

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

Building a Latino Machine: Corruption, Integration, and Machine Politics in East Chicago,
Indiana, 1945-2010

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Field of History

By

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EVANSTON, ILLINOIS

September 2022

Abstract

This dissertation is a case study of one midwestern city and its Latinx inhabitants. It explores the intertwined pursuit by ethnic Mexicans and Puerto Ricans of inclusion in union and electoral politics. The world of machine politics offered ethnic Mexicans and Puerto Ricans an avenue for inclusion. Central to this pursuit is the willingness of these communities to engage corrupt practices. The narrative traces the transition of Latinos from cogs in the pre-existing political machine, to eventually becoming the machine itself. During this transition, these communities engaged in unethical political behavior, including kickbacks, patronage politics, and vote tampering. Journalists across the United States framed East Chicago in the 1970s as “the last political machine in America.” However, U.S. historians primarily focus on corruption within the framework of ethnic ward bosses in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. I extend the discussion of machine politics, labor’s influence, and corruption in the mid-to-late twentieth century, to explore how a community pursued inclusion in a system notorious for backroom dealing.

Through decades of legal proceedings involving corruption, newspaper articles, and archival material, I argue that Latinos strived for inclusion (and gained representation) in a corrupt system. For the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community, participating in machine politics - and to a lesser extent resisting - provided them tangible benefits in exchange. Whether elected or appointed, Latinos actively engaged in silencing dissent, patronage politics, kickbacks, and numerous other unethical and, in some cases, illegal behavior. These individuals who paved the way for representation became silent and complicit members of the machine or actively corrupt agents themselves.

Acknowledgment

Over the last eleven years, I have had the fantastic opportunity to attend three exceptional academic institutions. From my four years at Wabash College to my two years at Purdue University Northwest to my five years as a part of Northwestern University, I have engaged with stellar scholars, interacted with many amazing peers and colleagues, and learned from dozens of students. This project and my development as a scholar would not have been possible without the support, encouragement, and engagement of the following people and countless others.

Thank you to the outstanding professors at Wabash College who challenged and continuously pushed that clueless young man from East Chicago: David Blix, Jeremy Hartnett, Tobey Herzog, Jill Lamberton, Michelle Rhoades, Warren Rosenberg, and Richard Warner. However, a special appreciation for Aminta Perez, who always took the time to check in on me and many others struggling with the new environment of Crawfordsville, Indiana. Without your not so gentle push for me to consider graduate school, I would not be where I am today. Everything I do and anything I accomplish is because you saw something in me that I did not.

It was a joy to gain my first experience as a graduate student at Purdue University Northwest. I met many amazing friends there and worked with some outstanding teachers and scholars. Thank you to the fantastic staff at Upward Bound and the excellent high school students I worked with while there. And a special thanks to my professors: Kenneth Kincaid, Saul Lerner, Kathleen Tobin, and Wendy St. Jean.

From the waitlist to joining such a welcoming and friendly cohort, I consider myself extremely fortunate to have worked and learned at Northwestern University for the last five years. I've

enjoyed learning from so many of you. Thank you, John Alba Cutler, Henry Binford, Lina Britto, Caitlin Fitz, Paul Gillingham, Sean Hanretta, Susan Pearson, Paul Ramirez, Michael Sherry, and Keith Woodhouse.

A special appreciation to my committee, I've benefited so much from each of your insights and having your mentorship. Thank you, Kevin Boyle, for bringing our shared interest in labor and the working class to the table. Kate Masur, I appreciate all of your insights into this project, its situation in political history, and its continuation of the political machines of the past. Your detailed feedback was instrumental in moving the project along. Sergio González, I am so grateful for your willingness to share your experiences writing and navigating the job market with me. I look forward to many years of conversation about the Latinx Midwest with you and others. Lastly, Gerry Cadava, you are a rockstar advisor, fantastic mentor, and someone I will never be able to thank enough for all your faith in this often-clueless advisee.

My fellow graduate students have been not only amazing colleagues but great friends. Special thanks and love to Elizabeth Barahona, Carl Creason, Dexter Fergie, Brian Forman, Sean Harvey, Emily Lyon, Jayson Porter, Elsa De La Rosa, Angela Tate, and Rita Velasco. I benefited from two outstanding mentors, Bennett Jones and Matthew Herrera, who were instrumental in my transition into the program and tackling feelings of doubt.

Outside of the university, I want to thank my family, friends, and loved ones for their support, encouragement, and understanding over the years. Without friends and loved ones like my Brothers at the Phi Gam house at Wabash College, my close friends from the old neighborhood, or the great folks at the Standard Underground Society, I don't know how I would have stayed

sane throughout these years. Thank you to my loving and supporting family. From the care packages made with love from my grandparents to my parents and stepparents and all my siblings and cousins, you have been nothing short of an abundance of love; lastly, to my partner, Loren E. Whitman, and our three cats for ensuring years of love and laughter. I am sorry you had to cope with my music during the pandemic-era dissertating.

I am grateful for the people who have assisted with this project. Harriet Lightman left me with a dozen new threads to pull after any conversation. East Chicago City Clerk Rich Medina and his predecessor, Adrian Santos, and their staff, for opening the doors of their office and granting me access to the municipal collections there. Ruth Needleman for letting me view their private collection of steelworker memorabilia. Nicole Martinez-LeGrand at the Indiana Historical Society (and a fellow East Chicagoan) for her dedication to preserving and sharing the history of Latinas and Latinos in Indiana. Jim Lane and Steve McShane of the Calumet Regional Archive for their shared passion for the region's history. For his support and assistance in translating the lawyer lingo into something understandable, even for me, Attorney Richard Morrisroe. The project would be nothing without those that have opened their lives and experiences to me: Morry, Barak, Antonio Barreda, Julie Cordova, James Dawson, Charles Johnson, Gerry Magallan, Frederick Maravilla, Carmelo Melendez, and Kathy Wilczynski. Lastly, Suzana Bursich of the East Chicago Public Library, for all of your knowledge and insight into the vast holdings of the East Chicago History Room. Although sometimes we weren't sure what would turn up, it never failed to disappoint. This project was made possible by each one of you.

To my grandparents, Francisco and Rosalia Aguilar.

A mis abuelos, Francisco y Rosalía Aguilar.

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Introduction: “The Region Way”: Corruption and Structures of Political Power in East Chicago, Indiana

In 2011, as a senior in high school, I became “Mayor of East Chicago” albeit for just one day. My campaign for the mayoral office did not include any of the usual shaking hands, kissing babies, and backroom deals. Instead, I wrote an essay on how I would change East Chicago if in office. At a city council meeting, I called for various reforms, that reflected my understanding of the city’s political needs. Most of them revolved around issues of transparency. I argued that spending within departments and council districts needed to be accessible and clearly tracked. I also questioned the practices of salaries, which outpaced the average income of residents, and individuals holding multiple positions within the city. Perhaps no person was prouder of me than my grandfather, Francisco Aguilar. After the meeting, he began planning for the inevitable mayoral campaign (still pending). A retired steelworker and active member and former president of the Union Benéfica Mexicana, a mutual aid society in East Chicago, my grandfather quickly started rattling off the various businesses and homes where I would be able to put signs, from an auto garage to a junkyard, neither in East Chicago but both owned by friends of my grandfather. I gained insight into how he, as an immigrant to East Chicago in the 1960s, understood politics, campaigning, and power.

My experience as Mayor of East Chicago for a day came at a pivotal moment in my hometown’s history. In 2010, during a caucus of the precinct committee in East Chicago, the group appointed Anthony Copeland as the city’s first Black mayor.¹ This decision came after his predecessor, the first Latino mayor of the city, George Pabey, was removed from office for

¹ See: “3 candidates seek to oust Pabey,” *The Times*, September 7, 2010; “E.C. mayor is Copeland’s job to keep or to lose,” *The Times*, October 17, 2010; and “Mayor Copeland: Humbled at the helm,” *The Times*, October 19, 2010.

utilizing city funds and employees to rehabilitate a lakefront beach house in September of 2010.² The highly-publicized affair was not the first instance of corruption in my life and especially not the first within the region. In *Crooked Politics in Northwest Indiana*, journalist Jerry Davich claimed that the tri-city region of Hammond, Gary, and East Chicago formed “a kind of Bermuda Triangle for crooked politics.” The work even claimed that Lake County was “ground zero for Hoosier corruption.”³ Davich argued that “the region way” of political corruption was the result of the rich industrial tax base.⁴

The idea of machine politics and corruption as a part of “the region way” became ingrained in the identity of East Chicagoans. One of my earliest paid jobs was distributing campaign literature for candidates who were friends with my mother. Little did I understand at the time, that my labor contributed to the long tradition of Latina and Latino political activity in East Chicago. In 1999, longtime Mayor of East Chicago, Robert A. Pastrick claimed that “East Chicago has always been a very political community since Day One, as long as I’ve lived here.”⁵ However, this hyper-political activity in the community did not necessarily translate into virtuous civic duty. The authors of a 2019 journal article labeled East Chicago as a “cornucopia of corruption.”⁶ As I discuss in later chapters, a lot of blame for East Chicago’s corruption has to do with the idea that it’s an exceptional place, or an outlier, much like the entire county, where corruption is isolated and left to thrive. For many, the supposedly bygone days of political

² See: “East Chicago mayor indicted,” *The Times*, February 4, 2010 and “Felon ejector seat created by ’08 law,” *The Times*, October 4, 2010.

³ Jerry Davich, *Crooked Politics in Northwest Indiana* (Charleston, SC: History Press, 2017), 15 & 49.

⁴ Davich, *Crooked Politics*, 145.

⁵ “Last City Machine in America,” *Indiana Business Magazine* March, 1999. Mayor Robert Pastrick folder at East Chicago Public Library Main Branch, East Chicago Room.

⁶ Tina Ebenger and Tracey McCabe, “East Chicago Politics: A Cornucopia of Corruption,” *Midwest Social Sciences Journal* vol. 22 no. 1 (2019).

bosses, encapsulated in our imaginary by figures like Boss Tweed and Richard Daley, remained constant presences in this smaller, industrial hub.

Whether or not a “region way” exists, what do the changing demographics in this area mean for the enduring presence of corruption? This dissertation, “Building a Latino Machine,” traces the history of Latino and Latina politics from the Postwar Era to the early years of the twenty-first century, concluding with Pabey’s removal from office that led to a brief takeover and creation of a Latino political machine. By navigating the political machine and utilizing it as a tool for their inclusion, ethnic Mexicans and Puerto Ricans gained a foundational understanding of their new political world. As relative newcomers to the Midwest, their engagement with and understanding of machine politics became a learning experience and path to political power for the two groups. In exploring the history of the political incorporation of East Chicago’s Latina and Latino community, this project offers several interventions in the field of Latinx History, political, and labor history.

First, I show how the predominantly ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican communities fought for representation and inclusion into the primarily ethnic European-run political machine.⁷ These various pursuits, in both union and municipal politics, provided them access to patronage positions and introduced them to the world of political loyalty and power through the personal connections that made the machine durable. As relative newcomers to an industrial region of dozens of immigrant groups, ethnic Mexicans and Puerto Ricans encountered a political world of backroom deals, and in exchange for their votes, favors. Only through their engagement, via

⁷ I utilize the term ethnic Mexicans to discuss both Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants that resided in East Chicago.

voting and canvassing for machine candidates, who often won, did these communities gain access to political power. This power allowed representatives to provide patronage to their supporters in the form of employment in city departments, such as the school district and parks and recreation. The adoption of the political machine's tactics as a means to gain representation allow for a more complex understanding of Latina and Latino politics. Instead of the traditional narrative of reform and an innately progressive community, these tactics highlight a fairly conservative pursuit for representation that often competed with more radical, progressive, or activist demands in municipalities.

Second, ethnic Mexicans and Puerto Ricans became an integral part of a corrupt political machine as they pursued political inclusion and power in their city. Members of the community, whether politicians, aspiring candidates, or everyday residents, encountered the machine differently. Some used the machine's connections to gain office only to find their political careers cut short when they refused to comply with the demands of their political bosses. Others became willing agents for the machine, participating in bringing out supporters to vote for candidates, and sometimes participating in the illicit actions of machine politics. These actions included setting up ghost payrolls, paying people for work not completed, collecting a portion of the paychecks, or procuring votes through public works projects. Residents who found themselves on the margins of power decried some tactics and operations as corrupt, such as the network of connections needed to gain municipal employment or the inability to get access to public works improvements without promising to vote for specific candidates. At the core of this tension between residents and political officials were the intertwined threads of power and representation. Did an elected Latino represent their community effectively by utilizing their

power to uplift supporters of the patronage system? By adopting these measures and maintaining a degree of amicability, Latinos and Latinas gained a form of political capital to gain access to municipal services and employment.

Structures of Power in East Chicago: Exceptional? Or a Laboratory?

The East Chicago that ethnic Mexicans and Puerto Ricans encountered shaped their political identities. As relative newcomers, these communities discovered specific structures of power that facilitated their assimilation and integration into the community. The industrialization of the area in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century is crucial to gaining insight into how a robust political machine developed. Additionally, these characteristics and structures of political power begin to highlight the distinctiveness of this case study about a midwestern industrial community and its Latina and Latino inhabitants.

Situated at the southern tip of Lake Michigan, in Northwest Indiana, East Chicago is quite literally east of its namesake, within its shadow even if across the state line. When I mention where I am from, many folks often assume I mean Chicago, Illinois, and not East Chicago, Indiana. Like its neighbors of Hammond, Gary, and Whiting, East Chicago continued the industrial sprawl of Chicago's south side. The area is a satellite of Chicago. East Chicago's landscape, culture, infrastructure, and even politics are more closely aligned with Chicago than Indianapolis. Central to this commonality is the industrial landscape of East Chicago, which at its height was only zoned 10.7% for residential housing and over 70% zoned for industrial uses.⁸ The vast industrial sector provided the majority of employment for East Chicagoans, as well as a

⁸ Julian Samora, *Mexican Americans in a Midwest Metropolis*. (Mexican American Study Project: University of California, Los Angeles, 1967), 12.

rich tax base for the city. The relationship between the city and the steel industry meant that for some politics became a way to escape the harsh realities of the steel mill. For others, their experiences as union members is what politicized them. Their participation in unions carried over to their participation in municipal politics, as voters, precinct committee persons, and officeholders.

As a small, industrial city, East Chicago is not unique. Within the region, East Chicago was another extension of Chicago's industrial sprawl that extended to neighboring cities. During the Gilded Age, various business interests turned to the underdeveloped marshland for new enterprises. Arguably, the most important developments for the region included the construction of Inland Steel (1901) and the Indiana Harbor Ship Canal (1903).⁹ These two economic developments served as important stages in the industrialization of East Chicago.

Despite Inland Steel's relatively small size, it proved an instrumental part of the region's economic growth and development. Within a decade, Inland Steel employed 2,600 workers and in the 1920s it produced 2% of all steel produced in the country. In the Postwar Era, Inland became one of the 10 largest steel companies in the United States and employed 25,000 people.¹⁰ East Chicago, and the broader Calumet Region of Southeast Chicago and Northwest Indiana, produced 20% of the steel in the United States, entrenching its economic importance for the region and country.¹¹

⁹ Workers of the Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Indiana, *The Calumet Region Historical Guide: Containing the Early History of the Region as Well as the Contemporary Scene Within the Cities of Gary, Hammond, East Chicago (including Indiana Harbor), and Whiting*. (Garman Publishing Company, 1939), 218.

¹⁰ Jonathan Keyes, "Inland Steel Co.," in *Encyclopedia of Chicago*.

¹¹ David Bensman and Mark R. Wilson, "Iron and Steel" in *Encyclopedia of Chicago*.

Because the steel industry required thousands of individuals to labor within the mills, East Chicago's population quickly grew from 3,411 in 1900 to 19,098 in 1910.¹² Within another decade, the city's population rose to 54,784 and was approximately 40% foreign-born.¹³ Many of these foreign-born residents of East Chicago were Poles, Hungarians, Austrians, Greeks, and Czechs. However, the steel industry also attracted Black migrants from the South and ethnic Mexicans. The ethnic Mexican community accounted for 18% of the city's population in 1930.¹⁴ These populations became increasingly important in the wake of national immigration legislation that restricted eastern and southeastern European immigrants. As Michael Innis-Jiménez noted in *Steel Barrio*, the majority of ethnic Mexicans arrived in the region to work in the region's steel mills.¹⁵ In the 1940s and 1950s, Puerto Rican residents joined as the newest group to arrive and labor within the region's steel.

Over time, the continued migration of ethnic Mexicans and Puerto Ricans redefined the industrial, lakefront community. As Llana Barber argues in her work on Lawrence, Massachusetts, "Throughout the nation, immigrants have completely reconfigured the demographics, economies, and public cultures of many small cities."¹⁶ The same could be said of East Chicago. In 2010, the Latina and Latino population of East Chicago was a majority of the city at 50.9%. Although a fraction of the city's postwar size, the population of 29,698 people consisted of 15,105 Latinas and Latinos, who were overwhelmingly ethnic Mexican (11,819)

¹² Powell Moore, *The Calumet Region: Indiana's Last Frontier*. (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1959), 249.

¹³ Fifteenth Census of the United States (1930): Population, 3: pt. 1:700.

¹⁴ Moore, *The Calumet Region*, 251-252.

¹⁵ Michael Innis-Jiménez, *Steel Barrio: The Great Mexican Migration to South Chicago, 1915-1940*. (New York: New York University Press, 2013), 6.

¹⁶ Llana Barber, *Latino City: Immigration and Urban Crisis in Lawrence, Massachusetts, 1945-2000* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 11.

with a smaller number of Puerto Ricans (2,528) and Central Americans (160).¹⁷ These communities found themselves drawn to the region's steel mill, as discussed more in the first chapter, and worked to forge their connections with their fellow Latinas and Latinos, and other ethnic groups in East Chicago. For many, politics and political engagement offered a clear experience to integrate themselves into East Chicago's world and carve out their place within it.

East Chicago's status as a smaller industrial city provides several methodological benefits for this project. In a big city such as Chicago, where a mayor could ignore certain communities so long as their coalition represents part of a majority. Large cities often have dozens of alderman districts in which machine candidates serve as representatives within their neighborhoods for the overall centralized machine. Within these larger cities, a centralized machine could consist of multiple smaller, political machines. In this context, a few anti-machine candidates could be easily forgotten. By contrast, smaller cities like East Chicago offer an opportunity to explore the intimate connections between neighbors, districts, and officials. While in larger cities, a machine's control over a majority of alderman positions proved a daunting task, smaller cities have a lower threshold for control. East Chicago's six council districts and three at-large positions meant that the machine could not easily forget or ignore dissent. Contentious political races turned ugly, as discussed in chapters five and six, as neighbors backed different candidates. Antics and resentment could often become personal.

What structures of power did these communities encounter in East Chicago? The political machine of their new community was a hierarchical structure that emphasized the smallest unit

¹⁷ "East Chicago," *The Hispanic Databook: Detailed Profiles of States and 782 Places with Hispanic Population, including 23 Ethnic Backgrounds from Argentinean to Venezuelan, with Rankings and Comparisons of States Counties and Places*. Third Edition. (Grey House Publishing, 2013), 542-543.

of party organization, the precinct, under various sub-machines that pledged loyalty through votes to a political boss. Elected officials did not always head these sub-machines. For instance, Robert Segovia, an educator and eventual school administrator, achieved an important role in the machine for his work in recruiting ethnic Mexicans and Puerto Ricans to vote for machine candidates. Segovia oversaw employment in the public schools and later Parks Department. By proving his ability to deliver votes, Segovia gained further clout in providing his supporters with patronage positions in the municipality. This “spoils system” proved the core of a political machine. In a recent *Journal of American History* article about Robert La Follette, Wang Yu claimed that the hierarchical system “created political opportunities for many local politicians. They accumulated political capital in their locales and would exchange favors with the higher-level party organization to make themselves the sole agents of the organization in their respective locations.”¹⁸ The ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community quickly learned that they could collectively leverage their votes into access as full participants within the community.

Often confined to the nineteenth century and histories of the Gilded Age, scholars have a renewed interest in the permanence of corruption in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries amid the controversies surrounding the Presidential Administration of Donald J. Trump.¹⁹ The *Journal of American History's* recent "Interchange: Corruption Has a History" (March 2019) offered a

¹⁸ Wang Yu, “‘Boss’ Robert La Follette and the Paradox of the U.S. Progressive Movement,” *Journal of American History* vol. 108 no. 4 (March 2022): 727.

¹⁹ The scholarship pertaining to Gilded Age corruption and Ward Bosses is extensive. For such works see: James Q. Wilson, *The Amateur Democrat: Club politics in three cities* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962); Terry Golway, *Machine Made: Tammany Hall and the Creation of Modern American Politics* (New York: Liveright Publishing, 2014); Tyler Anbinder, *Five Points: The 19th Century New York City Neighborhood that Invented Tap Dance, Stole Elections, and Became the World's Most Notorious Slum* (New York, Free Press Publishing, 2010); Steven P. Erie, *Rainbow's End: Irish-Americans and the Dilemmas of Urban Machine Politics, 1840-1985* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1990); Richard Schneirov, *Labor and Urban Politics: Class Conflict and the Origins of Modern Liberalism in Chicago, 1864-97* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998); Mark Wahlgren Summers, *The Era of Good Stealings* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

solid foundation for corruption as a historical trend.²⁰ The insights of scholars such as Daniel J. Czitrom and David Witwer proved instrumental in forming my perspectives on this topic. Czitrom and Witwer's arguments posed a crucial problem of legality. Along with their peers in the "Interchange," they grappled over the issue of whether corruption should only be defined as instances of illegality. Does drawing a distinction between honest graft, or is the use of inside information to make money, from dishonest graft, or the use of a vice economy for monetary gains, sufficient to define corruption?²¹ This 2019 exchange served as a potent reminder that there are still numerous questions about political corruption that remain unresolved and require further scrutiny.

Defining corruption presents any scholar with numerous challenges. In their definitive account, *Corruption: What Everyone Needs to Know*, social scientists Ray Fisman and Miriam A. Golden noted that while corruption "carries negative social consequences: it harms economic efficiency, increases social inequities, and undermines the function of democracy" corruption "isn't immediately and directly harmful to everyone—and that's what makes it such an intractable problem."²²

For my project, I am utilizing the understanding of corruption as an act involving a public official who takes advantage of their office to further personal interests. Their decision, as elected or appointed members of the city's political organization, worked to bring out voters or enrich the machine's coffers. These acts are not necessarily illegal and are often not solely led by

²⁰ "Interchange: Corruption Has a History," *Journal of American History* (March 2019), 912-938.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 917.

²² Ray Fisman and Miriam A. Golden, *Corruption: What Everyone Needs to Know* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 2.

individual decisions. The willingness to engage in corrupt practices is contingent on the behavior within the community. Latino political officials thus engage with this particular form of politics that is common in their place and time. Ultimately, engaging in corruption leads to unethical practices (such as kickbacks, ghost payroll, embezzlement, etc.) and the presence of leadership unresponsive to their constituents (a corruption of the democratic process). Additionally, for many East Chicagoans, their support for, and participation in, corrupt practices allowed for access to municipal services and employment, a visible and present boon to the community.

However, accusations of corruption also served as a political tool. Resisting corruption manifested in numerous forms throughout the city's history. These forms of resistance included running against the machine, exposing corrupt tactics, alleging corruption and illegal behavior, attempting to reform from within, and pursuing legal recourse against corruption. The accusation of corruption and its alleged severity offered an opportunity to tarnish political opponents. These accusations, regardless of their validity, became a central tool to weaken the support for the political machine and opponents. What makes these decisions so unique is that the small community size highlights the intimate and personal connections- as even family members align for or against the machine.

