppose Smith on partisan grounds but should rather forced him to live up to his campaign pledges. In this way, they advised, the Republicans could prevent Smith from blaming his opposition for his failures. This counsel, however, was never followed. Rather, the Republican legislature “chose the wrong side of almost every public question. This party, which purportedly contained the intellectual elite of the legislature, adopted the policy that anything desired by Al Smith was evil, extravagant, radical, or unscientific, despite the fact that many of [his] views . .

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<sup>28</sup> Smith to Adolph Ochs, August 9, 1928, Adolph Ochs Papers, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio (hereafter AJA); Smith, Up to Now, pp. 244, 374-377; Hapgood and Moskowitz, Up from the City Streets, p. 202; George Britt, Forty Years – Forty Millions: The Career of Frank A. Munsey (New York, 1935), pp. 8-9.

<sup>29</sup> Smith to Jacob Schiff, January 18, 1919, Jacob Schiff Papers, AJA; Moskowitz (ed.), Progressive Democracy, p. 215; Smith, Up to Now, pp. 186-191; Josephson and Josephson, Smith, pp. 216-220, 237-240, 252; Eldot, “Smith,” passim; Becker, “Smith,” pp. 87-96. Although Belle Moskowitz initiated the specific idea of the Reconstruction Commission, Smith’s experience on the Factory Investigating Commission had undoubtedly already inspired him to use public opinion to attain desirable legislative objectives. Smith, Up to Now, p. 170; Josephson and Josephson, Smith, pp. 136-139, 217-219.

<sup>30</sup> D.C.D. Moore to James P. Pope, April 6, 1927, James P. Pope Papers, Idaho Historical Society, Boise, Idaho (hereafter IdHS); NYT, April 5, 1925.

had been evolved from studies made by eminent Republicans.” While Smith was governor the Republican leadership opposed virtually his entire program, and that Smith was able to win some of his battles with the legislature “attests,” as Bernard Bellush has written, “to his skill as an executive and as a molder of public opinion.”<sup>31</sup>

The Republicans not only opposed Smith’s legislative program, but they tried repeatedly to cast Smith in a bad light. They charged that he was a radical and had “revolutionary” plans or that he aspired to become a dictator like the Communist Lenin or the Fascist Mussolini. The Republicans also attempted to embarrass Smith on occasion, particularly on the issue of prohibition.<sup>32</sup>

The result of this planned obstructionism and disparagement was quite the opposite of Republican expectations. By opposing popular issues and by their often-farcical machinations, the Republicans simply added to Smith’s prestige and gave him the opportunity to exploit their stupidity. Indeed, they became perhaps his greatest ally, for he was able consistently to take the high ground of principle while they were exposed as fighting for mere partisan advantage. Seldom has such ineptitude been revealed in an opposition party.<sup>33</sup>

Smith and his advisers realized the advantages they derived from Smith’s “good luck in law-makers.” In a 1924 speech, Smith contrasted himself with President Coolidge, who, Smith said, could not blame a lack of legislative results on partisan obstructionism. The next year, in the midst of a battle with the Republicans, Smith wrote a fellow Democrat, “Our Republican friends have evidently made up their minds that they are going to make it as difficult as possible for me, but I am not worrying about it. All these things work out the other way.” Van Namee, one of Smith’s closest political advisers, summed up Smith’s advantageous situation when in early 1928 he wrote Franklin D. Roosevelt, “The Republicans in the Legislature are giving the Governor as usual an opportunity to administer a good drubbing and it looks as though he would get plenty of favorable publicity during the session.”<sup>34</sup>

Smith effectively exploited the stupidity of his partisan opposition. Republican obstructionism “spread his issues so that he had a convenient number of them in every one of his campaigns,” and Smith seemingly refused to exert maximum pressure in behalf of certain aspects of his legislative program so that he would have ready-made campaign issues with which to rally popular support. The Republican opposition was such an asset to Smith that one may wonder, with Edward J. Flynn, whether Smith would have had it otherwise. At the very least, a friendly legislature would not have given Smith the opportunity to demonstrate his skills as a politician in dealing with an

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<sup>31</sup> NYT, April 20, 1919, December 2, 1922; Josephson and Josephson, Smith, p. 220; Bernard Bellush, Franklin D. Roosevelt as Governor of New York (New York, 1955), pp. 29-33; Eldot, “Smith,” passim. See the Introduction for the details of Smith’s accomplishments in dealing with the legislature.

<sup>32</sup> NYT, February 21, 1923, March 8, 1925, February 12, 1926, March 9, 1927, March 17, 1927, January 3, 1928; Eldot, MS, passim.

<sup>33</sup> Editorial, NYT, March 28, 1925, Editorial, March 25, 1927; “The Progress of Governor Smith, of New York,” World’s Work, XLVI (June, 1923), 131-132; “Governor’s Good Luck in Law-Makers,” Review of Reviews, LXXVI (November, 1927), 456-457; Kent, “A Good Look at Al Smith,” Colliers, LXXXI (March 3, 1928), 8-9, 51-53.

<sup>34</sup> Smith to Norman H. Davis, June 20, 1925, Norman H. Davis Papers, LC; George R. Van Namee to Roosevelt, February 8, 1928, Roosevelt Papers, FDRL; NYT, August 8, 1924; “Governor’s Good Luck in Law-Makers,” Review of Reviews, LXXVI (November, 1927), 456-457; Smith, Up to Now, pp. 181-183.

unyielding opposition. Without this blind opposition, Smith once asserted, “I should have been back in private life long ago.”<sup>35</sup>

The Republican leaders eventually recognized their mistake. In an exchange of letters late in 1928 Ogden L. Mills and state chairman H. Edmund Machold revealed their realization that Smith had outflanked them, and they even expressed grudging admiration for his resourcefulness. Mills pointed out the danger that the Republican legislature might build up Roosevelt as it had Smith. Machold concurred and wrote that he now thought that the policy of routinely opposing Smith from the time that he had become governor had been an error. The party’s hand, however, had been forced (presumably he meant by Smith), and he thought that by 1923 the leadership could not have altered course without destroying the party. Not altering course nearly destroyed the party anyway, however. By Smith’s fourth term, the New York Republican Party was virtually nothing but an anti-Smith organization and had been thoroughly demoralized by him.<sup>36</sup>

