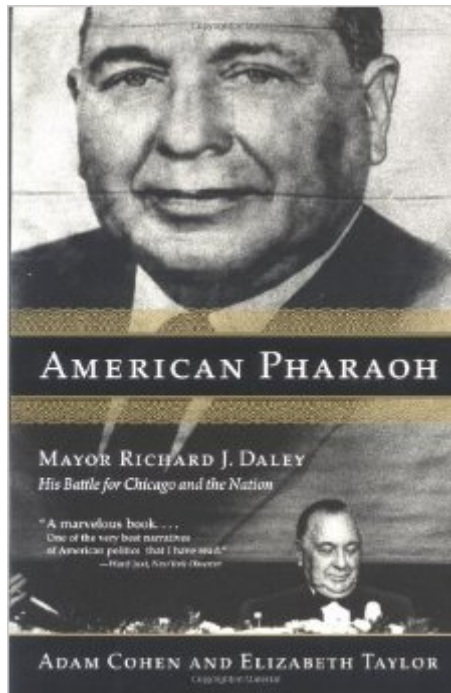


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American Pharaoh: Mayor Richard J. Daley - His Battle For Chicago And The Nation



Synopsis

Now in paperback comes the story of Richard J. Daley, the last of the big city bosses, the patriarch of a political dynasty, and a major national figure in American urban politics. of photos.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Born and raised in Chicago, I have always been fascinated by the personal life and public career of Richard J. Daley, arguably the city's greatest mayor whose son Richard now serves in that office. Years ago, in his book about Daley, Mike Royko suggested at least some of the parameters within which Cohen and Taylor now analyze "The Boss." They provide a wealth of information. I would have rated this biography higher had the authors probed more deeply into much of that material in order to answer so many questions I still have about Daley. For example, what do Daley's successes and failures as a public servant reveal about the political and social worlds in which they occurred? During the years he served as mayor, could he have achieved these same successes without maintaining absolute control of the city's political system? What did Daley share in common with those in control of the Chicago syndicate? To what extent were there strategic alliances with them? Why? If Daley was as corrupt as so many have claimed, why has no incontrovertible evidence of that corruption been presented? The authors have much to say about Daley's relationship with Chicago's black community. This was an uneasy, at times hostile relationship. To what extent was Daley's leadership as mayor a reflection of the community (Bridgeport) in which he was born and raised? Did he hate blacks? Did he fear them? Or is there another explanation of his attitude toward them? Ancient pharaohs were on occasion benevolent to those whom they viewed

as inferior as were, more recently, plantation owners in the Deep South. Perhaps Cohen and Taylor had this in mind when they selected their title.

AMERICAN PHARAOH by Cohen and Taylor contains 614 pages and 16 pages of black and white (not glossy) photographs. The book focuses on Mr. Daley's technique of ensuring cooperation through the use of patronage jobs, and on Daley's methods for keeping black people segregated in black-only housing projects. Hundreds and hundreds of pages are devoted to race relations. However, topics relating to business development are given short shrift. Daley's methods for converting Chicago from its dilapidated state in the 1950s to the gleaming showpiece that it became in the 1970s receive only a few pages of writing. In this regard, AMERICAN PHARAOH is a strangely lopsided book.

PATRONAGE JOBS. Patronage jobs are distinguished from civil service jobs. Patronage jobs are awarded by ward bosses, while civil service jobs are not. The mayor preceding Daley (Martin Kennelly) was anti-patronage and had a war on patronage. He had insisted on using civil service exams in the hiring methods. Patronage workers are government workers who knew their jobs were at stake, unless they contributed time and money to election campaigns. (pages 92, 116, 121, 122). Chicago had 50 wards. Each ward was allotted a number of patronage jobs. For example, Daley's political base, the 11th ward, had 2,000 patronage jobs (p. 156). For any given branch of city government, from 50-75% might be patronage jobs. Each job applicant needed to document his precinct work, in applying for the job. For Daley's benefit, each patronage job was equivalent to getting ten free votes (p. 159).

PASSIVE HYPOCRACY. When faced with issues of segregation in schools or public housing, or violence in public housing, Daley responded with "vague expressions of sympathy," that is, with "passive hypocrisy."

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