Analyzing the presence of corruption requires more than simply recognizing the prolific presence of the word in the region and its folklore. To critically analyze corruption, it is important to read a variety of sources against each other. For instance, official government records may omit, deliberately or not, the specifics of a group's dissent. In East Chicago, which contained a pro-machine newspaper, dissent would also not be covered. Instead, relying on alternative press, such as the bilingual paper, or anti-machine papers, can help illuminate

omissions within the municipal sources. My dissertation's research involved combing through municipal government sources within the City Clerk's office and local history room at the East Chicago Main Public Library. Often underutilized in historical scholarship, these municipal documents offer a glimpse into the community and the histories that they wanted to preserve. As opposed to sources created by regional, state, or federal entities, municipal documents innerworkings of neighborhood organizations, residents, and causes that they held close.

Historiography

The political history of Latinas and Latinos in the United States has revolved around the process of inclusion and civic engagement. Whether focused on themes of immigration and citizenship or representation in politics and as workers, these themes often focus on combating deliberate forms of marginalization. In considering my dissertation's contribution to the field of political history, one of the most essays that has influenced my thinking the most is David Montejano's, "On the Question of Inclusion," written in 1999. Montejano argued that it was important for Latina and Latino historians to explore the incorporation and consequences of "post-movement" politics within the community after an era of protest (1965-1975). While participation in politics gave Latinx peoples "access to decision making," he wrote, it also "set limits on [their] political behavior, promote[d] compromise at the possible expense of the community, and may even [have undermined the community's] organizational effectiveness."²³ He called this the "paradox of inclusion." Montejano reflected on the "browning of America," or what became the Decade of the Hispanics. This term referred to the moment in the 1980s where

²³ David Montejano, "On the Question of Inclusion," in *Chicano Politics and Society in the Late Twentieth Century* ed. David Montejano. (Austin: University of Texas, 1999), xxiv.

the prominence and growth of the Latino population gained national attention, bringing forth “evident advances in access and representation within institutionalized politics, but these advances all prove to be fleeting or ambiguous.”²⁴ For Montejano, Latina and Latino communities gained degrees of inclusion across the United States. In exploring the “post-movement” era, they were left to wonder about the consequences inclusion and where it could lead.

I am working in the same vein as Montejano and other historians who have begun to write new political histories of Latina and Latino communities locally and nationally, by exploring how their political inclusion could occur through their participation in machine politics. I see my scholarship as an important part of conversations about the diverse and varied approaches Latina and Latino communities take to inclusion, both its causes and consequences. The ethnic Mexicans and Puerto Ricans who arrived in East Chicago confronted several obstacles to their inclusion and articulation of their position in the industrial city. First, they could resist the machine; however, in a system where spoils were granted for loyalty, ineffective resistance would leave their community excluded from patronage and civic improvements. Second, they could participate in the machine, sometimes at the cost of legal trouble or their respectability among dissenters. Lastly, they could simply not participate as they become jaded with the system.

First, my project explores the integral role of Latinas and Latinos in the political system. “Building a Latino Machine” is representative of how the field of Latinx history has evolved. Early studies documented the experiences of Latinx communities across the United States,

²⁴ Montejano, “On the Question of Inclusion,” xxiv.

noting their presence and importance to various cities and regions, primarily in the West and Southwest.²⁵

This project joins a burgeoning field that seeks to understand the experiences of midwestern Latina and Latino communities.²⁶ The initial scholarship on the Midwest focused primarily on arguing for a unique experience and simultaneously documenting the importance of their presence. In the “Introduction” to *Aztlán*’s special issue, in 1976, Gilberto Cárdenas argued for the importance of midwestern Chicano experiences in a field dominated by the Southwest for Chicanos and East Coast for Puerto Ricans.²⁷ Cárdenas argued that “...the regional approach as a conceptual category has become a major limitation.”²⁸ Cárdenas and his colleagues argued that because of the restriction of Chicano History to the Southwest, the field was unable to conceptualize a national experience of Chicanos. According to Cárdenas, and echoed by his

²⁵ This documentation phase noted the presence and integration of Mexicans into an American identity. For a brief list see: Mario T. Garcia, *Mexican Americans: Leadership, Ideology, and Identity 1930-1960* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989); George J. Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

²⁶ For studies about the Midwest see: Dennis Nodín Valdés, *Al Norte: Agricultural Workers in the Great Lakes Region, 1917-1970* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991); Dionisio Nodín Valdés, *Barrios Norteños: St. Paul and Midwestern Mexican Communities in the Twentieth Century* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000); Zaragosa Vargas, *Proletarians of the North: A History of Mexican Industrial Workers in Detroit and the Midwest, 1917-1933* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Richard Santillán, “Rosita the Riveter: Midwest Mexican American Women during World War II, 1941-45,” in *Perspectives in Mexican American Studies: Mexicans in the Midwest*, ed. Juan R. García, 115-47 (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1996); Juan R. García, *Mexicans in the Midwest, 1900-1932* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1996). For Chicago see: Louise Año Nuevo Kerr, “The Chicano Experience in Chicago, 1920-1970,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois at Chicago, 1976); Felix Padilla, *Latino Ethnic Consciousness: The Case of Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans in Chicago* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985); Gina M. Pérez, *The Near Northwest Side Story: Migration, Displacement, and Puerto Rican Families* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Gabriela F. Arredondo, *Mexican Chicago: Race, Identity, and Nation, 1916-39* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2008); Lilia Fernández, *Brown in the Windy City: Mexicans and Puerto Ricans in Postwar Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012); Michael Innis-Jiménez, *Steel Barrio: The Great Migration to South Chicago, 1915-1940* (New York: New York University Press, 2013); and Mike Amezcua, *Making Mexican Chicago: From Postwar Settlement to Gentrification* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2022).

²⁷ Gilberto Cárdenas, “Introduction Who Are the Midwestern Chicanos: Implications for Chicano Studies,” *Aztlán* No. 2 Summer 1976.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 146.

colleagues in this generation of scholarship, “Justification for this practice centers on the position of absolute numerical size, the significance of proportional size (statewide geopolitics), and proximity to Mexico.”²⁹ Within his article for the special issue, Cárdenas further argued that the estimated 1.1 to 1.5 million Chicanos and Puerto Ricans in the Midwest were ignored by the scholarship that had become focused on the southwest. As Latina and Latino communities in the Midwest continue to grow, their lived experiences contribute to our understanding of their contributions and incorporation overall.

My second major intervention is that political machines offered, ethnic Mexicans and Puerto Ricans an opportunity to assimilate. Previous scholarship on cities like Chicago and New York during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has noted how political machines helped recent immigrant communities assimilate. Machines in these places provided a degree of inclusion to white ethnic voters, primarily as a way for the machine to retain control. This scholarship, including works by Dennis Judd, Todd Swanstrom, and Richard Schneirov, noted how machines politicized immigrants and helped them integrate into society. They became voters in a patronage system in which politicians and labor unions competed for their loyalty. Whether elected or appointed, ethnic Mexicans and Puerto Ricans actively engaged in silencing dissent, patronage politics, kickbacks, and numerous other unethical and, in some cases, illegal behavior. My dissertation refutes the idea, of scholars like Montejano’s work on Tejanos, who framed everyday community members as part of a “controlled franchise,” or a non-autonomous voting bloc. Instead, I argue that ethnic Mexicans and Puerto Ricans were active participants in corrupt machine politics, both as members of the machine and its willing supporters. Equally

²⁹ Ibid., 146.

important as the brokers between the machine and community were the community members who initiated and perpetuated various elements of the political machine. I depart from the scholarship that presents minority politicians in the machine as simply controlled, or silent, actors.

Historians also noted the beneficial role that corrupt, machine politics played in assimilating immigrants. In *City Politics*, Judd and Swanstrom argued that machine politics provided white ethnic voters “a measure of access to a political system that had previously excluded them.”³⁰ Schneirov extended the rise of machine politics and its manifestation to the growing labor movement in the United States. According to Schneirov, “The movements of each strata [labor reform and machine politics] sought to control, redirect the energies, and incorporate the new immigrant, less-skilled workers spawned by industrialization, who were a core constituency of machine politics.”³¹ This competition between unions and political machines created an “implacable obstacle” for independent labor unions that conflicted with machine bosses for authority over the share working-class constituencies.³² This scholarship noted the benefits of machine politics in politicizing immigrants and integrating them into society, through their politicization as voters in a patronage system often competing with other politicians and even organized labor for loyalty.

However, the scholarship on urban corruption leaves many unanswered questions. One such unresolved question concerns the role of minority groups as active participants within

³⁰ Dennis R. Judd and Todd Swanstrom, *City Politics: The Political Economy of Urban America, Eighth Edition* (New York: Longman Publishing, 2012), 46.

³¹ Richard Schneirov, *Labor and Urban Politics: Class Conflict and the Origins of Modern Liberalism in Chicago, 1864-1897*. (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 46.

³² Schneirov, *Labor and Union Politics*, 93.

machine politics. Aside from offering minority groups an opportunity to assimilate and integrate into the community, as scholars have noted it did for the Irish in New York, machine politics created hesitant advocates for civil rights. William J. Grimshaw's *Bitter Fruit: Black Politics and the Chicago Machine, 1931-1991*, traces the dual histories of the Chicago Democratic machine and black politics in the twentieth century. As black Chicagoans joined the Democratic Party in the 1930s, they gained few benefits from the machine that relied on their support in many wards.³³ Mayor Richard Daley and his machine further altered the machine's organization during his regime. Previously, productive electoral wards meant greater rewards for the community's leaders. However, Daley reserved top party and government positions for his loyal, male Irish Americans, excluding black Chicagoans from these posts.³⁴ Furthermore, Daley instated a system of elite recruitment, which "elevat[ed] men of high standing in the black community, but men who possessed little of the political experience or demonstrated skill of their predecessors."³⁵ This system created an "organizational contradiction" whereby the Daley machine relied on black voters and their support but offered them few if any tangible benefits for their loyalty. More importantly, the black Chicagoans who were elected to the city council became known as the "silent six" due to their role as loyalists and rubber stamps for the mayor's office.³⁶

Central to understanding how Latinas and Latinos confronted political machines, not only as opponents but supporters, Mike Amezcua's scholarship explores the Daley machine's

³³ William J. Grimshaw, *Bitter Fruit: Black Politics and the Chicago Machine, 1931-1991* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 67-68.

³⁴ Grimshaw, *Bitter Fruit*, 94.

³⁵ Grimshaw, *Bitter Fruit*, 95.

³⁶ Grimshaw, *Bitter Fruit*, 95.

courtship of Chicago's growing Mexican and Mexican American communities. Amezcua framed the Daley machine's courtship of these communities as a "mutually beneficial relationship rooted in political favors and symbolic gestures of exchange. Instead of an elected official to represent their needs, these Latino Daley Democrats functioned as the machine in the barrio, serving as a conduit to City Hall."³⁷ The organization of the "Amigos for Daley" established the unelected officials as "mini 'ward bosses' on an ad hoc basis."³⁸ Instead of providing space for elected Latino officials, Daley handpicked individuals favorable to the machine, circumventing elections, and controlling the brokers between his administration and the ethnic Mexican community. This proved a stark contrast from the earlier era where "a stingy Democratic machine was unwilling to share political influence with Latinos, even during national Democratic Party courting."³⁹ Grimshaw and Amezcua articulate the apparent paradox of inclusion for black and Latino Chicagoans into machine politics and provide complimentary frames for applying their work to other machine cities. Despite gaining representation within the machine, many members of marginalized communities in Chicago, and East Chicago, still found themselves barred from progress.

Participating in the machine's corruption was what assimilation looked like for the primarily ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican residents of East Chicago. By assimilation, I mean gradual incorporation into the political process, and the embrace of machine politics. By including Latinx communities in the scholarship on political machines, I extend the chronology

³⁷ Mike Amezcua, "A machine in the barrio: Chicago's conservative colonia and the remaking of Latino politics in the 1960s and 1970s," *The Sixties*, 12:1, 97.

³⁸ Amezcua, "A machine in the barrio," 100.

³⁹ Mike Amezcua, *Making Mexican Chicago: From Postwar Settlement to the Age of Gentrification* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2022), 113-114.

of machine politics and corruption into the twenty-first century. But more importantly, I argue that the decision by Latinx communities in East Chicago to participate in the machine was entirely understandable given the place they lived and worked. However, the broader benefits extended to the community were limited, much as Montejano argued. The machine's incorporation of Latinx communities was similar to the machine's earlier incorporation of European groups. Albeit reluctant at first, their inclusion into the political machine occurred as the community organized politically and politicians learned the considerable difference that this community could make in electoral politics. But ultimately were reluctant to include them as full members.

My third argument has to do with the field of labor history. Generally, labor history has approached the concept of corruption in two different ways. Jefferson Cowie, for example, argues that corruption stems from inept and unresponsive leadership. Although inept leadership is an example of how the influence of unresponsive leadership can corrupt democratic practices, I side more with scholars such as David Witwer who have examined how unionists have used accusations of corruption to tarnish incumbents, and have argued that the status quo of patronage appointments, contract bids, and other practices, even though they are not illegal, nevertheless represent an unethical use of power. I agree with Witwer that labor historians should focus more on corruption within the ranks of labor unions. However, the criticism of Jennifer Luff concerning the ambiguity of corruption is just as crucial. In delineating corruption, how should historians approach the protests against inept leadership? Particularly when dissenters framed it in terms of a corruption of union democracy? Luff claimed that "... 'union corruption' generally appears in one of two contexts: as a canard cynically spread by labor's enemies or as a

description of frequently craven union leaders who betrayed militant members' interests."⁴⁰

While exploring corruption, I attempt to highlight how many movements against it stemmed as calls for good government complete with responsive representation.

I also hope to add to the history of the rust belt's decline in the late twentieth century, by arguing that it wasn't only the result of companies shipping jobs overseas, but also because of corrupt machines like the one in East Chicago that drained their city's coffers. Residents of East Chicago, including the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community, found themselves centered in weathering the historical process. As the steel industry and manufacturing economy that served as the primary employer for the city shuttered departments and downsized, residents turned to the city and political machine for assistance. Former steelworkers entered politics to gain the salary of public officials. Others turned to gain employment in various city departments, which turned to become the primary employer for the residents. The inclusion of some despite the exclusion of many left the machine to figure out how to pacify and retain support within the community. The solution often became expensive public works projects that, at the expense of the city's payroll, benefitted political supporters. However, unable to absorb the pressures of the rusting steel region, residents decried these exorbitant costs and patchwork projects that still left portions of the city boarded up and decrepit.

Chapter Overview

"Building a Latino Machine" consists of six chapters, which cover the history of East Chicago from 1945 to 2010. Divided into two halves with three chapters each, the project

⁴⁰ Jennifer Luff, "Historical Contributors versus Sectoral Tendencies," Up for Debate in *Labor: Studies in Working Class History of the Americas*, Vol. 8 Issue 2 (Summer 2011): 79.

explores the gradual inclusion of ethnic Mexicans and Puerto Ricans into the municipal machine. The first three chapters show how ethnic Mexicans and Puerto Ricans simultaneously argued for a position within the machine and fought against its exclusionary practices. This position becomes complicated in the second half. As ethnic Mexicans and Puerto Ricans gained a measure of power, typically through adopting some of the corrupt tactics they previously protested, they became complicit in upholding corruption. In their effort to gain the city's top position of mayor, ethnic Mexicans and Puerto Ricans attained vital lessons in political power. The campaign for a Latino mayor coincided with an increasingly important role in an ethnic European ran machine. However, this came at the expense of their ethical behavior.

In chapter one, ethnic Mexicans and Puerto Ricans gained early political experiences through their involvement in union politics. Miguel Arredondo came north from Mexico, joining thousands of Mexicans in the Interwar Era to enter the steel mill. The union provided Arredondo with his first lessons in democracy in his new environment. Enthralled with the labor movement, Miguel worked as an organizer for the Steel Workers Organizing Committee, helping the ethnic Mexicans become one of the first groups to become unionized in the mill. With unionization and the formation of United Steelworkers (USW) Local 1010, unionists elected Arredondo to serve as Outer Guard. The first chapter, titled "'Will the Union Go Latin': Latino Unionism and creating a Latin United Steelworkers Local 1010, 1938-1964," explores the chief catalyst for the arrival of ethnic Mexicans and later, in the Postwar Era, Puerto Ricans. Arriving in the region because of the steel industry, the union provided these communities with their first experiences in politics and elections from the workplace. Additionally, a generation of World War Two and Korean veterans worked to increase the opportunities offered to ethnic Mexican and Puerto

Rican steelworkers in the union. In organizing these communities, Latino unionists hoped to present a united front that they could leverage for higher positions on the executive board of the union. Miguel Arredondo would teach these lessons to his son, Jesse, who worked with the Unity Caucus to engage Latino steelworkers in exchange for attaining the position of Financial Secretary in the 1950s.

However, as my second chapter demonstrates this leveraging act proved complicated. When veterans returned from the Second World War they formed the Latin American Veterans Association (LAV), which would later become the American G.I. Forum and a chapter of the Viva Kennedy movement. Joseph Maravilla, a steelworker and part-time student at Northwestern University, led these groups throughout their nearly two-decade history. Maravilla and his compatriots witnessed their parents' vulnerability during the Repatriation Movement of the 1930s and strove to organize politically to gain representation and power in the city's machine. These men and their families organized to secure elected positions within the political machine, culminating in the election of Maravilla as the first Mexican elected to public office in Indiana as a member of East Chicago's School Board. The initial forays into electoral politics provided the optimistic generation with numerous hard lessons about East Chicago's political machine. These lessons are represented in the career of individuals like Maravilla and Jesse Gomez. Maravilla, who won his position as a candidate backed by the Walter Jeorse administration, found himself alienated for refusing to follow the agenda set forth by the mayor's office. When Maravilla refused to hire patrons to Jeorse's administration, the mayor took to the courts to remove the entire elected school board and make it one appointed by the mayor's office. By prematurely removing Maravilla and his fellow dissenters from their terms in office, Jeorse provided the community with a lesson for those that would use the machine to attempt internal reform and

resistance. Despite attempts to run for other positions, such as city councilman, without the rubber stamp of the city machine, Maravilla found himself removed from electoral politics. This incident highlights the attempt by elected officials to retain anti-corruption sentiments within the political machine, which ultimately proved disastrous for their political careers. Instead, elected officials would have to utilize their positions within the machine, walking a delicate tightrope between their integrity and the demands of the boss. These lessons are represented by Jesse Gomez, who secured a position as the first Latino to serve on the city council. While in office, Gomez navigated the desire from his constituents for good government by maintaining the support of the political machine.

In the third chapter, the elected representatives of the community are tested by incidents of discrimination that excluded ethnic Mexicans and Puerto Ricans from the patronage of the city. When Susan Roque and Irene Gonzales claimed that a school administrator claimed “Mexicans are ignorant and lazy”, the community responded with frustration.⁴¹ Ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican activists unified against the political machine and corruption. The third chapter, entitled “‘Traditional passivity is a thing of the past’: Protest Politics Confronts Machine Politics in the Streets, 1968-1977,” traces the development of a direct-action grassroots movement during the throes of the civil rights era. Responding to the alleged claim from the school administrator, community activists organized and became further aggravated by the responses from the city they received. The community began to voice their concerns more actively. They engaged in direct protest in the city, via sit-ins, walk-outs, and other public displays of activism. Initially concerned with the discrimination against ethnic Mexican and Puerto Ricans, community groups

⁴¹ “Mexican American: Lazy, Ignorant,” *Latin Times*, September 25, 1970.

organized to protest the school administration, attracting the attention of the Saul Alinsky Institute/Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF). Under the guidance of IAF-affiliated organizers, nearly three dozen community organizations formed a coalition called the Concerned Latinos Organization (CLO), with Irene Gonzales as their coalition's leader. The CLO organized under three main pillars: education, housing, and employment. However, one of the first petitions the group presented to the Common Council of East Chicago concerned transparency in the city finances and the process of ghost payrollling. Within numerous missives and public protests, the members of the CLO frequently noted the blurred ethical lines by which the administration of Mayor Robert Pastrick operated. The activism of the CLO reflects the traditional civil rights struggles of education, employment, and housing from a group that recognized the role of corruption and exclusion from the political machine in their subordinate status. This chapter argues that the organization in East Chicago was not only a civil rights movement but an anti-corruption movement as well.

The role of Latino leadership offers crucial insight into the rank and file of the broader labor community in the fourth chapter. Titled, "‘To attain undreamed height’: Latino Leadership in Local 1010, Latinos as Establishment, and Sadlowski’s Steelworkers Fight Back, 1970-1981," explores the careers of two Latinos as union presidents of the steelworkers union in East Chicago. As scholars Francisco A. Rosales and Daniel T. Simon claimed, "Chicano union leaders, important from the beginning, gradually have become more prominent as presidents of important union locals. That the vast majority of leaders reflects the general attitudes of other trade unionists is probably indicative of the ideological orientation of rank and file Chicano

workers.”⁴² Leaders among the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican laborers, such as Jesse Arredondo and Hank ‘Babe’ Lopez, utilized their connections within the community to build a base of support. Arredondo and Lopez’s election to various positions within the local before they were elected President reflects the growing importance of ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican steelworkers as voters, both in the union and the city. The frequency of their appearance at USW conventions as voting delegates elected by their local expressed the influence of these leaders and their fellow ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican steelworkers. However, members of the community and rank and file unionists frequently criticized Arredondo and Lopez for their shady dealings and associations. Arredondo and Lopez held connections to the city’s government and utilized patronage politics as an element of their administration of the steelworker’s union. For example, Arredondo recommended that the United Steelworkers Union appoint Leo Arreguin, who had three separate pending court cases for embezzlement, to a position for the national of USW. Lopez provided contracts for union ballots to his friend and newspaper publisher Vince Kirrin at inflated prices frequently criticized by the union’s membership. Although Arredondo and Lopez forged the path for the future representation of ethnic Mexicans and Puerto Ricans in the union’s administration, corruption continued to plague their short-lived administrations. Their administrations as presidents of Local 1010 also highlight the intertwined workings of the city’s largest union and the political machine’s connection to labor. These connections allowed Lopez a position within the city’s administration after his defeat to the grassroots movement to remove corruption from the local union hall in the 1970s.

⁴² Francisco A. Rosales and Daniel T. Simon. “Chicano Steel Workers and Trade Unionism in the Midwest, 1919-1945,” *Aztlan*. Vol. 6 no. 2 (1975), 273.

The fifth chapter, ““This is America. No. This is East Chicago’: The King of Steeltown and a Multi-Racial Machine,” explores how Latinos and Latinas worked within the Eastern European ethnic machine of Mayor Robert Pastrick, East Chicago’s longest-serving mayor. While attempting to keep a well-balanced machine and all groups satisfied amid changing demographics and the struggles of deindustrialization, Latinos and Latinas found their positions threatened unless they adhered to multiracial alliances, or at least cooperated among themselves. Coupled with the fiscal obstacles of deindustrialization threatening the city’s tax base, as well as the fuel for the machine’s patronage army, the city’s demographics began to drastically change in the 1970s and 1980s. The Latina and Latino community became the majority among East Chicago’s residents. However, this shift came with its own tensions. Robert Segovia, a longtime boss of the primarily ethnic Mexican sub-machine, received criticism from the Puerto Rican community that felt excluded and the Black community that felt Segovia excluded them from patronage within the school system. Pastrick navigated these conflicts within the single-party city by expressing neutrality and often remaining quiet. However, his nonverbal actions sent a clear message, as reappointments and restructuring of the city from his desk diminished Segovia’s influence as Pastrick pushed to keep groups complacent over their portions.