If Smith manipulated the opposition party effectively, he handled his own party even more capably. By the end of his second term he clearly had taken control of the New York Democratic Party, and his activities in party affairs justified his 1924 claim: “I am the leader of the democracy of this State . . . .”<sup>37</sup>

After Smith assumed the governorship, his views dominated the party’s platforms. Beginning in 1920 his aides took their own drafts to the convention; in 1922 Smith and his advisers wrote the platform well before the convention met; and in 1926, over the objections of some party leaders, Smith forced a plank endorsing American entry into the World Court. Smith also dominated the selection of other party candidates. For example, after failing to persuade Roosevelt to run for the Senate in 1926, Smith was largely responsible for the eventual nomination of Robert F. Wagner. Two years later Smith presided over the choice of his own successor. Smith even intervened occasionally to endorse candidates on the local level.<sup>38</sup>

Smith also supervised internal party matters. He controlled the planning and organization of every state campaign, convened conferences of Democratic leaders, and sometimes served as peacemaker in intraparty disputes. In 1926 Smith finally secured the removal of state chairman Herbert C. Pell, who in 1921 had been Murphy’s concession to upstaters but who had never worked well with Smith. When Pell in 1925 gave signs of supporting Mayor John F. Hylan at a time when Smith privately opposed Hylan’s nomination, reports appeared that Pell would be replaced as chairman. Early the next year Pell was forced out of office. Edwin Corning, his successor, was Smith’s own man and was also a better chairman than Pell had been. In 1928, when Corning

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<sup>35</sup> Edward J. Flynn Memoir, CUOHC, p. 5; “Governor’s Good Luck in Law-Makers,” Review of Reviews, LXXVI (November, 1927), 456-457; Smith, Up to Now, pp. 181-183; Hapgood and Moskowitz, Up from the City Streets, pp. 169-170; Warren Moscow, Politics in the Empire State (New York, 1948), pp. 168-169.

<sup>36</sup> Ogden L. Mills to H. Edmund Machold, November 22, 1928, and Machold to Mills, November 26, 1928, Ogden L. Mills Papers, LC; Editorial, NYT, October 1, 1927.

<sup>37</sup> NYT, July 10, 1924.

<sup>38</sup> Smith to Bernard M. Baruch, September 27, 1927, Bernard M. Baruch Papers, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey (hereafter PU); NYT, August 2, 1920, January 26, 1923, June 5, 1926, September 28, 1926; Smith, Up to Now, pp. 216, 360-361; Hapgood and Moskowitz, Up from the City Streets, pp. 213-214; Freidel, Roosevelt: The Ordeal, p. 217; Rollins, “The Political Education of Franklin Roosevelt,” pp. 818-820.

decided to step down due to illness, Smith first offered the job to Herbert H. Lehman and then was instrumental in the choice of M. William Bray as chairman and James A. Farley as secretary of the state committee.<sup>39</sup>

Smith's domination of Democratic legislators and their leaders is further evidence of his command of the party. That he and his advisers prepared the Governor's annual messages without the aid of Democratic legislative (or party) leaders indicates Smith's belief that he himself was chiefly responsible for interpreting party policy. He consulted with the legislative leaders regularly, but Smith left no doubt that he was in control and that he expected all Democratic legislators to be absolutely loyal to his program. He received this loyalty, for Democratic lawmakers never opposed a Smith measure in either house, and they supplied the votes to insure that no Smith veto was ever overridden and that no Smith appointee was ever rejected by the Senate.<sup>40</sup>

Perhaps the surest indicator of Smith's political influence was his strength in elections that did not involve his own candidacy. The most dramatic of these elections was the 1925 New York City mayoralty, which will be considered below. Two years later Smith gave a vivid demonstration of his strength when the electorate overwhelmingly defeated the one constitutional amendment he opposed and overwhelmingly approved the other eight proposals being voted upon. Smith's ability to persuade New Yorkers to follow his wishes in the 1920s proved not only that he was the most powerful Democrat in the state but that he dominated the state's public life. Many thought, at least until Wagner's victory in 1926, that Smith was the only Democrat who could carry New York State against the Republicans.<sup>41</sup>

In establishing control over his party Smith capitalized on the circumstances that caused Democrats to urge him to run in 1922, 1924, and 1926. In 1922 many Democrats appealed to Smith re-enter politics because he was the only person who seemed able to frustrate Hearst's apparent ambition to be nominated for governor. Smith declared himself a candidate for governor, and his likely nomination forced Hearst's supporters to make the senatorial nomination their objective. Although Smith became a candidate for governor to further his state program as much to block Hearst, he took advantage of the strong bargaining position in which he had been placed to force the party convention to accede to his refusal to run on the same ticket with the publisher. In 1924 and in 1926 Smith again found himself to be in the enviable position of the candidate whose party implores him to run.

Many observers fixed 1922 as the year when Smith established his superiority over the Democratic Party, and certainly by the mid-1920s it was obvious that the party needed Smith more than he needed it. When Smith did not run for governor in 1928, the party was bereft of "natural" successors and had to draft Roosevelt. The Democrats had failed to prepare someone to take Smith's place; talented members of the party had promoted Smith's career instead of their own; and Smith himself had groomed no

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<sup>39</sup> NYT, March 29, 1925, June 17, 1925, June 18, 1925, January 16, 1926, March 19, 1927; Farley, Behind the Ballots, pp. 51-53; Nevins, Lehman, p. 93; Eldot, "Smith," pp. 77-78. Pell had urged Murphy to dump Smith during the 1922 battle with Hearst. Pell Memoir, CUOHC, pp. 310-318; Eldot, "Smith," p. 22.

<sup>40</sup> Smith, Campaign Addresses, p. 48; Smith, Up to Now, p. 219; Eldot, "Smith," chapter 9 passim.

<sup>41</sup> NYT, November 5, 1925, September 30, 1927, November 9, 1927, November 10, 1927; Editorial, Independent, CXVII (October 9, 1926), 401-402.

potential successors. He and his advisers probably welcomed this state of affairs because a lack of competitors gave Smith a monopoly of power.<sup>42</sup>

Despite Smith's command of his party, upstate Democrats were not always happy with his leadership. In part, they did not fully trust Smith because of his basic loyalty to Tammany Hall. They also were dissatisfied with Smith's patronage policies, complaining that he did not help them to build up their local organizations, and with his general inattention to their interests. Smith did do some things that substantially benefited upstate New Yorkers – one can cite improvements in rural education, roads, and health – but he evidently neglected party matters in that part of the state.<sup>43</sup>

In late November, 1924, Senator Royal S. Copeland apparently decided to exploit this latent disaffection for Smith in upstate New York. Copeland publicly labeled Smith the “Venus de Milo of politics,” implying that he was more ornamental than useful, and he claimed that Smith was not the strong leaders that upstate New York needed. Whether Copeland was simply trying to prod Smith into a more active attention to upstate affairs or whether the Senator was attempting to generate upstate support for himself as a possible presidential contender, his maneuver was a failure. With little more to show for his trouble than Smith's displeasure, Copeland was forced by mid-1925 to retreat.<sup>44</sup>

A description of Smith's political talents would be incomplete without an account of his long association with Tammany Hall,<sup>45</sup> for Smith proved that he possessed these talents by ultimately dominating the organization that had first dominated him.

Smith was a loyal Tammanyite throughout his Assembly career. Whenever necessary, he was willing to vote for liquor and gambling legislation that the organization wanted, to support machine patronage policies and “ripper” bills, and to help protect Tammany's political power by opposing the efforts of reformers to cripple the machine. Smith's long apprenticeship in local Tammany politics, the manner of his selection for the Assembly nomination, his limited exposure to any criticism of Tammany, and his lack of comprehension of legislative and state affairs all served to make him quite naturally obedient to the wishes of the Hall's leaders during his first several years in Albany.

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<sup>42</sup> Robert W. Woolley to Edward M. House, July 29, 1924, Edward M. House Papers, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut (hereafter YU); NYT, April 1, 1922, April 7, 1922, May 3, 1922, July 10, 1922, August 19, 1922, September 29, 1922, September 30, 1922, November 17, 1922, July 16, 1924, September 11, 1924, September 12, 1924; Smith, Up to Now, pp. 228-234, 291, 356; Warner, The Happy Warrior, pp. 178, 220-222; Pringle, Smith, pp. 21-22; Ernest K. Lindley, Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Career in Progressive Democracy (New York, 1931), p. 12; Bellush, Franklin D. Roosevelt as Governor of New York, p. 6; Eldot, “Smith,” chapter 9 passim. Roosevelt was nominated in 1928 in large part because his image was useful for Smith's presidential bid, but this does not diminish the fact that the state party had a dearth of gubernatorial candidates in 1928 and that the party and Smith had to resort to the extreme measure of drafting Roosevelt.

<sup>43</sup> Pell Memoir, CUOHC, pp. 310-318; NYT, January 15, 1926, May 28, 1926, January 7, 1927, October 4, 1928; Flynn, You're the Boss, p. 80; Moskowitz, Smith, p. 192. Farley reported that when he took over as secretary the upstate party was in a mess and that information on country chairmen and important workers was nonexistent. Farley, Behind the Ballots, p. 53.

<sup>44</sup> NYT, November 25, 1924, November 26, 1924, January 5, 1925, June 21, 1925, October 22, 1925; Farley, Behind the Ballots, pp. 51-53; Raymond J. Potter, “Royal Samuel Copeland, 1868-1938: A Physician in Politics” (Ph.D. thesis, Western Reserve University, 1967), pp. 336-337.

<sup>45</sup> Tammany Hall was only one of five New York City organizations; but, usually allied with the other four and city machines elsewhere in the state, it generally prevailed in state Democratic affairs.

Thereafter, Smith remained loyal essentially because of his conviction that the organization was the legitimate political institution of his district and that loyalty itself was a virtue. Since Smith believed that Tammany was, for the most part, genuinely seeking to advance the welfare of his constituents, he was willing to stand with his organization on matters vital to its interests.

Smith's record of loyalty to Tammany did not mean, however, that he was a mere puppet in the Assembly. As Smith and others made clear, Tammany's leader Charles F. Murphy, although he certainly had power and could use it on crucial occasions, allowed the men whom he trusted a good deal of discretion and advised rather than dictated. Smith shared the point of view of his superiors in the organization, and he valued their opinions for the long experience and wisdom that lay behind them. Smith, furthermore, was not a hack politician. After only a short time in the Assembly, he had begun to advocate certain worthwhile social reforms that would further advance the welfare of his constituents. Tammany was slower to accept these reforms than Smith was, and until it did he occasionally had to sacrifice some desirable changes in the interests of loyalty to the organization's position.

If Smith sometimes regretted these sacrifices and the other actions that loyalty incurred, he never considered insurgency because he recognized that the way to secure the reforms that he desired was by working through the organization and not against it. Hence, Smith voted with Tammany, usually on fairly routine matters, while he sought to persuade it to widen its horizons. By the time Tammany did expand the limits of what it would accept, Smith was in a position of leadership and could call upon the discipline of the organization to achieve the reforms in which he was interested. Though it is perhaps unfortunate that the machine's discipline had obligated Smith at the beginning of his political career to do some things that even apologists have not attempted to excuse, his loyalty and regularity paid off in the end. Such discipline is the way of politics, and talented persons have nearly always operated under its restrictions.<sup>46</sup>

Although Smith saw no inconsistency in both advocating certain progressive reforms and defending the machine, his record seemed paradoxical to many observers, especially independents and reformers. Some of them viewed Smith as a party hack, as "reactionary" as Tammany itself. In the annual evaluations of legislators by the Citizens' Union, probably the most prominent New York City civic organization, Smith