However, this adherence and loyalty to the entrenched machine led to the largest corruption probe in Indiana history during the concrete-for-votes scandal in 1999. This scandal paved the way for the defeat of Pastrick’s machine as well as the rise of Mayor George Pabey, a Puerto Rican member of the community, the subject of the sixth chapter, “Dethroning a King: The Rise of George Pabey and a Latino Machine, 2003-2010.” However, as the sixth chapter details, despite characterizing himself as an outsider and reformer, Pabey and his brief Latino

machine ended in six short years. Amid the highly publicized sidewalk for votes scandal, Pabey framed himself as a candidate against the status quo of patronage and machine politics that dominated the city's history. Although, as the chapter discusses, Pabey came into political maturity as a component of this machine through his service in the East Chicago Police Department, where he served as Chief (1990-1993). His insider knowledge allowed him to abandon the position to become a partner in the burgeoning gaming industry at the lakefront. Never truly an outsider, Pabey and the machine he helmed proved a logical successor to the very political environment he had navigated for decades in East Chicago. After aiming for the mayoral office and the political power it came with, a Latino political machine proved no different.

Chapter One: “Will the Union Go Latin”: Latino Unionism and creating a Latin United
Steelworkers Local 1010, 1938-1964

Miguel Arredondo arrived in Blue Island, IL in the 1920s from Salamanca, Mexico. He and his family followed the railroads from Mexico and Texas to the Midwest after hearing through friends that there were plenty of jobs in the Chicagoland region. In 1929, Inland Steel hired Arredondo. The dangers of the mill and the arduous working conditions brought Arredondo into contact with the union as an organizer for the Spanish-speaking; however, as his son recalled, Arredondo’s wife Maria proved skeptical about his growing involvement with the union. She told him: “Miguel, I know things are hard for the workers. I know things aren’t fair, but let someone else push for this union thing. Why should it be you? You have a family. We can hardly make ends meet now. Why should you be the one who has to cause trouble?”¹ Whether seen as causing trouble or initiating the unionization movement among steelworkers in the region, as a newcomer Miguel Arredondo’s experiences with the union provided him his first glimpse of politics in the region.

The union provided ethnic Mexicans, and later Puerto Ricans, their first experiences with politics in the Calumet Region, as well as their successes in elected representation. In January 1938, the Steel Workers Organizing Committee (SWOC) united their two lodges at Inland Steel to form Lodge 1010. In January 1938, the lodge elected its first officers, which included four Mexicans: Max Luna (Inner Guard), J.R. Camacho (Outer Guard), P. Valdez (Guide), and Juan

¹ Ramón Arredondo & Trisha (Hull) Arredondo. *Maria’s Journey*. (Indianapolis, IN: Indiana Historical Society Press, 2010), 51.

Davila (Trustee).² The inclusion of these ethnic Mexicans as union leaders proved a fleeting moment for the union and racial representation. Even though they made up only 5.4% of the workforce in steel during these early years, Latinos enthusiastically supported the labor movement. As discussed in the opening of Zaragosa Vargas' *Labor Rights Are Civil Rights*, the primarily ethnic Mexican steelworkers were the first group to completely organize their department within the steel industry.³ This support led to representation within SWOC for the primarily ethnic Mexican steelworkers at a pivotal moment for the labor movement. After World War II, the United States produced over half the world's steel, and the mills within the Calumet Region accounted for twenty percent of that production capacity.⁴ However, with the arrival of the Second World War, Local 1010 and the steel industry underwent significant changes that influenced the role of Latino leadership on the shop floor. Previously, Latino steelworkers, who were ardent unionists and supporters of industrial democracy, were accused of corruption by competing factions within the union.

Through exploring the push for elected representation by Latino unionists from the postwar era until the 1960s, this chapter argues that by participating in union politics, Latinos were able to procure representation much sooner than in municipal politics. Akin to Vargas' claim that the labor movement of the New Deal Era was an important precursor to the civil rights

² "Inland CIO Lodge Picks New Chiefs," *The Hammond Times*, January 30, 1938. Max Luna would be one of the labor activists hospitalized after the Memorial Day Massacre at Republic Steel in South Chicago. See: "Damage Action Outgrowth of Republic Riot," *The Hammond Times*, May 12, 1938. For more on the massacre and strike see: Robert Zieger, *The CIO, 1935-1955* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 60-65; Irving Bernstein, *The Turbulent Years: A History of the American Worker, 1933-1941* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969), 478-497; Michael Dennis, *The Memorial Day Massacre and the Movement for Industrial Democracy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), and Ahmed White, *The Last Great Strike: Little Steel, The CIO, and the Struggle for Labor Rights in New Deal America* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016).

³ Zaragosa Vargas, *Labor Rights Are Civil Rights: Mexican American Workers in Twentieth-Century America*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 3.

⁴ David Bensman and Mark R. Wilson, "Iron and Steel," *Encyclopedia of Chicago*.

movement, this period from the end of WWII until the 1960s formed the basis for Latino political power within the steelworkers' union.⁵ As Carolyn Hernandez noted in her Master's Thesis about the union, the segregation of workers by their fellow workers and management established entire departments at Inland Steel comprising mainly Latino laborers.⁶ Despite similar working conditions, Latino steelworkers often found themselves in conflict with each other as some became conservative voices for the international union and others engaged in corrupt practices to further their career or that of their supporters. Although within the realm of various caucuses, these were not binary choices, admittedly, not all steelworkers even voted in union elections. The various caucuses within the local often divided the Latino and Latina steelworkers, as it did other ethnic groups, creating a kaleidoscope of political alliances within the postwar era union.

This chapter details the world of steel and industrial unionism that Latino steelworkers encountered and worked within from the New Deal Era into the 1960s. Although there is a rich scholarship about steelworkers during the New Deal Era, this chapter will connect studies of steelworkers into the Cold War Era, as a reaction to the repression faced following fleeting gains during the Second World War. Then, it will explore how Latinos slowly became politically organized within the union, developing, albeit briefly, a Latino voting bloc within the push for broader, multiracial slates. These slates, most notably the one developed by the Unity Caucus, provided Latinos with greater opportunities for representation. However, the moment of unity was brief. Latinos quickly began to consider whether or not unity at all costs would prove

⁵ Vargas, *Labor Rights Are Civil Rights*, 6.

⁶ Carolyn Hernandez, "Integration of the Workforce in the Steel Industry: The Inland Steel Experience, 1945-1969," (MA Thesis: Loyola University Chicago, 1990).

advantageous for all. The desire for personal advancement led aspiring leaders to challenge each other and divide the Latino vote. The earlier workplace discrimination and their segregation in specific departments gave Latinos leverage to push for within the mills. Whereas this leverage relied on a united front, as Latinos gained inclusion and the segregation of the workplace lessened, unity became tenuous. Ultimately, I argue that Latinos' push for representation in the steel mills relied on presenting a united front in their departments. However, conflicting interests and their elevation to higher positions on competing caucus' slates often led to conflict among the Latino steelworkers.

Central to Latinas and Latinos gaining representation in the union was how they navigated their alliances. Like the vast field of candidates in Democratic primaries in East Chicago, multiple caucuses competing for leadership roles could dilute voting blocs and leave some caucuses with strange bedfellows as former enemies. These alliances led to Latinos joining caucuses or informal groups of union members aligned for common goals, such as transparency and contract demands. When union elections occurred, caucuses put forth a slate, or a group of candidates running in a multi-position election, much like a party ticket in government elections. Latinos found themselves included both in caucuses and on slates, often as representatives of mainly Latino departments, to curry favor for plant-wide races like President of the local. A savvy and connected union member could leverage their support to reach more influential positions on the slate, which would ideally lead to benefits for more of their supporters down the slate.

Corruption became a central theme in the forging of alliances as various slates vied for leadership of the local. Charges of corruption by dissenters and defeated slates of unionists were commonplace at the mill, in taverns and restaurants, and in the various newspapers read by the

steelworkers. In some cases, charges of corruption led to action being taken nationally, both by the union and the U.S. government through actions like administratorship and Senate hearings. A frequent action taken by the United Steelworkers union was to place Local 1010 under administratorship. This involved the parent union temporarily suspending a local's autonomy and handling the actions of the local while an investigation occurs. Nationally, the McClellan Committee Hearings (1957-1960), televised to an estimated 1.2 million people, exposed corruption within the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. Although not subject to the hearings, steelworkers were well aware of the proceedings. When then Senator John F. Kennedy spoke to steelworkers, in 1958, at their annual convention in Atlantic City, he proclaimed

I wish that some of my colleagues in the Senate could be here with me this afternoon. I wish they could see this democratic union convention in action—I wish they could talk with your leaders and your rank and file membership – I wish they could become familiar with your splendid record over the past two decades. If they could do these things which I have done, then they would see that here - here at this convention – is the true picture of the American labor movement – and not the parasites and racketeers that have paraded before the McClellan Committee.⁷

The very democratic unionism that Kennedy praised at the convention would become a focal point of contention in Local 1010 and USW.

Within the steelworkers' union, corruption included a corrupted democratic process in elections, as well as the unethical practices seen in the community, such as tampering with ballot boxes and misusing funds. Corruption in the union looked and operated much like it did within East Chicago, generally. Whereas the city's political machine controlled access to municipal employment, civic improvements, and the contracts that created those improvements, union

⁷ Remarks of Senator John F. Kennedy, United Steelworkers of America Convention, Atlantic City, New Jersey, September 18, 1958. John F. Kennedy: Speeches. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum,

representation and its possibility of corruption had similar perks. As David Witwer argues, corruption adopted multiple meanings in labor.⁸ Within the union, the labeling of administrations and individuals as corrupt often referred to dishonest leaders “who failed to represent the membership and thus undercut the union’s ability to protect the member’s dignity.”⁹ Often this associated inept leadership with an administration that favored the international over the local members that elected them. According to Witwer’s analysis, corruption proved most dangerous and solicited anti-corruption reforms, when union leadership went against the wishes of the membership. This made the allegations of corruption particularly damaging as a rhetorical tool to undermine competition in union elections.

Steel and Labor in the Postwar Era

Steel proved a critical component in building not only the nation but the region. The early twentieth century saw the rise of numerous steel mills, as well as the merging of numerous plants into behemoths, such as U.S. Steel. Engineered by J.P. Morgan, U.S. Steel incorporated Federal Steel as a part of its operations, maintain the South Works mill and later Gary Works. This company was joined by Wisconsin Steel’s South Deering facility, Republic Steel, Acme Steel, Youngstown Sheet & Tube, and Interlake Iron. In East Chicago, Inland Steel, built in 1901, became a major operation within the region. By the 1930s, this included four blast furnaces, which turned the raw materials into molten iron, and over 9,000 employees.¹⁰ The importance of this region for producing steel included its role in the labor movement. During the Postwar Era,

⁸ For “political words” see: Daniel T. Rodgers, *Contested Truths: Keywords in American Politics since Independence* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 3-16. For multiple meanings of corruption in labor see: David Witwer, *Corruption and Reform in the Teamsters Union* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 1-4.

⁹ Witwer, *Corruption and Reform*, 3.

¹⁰ For a history of Inland Steel see: Jack H. Morris, *Inland Steel at 100: beginning a second century of progress*. (Chicago: Inland Steel Industries, 1993).

Latinas and Latinos entered a relatively conservative and timid union landscape compared to the ones their parents found between 1919 and the New Deal. From 1945 to 1959, there were five industry-wide strikes in steel. The steel industry provided a crucial backdrop for how Latinos encountered union politics.

The periods of the New Deal and Postwar Era marked significant gains for the working class and unions, which quickly gave way to a backlash for Latino steelworkers' and their elected representatives.¹¹ In the postwar years, Latinos struggled for inclusion and power in the steelworkers' union, whose leaders were primarily ethnic European. As new families and individuals of ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican arrived in East Chicago, they encountered an industrial landscape where the union could be a possible avenue to confront workplace discrimination, advocate for better wages and more hours, and confront issues with promotions and workplace seniority. The organization of steel unions occurred as a byproduct of industrial democracy during the New Deal Era. The legislative changes in labor fueled workplace democracy and unionization nationally and within the heavily industrialized community.

¹¹ This period of the steel industry and steelworkers union is well documented and presented in this section only briefly. My point is not to intervene or complicate any of this literature but to frame the world that ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican steelworkers entered during the New Deal and Postwar Era. James D. Rose, *Duquesne and the Rise of Steel Unionism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001); John Hinshaw, *Steel and Steelworkers: Race and Class Struggle in Twentieth-Century Pittsburgh* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2002); Ruth Needleman, *Black Freedom Fighters in Steel: The Struggle for Democratic Unionism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003); Mary Margaret Fonow, *Union Women: Forging Feminism in the United Steelworkers of America* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 2003); Ahmed White, *The Last Great Strike: Little Steel, The CIO, and the Struggle for Labor Rights in New Deal America* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2016); and Mike Stout, *Homestead Steel Mill: The Final Ten Years, USWA Local 1397 and the Fight for Union Democracy*. (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2020). For Nonunion Era see: David Brody, *Steelworkers in America: The Nonunion Era* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960). See: Nelson Lichtenstein, *State of the Union: A Century of American Labor* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002; 2013) for a general survey of the rise and decline of the 20th century American labor movement.

However, with the ending of the federal Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC) in June of 1946, some of the hard-won gains made by Latino steelworkers were lost.¹²

When New Deal legislation afforded workplace protections for organizing unions, the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) resurged, mushrooming the membership of unions across the United States.¹³ The New Deal Era, National Industrial Recovery Act (1933) included Section 7(a), which protected collective bargaining rights for unions.¹⁴ Adding to this momentum, John Lewis launched the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) and an array of unions in the industrial sectors of steel, auto, and meatpacking. Lewis hired radicals, socialists, and communist organizers to help build a steelworkers' union.¹⁵

However, the NIRA had several limitations. Legal scholar Ahmed White has argued that the National Recovery Administration, established by NIRA, was “more concerned with implementing a system of government-sponsored industrial planning and cartelization than with vindicating labor rights.”¹⁶ In 1936, the SWOC formed with the financial and leadership assistance of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) and their president, John Lewis. This occurred as the steel industry began to rebound from Depression-Era shortages. The industry earned \$250 million in profits between 1936 and 1939, and by 1941 profits had quadrupled.¹⁷ The organizing of the SWOC proved viable with the changes of federal support for

¹² Staughton Lynd, “The Possibility of Radicalism in the Early 1930s: The Case of Steel,” *Radical America* 6 (November-December 1972): 37-64. Rose argued that steelworkers did not have a choice between radicalism and the conservatism of the SWOC but, in fact, between union or no union at all, see: Rose, *Duquesne and the Rise of Steel Unionism*.

¹³ Hinshaw, *Steel and Steelworkers*, 3.

¹⁴ White, *The Last Great Strike*, 57; 69.

¹⁵ Hinshaw, *Steel and Steelworkers*, 3.

¹⁶ White, *The Last Great Strike*, 72.

¹⁷ Hinshaw, *Steel and Steelworkers*, 66.

labor rights in the Wagner Act of 1935, which granted employees the right to form and join unions.

The first testing ground for steel occurred with the Little Steel Strike of 1937. Despite the progress made possible by the 1935 Wagner Act, the labor movement still relied on a catalyst like the Little Steel Strike of 1937 to garner support. Historian Nelson Lichtenstein has argued that “a law is not a social movement.”¹⁸ Even with the legislative support of the Wagner Act, the mass mobilization stemming from the Little Steel Strike encouraged action and tied steelworkers more closely to the union effort. Just prior to the strike, discrepancies appeared in various steel regions. For example, Bethlehem in Johnstown claimed nearly eight thousand members for SWOC, contributing less than \$3,000 in April and May. However, the Calumet Region, which included Southeast Chicago and East Chicago, Indiana boasted more than 52,000 members who contributed more than \$55,000 in dues during that same period.¹⁹ The most notorious event of the strike, the Memorial Day Massacre, occurred in 1937 when Chicago Police Department shot and killed ten demonstrators. The massacre became a vital rallying point for the labor movement, which saw significant gains in membership and support. The day after Chicago Police murdered ten strikers, nearly five thousand unionists rallied in East Chicago.²⁰

During the Second World War, the workplace drastically altered amid the demands of a wartime draft and economy. The threats of strikes and protests against racial discrimination, particularly by A. Philip Randolph, led the New Deal to establish the Fair Employment Practices Committee. The FEPC’s primary objective was to comply with Roosevelt’s Executive Order

¹⁸ Lichtenstein, *State of the Union*, 39.

¹⁹ White, *The Last Great Strike*, 116.

²⁰ White, *The Last Great Strike*, 133; 144.

8802, banning discrimination in companies with governmental contracts.²¹ Overall, workers benefited from gains in wage increases and standardized pay scales across the country, and within the company, to ensure steelworkers received equal pay rates for the same work.²²

However, the end of the war stressed the tenuous peace between labor and industry. The military contracts that fueled employment in the steel industry were canceled starting in the summer of 1945.²³ The FEPC expired, bringing an end to the relative gains for Black industrial workers, and more than half of the female war workers who joined industrial labor quit or were fired. The return to the forty-hour workweek and rescinding of overtime pay shrank some family paychecks by twenty to thirty percent.²⁴ The steelworker publication, *Labor Sentinel*, highlighted the lack of workers' rights and fair treatment in the face of record profits for the steel industry.



“Fact-Ignoring Plan,” *Labor Sentinel* January 9, 1946.

²¹ Hinshaw, *Steel and Steelworkers*, 77.

²² Hinshaw, *Steel and Steelworkers*, 78.

²³ Hinshaw, *Steel and Steelworkers*, 83.

²⁴ Hinshaw, *Steel and Steelworkers*, 83.

The comic, “Fact-Ignoring Plan,” appeared on the front page of *Labor Sentinel*’s January 9th, 1946, issue.²⁵ With the war over, the administration at Local 1010 called for a two dollar a day wage increase for steelworkers in exchange for avoiding a strike.²⁶

The Postwar Era is characterized by the tensions between significant profits in the steel industry and the demands for more equitable and fair treatment for the workers. In his history of the United Steelworkers union, Doug Nelson, a former steelworker and Grievance Committeeman for Chicago’s Republic Steel plant (Local 1033), noted that the postwar era saw a resurgence of demands by laborers.²⁷

Despite these conflicts between management and the union, the union attempted to construct the idea of multiracial solidarity within the union. As Nelson Lichtenstein noted, for effective unionization, as well as to make a strike an important union tool, the union had to address the color line.²⁸ The larger economic and political structures, outside of the steel mill, influenced democratic unionism in the local. In the past, Black and Latino steelworkers served as strikebreakers, which weakened organizing efforts and instilled racial animosity among the working class. However, as historian Ruth Needleman argues, stories of Black scabs in Gary, Indiana were fabricated in order to prevent racial solidarity in the mills.²⁹ For the labor movement, multiracial solidarity offered an opportunity to prevent the color line from obstructing effective unionism.

²⁵ *Labor Sentinel*, January 9, 1946. Local 1010 Historical Collection (Hammond, IN).

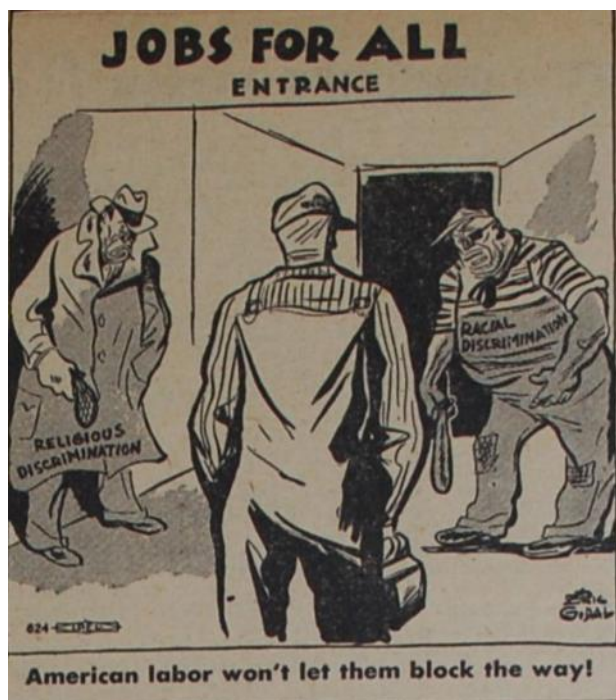
²⁶ Joe Germano, District Director, “Strike Message,” *Labor Sentinel*, January 9, 1946. Local 1010 Historical Collection (Hammond, IN).

²⁷ Doug Nelson, *Forged in Fire: The Story of the United Steelworkers Union* (Chicago: Labor Studies Press, 2020), 61.

²⁸ Lichtenstein, *State of the Union*, 72-73.

²⁹ Ruth Needleman, “Gary 1919: An Untold Story of Racial Solidarity from Gary’s History,” *Portside*, September 30, 2019.

This expression of multiracial solidarity extended to Latinos within the union. The *Labor Sentinel* even included a section, albeit not a regularly published column, entitled “Rincon Español” (Spanish Corner). This column proved instrumental in explaining the strike actions and responsibilities of strikers during the action.³⁰ The infrequency of this column suggests that the union felt Latino steelworkers only needed information when it would matter the most. The role of ethnic Mexicans in 1919 as strikebreakers likely influenced this decision to publish the column when strikes seemed imminent. The *Labor Sentinel* shared images, such as the following from the January 23, 1946, issue to argue that the labor movement provided an opportunity to circumvent religious and racial discrimination in the workplace.³¹



“Jobs for All,” *Labor Sentinel*, January 23, 1946.

³⁰ “Rincon Espanol,” *Labor Sentinel*, January 9, 1946. Local 1010 Historical Collection (Hammond, IN).

³¹ “Jobs for All,” *Labor Sentinel*, January 23, 1946. Local 1010 Historical Collection (Hammond, IN).

Despite these moves by labor to continue their gains of the previous decade, 1947 and the Taft-Hartley Act signaled a step backward. The legislation placed controls on unions and their actions during labor disputes and the president the ability to establish investigative boards for the disputes. These limits were placed for strikes that were deemed dangerous for public's health and safety. An immediate consequence of the legislation was the purge of Communists from union posts, despite their crucial work in organizing locals in the Chicagoland region.³² The *Labor Sentinel* labeled the bill a "legislative monstrosity" when outlining the changes made to the gains, such as the repeal of the Wagner Act.³³ According to Lichtenstein, Taft-Hartley's greatest accomplishment was "to depoliticize the unions by curbing interunion solidarity and ghettoizing the power of the labor movement."³⁴

As more Latinos entered Inland Steel in East Chicago, they joined other Latinos in the conflicts embedded in the history of the United Steelworkers' Local 1010. The Indiana Latino Historical Society listed Frank Flores, Max Luna, Albert Garcia, Alfredo Avila, Manuel Avila, Arnuflo Vasquez, Miguel Arredondo, and Aristeo Torres as key organizers for ethnic Mexican steelworkers in the union's early years as SWOC in the 1930s.³⁵ Latinos' pursuit of inclusion as leaders within the union offers a complementary account to understand the organization of underrepresented groups within the union. Including ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican

³² Lichtenstein, 115. For the role of the Communist Party and their organizing in the Chicagoland region see: Randi Storchi, *Red Chicago: American Communism at its Grassroots, 1928-1935* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007).

³³ "Anti Labor Bill Passes House Over Protest of Cong. Madden; Fight Shifts to Senate Floor," *Labor Sentinel*, April 23, 1947. Local 1010 Historical Collection (Hammond, IN).

³⁴ Lichtenstein, 117.

³⁵ *Mexican American Harbor Lights*. Indiana Latino Historical Society (1992). East Chicago Public Library, Main Branch. East Chicago History Room.

steelworkers in the scholarship highlights the complicated history of civil rights unionism for Latino steelworkers.

Building a Latino Vote in Steel Union Politics

Ramona Rivera de Serrano waited two years to follow her husband Carlos to the United States from San Juan, Puerto Rico. Born in Utuado, Puerto Rico, Ramona moved to San Juan in search of work and in October 1954 would follow her husband to East Chicago where he spent two years saving money as a steelworker. Reflecting in 1998 about this move, Ramona wrote, “When I came to this city by the way from Puerto Rico I left my parents and my beloved family. I was held in your arms like a cat to her kittens full of illusions and charms. I love you East Chicago as I long for Puerto Rico. I love you both like a mother loves her children. I’ve had good times and bad times but I look at the bad times as blessings from heaven.”³⁶ In her migratory experience, Ramona followed a sharp increase in the postwar years of Puerto Ricans’ exodus from the island to the Northeast and Midwest.³⁷

Ramona’s story became one of many that a local group, a generation of primarily U.S. born Puerto Ricans, collected as part of their organizing efforts in the 1990s. In 1993, thirteen Puerto Rican women gathered and organized a chapter of the National Conference of Puerto

³⁶ Ramona Rivera de Serrano, “Poema a East Chicago,” (1998), translated by author.

³⁷ For some Puerto Rican scholarship see: J. Hernández-Alvarez, “The Movement and Settlement of Puerto Rican Migrants within the United States, 1950-1960,” in *Latinos in the United States: Historical Themes and Identity*, ed. Antoinette Sedillo-López (New York: Garland Publishing, 1995); Carmen Teresa Whalen, *From Puerto Rico to Philadelphia: Puerto Rican Workers and Postwar Economies* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001); Ana Y. Ramos-Zayas, *National Performances: The Politics of Class, Race, and Space in Puerto Rican Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); Gina Pérez, *The Near Northwest Side Story: Migration, Displacement, and Puerto Rican Families* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004). For scholarship about the intersections of ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican communities see: Nicholas De Genova and Ana Y. Ramos-Zayas, *Latino Crossings: Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and the Politics of Race and Citizenship* (New York: Routledge, 2003) and Lilia Fernandez, *Brown in the Windy City: Mexicans and Puerto Ricans in Postwar Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2012).

Rican Women (NaCOPRW). In May of that year, these women organized a reception at Casa Blanca, a Mexican restaurant in East Chicago, Indiana for Dr. Doris Capello of Lehman College of the City University of New York. In addition to Dr. Capello's talk, the chapter recognized fifteen "pioneering women of Puerto Rican descent" part of the original cohort of arrivals from the island to the midwestern steel community. The organization would go on to collect the stories and memories of thirty-two, and later an additional twenty-two biographies, of the Puerto Rican women who arrived with their families, or to reconnect with fathers, brothers, or husbands who had been working in the region as early as 1948.³⁸ As a historical source, these biographies provide a crucial insight into how Puerto Rican families forged place and community within the midwestern steel community of East Chicago, a community without a longer history of Puerto Rican settlement, such as New York. Much like their ethnic Mexican neighbors, Puerto Ricans were drawn to the region by the needs of the steel industry.

Inland Steel Company maintained a complicated relationship with its Latino employees, primarily ethnic Mexicans and Puerto Ricans. During the Steel Strike of 1919, the company brought ethnic Mexicans from the Southwest and Mexico to serve as strikebreakers. The company utilized railroad lines and even the location near Lake Michigan to smuggle in "scabs" around the protestor's blockades.³⁹ This importation of labor instantly created animosity between the newcomers and East Chicago's dozens of European ethnic communities.

³⁸ See: *Our Pioneers* (National Conference of Puerto Rican Women, Indiana Chapter, 1993) and *Reflexiones del Ayer II: Biographies of Puerto Rican Women of Northwest Indiana* (National Conference of Puerto Rican Women, Indiana Chapter, 1998).

³⁹ In an interview, Frederick Maravilla recalled his father's story of arriving to Northwest Indiana as a "scab" for Inland Steel. The company brought Maravilla and his brothers into the mill via a boat, sailing around the union picket lines. "Frederick Ruiz Maravilla Oral History Interview," September 24, 2016, conducted by Nicole Martinez-LeGrand. Indiana Historical Society Latino History Project William H. Smith Memorial Library, Eugene

However, in the non-union era, which spanned from 1890s until 1937, ethnic Mexicans still comprised a central part of the picket lines. Gavino Galvan recalled his father and older brother's experiences during the era. The two older Galvan men came to the region in the 1920s and worked twelve-hour days, seven days a week.⁴⁰ According to Galvan, the ethnic Mexican community overwhelmingly supported efforts in the labor movement such as wildcat strikes and picket lines. Countering the stereotyping of ethnic Mexicans as "scabs," Galvan remembered Mexicans as vital proponents of the movement. Instead, Galvan claimed that in those days, you could count the number of Black steelworkers "On one hand."⁴¹

Many high school-aged Latinos looked to the steel mills as their future. These young men viewed the steel mill, where many of their families worked, as their next logical step when they became old enough. The company created a system to incorporate younger generations, particularly Latinos, to labor in the mill instead of pursuing college, particularly by offering special shifts for students. Vince Barbosa followed his two older brothers and began working with Inland while still attending Washington High School in the Indiana Harbor neighborhood. The company arranged a special shift for high school students to work either from 3:00 to 11:00PM or 4:00 to 12:00 (midnight).⁴² Although some students would wait to seek employment in Inland Steel, many still turned to the mill after graduation. Galvan started working at Inland Steel as a sophomore in high school, laboring in the 44" Hot Strip, where steelworkers reshaped thick slabs into sheets of varying thickness. When he graduated high school in 1950, he applied

and Marilyn Glick Indiana History Center. The transcript includes a copy of Ignacio's Alien Laborer's Identification Card.

⁴⁰ Interview with Gavino Galvan conducted by Ruth Needleman, September 12, 1986. Ruth Needleman Private Collection.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Isabelle Proton. "Compadres" in *Steel Shavings*. Vol. 13 (1987), 14.

to work at the mill full time.⁴³ Louis “Weasel” Vasquez spent his high school years playing baseball for the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) and as a reserve for his high school team. The day after graduation, Vasquez went with a friend Manuel to the employment office. Vasquez filled out an application for mail carrier and felt confident that because of his commercial courses he would attain the position. However, the employment manager, Kenny Grant, said that the mail carrier position “wasn’t open” and instead offered him open hearth, blast furnace, or construction. All three of these departments required intensive labor in grueling conditions, such as the high temperatures during the melting of raw materials. However, a classmate behind Vasquez, Carlson, received the supposedly non-open mail carrier job.⁴⁴ Regardless of his educational training, Vasquez found himself relegated to the sectors of the steel industry reserved for the Latinx community.

The yearbook for Washington High School, *The Anvil*, reinforced the permanence and significance of the steel industry utilizing it as the theme in 1942. During the Second World War, the steel industry’s demand for labor drastically increased. Utilizing the steel industry as a theme, as well as the shifts that allowed for high schoolers to join the labor force at the mill, helped entrench this path for a new generation. The yearbook opened with a poem by John Jay Chapman entitled “Toil Away.” The poem urged its audience to work without questioning the significance of their work, stating:

Toil away and set the stone/That shall stand when you are gone/ Ask not that another see/
The meaning of your masonry./ Grind the gem and dig the well,/ For what? For whom? I
cannot tell/ The stone may mark a boundary line,/ The well may flow, the gem may
shine./ Be it wage enough for you/ To shape them well and set them true/ Of the future
who can tell?/Work, my friend, and so farewell.⁴⁵

⁴³ Interview with Gavino Galvan,” September 12, 1986.

⁴⁴ *Weasel: The Autobiography of Louis Vasquez*, vol. 24, (Valparaiso, IN: Home Mountain Printing, 1995), 14.

⁴⁵ Washington High School Yearbook, *The Anvil* (1942).

The opening poem by Chapman accompanied other quotes by unknown authors and notably Carl Sandburg, as well as photographs and drawings of Inland Steel. The utilization of the industrial scenes and poetry presented a romantic notion of laboring in the steel industry. The inclusion of Sandburg's "Prayer of Steel," reminded the students of the intertwined stories of the industry and the community, "Lay me on an anvil, O God/ Beat me and hammer me into a steel spike/ Drive me into the girders that hold a sky/ Take red-hot rivets and fasten me into them/ Let me be the great nail holding a skyscraper into white stars."⁴⁶ The yearbook staff even adopted the terminology of the union, referring to the Juniors, Sophomores, and Freshmen as "Journeymen and Apprentices." The theme reminded the diverse student body at Washington High School that for many of them, the steel industry would become their future after graduation.

For some Latinos it started as early as their freshmen year of high school. Vasquez recalled an instance with his guidance counselor at Washington High School in 1938 where the counselor tried to get him to take a yellow card, a graduation track for vocational trades. However, Vasquez deemed that "it was too messy and greasy. Not for me."⁴⁷ Despite the insistence of the counselor, Vasquez wanted to take the red card for commercial courses such as typing and bookkeeping. Despite these courses, Vasquez was hired in to work the cement gang and eventually the blast furnace.⁴⁸ David Castro remembered that he told his guidance counselor that he desired to attend college. Instead, she placed him on the technical and industry track, or as Castro called it, "mill fodder." Following the guidance counselor's direction, Castro took welding, which he said "was a majority Mexican with a few blacks." According to Castro, his

⁴⁶ Washington High School Yearbook, *The Anvil* (1942), 49.

⁴⁷ *Weasel: The Autobiography of Louis Vasquez*, 10.

⁴⁸ *Weasel: The Autobiography of Louis Vasquez*, 15-16.

welding instructor, Mr. Walter M. Geyer, said, “Dave, you Mexicans are getting fucked. Look around.” Reflecting over twenty years later, in 1987, as Castro noticed the lack of Latino and African American foremen and management, he remembered Geyer’s words and realized “we had been funneled.”⁴⁹

However, for many, the steel mill and union became a family affair. For example, before becoming President of Local 1010, Jesse Arredondo heard about the union from his father Miguel. The elder Arredondo served as the Outer Guard for the union in 1945.⁵⁰ Another steelworker, Gavino Galvan noted that his father would talk to him positively about the benefits of the union in creating security for the steelworkers and better labor conditions.⁵¹ According to Galvan, his father knew their Griever, Fred Gardner, granting the Galvan family an important role under the union. In other cases, after leaving the region during the tail-end of the Depression for Texas, Arthur Vasquez returned to work in Inland Steel, joined by his son. The father-son duo worked together briefly in the blast furnace before the company switched the elder Vasquez to the furnace floor.⁵² These family connections extended kin networks beyond the home into both the mill and union. Although educational opportunities, or the lack thereof, held many youths back, the push from family forces also led many to pursue employment in the mills as well.

Family connections also encouraged the migration and growth of the Puerto Rican community in East Chicago. The National Conference of Puerto Rican Women, Indiana Chapter

⁴⁹ James B. Lane. “Interview with David Castro” in *Steel Shavings*. Vol. 13 (1987), 48.

⁵⁰ “Union Elects Nick Migas,” *The Hammond Times*, June 29, 1945.

⁵¹ “Interview with Gavino Galvan,” September 12, 1986 conducted by Ruth Needleman. Courtesy of Ruth Needleman’s Private Collection.

⁵² “Interview with Arthur Vasquez,” July 23, 1990 conducted by Ruth Needleman. Courtesy of Ruth Needleman’s Private Collection.

documented the biographies of the pioneering Puerto Rican women of the region in *Reflexiones del Ayer II* (1998).⁵³ The compilation of biographies by the daughters of these pioneering Puerto Rican families noted the familial connections that pulled Puerto Ricans into East Chicago as they followed fathers, brothers, husbands into the steel community in the 1950s. Of the twenty-one biographies included in the volume, all but two mention the role of Inland Steel in bringing their families to the region.

Once hired and employed by Inland Steel, Latinos and African Americans struggled to achieve promotions, or positions outside of the most grueling departments, such as the open-hearth blast furnaces. Ruth Needleman noted in her book, *Black Freedom Fighters in Steel*, that Latinos and African Americans represented an overwhelming majority in jobs such as the coke plant, open hearth, and blast furnace, or as labor gangs in generally ethnic European and white departments.⁵⁴ In the postwar era, Latino and African American steelworkers had to challenge both the management's ability to hire and assign as they pleased and the internal resistance within the union to integration while pushing for multiracial solidarity.⁵⁵ Ultimately, while Latino and African Americans pushed the union to address racial issues, many white and ethnic European unionists sought to marginalize issues of race in favor of issues such as contract negotiations and wages.

For Latinos, some departments offered early in-roads to promotions and union leadership, albeit through the segregation of Latino steelworkers into specific departments, such as transportation and the open hearths. Barbosa claimed that the transportation department had one

⁵³ National Conference of Puerto Rican Women, Indiana Chapter, *Reflexiones del Ayer II: Biographies of Puerto Rican Women of Northwest Indiana*. (East Chicago, 1998). In author's private collection.

⁵⁴ Ruth Needleman, *Black Freedom Fighters in Steel*, 47.

⁵⁵ Needleman, *Black Freedom Fighters in Steel*, 49.

of the first Mexican foremen because Inland recognized Mexican experience with railroad work.⁵⁶ Many of the ethnic Europeans, Latinos, and African Americans found themselves stuck in the lower rungs of the blast furnace, open hearths, and construction without an opportunity to leave manual labor.

Workers filed grievances to ameliorate their situations within the workplace. For example, a grievance filed on behalf of Salvador Pompa claimed that the refusal to promote Pompa to Hostler violated Article VII, Section 6a of the collective bargaining agreement.⁵⁷ Similar to other grievance reports filed on behalf of Spanish-Speaking steelworkers, the company foreman and union administration ruled that under the provisions of Section 1 of Article VII, the inability to read and or write English meant that they could not satisfy “ability to perform the work.”⁵⁸ John Gutierrez, a steelworker in the No. 2 Open Hearth, recalled an instance where a white coworker called him a “grease bug” and demanded he move his clothes to a dirtier section of the employee locker room. Gutierrez was fired for striking the employee with a 2x4 and when he returned to the mill two years later, the two were kept separated.⁵⁹

Discrimination within the company and the union encouraged participation from Latino steelworkers as an avenue to combat it. Art Velasquez noted that much of this discrimination relied on Black and Latino steelworkers not going to union meetings and remaining uninformed.⁶⁰ Vasquez noted that one of the crucial factors that people remained unaware of was the concept of seniority. The company facilitated further segregation by placing higher-paying

⁵⁶ Proton, “Compadres” in *Steel Shavings*. Vol. 13 (1987), 14.

⁵⁷ “Grievance Report, Salvador Pompa, Check No. 3144,” August 26, 1953. Ruth Needleman Private Collection.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Interview with John Gutierrez by Ruth Needleman. August 10, 1990. In Ruth Needleman’s Private Collection.

⁶⁰ Interview with Arthur Vasquez by Ruth Needleman. July 23, 1990. In Ruth Needleman’s Private Collection.

jobs in departments into separate sequences, which prevented promotion from laborer into jobs such as melters and pipefitters since promotion could only occur within the same job sequence.⁶¹

Steelworkers participated in the union to varying degrees. As Ruth Needleman argued in *Black Freedom Fighters in Steel*, Black steelworkers began to form their separate caucus as early as the union began. Although Black steelworkers engaged in union activities, their separate caucus allowed them to highlight and organize around workplace discrimination and establish an effective voting bloc within the union. Needleman claimed that white workers resisted altering the seniority system as they saw their positions threatened with the possibility of inclusion.⁶² The seniority system favored their segregated departments and would prevent the possibility of a supervisor outside of their ethnic and racial group.

However, Latino steelworkers organized much differently than Black steelworkers in the union. Some Latino steelworkers recognized that they could leverage their identity as Latino to gain positions on slates for various administrative posts. In many cases, these instances relied on forming a multiracial ticket. Galvan successfully became a steward when he agreed to support a white steelworker as assistant grievor of his department.⁶³ Needleman, a labor historian that has spent decades working with and writing about steelworkers in Northwest Indiana, noted that many of these people switched caucuses solely to stay out of the mill and on administrative payroll.⁶⁴ For instance, if one caucus gained momentum among the steelworkers, a candidate would switch to that caucus to utilize its popularity to remain in office. Some Latinos, such as Vasquez, noted that racial division in the union would only weaken the overall labor movement

⁶¹ Needleman, *Black Freedom Fighters in Steel*, 48.

⁶² Needleman, *Black Freedom Fighters in Steel*, 48-49.

⁶³ Interview with Gavino Galvan by Ruth Needleman. September 12, 1986. In Ruth Needleman's Private Collection.

⁶⁴ Interview with Ruth Needleman by author. May 26, 2019.

and stressed that forming a separate Latino caucus was not in the best interests of Latinos or labor.⁶⁵

Union leaders made some efforts to incorporate Latinos into the union. Local 1010 President, William “Wildcat Willie” Maihofer, who served consecutive and non-consecutive terms in 1938, 1945, and 1950-1952, wanted to establish a Mexican youth organization. In September 1950, Maihofer argued that a separate organization would assist with incorporating the predominantly Spanish-speaking youth arriving to East Chicago in the postwar years into the union.⁶⁶ However, few of the members present agreed with Maihofer. Several union members believed that this would “foster discrimination” while others declared that such an organization should be open to all youth. Even still, unionists claimed that the local was “not a charitable organization” and should nor could not provide funds for every group. However, the local voted and approved sending a white officer, and an International union representative, Joe Jeneske, to an American Bowling Congress dinner with “unlimited expenses.” The dinner was to celebrate a discrimination suit against the union’s bowling club excluding Latinos and African Americans.⁶⁷ Jeneske, as well as the frivolous spending of Local 1010, became a focal point for conversations about union corruption in the 1950s.

This lack of broader support from the local did not prevent any organization of Latinos in the union from forming. Although few of the organization’s records exist, Local 1010 established the Spanish Speaking People’s Committee (Comité de Habla Española) for its Latino

⁶⁵ Interview with Arthur Vasquez by Ruth Needleman. July 23, 1990. In Ruth Needleman’s Private Collection.

⁶⁶ Local Union 1010, General minutes, September 21, 1950, and October 5, 1950. Calumet Regional Archive 115 Indiana University Northwest.

⁶⁷ Local Union 1010, General minutes, September 21, 1950, and October 5, 1950. Calumet Regional Archive 115 Indiana University Northwest.

steelworkers. Notices within the steelworker's newspaper, *Labor Sentinel*, advertised that the group met at varying times multiple times a month. The night meeting occurred every Tuesday and Wednesday at 6:00 PM and the first and third Sunday of every month at 2:00 PM. The committee also held walk-in office hours on Thursdays.⁶⁸ The committee concerned itself with racial issues in East Chicago. In June 1951, Rufus Camacho, the group's chairman, protested the rent hike in the Indiana Harbor neighborhoods of the city, where a lot of Latinos and immigrants resided. Camacho claimed that his rent in his four-room apartment went from \$25 to \$60 a month. He exclaimed that "I can't afford to buy shoes for my child anymore. Hundreds of others are in worse positions than I am. Mexican workers for Inland Steel are jammed seven in one room in many cases, and they pay \$7 a week each for rent."⁶⁹ Despite the public push against these hikes, the rent increase stood. However, the committee offered an opportunity to elevate Latino leadership and provide an avenue for cultivating leadership within the community. The committee's next chairman, Jesse Arredondo, would work to balance the racial issues and union issues that seemed contradictory for elements of the union's membership.

The Unity Slate: Building a Cross Racial Coalition

Jesse Arredondo, who would become the President of 1010 in 1970, followed his father into the mill. The Arredondo family had deep roots in both the region and the steel industry.⁷⁰ The family's patriarch, Miguel Arredondo moved to the region to become a "mill rat" and was

⁶⁸ See issues of *Labor Sentinel* 1951-1952.

⁶⁹ "Halt Gouging, Renters Ask E. Chicago Council," *The Hammond Times*, June 12, 1951.

⁷⁰ The Arredondo Family wrote a history of their family's involvement in the region centered on their mother's personal story. See Ramón Arredondo & Trisha (Hull) Arredondo. *Maria's Journey*. (Indianapolis, IN: Indiana Historical Society Press, 2010).

an early supporter of unionization efforts in the 1930s. Upon Jesse Arredondo's return from WWII, his father introduced him to the union efforts and taught him that:

We have to take a stand. The war is over, and there's no excuse for the steel companies to keep wages and benefits down. They've made themselves rich. The big shots always get their share. It's time for us to make sure we have our fair share, too. We need contracts that guarantee us a living wage and a decent pension. As things stand now, the company can fire you if they decide they don't like the way you wear your cap. It's time the working man had his due.⁷¹

These father and son conversations ignited Jesse Arredondo's long career in the union.

Arredondo recognized that as the son of Miguel many old-time unionists would look to him as a union leader.

The Arredondo family also played a role in Jesse Arredondo's future campaigning. From their basement in the Arredondo family home, Jesse and his new wife Eva, turned their home into the campaign headquarters. The dining room table turned into a focal point for "an assembly line of workers."⁷² The basement apartment's conversion into a "minifactory" brought friends and family to the apartment after their shifts to create campaign literature and stuff envelopes. Although it was Jesse Arredondo running for office, the campaign truly became a family affair. His mother Maria Arredondo and two sisters, Mary and Camila fed the volunteers. His younger brothers, Ray and Lorenzo, stood outside the mill's gates to pass out the previous evening's campaign materials at shift changes.⁷³ According to the family's history, "The roller-coaster twists and turns of the campaign had a contagion that was unavoidable."⁷⁴

The growing visibility of Arredondo in the union allowed for the young veteran to gain name-recognition. One of the first opportunities granted to Arredondo was with union leader

⁷¹ Arredondo, *Maria's Journey*, 164.

⁷² Arredondo, *Maria's Journey*, 194.

⁷³ Arredondo, *Maria's Journey*, 195.

⁷⁴ Arredondo, *Maria's Journey*, 195.

Jimmy Stolla as an investigator for assistance claims from union members. This work allowed Arredondo to visit with a variety of unionists in their homes and discuss the fiscal problems they faced.⁷⁵ The leadership of Local 1010 even selected Arredondo as one of one-hundred steelworkers in the Chicagoland District to attend a labor institute program at the University of Illinois. Arredondo worked with two other Latino steelworkers for programming about Labor Day, which included publishing a historical account in Spanish for the union's newspaper.⁷⁶ The program offered opportunities for Arredondo and his fellow representatives to learn about collective bargaining, grievance handling, public relations, union administration, and a wealth of other topics central in developing strong leadership for the rank-and-file.⁷⁷ The leadership actively cultivated Jesse Arredondo for a leadership role as he even joined men such as Vice-President of 1010 William Young, Peter Calacci, and Griever Don Lutes in contract negotiations with Inland Steel prior to his election in 1952.⁷⁸

When Don Lutes offered Arredondo a position on his slate for the United Labor Candidates in 1952, this likely came as a surprise for Arredondo. When previous slates thought to include representation of ethnic Mexican or Puerto Rican steelworkers, they filled low-tier spots in the administration hierarchy, such as Guards, or Grievors. However, Lutes offered Arredondo a key role as Treasurer on his slate for the Union Builders Slate.⁷⁹ By offering a Latino steelworker a higher position on the slate, Lutes attempted to gain the Latino steelworker vote. In the steelworkers' mindsight, much like municipal governments, higher positions offered

⁷⁵ Arredondo, *Maria's Journey*, 165.