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<sup>46</sup> Robert S. Binkerd Memoir, CUOHC, pp. 32-33; Tanner Memoir, CUOHC, pp. 158-159; Editorial, NYT, September 19, 1918; James A. Foley remarks in In Memoriam: The Honorable Alfred E. Smith (pamphlet; [New York], 1944), p. 10; Hapgood, "Why 'Al' Smith is Great," Nation, CXXIV (February 16, 1927), 164-165; "Al Smith and Tammany Hall," New Republic, LVI (October 10, 1928), 188-191; Smith, Up to Now, pp. 121-122; Flynn, You're the Boss, pp. 40-41; Pringle, Smith, pp. 129-130, 166; Hapgood and Moskowitz, Up from the City Streets, pp. 44-45, 50, 91-95; Handlin, Smith, pp. 39-44, 52-60; Josephson and Josephson, Smith, pp. 87, 90-92, 151; O'Connor, The First Hurrah, p. 35; Weiss, Murphy, pp. 18-19; Allen, Al Smith's Tammany Hall, pp. 118-124; Burner, The Politics of Provincialism, p. 24; Diskint, "Smith," pp. 20-21, 65-67, 72-74; Silveri, "The Political Education of Alfred E. Smith," pp. 29, 45-47, 56-71, 84-90, 120, 137-142; Becker, "Smith," pp. 35, 45; Feldman, "The Political Thought of Alfred E. Smith," pp. 45-49. Curiously, Smith's first venture into politics was in opposition to a carpetbag organization candidate. He did not rebel, however, against the notion of the machine or of machine politics, as many reformers did. See Smith, Up to Now, pp. 54-56; and Warner, The Happy Warrior, pp. 43-44. For Smith's view of Tammany's service to the community, see Smith, Up to Now, p. 28. Smith and Murphy did not meet until 1908 and did not become intimate until 1922, when Smith became majority leader. They then conferred every weekend on state and party matters. Their relationship was cordial and apparently filled with mutual respect. See NYT, April 26, 1924, July 11, 1925; and Smith, Up to Now, pp. 121-122, 280-281.

received occasional praise but more frequently criticism that, in following the dictates of the machine too often, he was opposing the public interest. Critics deplored what they considered to be Smith's abuse of his leadership abilities and political talents on behalf of the machine. Although he was never accused of personal cupidity, he was faulted for supporting men who were believed to be dishonest and detrimental to the public interest. Many of those who were opposed to Tammany, however, misunderstood Smith and his position because they failed to perceive the changes that were taking place, not only in him but also in Murphy and in the machine.<sup>47</sup>

When Tammany's leaders promoted Smith, it was partly due to his abilities and his loyalty but also the result of the machine's need for a new face. While Tammany was slowly adopting a more progressive attitude toward social reform, it was also forced to respond to adverse election results by putting forward new and younger men – among them Alfred E. Smith. Thus, by the midteens, Smith and his organization needed each other. If he had to remain loyal to insure his own advancement and to secure the reforms he sought, he was invaluable to the machine in Tammany's refurbishment of its image. The most spectacular episode in the process of refurbishment was Smith's performance in the 1915 Constitutional Convention, where he amazed his colleagues and other observers with his expertise and statesmanship. He was Tammany's best exemplar, and this fact combined with the real stature that he had earned in the Convention and his general popularity made him a logical candidate in the citywide elections of 1915 and 1917. Evidence of Smith's new prestige was the praise that he won from the Citizens' Union and even opposition newspapers in 1915.<sup>48</sup>

In 1918 Smith carried the Hall's colors onto the state level; Tammany had finally found a man from its own ranks whom it could present to the Democratic Party for the state's highest office. Antipathy to the machine was strong enough, however, to force Tammany to resort to a policy of indirection. Since Smith's open endorsement by Tammany might have meant the kiss of death, Murphy let upstaters take the initiative in promoting Smith's candidacy.<sup>49</sup> In the campaign itself, although many reformers and independents supported Smith, the use of the Independent Citizens' Committee continued the policy of indirection. Tammany's actions, though, could not altogether conceal the fact that Smith was still a loyal Tammanyite and that the prestige of the "new Tammany" rested upon his performance as governor.

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<sup>47</sup> Davenport, "Human Nature in Politics," Outlook, CXIX (July 31, 1918), 522-524; "Why 'Al' Smith Stays Home is May Be Made Governor," Current Opinion, LXV (September, 1918), 154-155; Handlin, Smith, pp. 52-53; Feldman, "The Political Thought of Alfred E. Smith," p. 43; Silveri, "The Political Education of Alfred E. Smith," pp. 91, 157; Diskint, "Smith," pp. 119-120. The files of the Citizens' Union, Columbia University, New York, New York (hereafter ColU), contain its analyses of Smith's legislative record. See Chapter One for an explanation of the concept of a "new Tammany" as well as for an elaboration of the points in the following paragraph.

<sup>48</sup> Davenport, "Human Nature in Politics," Outlook, CXIX (July 31, 1918), 522-524; Hapgood and Moskowitz, Up from the City Streets, pp. 133-137; Handlin, Smith, pp. 39-42, 68-70; O'Connor, The First Hurrah, p. 61; Huthmacher, Wagner, pp. 33-37; Allen, Al Smith's Tammany Hall, pp. 118-124; Huthmacher, "Charles Evans Hughes and Charles Francis Murphy," New York History, XLVI (January, 1965), 28-29. Smith was apparently the first Tammany candidate whom the Citizens' Union ever endorsed. Proskauer, A Segment of My Times, pp. 40-42.

<sup>49</sup> Smith was finally accepted in 1918 as the best New York City candidate after upstate Democrats could not agree on an acceptable candidate from their own area. See Rogers to Huppuch, November 13, 1922, and Huppuch to Rogers, November 14, 1922, Rogers Papers, FDRL; NYT, June 17, 1918, June 19, 1918, June 24, 1918, July 6, 1918, July 19, 1918; Smith, Up to Now, pp. 159-160; Warner, The Happy Warrior, p. 87; Rollins, "The Political Education of Franklin Roosevelt," pp. 624-627; and Eldot, "Smith," pp. 12-16. Some have insisted that Murphy opposed Smith's nomination in 1918 or that he was at least lukewarm to it. See Hapgood, "Why 'Al' Smith is Great," Nation, CXXIV (February 16, 1927), 164-165; and Farley, Behind the Ballots, pp. 23-27.

The really crucial phase of Smith's association with Tammany Hall began in January, 1919. William Allen White was basically correct when he wrote that Smith "took orders from Tammany until he was able to give orders." The decade from 1918 to 1928 saw Smith assume the superior position and establish the principle that New York Democratic governors were no longer to be the subjects of Tammany Hall. Although not all of Smith's Democratic successors were as successful as he was at influencing Tammany itself, at least they operated independently of its control.<sup>50</sup> Smith's personal victory in 1918 marked the first step toward his supremacy over the Hall, and with every passing year he became stronger than the organization. The change in the power relationship is seen in the character of his renominations, his appointment policy and other official actions as governor, and his interventions in New York City politics.