⁷⁶ "Origen Del Dia Del Trabajo," *Labor Sentinel*, August 31, 1951.

⁷⁷ "Calumet Labor News," *The Hammond Times*, July 14, 1950.

⁷⁸ "Big, Little Steel Talks Scheduled," *The Hammond Times*, November 27, 1951. "Price Dispute Hammers Peace," *The Hammond Times*, March 26, 1952.

⁷⁹ "Strikers Out to 'Get Taft,'" *The Hammond Times*, June 17, 1952.

more opportunities for Latinos. These positions were also placebos to claims of inequality and discrimination in the local. In some ways, these multiracial slates sought to mitigate the emphasis placed by “radicals” within the union on racial issues over union issues.

Jesse Arredondo had won an election to become Financial Secretary of 1010. The family’s memoir recalled Miguel’s reaction that night:

Most of all, Miguel was proud- proud that his son had accomplished that which he had been denied. The seeds he had planted had indeed come to fruition. If there were regrets that it was his son and not he who was receiving toasts of glory, he did not betray it. His expression held only pride and happiness as he lifted his beer to toast the new Financial Secretary of Local 1010.

‘I won because of you, Dad,’ Jesse broke in as the toasts were being raised. They knew the Arredondo name and voted for me because of that. Thanks, Dad.’ With that, Jesse raised his glass to his father.⁸⁰

While campaigning for Treasurer, Arredondo earned a high school GED and enrolled in courses at Roosevelt University in Chicago.⁸¹ Arredondo’s victory under Lutes to become the Treasurer of 1010 had two crucial benefits for the Arredondo family. With the new officer’s position, Arredondo “became the primary source of income for the family.”⁸² With this new income, Jesse Arredondo both paid the down payment for the family home on Block Avenue and began to provide his aging father Miguel with pocket money. The position also paved the way for the Arredondo family to establish themselves as a prominent family both in steel and the city.

However, misfortune struck the Arredondo household. With the spare pocket money that Miguel received from his son’s new position, Miguel Arredondo spent more time drinking. As the family recalled, “Relief was only to be gained from drinking, an escape that allowed him to forget the hateful disappointments of his life, if only briefly. His medicine was a bottle of Jim

⁸⁰ Arredondo, *Maria’s Journey*, 196.

⁸¹ Arredondo, *Maria’s Journey*, 190.

⁸² Arredondo, *Maria’s Journey*, 191.

Beam whiskey or cheap wine in which he could literally drown his sorrows.”⁸³ Although neither the family’s history nor the newspaper mention the death being the result of alcohol, instead opting for “train accident,” Miguel Arredondo’s final days reflected a troubled life.⁸⁴ As Jesse’s career in the union began to look even more promising, his father Miguel, the man responsible for instilling into his son the significance of unionism, was struck and killed by a train.⁸⁵ The Chicago-bound train blew the locomotive’s horn in an effort to move Miguel from his position standing in the middle of the tracks. At the age of fifty-five, Miguel Arredondo passed away.

The untimely death of Miguel Arredondo proved only one misfortune in Jesse Arredondo’s budding career. Shortly after his father’s death, the international, in February 1955, placed Local 1010 under administratorship. The incident appeared to be a follow-up by the international when Local 1010 removed two officers for the misappropriation of funds in November 1954. Joseph Jeneske, an international staff representative, and Thomas Conway, the former Financial Secretary, for the misappropriation of funds.⁸⁶ Although the international upheld the removal of Jeneske and Conway, the investigation quickly led to the removal of thirty-seven members from the local’s leadership. Although the international stressed that “there is no question of misappropriation of union funds involved,” much of the incident remained vague.⁸⁷ Within a week of administratorship, the international reinstated the twenty-two grievors and the Financial Secretary, Jesse Arredondo. Although the international investigated and removed over thirty individuals from their elected officers, the newspaper reported that the

⁸³ Arredondo, *Maria’s Journey*, 204-205.

⁸⁴ “Obituary for Miguel Arredondo,” *The Hammond Times*, January 20, 1955.

⁸⁵ “Train Kills Dad of 10 In Harbor,” *The Hammond Times*, January 19, 1955.

⁸⁶ “USW Aides Sift Local Fund Case,” *The Hammond Times*, January 10, 1955.

⁸⁷ “Politics’ Denied in 1010 Case,” *The Hammond Times*, February 2, 1955.

international did not pursue charges against any of these steelworkers.⁸⁸ The retaining of the Grievers and Financial Secretary is likely due to these positions as necessary for the day-to-day operations for union members to file complaints against the company and receive their checks. The international retained these individuals to prevent disrupting the rank and file of the union; although, the international supervised their work.

The removal of the rest of the officers and the decision to not file charges against them remained more of an enigma. Lutes claimed the administratorship attempted to intimidate individuals from pursuing an elected office in the upcoming elections and tarnish the reputation of others.⁸⁹ This sort of incident fits historian David Witwer's observation of corruption serving not only as a legal term but one with political interpretation. According to Witwer, "this strategic use of the issue of corruption became particularly important if organized labor had gained a measure of political security."⁹⁰ Lutes recognized this political usage when he claimed that "The officers of our local wouldn't knuckle under to Germano, but always have taken an active stand of their own in the United Steelworkers."⁹¹ For Lutes, the charge of "misappropriation of funds" served as a thin veil for the international to remove individuals who they disagreed with from running the local and tarnish the careers of those who hitched themselves to them. However, the brief administratorship did not stain Arredondo's career as he appeared on the Unity Ticket in 1956 for the upcoming election.

The discriminatory policies of the corporation toward the union members offered Italian immigrant, Peter Calacci, an opportunity to fulfill the cross-racial coalition he attempted to

⁸⁸ "Lutes Charges Germano 'Trying to Cover Up Purge': Hits Thornton," *The Hammond Times*, February 3, 1955.

⁸⁹ "Lutes Charges Germano 'Trying to Cover Up Purge': Hits Thornton," *The Hammond Times*, February 3, 1955.

⁹⁰ Witwer, *Corruption and Reform in the Teamsters Union*, 2.

⁹¹ "Lutes Charges Germano 'Trying to Cover Up Purge': Hits Thornton," *The Hammond Times*, February 3, 1955.

create while he was a member of the Steelworkers Organizing Committee in the 1930s. Born in Ferentino, in the Latium Province of Italy, Calacci arrived in Evanston in 1930 with his father where they worked as carpenters. However, seven years later Calacci found himself employed at Inland Steel where he became central in the formation of the United Steelworkers.⁹² Utilizing his own experiences as an immigrant to the United States, Calacci continued (and escalated) the post-war strategy of forming coalitions across various racial and immigrant groups in the 1950s. This characteristic of Calacci's slate improved on the Union Builder Caucus (under Don Lutes) to slate minorities in low-tier positions by ensuring Latinos and African Americans gained meaningful representation outside of representation in primarily segregated departments. Calacci's administration served as a crucial catalyst for the elevation of Arredondo and Lopez to the Presidencies of 1010.

By offering positions on the slate to Latinos and African Americans, in the 1950s, Calacci escalated the growing solidarity between the union, minorities, and civil rights initiated by his predecessors. Latinos and African Americans would now be recognized as instrumental figures within labor politics. Roberto Flores noted that "Hispanics weren't being slated by union caucuses until we allied with one slate, and it made other caucuses realize they'd have to slate Hispanics, too."⁹³ The alliance formed between these minority steelworkers and Calacci's Unity Ticket altered the role of Latino steelworkers for decades. The ticket included the Unity Slate's statement of purpose:

We also wish to again remind our friends and faithful supporters that our names appear on the 'UNITY' ticket because we are of the firm belief that all 'UNITY' candidates for local union offices and delegates to the Steelworkers convention are pledged to support the principles of good, honest and sincere trade unionism, based on a program that is of

⁹² "Peter Calacci receives International Institute's Immigrant Achievement Award," *The Times*, August 26, 1990.

⁹³ "Roberto Flores Oral History" interview conducted by James B. Lane, *Steel Shavings*, 12.

benefit to all union members, regardless of race, creed, color or national origin- and NOT a program for just a chosen few.⁹⁴ This call for unity among many of the ethnic European, Black, and Latino steelworkers allowed for a winning ticket in 1010. The Unity Slate won by a two-to-one margin in the local, sweeping most of the offices from the opposition.⁹⁵

In 1956, Calacci's Unity Slate garnered significant traction among various groups in the steel mill in their first election. The local paper, *The Hammond Times*, proclaimed that "Unity Slate is Winner at Inland." Although relying on unofficial numbers, the article noted that the union elected fourteen members from the slate. Aside from Calacci as president of the local, Unity Slate members dominated elected offices by nearly a two-to-one margin among the 15,000 member local.⁹⁶ Through the successful Unity Slate ticket, Arredondo became the highest-ranked Latino in the local as the Financial Secretary.

A crucial aspect of Arredondo's rise in Local 1010's political scene was hitching his career to the Unity Caucus and Peter Calacci. This connection continued Miguel Arredondo's relationship with the Unity Caucus in the post-war era. The former Outer Guard, Miguel ran for the Inner Guard position in 1946 and retained the office until he lost reelection in 1950.⁹⁷ Through his early involvement with the union, Jesse "found that many of the young men his age were very impressed by his father and, as he became more involved, Jesse's personal admiration for his father grew."⁹⁸ This association on the Unity Ticket with Peter Calacci introduced the

⁹⁴ "Unity Slate Ticket," *The Hammond Times*, September 5, 1956.

⁹⁵ "Unity Slate is Winner at Inland," *The Hammond Times*, September 11, 1956.

⁹⁶ "Unity Slate is Winner at Inland," *The Hammond Times*, September 11, 1956. Other elected officials included Don Black (Vice President); Louis Chickie (Recording Secretary); Jesse Arredondo (Financial Secretary); and George Stoddard (Treasurer). Latinos assumed many other smaller roles, such as Leo Arreguin (Guide); Eddie Perez (Inner Guard); and Al Garza (Vice Chairman of the Grievance Committee).

⁹⁷ "Vote for Unity Ticket," *The Hammond Times*, June 26, 1946. "Election of-," *The Hammond Times*, June 18, 1950.

⁹⁸ Arredondo, *Maria's Journey*, 164.

younger Arredondo to influential people in the union, indoctrinating him into a broader network of important figures. Jesse recalled that “I made a lot of friends that way and met a lot of people. That helped me as I moved up the ranks.”⁹⁹ Through these associations, Jesse Arredondo became a more visible presence in 1010.

Post-Unity: Union Corruption, Latinos in the Union, and Right to Work

The Unity Slate’s victory proved short-lived. Former president, and fourth place finisher for the presidency in 1956, Don Lutes forwarded to the national a list of grievances concerning several of his former co-officials. This list of officials included Arredondo, who served as Treasurer under Lutes’ Rank and File Union Builders Slate in 1952 until the national placed the local under administratorship in 1955.¹⁰⁰ Lutes argued that the 1956 union election on September 6th was illegal. However, like the administratorship in 1955 against Lutes, these charges may have been more or less reactionary. Regardless of the validity of Lutes’ claims, the grievances directed toward the union leadership represented a crucial turning point both within the union and nationally. Whereas Latino steelworkers viewed the election as a watershed moment for them to seize more positions within the union’s leadership, the charges reflected the broader trends across the Midwest and country concerning union corruption. An estimated 1.2 million households watched the televised McClellan Committees in 1957 and listened to the illegal activities of corrupt unions across the United States. The three-year Senate committee, formally known as the United States Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in Labor and Management, investigated the extent of improper practices and criminal elements in labor. Coinciding with the passage of right-to-work legislation in Indiana, Lutes’ charges of corruption

⁹⁹ Arredondo, *Maria’s Journey*, 165.

¹⁰⁰ “Strikers Out to Get Taft,” *The Hammond Times*, June 17, 1952.

signaled a vital turning point in the pursuit of representation and leadership by Latino steelworkers.

Lutes' list of grievances charged that Calacci's Unity Slate violated numerous election criteria. Notably, Lutes claimed that "Members of the local union were told to go into the polling place and they would be allowed to remain there to tell Mexican and Puerto Rican members to vote for the Unity Slate. One of these members remained there from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m."¹⁰¹ Other charges included the lack of watchers to watch the counting of ballots, the use of the 1010 mailing list without prior approval, the changing requirements to vote from union cards to clock card stubs, and general mismanagement of ballots. Joyce Lutes, Don's wife, echoed these grievances in a letter to the editor in the newspaper's "Voice of the People" section. She questioned why the votes were still listed as "unofficial," and why instead of four official ballot boxes there were five. Furthermore, she questioned why the international moved Jeneske, who was responsible for the financial discrepancies that led to Lutes losing his position, only transferred and not expelled from the union. Her letter noted that Lutes, like Arredondo, despite both being removed during the period of administratorship, were still allowed to run for office. Bluntly, she asked, "Why is it, if you are honest and for the people in your local, you are told to either go along with the international big shots and be quiet or they will see your local is taken away from you like Local 1010 was?"¹⁰²

Mr. and Mrs. Lutes were not the only ones to allege that the Unity Slate had violated the integrity of the union's electoral process. Other former officers of the 15,000-steelworker local did too. Among the additional accusers, John Sargent, the former 1010 President, like Lutes, was

¹⁰¹ "14 Gripes Listed by Ex-Chief," *The Hammond Times*, September, 26, 1956.

¹⁰² "Local 1010's Election," *The Hammond Times*, September 16, 1956.

a defeated candidate in the 1956 election. These men agreed with Lutes in claiming that ballot-box stuffing, the refusal to allow poll watchers, and the distrustful nature of some election officials led the sub-district director “to steal the election for the Unity candidates,” which were elected in its entirety.¹⁰³ In their letter to USW President David McDonald, the accusers asserted that:

There is sufficient evidence for us to be sure that certain people on the election committee involved in manipulations of an impounded ballot box cannot be trusted for the counting of ballots. Members of the election committee have no right to stuff ballots into ballot boxes other than their own ballot... The past four years of administration of Local 1010 by local international officers have been corrupted by theft and dishonesty.¹⁰⁴

The former officers framed the complete victory of the Unity Slate as a result of the international’s oversight of the local. These former officials believed that the international’s governing of the local corrupted democracy within the union, primarily through electing officials that supported ties to the international.

However, Cecil Clifton, the international representative for USW, claimed that Lutes’ charges were invalid. Clifton stated that “It was a clean election, the rules were followed and his (Lutes’) procedure now is typical of the way he has acted in the past.”¹⁰⁵ The article recalled Lutes’ suspension of his second term as President on charges brought about by the defeated former President Maihofer, who accused Lutes of misappropriating funds. This implied that these charges of corruption occurred, often from the losing side, as a way to discredit and more often annoy the new leadership with an investigation. In response to Lutes and the other former

¹⁰³ “5 Former Officers Join Lutes in Protesting Inland Union Election,” *The Hammond Times*, October 7, 1956.

¹⁰⁴ “5 Former Officers Join Lutes in Protesting Inland Union Election,” *The Hammond Times*, October 7, 1956.

¹⁰⁵ “14 Gripes Listed by Ex-Chief,” *The Hammond Times*, September, 26, 1956.

officers' claims, Calacci claimed that "To me it's a laughing matter the way they're behaving, trying to cover up for their own bad showing."¹⁰⁶

Despite the claims of corruption and foul play, Latino steelworkers continued to push for more representation in all aspects of 1010. The community's bilingual newspaper, *The Latin Times*, extensively covered the upcoming union election of 1957. An edition of the column "Our Town" claimed that the election "is going to find quite a few of our own Latin lads flinging the old hat in the ring so to speak."¹⁰⁷ Although the author recognized that the list was not complete and that not every man would win their election, the article listed eighteen candidates for positions as Assistant Grievors and Stewards. The note concluded that "If this is any indication of things to come, then the Latin workers of our town are going to be well represented if ever the time comes for them to air their grievance."¹⁰⁸ The pages of the newspaper even began to include pieces such as, "Will the Union Go Latin?" Discussing a conversation with a friend, Latino steelworker Stanley Avila provided a concise overview of the Latin American steelworker's past and the possible future that the 1957 election held. Avila claimed that:

Not only has the Latin American steel worker risen to the once forbidden fields in labor, he has in the more recent years fared well union wise. As we all know we can proudly point to very able representation in the form of Latin American officers at our local union. Let us hope that more of our Latin American steel workers can fill even more of these union positions.¹⁰⁹

The mentioning of "very able representation" likely alluded to Jesse Arredondo, who under the Unity Ticket, paved the way for Latino representation in union politics as far back as 1952. The

¹⁰⁶ "5 Former Officers Join Lutes in Protesting Inland Union Election," *The Hammond Times*, October 7, 1956.

¹⁰⁷ "Our Town," *Latin Times*, February 23, 1957.

¹⁰⁸ "Our Town," *Latin Times*, February 23, 1957.

¹⁰⁹ "Will the Union Go Latin," *Latin Times*, March 9, 1957.

community looked toward these representatives with a positive mentality. Men such as Arredondo served as bastions of democratic unionism and climbing the political ladder.

The Unity Slate offered Arredondo and many other minority steelworkers an opportunity to experiment with elected leadership roles and initiate conversations about representation in the union. These early interactions with an older generation of Latino unionists, such as Miguel Arredondo, and with allies to Latino steelworkers such as Peter Calacci, served as significant moments for the rise of Latino leadership in local 1010 and in the United Steelworkers' Union more generally. The *Latin Times* recognized the power behind the Unity Slate when it noted in 1958 that Latinos might "Prove to yourselves that in Unity there is strength and come next election, maybe you'll have a Latin Local 1010 president."¹¹⁰ Although it was not the next election, the desire for a Latino President of 1010 would come to fruition in the coming years. But with the election of a Latino President in 1010, Latino steelworkers and the Latino community would find their optimistic view of the future of democratic unionism tested.

Unity within the union became complicated by th important moments for the labor movement in the 1950s: the McClellan Senate Hearings of 1957 and the Steel Strike of 1959. The McClellan Committee Hearings drew links between fears that there were communists in the labor movement and the role of corruption, racketeering, and organized crime. Additionally, Robert F. Kennedy, chief counsel for the Senate, subpoenaed dozens of Democratic Lake County officials, including East Chicago Mayor Walter Jeorse. While these hearings drew attention to allegations of corruption in the labor movement, the Steel Strike of 1959, a conflict over the 2-B clause, served as a vital turning point in the steel industry. During the strike, steel imports, for

¹¹⁰ "Four Latins on One Union Slate," *Latin Times*, June 14, 1958.

the first year in the industry's history, exceeded exports.¹¹¹ These national events were joined by Indiana's passage of a right-to-work law in 1957.¹¹² As Latinos struggled with presenting a united front, the world of unionized labor underwent a moment of crisis.

Cultivating Latino Leadership

As the labor movement underwent a more conservative, and some places, moderate counteroffensive, Latinos simultaneously began to rise as leaders within the union. As a cohesive voting bloc, Latino steelworkers represented a chief demographic for any caucus to pursue for their slates. Steelworkers leveraged this to gain higher positions on the ballots, as well as gain more representation. This allowed for elected Latinos in the union to begin to cultivate themselves as leaders both within the union, and in the community. However, this representation would come within the pro-International union and kaleidoscopic nature of union politics.

Jesse Arredondo's inclusion on the Unity Slate paved the way for other Latinos in the Union. Henry J. "Babe" Lopez and Roberto "Bob" Flores both ascended union politics to find positions within the local's administration. Lopez and Flores engaged in multiracial tickets on various slates and engaged in red-baiting against the local's dissenting voices. In Flores' scrapbooks of his years in the union, he saved a pamphlet handed to steelworkers entitled "Hearings Before the Committee on Un-American Activities," where Presidential candidate for Local 1010 in 1958, John Sargent, admitted to joining The Young Communist League and later

¹¹¹ See: William T. Hogan, *Economic History of the Iron and Steel Industry in the United States* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1971) and Kristoffer Smemo, Samir Sonti, and Gabriel Winant, "Conflict and Consensus: The Steel Strike of 1959 and the Anatomy of the New Deal Order," *Critical Historical Studies* (Spring 2017): 39-73.

¹¹² See: "Behind Closed Doors," *The Indianapolis Star*, March 3, 1957. For more on right to work laws in the Midwest see: Marc Dixon, *Heartland Blues: Labor Rights in the Industrial Midwest* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

the Communist Party.¹¹³ Flores utilized the anti-communist language of the Cold War to advance his career. Lopez utilized his years as an Assistant Griever, and later Griever, in the 76” Hot Strip Mill to establish his position within the union. In 1958, Lopez and Flores both ran for office (Inner Guard and Recording Secretary). Lopez won his election whereas Flores lost to the incumbent nearly two-to-one.¹¹⁴

Despite the Unity slate of candidates elevating the roles that Latinos held in the union, unity became a problematic concept for the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican steelworkers. In 1960, Henry “Babe” Lopez announced his decision to run against Jesse Arredondo for Financial Secretary. Lopez’s supporters claimed that the Korean War veteran “is the choice of the majority of Latin steelworkers.”¹¹⁵ The Membership First Slate incorporated Lopez under their motto of “For a Good Militant Union For You.”¹¹⁶ These internal discussions in the community highlighted competing notions about responsive leadership for the Latino steelworkers. While Lopez leveled no specific complaints against Arredondo, he continuously framed himself as a more responsive leader for the unionists. This framing implied Arredondo as out-of-touch with unionists. Alternatively, these moments of disunity allowed separate groups to leverage their ability to bring in votes to gain representation for their supporters over other groups. Lopez’s campaign could have simply been an opportunity for him to elevate himself and his career at Arredondo’s expense. Whether for the personal gain of an individual candidate, or their group of

¹¹³ “Scrapbooks, United Steelworkers of American activities (1958-1988),” Roberto “Bob” Flores Papers, CRA 371 Box 1. Calumet Regional Archives (Indiana University Northwest: Gary, IN).

¹¹⁴ “Calacci, Mussat Head Steel Locals,” *The Hammond Times*, June 22, 1958.

¹¹⁵ “Hank ‘Babe’ Lopez for Financial Sec. of 1010,” *Latin Times*, June 11, 1960.

¹¹⁶ “Vote the Membership First Slate,” *Latin Times*, June 11, 1960.

loyalists, the divided vote in steel placed their brief ability as a cohesive swing bloc into question.

The election revealed the complexities of slate voting. Whereas Calacci won a narrow victory for his re-election as president (3,112 to 2,781 and 2,670), Lopez handily won over Calacci's candidate for Financial Secretary, Jesse Arredondo. In fact, *The Hammond Times* declared Lopez as "the top vote-gatherer" in the election.¹¹⁷ Lopez defeated the incumbent Arredondo, 4,035 votes to 3,572. Recalling the 1960 election, Roberto Flores, who John Sargent wanted on his slate for Financial Secretary, claimed to have provided Sargent with the idea of double-slating Lopez on their Rank-and-File Caucus slate, and the Membership First slate.¹¹⁸ Lopez's inclusion on two competing caucus' slate of candidates for the same position meant that he could likely count on supporters for both of those caucuses, providing him leverage over Arredondo's single slate.