If Smith was in some measure indebted to Tammany for his 1918 nomination, the same cannot be said for his subsequent nominations. In 1920, as the incumbent governor, he was the only logical Democratic candidate and the party's only hope in what was feared might be a Republican landslide. Two years later many Democrats begged Smith to give up a comfortable retirement to block Hearst, and he forced Tammany and the party generally to agree to his terms. His debt to the Hall was erased, and he was now a free man. Tammany's leaders supported Smith's renomination in 1924 and 1926 in part because he promised victory and the continued rehabilitation of the organization's prestige but also because they feared Tammany might lose what patronage Smith gave it. Smith's appointment policy, however, was one cause of Tammany's dissatisfaction with his governorship.<sup>51</sup>

Smith publicly pledged his support for civil-service standards and spoke with justifiable pride of his appointment record. Although he was willing to entertain patronage suggestions from Tammany and party leaders and to give deserving Democrats preference for lower-level positions whenever possible, he insisted that all candidates be qualified and that appointees to major positions meet his high standards. Occasionally, he would fill important vacancies without having any personal knowledge

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<sup>50</sup> White, Masks in a Pageant, p. 477; Shannon, The American Irish, pp. 173-174, 372.

<sup>51</sup> NYT, July 16, 1924, September 11, 1924; Hapgood, "Why 'Al' Smith is Great," Nation, CXXIV (February 16, 1927), 164-165; "Alfred E. Smith, Presidential Candidate," Review of Reviews, LXXVI (October, 1927), 430; Bent, "Al Smith," Independent, CXX (June 23, 1928), 590-591; Smith, Up to Now, pp. 355-356; Pringle, Smith, pp. 60, 258. The position of Murphy and Tammany regarding Smith's nomination in 1922 is a matter of some dispute. Some, including Farley (Smith's convention manager) and Emily Warner, have said that Murphy was caught between the Smith and Hearst groups and was eager to effect a compromise ticket containing both men. Although the boss did not personally urge this solution on Smith, these observers say, he applied indirect pressure and was puzzled at Smith's stubbornness. See NYT, June 25, 1922, September 11, 1922, September 29, 1922, September 30, 1922, October 1, 1922; Farley, Behind the Ballots, pp. 30-37; Warner, The Happy Warrior, pp. 135-136; and Rollins, "The Political Education of Franklin Roosevelt," pp. 717-720. Others, like Flynn, who was at the very center of power at the Syracuse convention that year, have said that Murphy only pretended to be neutral but that he really favored Smith's nomination. The inference is that Murphy kept Hearst and Smith guessing until the last moment out of respect for their influence and power. See NYT, April 4, 1922, July 10, 1922, July 16, 1922, August 16, 1922, July 31, 1924; and Flynn, You're the Boss, pp. 35-36. A good case can be made for both interpretations. What the crisis meant to the Smith-Murphy relationship is not clear, although no obvious coolness or friction resulted. In fact, to counteract rumors that he was not wholeheartedly supporting Smith in the 1922 campaign, Murphy issued an unprecedented personal plea for Smith's election. See NYT, October 1, 1922, November 4, 1922; and Wilhelmine T. Burch, "The Life and Methods of Charles F. Murphy" (M.A. thesis, Columbia University, 1930), pp. 77. There were reports that the state leaders were less eager to pressure Smith to run again in 1924 than John W. Davis was. NYT, January 10, 1926; Smith, Up to Now, p. 291.

of the proposed individual or that person's politics but simply on the recommendation of the retiring incumbent, whose judgment Smith trusted.<sup>52</sup>

Smith's appointment of the first Governor's Cabinet in 1927 provides the best evidence of his reliance on experience, satisfactory service, and "the ability, the integrity and the fitness of the appointee and his capacity properly to serve the State"; the Cabinet's members, a majority of whom were Protestants, included many Republicans. Although Smith continued to be attacked for his "Tammanization" of appointments, he was more frequently praised, by civil service reformers and by impartial observers, for his "excellent" record.<sup>53</sup>

It is curious, as William V. Shannon has pointed out, that Tammany had Governor William Sulzer impeached in 1913 in large part because of his unfriendly patronage policy but went along with Smith despite his paying even less heed to Tammany. Perhaps, as Shannon has suggested, Tammany was more tolerant of Smith because he was one of the organization's own products. It may be too, as Flynn contended, that the Hall's leaders, especially Murphy, were too wise to pressure Smith, recognizing that he could be a success only if he had a free hand and could demonstrate his independence of the machine. Smith claimed that Murphy understood the Governor's need to prove that a Tammany East Sider could do as good a job as governor as anyone else could and that the boss told him to refuse Tammany's requested favors whenever he believed that they would hurt his record. Smith apparently encouraged the organization's leaders to believe that his success would do the party and Tammany more ultimate good than a few appointments would.<sup>54</sup>

At any rate, although Murphy and Brooklyn boss John J. McCooey were in Albany seeking patronage when Smith took office in 1919, they, and Smith's old district leader, Thomas Foley, reportedly gave orders to their machine subordinates not to pressure Smith for jobs. In fact, throughout Smith's terms upstaters applied more pressure for patronage than Tammany did. The Hall focused its attention on New York City, where

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<sup>52</sup> Smith to N.S. Spencer, October 19, 1918, and Smith to W.W. Montgomery, Jr., August 30, 1928, Civil Service Reform Association Papers, Cornell University Regional History Collection, Ithaca, New York (hereafter CU); Smith, Campaign Addresses, p. 48; NYT, October 9, 1926; Smith, Up to Now, pp. 171-172, 175-176; Flynn, You're the Boss, pp. 37-39; Moskowitz, Smith, p. 86; Josephson and Josephson, Smith, p. 213; George S. Hellman, Benjamin N. Cardozo, American Judge (New York, 1940), p. 149; Becker, "Smith," p. 100. Smith reportedly gave Tammany fewer jobs than President Wilson had or than Roosevelt later did as governor. Editorial, NYT, August 24, 1928, February 13, 1932. During 1919-1926 only 39% of ninety major appointees came from New York City and hence from Tammany. Becker, "Smith," p. 101. Smith sometimes used the tactic of filling a position on the recommendation of the retiring incumbent to avoid pressure from party leaders, who had candidates of their own for the position. George F. Chandler Memoir, CUOHC, pp. 100-102. Smith also found it useful to appoint an independent to head a patronage-filled department and then to blame this "uncontrollable" independent when he received complaints about patronage. See Josephson and Josephson, Smith, p. 214.

<sup>53</sup> S.H. Ordway to Smith, October 15, 1926, Civil Service Reform Association Papers, CU; Smith, Campaign Addresses, p. 48; NYT, May 15, 1919, August 11, 1919, October 20, 1920, May 14, 1925, October 4, 1926; Appointments by Governor Smith to Public Offices in the State of New York (pamphlet; New York, [1928]), passim; Charles Merz, "Preconvention Portraits. II. Smith of New York," Independent, CXX (January 14, 1928), 33-34, 48; Moskowitz, Smith, pp. 87-88; Bellush, Franklin D. Roosevelt as Governor of New York, pp. 29-33. Smith even appointed a Republican to be his personal secretary in 1924. Moskowitz, Smith, p. 88.

<sup>54</sup> Goldstein Memoir, CUOHC, pp. 24-25; Smith, Up to Now, pp. 281-282; Flynn, You're the Boss, pp. 37-39; Proskauer, A Segment of My Times, pp. 42-43; Shannon, The American Irish, pp. 170-171; Becker, "Smith," p. 100. Flynn asserted that Murphy "invariably" respected Smith's appointment wishes. Flynn, You're the Boss, pp. 37-39.

the public treasury was richer than in Albany and where Mayor Hylan was more generous than Smith was.<sup>55</sup>

Tammany, actually, had mixed feelings about Smith's "need" for independence in his appointment policy. Some district leaders and lower-level functionaries certainly resented Smith's behavior, particularly in the later years of his tenure. Tammany's resentment may have stemmed, at least in part, from its dim realization that Smith's reorganization of the state administration was creating a new, visible form of government that the political machine could not easily control and that his domination of the Hall – at least after Murphy's death – was drastically altering the old relationship between boss and governor. Smith's long-range impact was to weaken the machine, and Tammany may have perceived that by acquiescing in his patronage policy it was contributing to this weakening.<sup>56</sup>

Smith also offended Tammany by surrounding himself with an inner circle composed largely of independent political advisers: the "Kitchen Cabinet." In addition to his old friends from the organization, men like Robert F. Wagner and James A. Foley, Smith availed himself of the services of people like Henry and Belle L. Moskowitz, Robert Moses, Joseph M. Proskauer, Abram I. Elkus, Bernard L. Shientag, and Herbert H. Lehman. These individuals were resented because they were not of machine origins – most, in fact, had been anti-Tammany – and because they were "high-brow" idealists who scoffed at traditional machine mores and methods and looked at matters from the point of view of their state or national implications rather than their local impact. That most members of the Kitchen Cabinet were Jews increased the antagonism, as did the fact that Smith's closest adviser, Belle Moskowitz, was a woman. Smith undoubtedly was aware of this antipathy, but he was also aware that the members of the Kitchen Cabinet furnished him with services such as bill drafting, the writing of articles, publicity, and research that the older advisers could not provide, or, at least, provide well.<sup>57</sup>

Tammany's resentment of Smith's "new" advisers<sup>58</sup> was only part of a more general concern it had: the suspicion that Smith had lost touch with his origins and comrades in the Lower East Side and had fallen in with a silk-stocking, uptown crowd. To some extent this was true, for Smith, particularly in the late 1920s, acquired a "golfing cabinet" of friends who had started as poor boys and had then "made it" in business. Although not all of these men were directly involved in politics, Tammany saw their proximity to Smith as a threat to itself. It grumbled that all these nonorganization people insulated

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<sup>55</sup> NYT, January 3, 1919, May 10, 1925; Hapgood and Moskowitz, Up from the City Streets, pp. 51, 175-176.

<sup>56</sup> Baruch to George Fort Milton, May 2, 1928, Baruch Papers, PU; NYT, November 7, 1924, September 20, 1925; Editorial, August 24, 1928, November 9, 1928; "What! Al Ritzing N'Yawk?" Patches, I (February 12, 1927), 11; Lippmann, "Tammany Hall and Al Smith," Outlook, CXLVII (February 1, 1928), 165; Henry F. Pringle, "What's Happened to Tammany?" Outlook, CLII (May 15, 1929), 83-86, 117; Pringle, Smith, pp. 15-20; Shannon, The American Irish, pp. 173-174, 352; Crown, "The Development of Democratic Government in the State of New York," p. 134.

<sup>57</sup> NYT, October 25, 1926, March 24, 1927, May 11, 1928, May 17, 1928, September 23, 1928; Joseph McGoldrick, "The New Tammany," American Mercury, XV (September, 1928), 2; Denis Tilden Lynch, "Friends of the Governor," North American Review, CCXXVI (October, 1928), 420-428; Louis Seibold, "The Morals of Tammany," North American Review, CCXXVI (November, 1928), 525-530; Pringle, Smith, pp. 15-20, 62, 70-72; Handlin, Smith, pp. 74-77; Josephson and Josephson, Smith, p. 285; Nevins, Lehman, p. 93; Shannon, The American Irish, pp. 170-171; Karg, "Moskowitz," pp. 2-6, 27-31.

<sup>58</sup> Smith's "new" political advisers were new only from Tammany's perspective; many of them had been with Smith from 1918. Josephson and Josephson, Smith, p. 127-128, 192, 219.