However, as the *Latin Times* noted that Lopez had assistance from outside of the union. According to the newspaper, "Birds of a feather flock together," referring to educator Robert Segovia and steelworker Leo Arreguin. The coverage vaguely noted that "They [Segovia and Arreguin] already gave us an idea of how they play politics. Remember what happened to Jesse Arredondo? Well, politics is politics."¹¹⁹ In their political maneuvering, unity was not as cohesive for Latino steelworkers as it once had been in pursuing executive positions in the local. For younger steelworkers, such as Joe Gutierrez, "there was not much sense of unity. You identified with your department. They were islands unto themselves except for a common

¹¹⁷ "Close Victory for Union Chief," *The Hammond Times*, June 20, 1960.

¹¹⁸ "Roberto Flores Oral History" interview conducted by James B. Lane, *Steel Shavings*, 18.

¹¹⁹ "Flamazos," *Latin Times*, September 17, 1960.

canteen.”¹²⁰ The incorporation of Latinos into various Caucuses reversed the previous strategies of a united front along a racial identity, as opposed to the previous departmental allegiances.

Arredondo utilized the defeat, which occurred shortly after his defeat for Sixth District Councilman in East Chicago, as an opportunity to attempt organizing a cohesive Latino voting bloc. As County Organizer for the Lake County Latin American Political Alliance organization, Arredondo organized a meeting at the mutualista- Union Benéfica Mexicana in the Harbor neighborhood. In the announcement for the meeting, Arredondo noted that “This meeting is specifically for endorsements of Latin candidates and all member clubs are urged to send their delegates. The public is invited to witness this democratic selection.”¹²¹

In 1964, Lopez ran for reelection as Financial Secretary of Local 1010. Lopez switched to the Progress Caucus’ slate. In their advertisement for support in the *Latin Times*, the Lopez for Financial Secretary Committee urged voters to “show him [Lopez] we appreciate his well done work in the past for the Local, and our confidence for him for the future by re-electing him to serve as Financial Secretary...”¹²² Switching caucuses was common in 1964, as Arredondo made his first attempted bid at the presidency under the Membership First’s slate, which replaced him with Lopez four years earlier.¹²³ By deliberately switching caucuses, Latino steelworkers engaged in the kaleidoscopic nature of union politics, adopting the issues of those caucuses’ membership, either wholeheartedly or symbolically, to secure an elected position.

Latino steelworkers continued to make inroads within Local 1010. In 1966, the local voted for delegates to send to the national convention. 5,800 of the 16,000 steelworkers in the

¹²⁰ “Joe Gutierrez Oral History” interview conducted by James B. Lane, *Steel Shavings*, 19.

¹²¹ “Important Meeting,” *Latin Times*, March 8, 1963.

¹²² “Re-elect 19 Hank Babe Lopez for Financial Secretary,” *Latin Times*, June 12, 1964.

¹²³ “Steelman to Elect Officers,” *The Hammond Times*, May 31, 1964.

union voted, granting Latino steelworkers over half the seats.¹²⁴ The *Latin Times* noted that for the first time in the union's history, two Puerto Rican steelworkers were elected as delegates. The newspaper's community column also declared the "Resurgense [sic] of Jesse Arredondo after a series of political failures."¹²⁵ Flores recalled that "It had been customary at conventions for Hispanics to have a get together to exchange ideas and socialize. During the 1960s we became more political. We petitioned the union to have a conference of Hispanic delegates from other unions."¹²⁶ These informal meetings among Latino steelworkers became institutionalized by the International, which formed the Labor Council for Latin-American Advancement. For Arredondo, the organization of this new cohort of Latino leaders, both in Local 1010 and across the International union, would provide a new vehicle for his pursuit of attaining an elected position.

Conclusion

Unlike in electoral politics, Latinos in the union pushed for representation quicker and with more immediate success. The kaleidoscopic nature of union politics, as well as the stress for multiracial solidarity in northern industries, provided the necessary conditions for multiracial alliances that incorporated diverse slates. Initially, these slates competed for a relatively united Latino vote in steel. Those votes would follow the caucus that slated a Latino into the most opportune position. However, Latino steelworkers were not politically unified. Competing Latino candidates on different slates represented both the internal desire to elevate a career for

¹²⁴ "Election Results," *Latin Times*, August 25, 1966.

¹²⁵ "Hello! My Name Is Tillie," *Latin Times*, August 25, 1966.

¹²⁶ "Roberto Flores Oral History" interview conducted by James B. Lane, *Steel Shavings*, 26.

one steelworker and his supporters over another. Additionally, caucuses led by ethnic Europeans could manipulate this lack of unity by offering Latinos a position on their slate.

Within the segregated workplace departments of the steel mill and the throes of union democracy, Latino steelworkers began to cultivate a new generation of union leadership. Beginning from their segregated departments, Latinos stressed their importance in union politics. To navigate the union, Latinos had to unite and present themselves as a cohesive voting bloc. As Vargas noted about the 1950s and 1960s, “Mexican Americans began to press for changes in their communities by forming and strengthening new and old alliances with labor and with progressive civil rights organizations.”¹²⁷ How ethnic Mexicans in Local 1010 approached negotiating these alliances drastically altered their ideas about unity, progress, and their position within the power structures of the United Steelworkers.

However, the representation of Latinos in higher positions on caucus slates was problematic in subsequent years. Aside from the fracturing of unity, charges of corruption began to highlight structural issues within the local. Whereas Lutes attempted to frame much of the corruption as pro-International and strip the local of its autonomy, steelworkers in the 1960s and 1970s will note the nuances and changing ideas of corruption. When Latinos ascended to new heights of union leadership, they increasingly gained access to the world of politics, changed their engagement with unethical practices, as well as their understanding of corrupting democratic practices in union elections, which moved to the forefront of their conversations. As developing leaders within the union, elected Latinos became embroiled in the allegations of

¹²⁷ Vargas, *Labor Rights are Civil Rights*, 253.

corruption. Steelworkers like Arredondo and Lopez would learn that their inclusion, and maintaining it, would come with a cost.

Chapter Two: “A Budding Oak Tree:” Latino Veterans, the Appeal of Good Government and Entering Electoral Politics, 1945-1967

When Abe Morales enlisted in the United States Marines during the Second World War, he joined thousands of other ethnic Mexicans, both drafted and enlisted, in the call for servicemen at the war’s onset. In East Chicago, these primarily ethnic Mexicans, in the 1930s, were seen as an unwanted element of the community and faced repatriation. Morales, was born in Texas, and as a child his parents left the cotton fields near Laredo for the industrial Midwest. They began their journey in 1922. The family of eight stopped for short stints of work along the railroad in both Blue Island, IL and South Chicago before finally settling in Indiana Harbor in 1924. Morales’ father, Abraham Sr., found work at Inland Steel, managing to stay employed until the mill fired him in 1931, as it fired many others during the Great Depression. The American Legion devised lists of unemployed ethnic Mexican families receiving aid from the township and targeted these families for repatriation by denying them public assistance. Abraham, who worked odd jobs when able, and the now teenage Abe continued to struggle to find work. The Morales family narrowly avoided repatriation, as Inland Steel hired the elder Morales back just two weeks before their scheduled departure in the summer of 1934. With the start of the Second World War, the younger Morales would join his father at the Steel Mill.¹

¹ For Morales’ Story see: “Interview with Abe Morales conducted by Dr. James Lane,” 4. Abe Morales Papers, CRA 260, Box Number 1. Calumet Regional Archives, Indiana University Northwest. “We Didn’t Want to Go Back,” *The Times*, October 9, 1944. For the Repatriation Movement in East Chicago see Paul E. Kelly, “Repatriation Report,” From Indiana University Northwest. CRA051-East Chicago Collection, Series: Ethnic Groups Box 3 File 13 “Report, Mexican Repatriation, 1932”; Daniel T. Simon, “Mexican Repatriation in East Chicago, Indiana,” *Journal of Ethnic Studies* 11 (Summer 1974): 11-23. Francisco A. Rosales, “Mexicanos in Indiana Harbor During the 1920’s: Prosperity and Depression,” *Revista Chicano-Requeno* 4 (1976), 88-98; Francisco Rosales and Daniel T. Simon, “Mexican Immigrant Experience in the Urban Midwest: East Chicago, Indiana, 1919-1945,” *Indiana Magazine of History* 77 (1981): 333-357; and Tom Gould, “Repatriation: Forced Exodus from the Calumet Region,” *Traces of Indiana and Midwestern History* 14 (2002): 38-47.

Morales joined dozens of ethnic Mexicans from East Chicago, as well as thousands from across the United States, in serving a country that previously pushed to exclude and forcibly remove them.² The historian Mario T. Garcia referred to the Great Depression and Second World War as “the twin historical experiences” for the developing, hyphenated generation of Mexican Americans.³ The Depression and Second World War drastically demarcated the boundaries of inclusion for a generation that once feared a forceful removal by the same government they enlisted to defend. Previously barred from inclusion during the Depression, this generation found their service as an opportunity to articulate their American-ness, and as a pathway to further inclusion.

The return of American GIs to the United States after World War II initiated a pursuit for equality across the nation, particularly by underrepresented minorities excluded from full participation and inclusion.⁴ Veterans of Mexican descent fought for democracy abroad only to

For the Repatriation Movement across the United States see Abraham Hoffman, *Unwanted Mexican Americans in the Great Depression: Repatriation Pressures, 1929-1939* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1974) and Francisco Balderrama and Raymond Rodríguez, *A Decade of Betrayal: Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, revised edition 2006).

² See: “Interview with Abe Morales,” and “Marine Private Morales Jr,” *The Hammond Times*, April 7, 1944. Granted, not everyone bought into this and the newspaper carried stories about Army Evasion, such as “Two Held for Army Evasion,” which noted Mexican Romeo Alfonso Lopez. See “Two Held for Army Evasion,” *The Hammond Times*, April 4, 1945.

³ Mario T. Garcia, *Mexican Americans: Leadership, Ideology and Identity, 1930-1960* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989), 18.

⁴ Henry A. J. Ramos argued in *The American GI Forum: In Pursuit of the Dream, 1948-1983* (Houston, TX: Arte Público Press, 1998) that the GI Forum served as a national network of organizations that allowed veterans and their families to “secure the blessings of American democracy.” The literature about veterans and the pursuit for civil rights is extensive, particularly within African American communities. See: W.E.B. Du Bois, “Returning Soldiers,” *Crisis* 18, no. 1 *May 1919): 13; David G. Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Timothy B. Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Jennifer E. Brooks, *Defining the Peace: World War II Veterans, Race, and the Remaking of Southern Political Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Lorena Oropeza, *¡Raza Si, Guerra No!: Chicano Protest and Patriotism during the Viet Nam Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez, *Mexican Americans & World War II* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005); Laura Pulido, *Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Kimberley L. Phillips, *War! What Is It Good For? Black Freedom Struggles and the U.S. Military from World War II to Iraq* (Chapel Hill:

find themselves still confronted with inequality at home. Some of these men, like Abe Morales, remembered the injustice of the Depression Era repatriation program and hoped for a more positive future. Morales, a marine stationed in the Pacific during WWII, recalled in the 1990s that “Ten years later [after the repatriation movement], some of them came back [from Mexico] and were promptly drafted. They were told they were Americans and had to go fight for their country. First they kicked them out; then they were welcomed back and put into the army.”⁵ As Morales saw it, “As long as they had the Mexicans to draft, they didn’t have to draft the children of the elite.”⁶ Although there were some middle-class ethnic Mexicans in the community, Morales viewed himself and others as solely defined by their status as Mexicans. Morales noted that upon returning home from the war, he joined the American Legion Post that sponsored the repatriation program, which had a “big reunion, a healing, and apologized for the episode.”⁷ Regardless of this reunion, Latino veterans desired their space to pursue equality as fellow American veterans. Remembering their family’s exclusion as outsiders during the Depression, these veterans pushed for their integration into the community as politically active participants. These initial steps as members of veterans’ organizations and identification as veterans sowed the seeds for national connections with organizations such as the American G.I. Forum and the Viva Kennedy campaign.

This chapter traces the return of ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican veterans to East Chicago. These veterans labored to organize through their shared identity as Latin Americans

University of North Carolina Press, 2012); and Christine Knauer, *Let Us Fight as Free Men: Black Soldiers and Civil Rights* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014).

⁵ “Interview with Abe Morales conducted by Dr. James Lane,” 4. Abe Morales Papers, CRA 260, Box Number 1. Calumet Regional Archives, Indiana University Northwest.

⁶ “New horizons in the Harbor,” *The Times*, October 8, 1995.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 4

and veterans to push for both inclusion and representation in the municipal government. No veteran characterized this early struggle more than Joseph Maravilla, a steelworker turned Safety Engineer at Inland Steel, the primary employer in East Chicago. Maravilla followed his older brother Frederick and enlisted in the Second World War. When the Democratic political machine began to solidify with the election of Mayor Walter Jeorse in 1951, Maravilla found himself a fitting candidate to serve as an ethnic Mexican representative. As discussed later, Jeorse prided himself on his “young men,” a group of mainly college-educated East Chicagoans that helped him entrench a seemingly reliable and respectful network across the city. One of these men, albeit briefly, was Maravilla, who worked for over a decade to earn his degree at Northwestern University. However, Maravilla only served briefly as he would refuse to be a complicit cog in the political machine run by ethnic Europeans. His removal from office signaled a vital turning point as Latinas and Latinos had to reconceptualize their relationship to the political machine, as well as their complicity in its corruption.

Entrance into national organizations such as the American GI Forum granted the Midwestern Latino community a crucial opportunity to organize alongside other longtime Democrats in Northwest Indiana for John F. Kennedy’s presidential campaign. Through forming local and national connections, ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican veterans laid a foundation for civic involvement in their community.⁸ Soon after Latinos gained a toehold on local and regional

⁸ For the influence of World War II on political organization by Latino veterans see: John R. Martinez, “Leadership and Politics,” in *La Raza: Forgotten Americans*, Julian Samora, ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966): 47-62; Albert M. Camarrillo, “Research Note on Chicano Community Leaders: The G.I. Generation,” *Aztlán* 2 (Fall 1971): 145-150; David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987): 259-287; Mario T. García, *Mexican Americans: Leadership, Ideology, & Identity, 1930-1960* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); George J. Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993): 253-269; Henry A.J. Ramos, *The American GI Forum: In Pursuit of the Dream, 1948-1983* (Houston, TX: Arte Público

politics, they elected one of their own. Jesse Gomez Sr. was an insurance salesman and Manager at the Auto License Bureau in East Chicago, who became the city's first Mexican-American councilman. Gomez proved more willing to engage with machine politics while working to represent the ethnic Mexican and growing Puerto Rican communities.

In their pursuit of inclusion, ethnic Mexicans and Puerto Ricans learned how to navigate machine politics and specifically corruption as they transitioned from political outsiders to competitive candidates in elections. Initially desiring good government and responsive leadership, ethnic Mexicans and Puerto Ricans organized their community simultaneously as political outsiders and proponents of machine politics. They stressed unity and cohesiveness among the city's ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican communities in their political behavior to secure patronage and municipal services for "Latin" neighborhoods. Within the realm of machine politics, their inclusion would only be as useful as the votes they could bring to the ballot. However, internal conflicts within the Latin neighborhoods formed as the community's residents debated, through the ballot and newspaper, whether working with the machine or against it would be the best course of action. Ultimately, Latina and Latino residents during the 1940s-1960s constantly renegotiated how they wanted to be incorporated. Stemming from their expression of patriotism in the Postwar Era, Latinas and Latinos explored their position within the political machine as relative newcomers. Each foray into the political arena provided individual candidates and potential candidates instruction about the expectations of their

Press, 1998); Ignacio M. García, *Viva Kennedy: Mexican Americans in Search of Camelot* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2000); Brian D. Behnken, *Fighting Their Own Battles: Mexican Americans, African Americans, and the Struggle for Civil Rights in Texas* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Max Krochmal, *Blue Texas: The Making of a Multiracial Democratic Coalition in the Civil Rights Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016); and Benjamin Francis-Fallon, *The Rise of the Latino Vote: A History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2019).

community within city government. However, the attempts to reform politics in their community yielded few returns. The ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican communities, which previously demanded good government and anti-corruption found themselves incorporated into the very politics they wanted to remove.

Returning Home: Latin American Veterans Association and Early Organizing

Life didn't necessarily get better for victims of repatriation who served in WWII. Although they utilized their status as veterans to advocated for their fair and equitable treatment, this path proved easier said than done. The ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community resided in the Harbor, near Block and Pennsylvania Street, across the road from the steel mill. The arrival of visibly different tenants to this neighborhood a few blocks south stoked both resentment and self-defense.⁹ Local newspapers targeted the primarily ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community as unwanted additions to East Chicago. In the daily column, "Voice of the People," an individual identified as "Property Owner in Neighborhood" anonymously attacked a tavern in the Sunnyside neighborhood for renting out the upstairs and two downstairs storage rooms to "Mexican men brought here from Texas."¹⁰ The author complained that Mexican immigrants had housing while the community's returning veterans were "in desperate

⁹ The presence of underrepresented minority groups dictated how cities demarcated space throughout history. For residential segregation in the 20th century and Postwar Era see: Arnold Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race & Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998, reprint); Kevin Boyle, *Arc of Justice: A Saga of Race, Civil Rights, and Murder in the Jazz Age* (New York: Henry Holt, 2004); Beryl Satter, *Family Properties: Race, Real Estate, and the Exploitation of Black Urban America* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2009); Charlotte Brooks, *Alien Neighbors, Foreign Friends: Asian Americans, Housing, and the Transformation of Urban California* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Lilia Fernandez, *Brown in the Windy City: Mexicans and Puerto Ricans in Postwar Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012); N. D. B. Connolly, *A World More Concrete: Real Estate and The Remaking of Jim Crow South Florida* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2014); Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America* (New York: Liveright Publishing, 2017)

¹⁰ "No Regard for Veterans," *The Hammond Times*, April 17, 1946.

need of homes.” The author even wondered, “Would this tavern-owner like to have these men parade into his tavern to do their drinking? No, I doubt it. It would hurt his Sunnyside trade.”¹¹ The author’s hypothetical question concerning the patronage at this tavern by the Mexican tenants alluded to the neighborhood divisions, rooted in race. A response to the letter from a “Mexican Vet” questioned whether the property owner knew that “this town is full of Mexican veterans who fought for the United States of America.” Rooting their response to their experiences abroad, the veteran stated, “I saw a lot of Mexicans’ names on crosses in cemeteries overseas and in this town there are a few of Mexican boys crippled for life. Why all the discrimination now that the war is over? There wasn’t any discrimination in battles overseas.”¹² The anonymous writer questioned the blatant discrimination against Mexicans by highlighting their sacrifices as enlisted men during the Second World War. Tying their service to anti-discrimination expressed an appeal to patriotism as a venue to articulate belonging in the city.

Residential segregation influenced the housing market that returning veterans discovered. The Home Owners’ Loan Corporation (HOLC), a federal agency established in 1933 to refinance home mortgages during the Depression, offered a grim report on their neighborhoods. In 1940, HOLC wrote about the east side of the Indiana Harbor that it was a “Good neighborhood twenty years ago” that had been “over-run by Mexican and negroes.” The report forecasted that the “Trend of desirability over the next 10-15 years” would be “Downward.”¹³

¹¹ “No Regard for Veterans,” *The Hammond Times*, April 17, 1946.

¹² “No Discrimination,” *The Hammond Times*, April 22, 1946.

¹³ Christopher Harris, “The History and Legacy of Redlining in Greater Gary,” *Our Gary Stories*, April 13, 2020. <https://www.ourgarystories.com/post/the-history-and-legacy-of-redlining-in-greater-gary?fbclid=IwAR04UZTSg0VTw4kGCpPisMCumzK4M6qL4FB1d9ZVS1FFju0Lgk7Uj0UYYm4>

After the war, the American Legion hosted events that included Latin American themes. The work by the American Legion to welcome them back and acknowledge Latino service was rooted in gestures of Pan-Americanism and hemispheric unity. Starting in 1933, the U.S. emphasis on the Good Neighbor Policy, a policy of non-intervention and non-interference in the affairs of Latin America. It extended to the civil rights of Latin Americans in the United States, as well as trade agreements with Latin American countries.¹⁴ Locally, some groups worked to incorporate returning Latin American veterans under a banner of friendship. In March 1945, the American Legion Auxiliary planned a program for April 10th dedicated to child welfare and Pan-Americanism.¹⁵ Members of the Auxiliary “rendered songs in a South American way” and decorated tables “appointed with a Pan-American theme of Mexican pottery, tablecloths and the gala array of Mexican colors.”¹⁶ The auxiliary included a talk entitled “Vagabonding in Mexico.” Notably, the program included no Spanish surnames on the program, instead of listing married women as the presenters for the events.

However, these annual gestures of recognition paired with the continued discrimination towards the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican residents pushed the community towards new solutions. Latino veterans recognized that they needed a more united presence, as well as a sense

¹⁴ A rich and recent trend of scholarship discusses how the Good Neighbor Policy and the civil rights movements in the Postwar Era influenced U.S. foreign policy for Latinas, Latinos, and African Americans: Mary Dudzick, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton University Press, 2000); Azza Salama Layton, *International Politics and Civil Rights Policies in the United States* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Emilio Zamora, “Mexico’s Wartime Intervention on Behalf of Mexicans in the United States,” in *Mexican Americans and World War II*, ed. Maggie Rivas-Rodríguez (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005); Emilio Zamora, *Claiming Rights and Righting Wrongs in Texas: Mexican Workers and Job Politics during World War II* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2009); Geraldo Cadava, *Standing on Common Ground: The Making of a Sunbelt Borderland* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013).

¹⁵ “Auxiliaries,” *The Hammond Times*, March 26, 1945.

¹⁶ “Auxiliary Meets,” *The Hammond Times*, April 15, 1945.

of community.¹⁷ Aside from the *mutualistas*, or mutual-aid societies, that served as fraternal and social groups for the older generation, the returning GIs had few opportunities to socialize. The *mutualistas* were also concerned more with matters in Mexico and aiding recent migrants in Indiana, than with focusing on domestic, political issues. Although pivotal for their parents' generation and for newcomers from Mexico and Puerto Rico, the U.S.-born generation looked toward new organizations to develop a sense of community for themselves.

Returning from WWII, Latino veterans in East Chicago and throughout the Midwest formed the Latin-American Veterans' Association (LAV) in December 1945.¹⁸ The LAV, and later their women's auxiliary (LAVA), became a site for WWII veterans to meet and interact with each other. Although not formally a part of the American Legion, the LAV met weekly on Friday evenings at the American Legion Post #266 in East Chicago. The group of primarily ethnic Mexican veterans worked "to further civic, social and athletic activities in the area."¹⁹ According to Fred Maravilla, "LAV was more of a fraternal organization. It was mainly young men from Our Lady of Guadalupe parish in the harbor. We were friends that had grown up together."²⁰ While many of these men worked in steel, others, such as Fred Maravilla, utilized their benefits as veterans to pursue a college education. Maravilla became one of the first ethnic Mexican schoolteachers in East Chicago. Some members of the broader community "admonished" LAV for "isolating themselves." A classmate of Maravilla's wife advised him to

¹⁷ Interview with Frederick Maravilla by the author, March 19, 2018.

¹⁸ This date is provided in Louis Vasquez memoir, *Life of Louis Vasquez*, 1985, 313. Louis Vasquez Papers, CRA 389, Box Number 1. Calumet Regional Archives, Indiana University Northwest.

¹⁹ "New horizons in the Harbor," *The Times*, October 8, 1995.

²⁰ Interview with Frederick Maravilla by the author, March 19, 2018. The membership in the early years included numerous individuals such as brothers Frederick and Joseph Maravilla, Abe Morales, Louis Vasquez, Al Mancera Jr., and Fred Flores.