Smith from his old political friends and that Smith did not consult with Tammany as he should.<sup>59</sup>

Quite apart from his appointment policy, some of Smith's other actions as governor irritated Tammany. Although Smith occasionally signed minor bills in which the organization was interested, he sometimes acted adversely to Tammany's interests. For example, he once pressed an investigation that the machine's district attorney was stalling; and, in a scandal that clearly tested his loyalty to both the Hall and clean government, he took prompt action admired even by Republican leaders. Smith's delay in signing the 1923 bill that repealed the New York prohibition enforcement statute is another instance when Smith annoyed Tammany by considering more than its interests before he acted.<sup>60</sup>

As early as 1920 observers detected signs that Smith was becoming the senior member in the partnership between boss and governor. After Murphy's death in April, 1924, Smith's interventions in New York City politics proved that he had become the organization's true leader. He directed the search for a successor to Murphy, and the eventual selection, George W. Olvany, was a long-time Smith friend and former aide. Olvany was widely regarded as merely Smith's steward, even though, with Smith's public concurrence, he pronounced himself to be the leader of Tammany and impervious to domination by anyone. Smith obviously owed Olvany nothing, and his relationship with Tammany's chief after 1924 was profoundly different from what it had been before that date.<sup>61</sup>

The change in Tammany's leadership and Smith's big electoral victory in 1924 gave Smith the leverage to intervene in the 1925 New York City mayoralty race, the only one to coincide with his four terms as governor. Although Smith did not make his position public until August, 1925, he had decided as early as January of that year to try to dump Hylan. Smith had many reasons for acting. Hylan had close ties to Hearst and had led the fight for him in the 1922 state convention. Smith had long thought the mayor ill-equipped for his position and differed with Hylan over a number of issues. Publicly, Smith justified his intervention by raising the third-term issue (Hylan had been elected

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<sup>59</sup> Baruch to Milton, May 2, 1928, Baruch Papers, PU; NYT, October 25, 1926, November 9, 1928; "What! Al Ritzing N'Yawk?" Patches, I (February 12, 1927), 11; Broun, "It Seems to Heywood Broun," Nation, CXXVII (July 18, 1928), 58; Pringle, "What's Happened to Tammany?" Outlook, CLII (May 15, 1929), 85; Pringle, Smith, pp. 15-20; [Tucker], Mirrors of 1932, pp. 33-52. Smith's golfing cabinet included William F. Kenny, William H. Todd, George Getz, James J. Riordan, James J. Hoey, William Humphrey, and John J. Raskob.

<sup>60</sup> Machold to Bertram Snell, March 23, 1928, in Mills Papers, LC; Flynn Memoir, CUOHC, pp. 3-4; NYT, May 16, 1923, May 21, 1923, May 23, 1923, May 24, 1923, May 26, 1923, May 28, 1923, December 24, 1926, June 22, 1927, January 6, 1928; Hamilton A. Long, Roosevelt or Smith? (pamphlet; [New York, 1932]), pp. 46-48; Flynn, You're the Boss, pp. 40-41; O'Connor, The First Hurrah, pp. 142-143; James Wyman Barrett, Joseph Pulitzer and His World (New York, 1941), pp. 369-370. The repeal of the prohibition enforcement statute in 1923 will be described in Chapter Three.

<sup>61</sup> NYT, May 6, 1920, August 2, 1920, July 13, 1924, July 15, 1924, July 3, 1925; "A 'White Collar' Boss for Tammany," World's Work, XLVIII (September, 1924), 467-468; "Tammany's New Chief," Literary Digest, LXXXII (July 26, 1924), 9-10; Pringle, "What's Happened to Tammany?" Outlook, CLII (May 15, 1929), 84, 86; Smith, Up to Now, p. 282; Flynn, You're the Boss, p. 49; Hapgood and Moskowitz, Up from the City Streets, p. 140; Josephson and Josephson, Smith, p. 319. The death of Tom Foley early in 1925 removed Smith's other political mentor. See NYT, January 16, 1925; and Josephson and Josephson, Smith, p. 319.

first in 1917 and then re-elected in 1921) and by implying that Hylan had stood in the way of the city's progress.<sup>62</sup>

Smith could depose Hylan only if a suitable alternative could be found, and he presided over the search for one throughout early 1925. Smith could not persuade his personal choice, James A. Foley, to make the race, just as he had not been able to convince Foley to succeed Murphy in 1924. Some New York City leaders proposed the popular Jimmy Walker, but Smith was initially adverse to his friend's nomination, largely because of Walker's near-scandalous private life. After obliging Walker to promise that he would behave and take the mayor's job seriously, however, Smith abandoned his opposition, and Tammany settled on Walker as its candidate in the primary.<sup>63</sup>

When Hylan contested the primary, Smith, allegedly as a private citizen, campaigned actively for Walker, and he also spoke for Walker in the general election. Walker's victories in both contests were generally credited to Smith's influence and prestige. The Governor's prestige was, however, now tied directly to the success of Walker's administration: in the erratic playboy Smith had given a "hostage to fortune."<sup>64</sup>

The 1925 mayoralty issue held two major implications for Smith's political career. First, it was a test of his leadership of Tammany, which was forced to choose between Hylan, with his extensive patronage, and Smith, with his power. The incident also affected Smith's national reputation; inaction would have given Hylan (and Hearst) the opportunity to undermine Smith's support in the 1928 New York delegation, but defeat at any stage would have raised questions about Smith's political judgment and his influence and would have guaranteed a challenge from the mayor and the publisher in 1928. Inevitably, though, some in Tammany resented Smith's deposition of Hylan as well as the need to behave circumspectly lest Smith's national image be somehow tarnished.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> NYT, May 11, 1924, August 3, 1924, December 3, 1924, December 4, 1924, April 12, 1925, April 24, 1925, May 7, 1925, June 18, 1925, June 21, 1925, July 3, 1925, August 9, 1925, August 10, 1925, August 14, 1925, August 27, 1925, August 28, 1925, September 19, 1925; Ray Tucker, "Tammany Gives a Hostage to Fortune," Independent, CXV (December 26, 1925), 728-729; Smith, Up to Now, pp. 332-333; Flynn, You're the Boss, pp. 41-51; Warner, The Happy Warrior, p. 80; Hapgood and Moskowitz, Up from the City Streets, pp. 145-147; Josephson and Josephson, Smith, p. 319; Fowler, Beau James, pp. 145-148; Eldot, MS. Although Smith had tried to stay out of the city's affairs, he had sometimes intervened, as in the search for Murphy's successor as well as for a successor for Tom Foley. See NYT, January 23, 1925, January 25, 1925; and Fowler, Beau James, p. 97. At the same time as Smith secured Walker's nomination, he forced the Tammany Hall Executive Committee to accept his choice in a dispute over the Manhattan borough presidential nominee. Smith reportedly induced the rival to withdraw by promising him a judgeship. See NYT, August 12, 1925. Smith had run with Hylan in 1917 but quickly discovered the mayor's weaknesses. Smith campaigned rather unenthusiastically for Hylan's re-election in 1921, but in 1925 he seized the opportunity to purge him and remove Hearst's influence altogether. Hylan only nominally supported Smith's 1924 presidential candidacy. NYT, October 26, 1921, May 11, 1924, June 4, 1924, July 11, 1924.