“do away with the Mexican American and just keep American.”²¹ However, stressing an ethnic identity allowed for a sense of community within the Latino population rooted in the civic participation of some as soldiers in the 1940s. The organization, as well as its auxiliary composed of many of the men’s wives, retained the ethnic label.

The LAV engaged in fundraisers, dances, military services at funerals, granted scholarships, and briefly published a newsletter entitled The Scuttlebutt.²² LAV and its auxiliary began as an opportunity for their members to socialize with each other and engage with other groups in the city: particularly through its baseball team. The Latin American Veterans’ baseball team competed against groups like the East Chicago Police.²³ The LAV used athletics to forge not only these local relationships but also regional ethnic connections. In 1947, the LAV hosted the city’s first All Mexican Invitational Basketball Tournament featuring the local Mexican Cagers, and three other teams: Lobos, Rancheros, and the Hidalgos.²⁴ The LAV also provided an annual scholarship for Latino and Latina high school students.²⁵

The group organized events to recognize the efforts of Latino veterans in the community. When former Air Force Master Sergeant Antonio Padilla received the Legion of Merit, the Latin American Veterans Association sponsored a dance to celebrate Padilla’s service as “one of the first East Chicago soldiers to land in England.”²⁶ The Legion of Merit, was one of the highest

²¹ Interview with Frederick Maravilla by the author, March 19, 2018.

²² The Latin American Veteran’s Auxiliary (LAVA) formed in April 1953 and outlined their goals to include assisting the LAV with their building fund to produce their post headquarters, create functions for the Latina and Latino community, and social functions for LAV. LAVA’s membership remained open to sisters, daughters, and wives of LAV members, which had a membership of ninety men. Refer to “Meet to Form Latin Vet Auxiliary,” *The Hammond Times*, April 3, 1953.

²³ “Twin City Cops Scheduled in Softball Games,” *The Hammond Times*, July 15, 1946.

²⁴ “Mexican Cagers Hold First Tourney Sunday,” *The Hammond Times*, March 28, 1947.

²⁵ “High School Students Honored,” *The Hammond Times*, June 8, 1947.

²⁶ “Harbor Father Proud Owner of Legion of Merit,” *The Hammond Times*, May 29, 1946.

awards in the army air force, and Padilla was one of two Indiana men to receive the award in the summer of 1946.²⁷ When the body of Staff Sergeant Ferdinand Alvarez, who was killed in Germany and buried overseas, was returned to East Chicago and reburied in the region, the Latin American Veterans Association organized the military services at his funeral.²⁸ After Alvarez's family reburied him, Joseph Maravilla, elected as President of the LAV in 1949, organized a Special Mass for All Soul's Day at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church to honor the five Latinos from the parish killed during the Second World War.²⁹ The LAV continued these military services and rites as Latinos from East Chicago left to serve in Korea.³⁰

After spending several years organizing as a social club and building a presence in East Chicago, the LAV pursued a new direction in 1950. The Latin American Veterans' group elected Gabriel Fraire as president of the organization. Fraire listed two main goals for the LAV moving forward: to establish an auxiliary for Latinas and to pursue "greater participation in civic affairs."³¹ This transition to politics offered an outlet for the LAV's organizing and formation along their ethnic identity. Whereas in the Interwar Period, communities organized themselves around a Mexican heritage, or identity, the decision to use "Latin American" expressed a broader network of unity among various heritages and a broader, hemispheric American identity.³²

Although the ethnic Mexican community was the largest demographic in the city and region,

²⁷ "Two Hoosiers Get Legion of Merit," *Muncie Evening Press*, May 8, 1946.

²⁸ "Death Notices," *The Hammond Times*, December 21, 1948. "Alvarez Reburial Friday," *The Hammond Times*, December 22, 1948.

²⁹ These men were Fred Luna, Anthony Cornejo, Fernando Alvarez, Raymond Martinez, and Alex Pineda, see: "Special Memorial Mass," *The Hammond Times*, November 9, 1949.

³⁰ "Obituary for Cpl. Jesse F. Fierro," *The Hammond Times*, May 3, 1951.

³¹ "Twin City Man Heads Vet Club," *The Hammond Times*, December 1, 1950.

³² As Nicole Martinez LeGrand showed in their recent blog entry, "Not all Latinos are Mexican: The Story of a 1920s Peruvian Steel Worker from Gary, Indiana," *Indiana History Blog* (October 2020), Northwest Indiana contained a diverse range of groups in its Latino/Hispanic community.

avoiding labeling themselves as a Mexican Veteran group acknowledged the presence of other Latino veterans, such as Puerto Ricans, who were recent arrivals in the 1940s and 1950s. Admittedly, LAV consisted of a few Puerto Ricans, as their fraternal order began from the social circle of the ethnic Mexicans before their enlistment. The bulk of Puerto Ricans, as discussed in the previous chapter, arrived in the 1950s, attracted by the promise of steelwork.

East Chicago Latinas organized a LAV auxiliary, and this was a pivotal step in the political development of the community. Gloria Guerrero Fraire, who served in the Women's Army Corps during the Second World War, included a case where a veteran served in the auxiliary.³³ As members of the Latin American Veterans Auxiliary, these Latinas served as full members and offered crucial labor in fundraising for the organization. As much scholarship about women in the GI Forum has demonstrated, women's labor proved instrumental in outreach to the broader community, particularly with highly visible endeavors such as providing scholarships and selling food.³⁴ These actions helped foster community among the veterans and their neighbors.

As the LAV established itself in the community, the leadership reconsidered the organization's future direction. Although the LAV's early organizing revolved around social gatherings, the issue of politics offered a relatively new arena for the veterans.³⁵ Granted, members did campaign for national candidates, such as several members' support of General Eisenhower, and LAV President Elmo Gonzales' unsuccessful bid to be the Republican nominee

³³ John Fraire, "Playing Catch With My Mother," *Indiana Historical Society Blog*.

³⁴ Ramos, *The American GI Forum*, 27-30.

³⁵ For how veterans grappled with establishing a political identity in the early years see Ramos, *The American GI Forum*, 19-31; García, *Mexican Americans*, 18-21; García, *Viva Kennedy*, 13-32; Francis-Fallon, *The Rise of the Latino Vote*, 15-52.

for the city's 6th District.³⁶ In a 2018 interview, Maravilla noted that LAV did initially try to organize the Latino vote as several members were precinct committeemen in East Chicago and Gary; however, many of their constituents were not citizens.³⁷ In 1952, the group issued a political neutrality statement, emphasizing their nonpartisan goals and making it clear that they did not seek to become a political party. This statement, signed by former-president Joseph Maravilla, stated that:

We, who have served honorably in the United States armed forces have united to establish a permanent organization to be non-partisan and non-sectarian... and which shall never serve as a medium of personal political ambition or preferment... The political activity of members of this organization is based on individual beliefs or interests and should [not] be misconstrued to be representative of the Latin-American Veterans, INC.³⁸

The statement's reminder that the members of LAV served in the U.S. military presented an explicit claim for organizing and the democratic principles entailed with citizenship. This claim also reinforced the idea that many of these veterans identified as both Latin and American. They simultaneously stressed their heritage and their inclusion in the rights of citizenship. Despite claims of neutrality, the community disagreed over the future of the LAV.

In 1954, some supporters of the LAV felt that the organization was too focused on social issues and was squandering its potential to be a broader instrument for change in the community. Father Kenneth Mitchell and Father John P. Flanagan of Our Lady of Guadalupe in East Chicago shared their criticism to the Latino veterans about their organization in the Fall of 1954. Louis Vasquez recalled that September 1954 "was an eventful month" that included a carnival hosted

³⁶ "Twin City Vet Group Neutral Politically," *The Hammond Times*, October 12, 1952. "Official Breakdown of Twin City Vote," *The Hammond Times*, May 10, 1951.

³⁷ Interview with Frederick Maravilla by author March 19, 2018. Maravilla himself secured his citizenship for his service in the 450th Bombardment Group during the war. (refer to: "A Real Christmas Present—American Citizenship," n.d. newspaper article from Joseph Maravilla Private Collection courtesy of Kathy Wilczynski. For biographical information about Frederick Maravilla refer to "Frederick Ruiz Maravilla Oral History Interview, 2016" (Collection # SC 3355) by Nicole Martinez-LeGrand. Indiana Historical Society (Indianapolis).

³⁸ "Twin City Vet Group Neutral Politically," *The Hammond Times*, October 12, 1952.

in conjunction with a dance hosting Puerto Rican musician Tito Puente.³⁹ The decision to hire a high-profile musician likely offered an opportunity for the predominantly ethnic Mexican LAV the chance to socialize with their Puerto Rican neighbors in the community. According to Vasquez, “the only sour note was the questioning of our goals by the priests of OLG [Our Lady of Guadalupe] church. They lamented that so much of our energy was consumed promoting events of dubious merit where great amounts of liquor were consumed.”⁴⁰

The priests’ specific criticisms are not available in the sources, but Joe Maravilla’s response in the LAV newsletter, The Scuttlebutt, gives an indication of what Father Mitchell had said. Initially thanking the priest for his “frank and almost brutal, true statements about us [LAV],” Maravilla shared his vision for the organization.⁴¹ Maravilla referred to the LAV as a “budding oak tree that will someday give beauty and haven to our community. Our mistakes here caused the tips of some of the branches to die. Around us, weeds of evil threaten to choke our growth.”⁴² The response then turned to both a plea and a listing of “mistakes” made by the LAV that merited the priest’s criticism. Maravilla wrote:

And we have been called “fools” also Father, and in some cases, we may have been just that. Our greatest critics; and ours, even as yours, are the most damaging are to be found within our ranks. We were “fools” when we befriended a seemingly lost and desperate vet who came to us begging for aid. He turned out to be a swindler. We were “fools” when a few hundred of our dollars went to sponsor a ball team made up of children who probably never even heard of us. That they went on to win a championship and gain a never-to-be-forgotten experience matters not to our name-callers. And now, when our money should be dedicated for the purchase of our L.A.V. Home, there are some who call us “fools” for sponsoring basketball teams, awarding scholarships, paying our sick benefits, and for expending other charitable contributions. Even some of our best

³⁹ “Weasel: The Autobiography of Louis Vasquez,” *Steel Shavings*, vol. 24 (1994) ed. James B. Lane (Gary, IN: Indiana University Northwest), 50.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ “Answer to Father Kenneth Mitchell, S.C.J.” The Scuttlebutt vol. 1 no. 7 December 31, 1954. Abe Morales Papers, CRA 260, Box Number 1. Calumet Regional Archives, Indiana University Northwest.

⁴² “Answer to Father Kenneth Mitchell, S.C.J.” The Scuttlebutt vol. 1 no. 7 December 31, 1954. Abe Morales Papers, CRA 260, Box Number 1. Calumet Regional Archives, Indiana University Northwest.

members have been called “fools” for giving unselfishly of their time and labor for the good of the club. I wonder, Father, whether God thinks of us as “fools”??? I honestly feel that He does not!!! If the day should come when I, and those who feel as I do, begin to doubt that the L.A.V. is not on God’s side; then we will be the first to hew the organizational roots that nourish us.⁴³

Maravilla’s letter suggests that Father Mitchell’s primary criticism of LAV was that the organization had not effectively utilized its network to achieve appropriate goals. Maravilla noted that the ambiguous critics might disapprove of LAV using funds within the community instead of working towards a dedicated space for the organization. Whether Father Mitchell deemed a dedicated space for LAV as an appropriate goal, or not, he did express disdain for the emphasis on the social nature of the group over organizing. However, these community outreach efforts facilitated a connection between the veterans and the broader community, allowing both the organization and auxiliary to form connections across the neighborhood. Louis Vasquez, a member of LAV, noted in his memoir: “All that I could add was that only those who do things get criticized.”⁴⁴ Members such as Vasquez and Maravilla believed the outreach work of LAV and the auxiliary was a productive use of time.

Competing visions about the goals and potential for the LAV created significant friction within the group. Some members received criticism from fellow members as they concerned themselves with partying and personal advancement. The organization’s newsletter, The Scuttlebutt, featured a column entitled “Chaplain’s Corner” which allowed members to voice their opinions and offers an interesting insight into the internal conflicts of LAV. In one such letter, a writer by the initials J.V. asked, “How is it that at every big social function some ‘inactive’ member always manages to head a committee of one sort or another?”

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ “Weasel: The Autobiography of Louis Vasquez,” *Steel Shavings*, 50.



“Jack of Clubs,” The Scuttlebutt vol. 1 no. 7 December 31, 1954. Abe Morales Papers, CRA 260, Box Number 1. Calumet Regional Archives, Indiana University Northwest.

Although J.V. did not allude to particular people, other members noted a similar issue within the organization.⁴⁵ However, other members such as Maravilla still thought of the LAV as a “budding oak tree.”⁴⁶ They recognized that their identity as veterans offered them an avenue to press for a seat at the table. Maravilla and his fellow Latino veterans never raised funds for their building; however, the LAV and its auxiliary laid the foundation for inclusion into the political community of Northwest Indiana. Despite the criticism, Maravilla and his colleagues would begin to see seeds begin to sprout that they had planted during a decade of outreach. In 1955,

⁴⁵ In the following image, cartoonist for The Scuttlebutt, Al Mancera included in the issue his own opinion toward these “inactive” members. Mancera showed the eager member practicing “to decline any nominations for officer he may get.” Member Jesse Carrillo concurred with Mancera and J.V. and penned his own article entitled “Let’s Grow Up.” Carrillo observed, “It seems to me that some members in our club (LAV) aren’t active in anything but shooting off their mouths.” According to Carrillo, these members “no matter what any individual or group has to say; no matter what the subject or the program may be; they are against it even before the idea or proposal is thoroughly explained.” Although Carrillo offered gratitude at the end of his letter to the editor for these members “sticking with our club thru’ thick and thin,” his letter still provided a glimpse into internal discontent in the association. Regrettably, the archived issues of The Scuttlebutt do not offer a glimpse into what specific instances these individuals referred to in the issue. Refer to “Chaplain’s Corner,” “Let’s Grow Up,” and “Jack of Clubs,” The Scuttlebutt vol. 1 no. 7 December 31, 1954. Abe Morales Papers, CRA 260 Box Number 1. Calumet Regional Archives, Indiana University Northwest. See Appendix 1 for the cartoon.

⁴⁶ “Answer to Father Kenneth Mitchell, S.C.J.,” The Scuttlebutt, vol. 1 no. 7 December 31, 1954. Abe Morales Papers, CRA 260, Box Number 1. Calumet Regional Archives, Indiana University Northwest.

Joseph Maravilla would make history as the city's first elected ethnic Mexican official. A newcomer to the political world, Maravilla joined the administration-backed ticket of Mayor Walter Jeorse and his growing machine of "young men," a cohort of college-educated men who headed his departments and political machine. This victory became a testament to the LAV's role as a "budding oak tree" for the community's social and political development. However, as Maravilla and his colleagues discovered, hitching oneself to the machine required a degree of reciprocity that the newcomer would have to confront.

Maravilla for School Board

Before 1955, Joseph Maravilla never ran for public office. Unlike some of his peers who chose to start as precinct committeemen in the city, Maravilla aimed higher. With his eyes set on the East Chicago School Board, Maravilla set himself up for a city-wide race, where even popularity in the mainly ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican district might not be enough to secure him a seat.⁴⁷ Similar to other Latino elected officials in the postwar period, Maravilla's election reflected a "politics of status" that historian Mario García argued defined the political career of El Paso's first Mexican American Mayor, Raymond L. Telles.⁴⁸ For Telles, Maravilla, and many others that paved the way, a "politics of status" meant gaining recognition as an equal without necessarily upsetting racial hierarchies.⁴⁹ As Benjamin Marquez noted in his study of El Paso,

⁴⁷ For more on Telles and early efforts at electoral politics within the community see: Benjamin Marquez, *Power and Politics in a Chicano Barrio: A Study of Mobilization Efforts and Community Power in El Paso* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1985); Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans*, 262-287; and García, *Mexican Americans*, 113-141; Mario T. García, *The Making of a Mexican American Mayor: Raymond L. Telles of El Paso* (El Paso, TX: Texas Western Press, 1999).

⁴⁸ See: Mario T. García, "The Politics of Status: The Election of Raymond L. Telles as Mayor of El Paso, 1957," in *Mexican Americans*, 113-141.

⁴⁹ García, "The Politics of Status," 114.

Texas, for a non-white candidate in a multiracial town to win a city-wide election they must not only convince an overwhelming proportion of their ethnic group but a good number of Anglos as well.⁵⁰ The chances of a ethnic Mexican candidate winning a city-wide race without support outside of his community proved difficult at best. Whereas aspiring politicians like Telles' relied on a middle-class white vote, Maravilla turned to the political machine.

As the LAV worked to organize socially and to a minor extent politically, significant changes were occurring in East Chicago's political landscape. Whereas the city's machine looked more like the ward bosses of Tammany Hall in preceding decades, 1951 marked a significant point in how machine politics operated in the industrial community. In 1951, Walter M. Jeorse won the election for Mayor of East Chicago against Frank J. Migas, who had initiated the Democrats' hold on the city. Migas, a Polish-American candymaker turned bank director turned deputy sheriff, rose to power as a part of the new urban Democratic gains in the 1930s New Deal Era.⁵¹ Jeorse's upset of the three-term incumbent marked a crucial turn in the Democratic political machine in East Chicago. Jeorse, who rose from precinct committeeman to the head of the Lake County, Indiana Democratic Party, aligned himself with his "young men." These "young men," as Jeorse referred to his network, were college-educated, rising stars in the party who exemplified efficiency and professionalism. These characteristics offered, at least in terms of perception, a stark departure from the gritty ward bosses of previous machines. Despite this professionalism, the "young men" still used many of the same tactics, including patronage, kickbacks, and backroom deals. Whereas contemporary bosses, most notably Chicago's Richard

⁵⁰ Marquez, *Power and Politics in a Chicano Barrio*, 34.

⁵¹ "East Chicago Mayors," n.d., 29-31. East Chicago History Room in East Chicago Public Library, Main Branch.

Daley, relied on men that could deliver votes, Jeorse placed an emphasis on an educated, middle-class network of supporters within his machine.⁵² Although these “young men” still delivered votes, Jeorse hoped that the perception of an educated politician would prove more marketable and appealing to the typical voter.

For many years before the chaotic race of 1955 in which Maravilla was elected, residents of East Chicago had recognized that the schools were extensions of the political machine. In 1945, East Chicago City Council member D.B. Curtiss proclaimed that “our schools are being used as political exploits.”⁵³ Prior to the first elected school board race, concerned citizens attempted to remove the city hall’s political influence from education. These reformers viewed the influence that city hall held as being at odds with effective and good government for the school system. Stanley Kwiat, a former Democratic state representative of Indiana, joined the school board in 1945, backed by the East Chicago Civic League against “boss rule” in the city. Since the position relied on the appointment, the city council voted to confirm or deny mayoral appointments. Kwiat’s appointment by a 5-4 vote occurred on the 12th Ballot of the East Chicago City Council. The East Chicago Civic League had an ally in Kwiat with its goal of stamping out corruption in the city.⁵⁴ The council agreed to Kwiat’s appointment after voting eleven times and due to the presence of members of the community. The appointment of Kwiat also initiated dialogue about a new system in the city that allowed for East Chicagoans to elect their school board members.⁵⁵ The school board implemented this policy for an elected school board in 1952.

⁵² For Daley see: Adam Cohen and Elizabeth Taylor’s definitive book *American Pharoah: Mayor Richard J. Daley His Battle for Chicago and the Nation*. (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 2000)

⁵³ “Civic League Asks Defeat of Dreesen,” *The Hammond Times*, May 22, 1945.

⁵⁴ “City Council Ousts Dreesen,” *The Hammond Times*, June 12, 1945.

⁵⁵ “Council Asks Voters Select School Board,” *The Hammond Times*, June 12, 1945.

The 1955 primary for East Chicago's School Board consisted of twenty-six individuals vying for one of ten spots in the November election. Several members sought reelection, notably the incumbent board president Kwiat. This primary was only the second election to follow the newly passed school board laws, which required board members to serve two calendar years.⁵⁶ Faced with the new policy of elected school board officials, Jeorse's administration, which began only a year before the law for elected school boards, altered the patronage system to retain a connection between the city administration and desired political posts within the school system. Across the United States, Latinas and Latinos turned to school board positions as a method of exercising political power. For instance, in Postwar Era Texas, dozens of ethnic Mexicans campaigned for school board positions for two primary reasons. First, Texas law prohibited civil rights organizations from intervening in school affairs. Second, to ensure ethnic Mexican students received needed financial support during a period of integration.⁵⁷ While no law barred such organizations in Indiana, Maravilla's election to the school board offered him an opportunity to provide resources to ethnic Mexican children and showcase the community's political power.

In 1955, The East Chicago Political Action Committee (CIO), a funding apparatus of machine-loyalists, announced its support for incumbent Mayor Walter Jeorse, as well as Maravilla and several other favorites of the administration a month before the primary. This announcement granted unlikely candidates, such as Maravilla, an opportunity to move beyond the expected voting base (the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community) and garner votes

⁵⁶ "Ruling Due July 17 on New Twin City School Board Law," *The Hammond Times*, July 1, 1951.

⁵⁷ Martha Menchaca, *The Mexican American Experience in Texas: Citizenship, Segregation, and The Struggle for Equality* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2022), 166.

from the vast network of politically connected individuals. The PAC promised “time and money” to their candidates for their elections.⁵⁸ However, given the higher-ticket races, it is unlikely Maravilla and his fellow school board candidates saw much money to ensure their election. Instead, Maravilla and the down-ticket candidates with the administration’s endorsement likely benefited from the association as loyalists voted for their political boss and all the candidates they were suggested to vote for in the primary.

The Hammond Times proclaimed on May 4th that Maravilla was the “School Vote King.” Described as a “city administration-backed candidate,” Maravilla led Kwiat by sixty-two votes, 3,423 to 3,361.⁵⁹ Maravilla joined nine other individuals in the November election for the coveted school board posts. Noted candidates included Kwiat, Mary Bubala, Jack Albertson and Dr. Frank Wadas (all incumbents) and “dark horse” James Melyon, a gas station attendant.⁶⁰ After Election Day, *The Hammond Times* revealed that Maravilla secured the third spot among the ten candidates, bringing in a total of 4,544 votes.⁶¹ After his election, Maravilla told *The Hammond Times* that the primary dilemma on the school board was the “prejudiced influence of the present board on the school system...Decisions involving school problems should be rendered upon the merit of the problem and not whether the decision will make good publicity or personal financial gain.”⁶² Although Maravilla did not explicitly name these “school problems,” his election day promise reflected a clear desire to maintain an idea of a good government for the

⁵⁸ “CIO Group Backs Jeorse, Havran, 7 for School Posts,” *The Hammond Times*, April 22, 1955. Before Maravilla’s appointment, *The Hammond Times* speculated that Maravilla’s election would secure Jeorse a majority on the school board, refer to “Dr. Wadas’ Term Cut by 2 Years,” December 22, 1955.

⁵⁹ “Maravilla E.C. School Vote King,” *The Hammond Times*, May 4, 1955.

⁶⁰ “East Chicago School Board Election May Be Neck-and-Neck,” *The Hammond Times*, November 2, 1955.

⁶¹ “East Chicago School Board Results,” *The Hammond Times*, November 9, 1955. However, the newspaper did not list results by precinct for offices besides the mayor.