<sup>63</sup> NYT, June 17, 1925, June 18, 1925; Flynn, You're the Boss, pp. 49-51; Fowler, Beau James, pp. 141-148. Smith compelled Walker to accept a Smith aide, George V. McLaughlin, as police commissioner to clean up the department. McLaughlin's actions, however, angered Tammany, and he was soon forced out. Some of this anger was directed at Smith. See NYT, October 25, 1926; Pringle, "What's Happened to Tammany?" Outlook, CLII (May 15, 1929), 84; Pringle, Smith, p. 17; and Josephson and Josephson, Smith, pp. 322, 423.

<sup>64</sup> NYT, August 14, 1925, August 28, 1925, November 1, 1925, November 5, 1925; T.R.B., "Washington Notes," New Republic, XLIV (September 30, 1925), 152-153; Editorial, New Republic, XLIV (October 14, 1925), 188; Tucker, "Tammany Gives a Hostage to Fortune," Independent, CXV (December 26, 1925), 728-729.

<sup>65</sup> Smith to Baruch, December 26, 1925, Baruch Papers, PU; Frank A. Hampton to William G. McAdoo, October 20, 1926, Frank A. Hampton Papers, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina (hereafter DU); NYT, April 12, 1925, April 24, 1925, April 28, 1925, May 7, 1925, May 10, 1925, May 17, 1925, May 25, 1925, July 3, 1925, July

Tammany's animosity toward Smith's appointment policy, his alleged remoteness, his unfavorable official actions, and his domination of the organization boiled over into subterranean factiousness and bitterness. Some of the district leaders, led by John F. Curry, were less interested in improving Tammany's reputation and in state and national affairs – including Smith's presidential candidacy – than they were in the conventional concerns of local patronage and graft. These men, a substantial minority in the Hall while Smith was still governor, were inclined to blame Smith for all the troubles that Tammany was facing. Smith, like Murphy before him, applied pressure on these narrow-minded district leaders and kept them under a certain degree of discipline. He could not, however, drive them out, and they captured control of the Tammany leadership after his defeat in 1928.<sup>66</sup>

While he was in office, Smith was able to keep these men in line because he had power and he knew too much about them and their methods. Also, they were aware that they could not control the state without Smith, and although Smith did not assist Tammany as much as they thought he should, at least he did not repudiate it and attempt to arouse public sentiment against his old organization. Smith, as a matter of fact, publicly defended Tammany and lent it some of his personal prestige; he drew many responsible and valuable new people into the organization, and his reputation provided a shield against criticism. The concept of the "new Tammany," which had begun to be accepted in Murphy's time, was firmly established only when Smith became the Hall's sovereign. He was given credit as early for 1922 for reforming Tammany, and by 1928 even many of Tammany's critics acclaimed Smith for this achievement.<sup>67</sup>

In summary, Smith's record in New York politics established his credentials as a first-rate professional politician. He had demonstrated that he was an excellent campaigner and strategist, an effective chief executive, and an astute manipulator of public opinion and that he was proficient at outflanking the opposition and at commanding his own forces. It remained to be seen how well this state experience would serve Smith in

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11, 1925, August 11, 1925, Editorial, August 14, 1925, August 20, 1925, August 23, 1925, August 30, 1925, September 6, 1925; "The Smith-Hylan Battle," Literary Digest, LXXXVI (September 12, 1925), 8-9; Pringle, "What's Happened to Tammany?" Outlook, CLII (May 15, 1929), 83-86, 117. Smith himself reportedly saw the Hylan affair as a test of Olvany's leadership, not his own. See W.T. Arndt to W.J. Schieffelin, July 13, 1925, Citizens' Union Papers, ColU. Walker apparently shared Tammany's resentment at Smith. See Fowler, Beau James, pp. 97-98. Such petty things as the preponderance of Smith's personal friends in the New York delegation in 1928 and the lack of liquor on the train to the convention made many Tammanyites feel that Smith considered their interests as secondary to his national image. See NYT, February 13, 1928, March 1, 1928; and Pringle, "What's Happened to Tammany?" Outlook, CLII (May 15, 1929), 83-86.

<sup>66</sup> NYT, April 27, 1924, October 5, 1930; McGoldrick, "The New Tammany," American Mercury, XV (September, 1928), 3; Pringle, "What's Happened to Tammany?" Outlook, CLII (May 15, 1929), 83-86, 117-118; Charles Garrett, The LaGuardia Years: Machine and Reform Politics in New York City (New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1961), pp. 59-62. For Smith's oblique attacks on some district leaders, see Smith, The Citizen and His Government, pp. 18, 38.

<sup>67</sup> NYT, May 23, 1923, May 10, 1925, July 5, 1925, July 6, 1926, Editorial, April 26, 1929; "The Election," Outlook, CXXXII (November 15, 1922), 463; "Governor Smith's Triumph," Outlook, CXLIV (November 10, 1926), 326; Lippmann, "Tammany Hall and Al Smith," Outlook, CXLVIII (February 1, 1928), 164-165; "Pretty Pussy!" Colliers, LXXXI (June 30, 1928), 40; Seibold, "The Morals of Tammany," North American Review, CCXXVI (November, 1928), 525-530; "Back to the Jungle," Nation, CXXVIII (May 8, 1929), 549-550; Villard, Prophets True and False, pp. 15-16; Garrett, The LaGuardia Years, pp. 56, 59-62. Perhaps the best indication of Smith's reputed influence over Tammany was the speculation that the Citizens' Union and other civic groups might endorse the anti-Hylan Tammany candidate in 1925, whoever he might be, simply because they considered Smith's participation in the selection process a guarantee of the man's fitness. NYT, April 26, 1925.

national politics and how well he would adjust to the requirements of the political world beyond the Hudson. Indeed, his very discernment of that world was subject to question.