⁶² “School Trustees Tell Aims,” *The Hammond Times*, November 27, 1955.

school system instead of enriching himself or to attain good publicity in the community. Despite using a pro-Jeorse political action committee to secure his election, Maravilla tried to make clear that he would not simply become a “yes-man” to the administration.

For the Latino community, the brief tenure of Joseph Maravilla on East Chicago’s School Board presented a clear lesson for subsequent candidates. Although the first elected Latino official, Maravilla's term (1955-1957) on the school board presented the dilemma of partial association with the machine politics of East Chicago. Maravilla stood out as a possible candidate to join Jeorse’s group of “young men.” Although not typically referred to, or remembered, as one of the “young men,” Maravilla fit the profile of this group. Maravilla worked as a Safety Engineer for Inland Steel and was working towards a Philosophy degree at Northwestern University. With the support of the Jeorse administration, Maravilla’s election was almost guaranteed, as was his re-election so long as he retained the machine’s support.⁶³ The complexities of Maravilla’s election and dismissal are rooted in the history of the East Chicago School Board serving as a body of patronage positions.

⁶³ For operation of political machines see: James Q. Wilson, *The amateur Democrat: Club politics in three cities* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962); Terry Golway, *Machine Made: Tammany Hall and the Creation of Modern American Politics* (New York: Liveright Publishing, 2014); Tyler Anbinder, *Five Points: The 19th Century New York City Neighborhood that Invented Tap Dance, Stole Elections, and Became the World’s Most Notorious Slum* (New York, Free Press Publishing, 2010). For a focus on Chicago, see: Steven P. Erie, *Rainbow’s End: Irish-Americans and the Dilemmas of Urban Machine Politics, 1840-1985* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1990); Richard Schneirov, *Labor and Urban Politics: Class Conflict and the Origins of Modern Liberalism in Chicago, 1864-97* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998); Mark Wahlgren Summers, *The Era of Good Stealings* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); William J. Grimshaw, *Bitter Fruit: Black Politics and the Chicago Machine, 1931-1991* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Mike Amezcua, “A machine in the barrio: Chicago’s conservative colonia and the remaking of Latino politics in the 1960s and 1970s,” *The Sixties*, 12:1, 95-120; Cohen and Taylor, *American Pharaoh*; Milton Rakove, *Don’t Make No Waves, Don’t Back No Losers*. (Bloomington: University of Illinois Press, 1975); Milton Rakove, *We Don’t Want Nobody Nobody Sent*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979).

Once elected, Maravilla turned against the machine's ticket from the 1955 primary and its head, Mayor Walter Jeorse during a period of urban renewal and new construction in the city. Maravilla earned the disdain of Mayor Jeorse for denying the Mayor's "request" for his connections to be awarded construction contracts and rejecting the Mayor's appointees to school positions.⁶⁴ Although he had not strongly identified with anti-corruption and hadn't criticized positions tendencies, or criticism of Jeorse, before his election, Maravilla expressed these sentiments ardently once elected. So, his comments and decisions to dissent from the machine-supported candidates in his voting likely took his political boss, Jeorse, by surprise. The Jeorse administration gained federal funds to begin urban renewal projects throughout the Indiana Harbor section of the city. With the planned construction and urban renewal programs underway through East Chicago, the extension of the school district as a source of patronage became vital for garnering support in a quid pro quo system of favors and kickbacks.

In the 1950s, the official Urban Renewal Project No. 1 and previous work during Jeorse's first term note the aims of these projects and their influence on the city, particularly the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican neighborhoods. Shortly after the General Election, one hundred residents delivered a petition to the Common Council protesting the destruction of the Block and Pennsylvania neighborhood.⁶⁵ The petitioners declared that they were "in favor of improvement of property in the area." However, they were "against mass destruction" of its quality constructed homes.⁶⁶ The petition was read and accepted by the present seven council members to be placed

⁶⁴ Interview with Kathy Wilczynski (Joseph Maravilla's daughter) by the author, February 2, 2018.

⁶⁵ "Regular Session of the Common Council, Monday November 14, 1955" East Chicago City Ordinances Book 14, p. 327-328. Maintained by the City of East Chicago, Indiana City Clerk Office.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

on file. The neighborhood, predominantly immigrant, ethnic Mexican, and African American, would be razed for the development of Cline Avenue. Once the newly elected officials were installed, Jeorse and the Common Council began pushing for the federal funds and organizing for “slum clearance” throughout the Harbor neighborhoods.⁶⁷

The Urban Renewal Project No. 1 and the growing political activity of the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community led to a renewed “Latin” press. Maravilla’s election to the school board and his brief tenure coincides with the revival of Figueroa Printing’s newspaper. Previously published by Francisco Figueroa as the Spanish-language weekly, *El Amigo del Hogar* (1925-1930), his children began printing the bilingual weekly, *Latin Times*, in 1956. The *Latin Times* sought to simultaneously provide a sense of community for the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican residents, as well as serve as a means of harnessing its political power.⁶⁸ According to Irene Osorio, a daughter of Francisco Figueroa, the paper felt that “It [the Latina and Latino community] was one just to use for the vote, and then you’re done- and promises made and not kept and things of that nature, and the newspaper would call them out on different things.”⁶⁹ Instead, of genuine appreciation from elected officials, the printing shop often gained unwarranted attention from politicians. A lot of this attention occurred because of the pointed writing of the editor, Victor Manuel Martinez. Martinez wrote fiery critiques of the political

⁶⁷ “Resolution No. R-58: Resolution Requesting the Reservation of Capital Grant Funds, Approving the Undertaking of Surveys and Plans for Indiana Harbor Urban Renewal Project No. I, and the Filing of an Application for Federal Advance of Funds, Regular Session of the Common Council, Monday March 12, 1956,” East Chicago City Ordinances Book 14, p. 350-352. Maintained by the City of East Chicago, Indiana City Clerk Office. The city established a formal Department of Redevelopment on August 26, 1957. See: “Resolution R-71, Regular Session of the Common Council,” East Chicago City Ordinances Book 14, p. 499-501. Maintained by the City of East Chicago, Indiana City Clerk Office.

⁶⁸ Interview with Irene Osorio by Nicole Martinez-LeGrand, July 29, 2017. Collection # SC 3472. William H. Smith Memorial Library, Eugene and Marilyn Glick Indiana History Center. Indianapolis, Indiana.

⁶⁹ “Interview with Irene Osorio conducted by Nicole Martinez-LeGrand, July 29, 2017,” William Henry Smith Memorial Library, Indiana Historical Library. Collection # SC 3472.

machine and pleas for unity. The contribution of gossip columns, neighborhood news, and letters to the editors provide insights into the increasing political activity of the community.

Statewide legislative changes offered Jeorse an avenue to remove Maravilla and other democratically elected dissenters. In March 1957, Indiana Governor, Harold W. Handley signed a bill that permitted Anderson and East Chicago to appoint members to their school boards.⁷⁰ In light of the decision to maintain appointed school boards, the Jeorse administration reverted to this policy of retaining school board members that would adhere to the politics of the status quo. Mayor Jeorse seized an opportunity to rid himself of Kwiat and Maravilla. On March 14th, Jeorse named a new school board, retaining Melyon and Thad Dywan.⁷¹ Jeorse inserted former president of the Chamber of Commerce, Irving Lewin, park board member Frank Williams, and steelworker Joseph Kish to the new board.⁷² While planting yes-men to the school board, Jeorse also created an all-white board, much to the disapproval of Maravilla. *The Hammond Times* reprinted a statement from Maravilla to Jeorse that claimed the Latino vote secured Maravilla's election, making the community's wishes "quite obvious." Maravilla stated, "This wish should have been respected by Mayor Jeorse, in deciding who shall serve next on the East Chicago School Board. Certainly, someone of this group [Latino] should have been named to represent those citizens who have long waited to be recognized and accepted."⁷³ However, Jeorse's

⁷⁰ "Twin City School Bill Signed," *The Hammond Times*, March 12, 1957.

⁷¹ "New Twin City School Board Named," *The Hammond Times*, March 14, 1957.

⁷² "New Twin City School Board Named," *The Hammond Times*, March 14, 1957. The appointment of Kish is odd as he is a registered Republican who does run against Jeorse in the 1960 election. However, as East Chicago was a Democratic stronghold, I argue that neither Kish nor Jeorse worried about a Republican mayor.

⁷³ "Maravilla Raps Jeorse for Not Naming Latin-American to Board," *The Hammond Times*, March 14, 1957.

decision to not name a Latino or Latina replacement for Maravilla became an additional qualm (and reason) for the *Latin Times*, labeling Mayor Walter Jeorse “El Gordito.”⁷⁴

Kwiat and Maravilla both ran for public office against Jeorse’s administration in 1959. Kwiat ran against Jeorse for Mayor of East Chicago and Maravilla campaigned for Councilman in the predominantly Latina and Latino fifth district. Kwiat, who expressed himself as anti-machine and anti-Jeorse since his school board election, gained a possible ally in Maravilla. Though the East Chicago Political Action Committee once endorsed Maravilla, his avid refusal to support Jeorse’s policies and eventual removal from office found him a brief Kwiat ally. Although Kwiat, Maravilla, and their informal, anti-machine ticket lost their election, the race highlighted the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community’s position within machine politics.⁷⁵ In a *Latin Times* editorial, the editors noted that the five to seven hundred “Latin” families in the 5th District represented a significant force. According to the editorial, “The Latin vote, if completely registered, could elect MARAVILLA by itself. The Latin vote already registered will contribute heavily towards his election if all Latins stand together. THEREIN LIES THE CHALLENGE.”⁷⁶ Unity among the Latina and Latino residents of the fifth district offered a degree of effectiveness and clout for machine loyalists, who gained inclusion by bringing in votes. If that same unity and effectiveness could be applied to electing Maravilla in an eleven-candidate primary, then the community could better articulate their position and

⁷⁴ The first time this endearing nickname was publicly printed in association with the mayor was in the “Informes y Pubelo” section of the March 28, 1959 issue of *Latin Times*. However, an article stated that the moniker “El Gordito” was used on pro-Jeorse literature during his political career along with the slogan, “Jeorse Arriba y Adelante” (Jeorse Upward and Onward). “Jeorse Lambasts Foes,” *The Times*, February 8, 1971.

⁷⁵ “Jeorse Has 2-1 Margin In Victory,” *The Hammond Times*, May 6, 1959. “Official Primary Vote,” *The Hammond Times*, May 7, 1959.

⁷⁶ “Editorial: Joseph R. Maravilla,” *Latin Times*, April 4, 1959. The paper also printed a Spanish advertisement about Maravilla the following week entitled “Quién Es José Maravilla,” *Latin Times*, April 11, 1959.

representation within the city. However, as Maravilla noted in an “Open Letter to City Workers of the Fifth District,” he had no intention of becoming a new member of the status quo of one machine usurping another. Maravilla stated that:

My campaign for Councilman of the 5th District, although financially a poor one, is a sincere and earnest appeal to our citizenry for good government based on integrity and understanding of 5th District problems, I cannot offer jobs nor money in exchange for votes. I appreciate that the city workers who favor my nomination are torn between loyalty to my candidacy and loyalty to the job which provides his bread and butter when department heads and elected officials demand do-and-die fidelity for a pre-selected candidate.⁷⁷

This invocation of patronage and vote-buying continued Maravilla’s previous note while on the school board of framing himself as anti-machine, whether genuine or not. However, he recognized that in a political machine that relied on patronage and support from those lower on the hierarchy the decision to support him against a worker’s “bread and butter” would not be an easy decision. Unlike Maravilla, Kwiat leveraged his previous positions to note how he had previously bestowed municipal opportunities on members of the community. His ad included the list of four school teachers, five maintenance workers, and school clerk that were hired during his time on the school board. He concluded with a pledge “to give a truly representative administration, fairly divided among various groups, regardless of race, color or creed. I will not practice nepotism or make all appointments from one class of people as is now practiced by the present administration.”⁷⁸ Despite this mixed strategy on their ticket, Kwiat and Maravilla failed to unseat Jeorse or members of his administration.

⁷⁷ “Open Letter to City Workers of the Fifth District,” *Latin Times*, April 11, 1959.

⁷⁸ “To the Mexican and Puerto Rican People of East Chicago,” *Latin Times*, April 11, 1959.

The movement to oust Jeorse got a boost from the U.S. Senate, when a Senate investigation into racketeering in unions turned up possible connections between Lake County Democrats and the mob. Often overshadowed by the Senate Hearing's probe into Jimmy Hoffa and the Teamsters Union, the Senate Racketeering Committee's meeting highlighted nefarious dealings within East Chicago and the county. The Chief Deputy Prosecutor for Lake County, Metro Holovachka claimed that "I'm not on trial here. Nor will I be pushed around. I will not forfeit my constitutional rights as an American citizen to a man like young Bob Kennedy [Committee Counsel Robert F. Kennedy]." ⁷⁹ Holovachka refused to answer questions outside of the purview of the committee's established purpose. When Counsel Kennedy and the Senate Committee called Jeorse, Kennedy expected a similar response. As the newspapers reported the hearing when questioned by Kennedy, "Jeorse Chooses Silence." ⁸⁰ Although Jeorse chose silence, his opponents and critics proved much more vocal.

When electoral politics did not offer an opportunity to remove Jeorse, Kwiat and several allies turned to organize under the self-appointed East Chicago Crime Commission. Chartered in July of 1959, the East Chicago Citizens Crime Commission (ECCCC), a bipartisan organization, said its purpose was to "perpetuate good government, investigate misfeasance [malfeasance] of public officials and to endorse honest candidates in elections." ⁸¹ The chartering of the ECCC occurred shortly after testimony to the Senate Rackets Committee in Washington DC on Mayor Jeorse, the City Controller, and Police Chief taking gifts from pinball operators in the Harbor

⁷⁹ "Deputy Prosecutor Pledges To Tell All In Lake Vice Probe," *The Hammond Times*, June 8, 1959.

⁸⁰ "Jeorse Chooses Silence," *The Hammond Times*, June 29, 1959.

⁸¹ "East Chicago Citizens Get New Charter," *The South Bend Tribune*, July 9, 1959.

neighborhood.⁸² During the investigation of Lakeside Specialties Corp, an alleged front for Chicago mobster, Sam “Mooney” Giancana, the Senate received a list of dozens of city and county officials in Lake County who had received gifts.⁸³ The company had attained \$2.5 million in a five-year span from pinball profits and had earmarked approximately \$23,000 in gifts to politicians. These gifts included \$1,020 to Mayor Walter Jeorse.

The ECCC’s membership included many close allies of Jeorse’s former Mayoral opponent, Stanley Kwiat. These included Edward Fiori, Kwiat’s former campaign manager and President of the crime commission. James Kroll, brother-in-law to Kwiat whom he appointed as Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds for the school administration. However, several notable Latinos also served on the six-person committee, including Frank Figueroa, Basil Pacheco, and Tony Bocanegra. Figueroa, an unsuccessful candidate for the City Council’s sixth district, was also a member of the Figueroa Printing Family, who published *El Amigo del Hogar* and *Latin Times* in the region. Pacheco, an organizer for Mexican steelworkers during the push for unionization, was a frequent candidate for several unsuccessful political campaigns in the city. Likewise, Tony Bocanegra was another frequent campaigner for office in several unsuccessful bids. Gus Depino, a failed candidate for City Clerk, served as the sixth member. In one way or another, each member of the committee had confronted and lost to the political machine.⁸⁴ Whether they sought to reform and instill their definition of good government, or

⁸² See: “Investigation of Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field. Hearings Before the Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field. Eighty-Sixth Congress 1st Session. June 2-11, 1959. Part 53 and “Final Report of the Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field. Eighty-Sixth Congress, February 26, 1960. (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1960): 733-867.

⁸³ “Top Hood in Chicago On Tap,” *The Hammond Times*, June 7, 1959.

⁸⁴ “Mayor Says Crime Charges ‘Political,’” *The Hammond Times*, July 28, 1959.

simply refashion the machine in their image, each member had their own reasons for opposing the machine. However, the agenda of anti-machine politicians in East Chicago was complicated. Jeorse and his administration characterized them as disgruntled candidates for office, likely just wanting “in” on political power on their terms. While the actual agenda of the ECCC remains unclear, Mayor Jeorse’s comments highlight a key tension in later chapters. As we will see, although some advocated for politics to become more responsive to voters, they still engaged in corrupt practices. This established a cycle of anti-machine advocates becoming incorporated into the very politics they once railed against early on in their careers.

The organization immediately pursued its anti-corruption stance. Utilizing the momentum from the Senate Rackets Committee hearing, ECCC issued an ultimatum for Mayor Jeorse and City Controller and Indiana State Senator Walter Baran to resign or face impeachment.⁸⁵ Three weeks after the hearing, the group charged that Jeorse and Baran “permitted the city to run rampant with corruption, gambling, pinball machines, and crime to the point where the morals and general welfare of the youths and general citizens have been affected.”⁸⁶ The ECCC was not the only organization to demand Jeorse and Baran’s resignations. At a joint meeting with Gary Crime Commission and the Women Citizen’s Committee filled a downtown Gary venue with 1,200 attendees who demanded resignations from each county and municipal politician subpoenaed by the Senate.⁸⁷ One citizen proclaimed that the Senate hearings were “a sorry mess

⁸⁵ “E. Chicago Mayor Warned to Quit or Be Impeached,” *The Indianapolis News*, July 25, 1959.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ “Ultimatum to Vance: 2 Weeks To ‘Sweep Up’,” *The Hammond Times*, June 16, 1959.

and what we see is only on the surface.”⁸⁸ Unfortunately, in their silence and the Senate’s legal constraints, what laid beneath the surface proved unattainable.

The watchdog work of the ECCC and attempts at electoral politics ultimately yielded few results for the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community. Within a multiracial alliance, former and aspiring politicians like Maravilla and Pacheco found only limited success. Although Maravilla failed to secure a nomination as councilman in the fifth district, whose Latino voting population remained small, 1963 would see a change to Latino political representation. This increased showing of the Latino vote in 1963 occurred both because of the fervor of the “Viva Kennedy” Movement within the region, initiated by Maravilla, and a growing anti-Jeorse sentiment.

Maravilla Strikes Back

Mayor Jeorse’s removal of Maravilla and his colleagues on the school board provided a vital lesson to the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community. Although democratically elected, Maravilla’s removal presented the clear consequences of playing the machine’s game only to in turn rock the boat. If the community hoped to find a seat at the machine’s table, they would have to alter their strategy. After Maravilla’s removal, a new opportunity presented itself: the American GI Forum. The Forum offered a breath of fresh air as the local Latin American Veterans Association became less active as its leadership pursued other ventures, such as electoral politics. However, by connecting their local movement to a broader national movement, the veterans in East Chicago demonstrated their importance as potential Democrats. However,

⁸⁸ “Says Jeorse Owes People Explanation,” *The Hammond Times*, June 26, 1959.

the GI Forum in East Chicago also had to demonstrate its importance to the organization that had a stronger focus and presence in the southwest, particularly in Texas. The arrival to East Chicago of Marco Martinez-Infante, an academic arriving to complete a sociological study of the community, and Maravilla's work in coordinating a campaign against the alleged fraud granted Maravilla the opportunity to situate himself as a leader of East Chicago and the GI Forum. The decision by Senator John F. Kennedy's Presidential Campaign to use the GI Forum's connections across the United States led to the creation of the Viva Kennedy Movement in East Chicago. Tapping leaders from the GI Forum's membership, Maravilla secured a position just weeks after his campaign against Diaz Infante. The Viva Kennedy Movement offered Maravilla and his colleagues in East Chicago an opportunity to push for their inclusion in the machine along with the calls for Democratic unity.

Locally, the GI Forum entailed many of the same outreach programs that the LAV had undertaken. The group included a nonpartisan clause that was similar to the one the *Latin Times* reprinted. It stated, "While officers and members are encouraged to participate in matters political as individuals, such actions are not to be construed as representative of stands taken by and for the American GI Forum at the national, state, or local level."⁸⁹ The East Chicago chapter of the GI Forum comprised many of the same members of the LAV.⁹⁰ The organization eventually eclipsed the LAV in the late 1950s Vasquez stated, "Some LAV committees ceased being active. Petty jealousies were surfacing and factions forming. The spirit of volunteerism was declining."⁹¹ Despite the activist origins of the American GI Forum, constitutional

⁸⁹ "GI Forum Policy on Politics," *Latin Times*, October 15, 1960.

⁹⁰ Interview with Frederick Maravilla by the author, March 19, 2018.

⁹¹ "Weasel: The Autobiography of Louis Vasquez," *Steel Shavings*, 51.

provisions impeded members from campaigning or endorsing political candidates.⁹² Members presented an apparent interest in engaging politics from the local to national level and built networks extending across states. Whereas the LAV was more social and fraternal, the GI Forum was more explicitly oriented toward civil rights. The GI Forum was a political machine awaiting an innovative individual to tap the potential of a national collection of leaders.⁹³ However, now with access to a broader network of Latino veterans, the Northwest Indiana contingent began to form vital political connections with communities within and outside of the Midwest.

The Latino community utilized these national connections with other veteran organizations to solve conflicts within their community while simultaneously forming connections vital to their political inclusion. Relying on the assistance of the GI Forum's founder, Dr. Hector P. Garcia of Corpus Christi, Texas, Joseph Maravilla desired to out a fraud within the region that had victimized several other Latino communities across the United States.⁹⁴ The Diaz-Infante affair highlighted the importance of regional connections for Latino communities and provided local leadership an opportunity to flex their muscles.⁹⁵

Dr. Marco Martinez-Infante, an alias for Marcantonio Diaz-Infante, arrived in East Chicago in the summer of 1960, announcing that he would teach at St. Joseph's College in the fall. Meeting with local leaders of the Calumet Region at an extension of Indiana University in

⁹² For more on these origins refer to *Handbook of Texas Online*, V. Carl Allsup, "Felix Longoria Affair," June 12, 2010. Modified on March 25, 2016. Published by the Texas State Historical Association. Patrick Carroll, *Felix Longoria's Wake: Bereavement, Racism, and the Rise of Mexican American Activism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003).

⁹³ Ramos, *The American GI Forum*, 88.

⁹⁴ Refer to "Letter to Dr. Garcia from Joseph Maravilla, Sept. 2, 1960" Dr. Hector P. Garcia Papers, Coll. 5, Box 38. Special Collections and Archives, Mary and Jeff Bell Library, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

⁹⁵ Within this section, I refer to Diaz-Infante by Martinez, which was the name he used in Indiana. However, the majority of his aliases included either Diaz or Infante, so I follow the example set by the *Latin Times* to use Diaz-Infante.

East Chicago, Dr. Martinez presented his credentials as a sociologist and planned to do a survey of the area's Spanish speaking community.⁹⁶ Through these mechanisms, Martinez placed himself among the Latino leadership of Northwest Indiana.⁹⁷ Yet Diaz-Infante's credentials were fraudulent, and in exposing Diaz-Infante, Maravilla established himself both locally and nationally as a rising-star of the community and the GI Froum. His work against Diaz-Infante led to his eventual appointment as a State Chair for the Viva Kennedy campaign in the fall of 1960.

The Diaz-Infante affair highlighted the developing nature of the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican communities' political consciousness. Much of Diaz-Infante's work in the region focused on playing into the political lives of this community in Northwest Indiana. On July 17, Diaz-Infante invited a "goodly number of citizens from our Spanish speaking community" to organize a newspaper for the region (to include neighboring cities in the region, such as Chicago Heights and Gary).⁹⁸ According to Dr. Hector García, "Dr. Mark Martinez was raising money from innocent people for the purpose of organizing the Latin American people into a political group."⁹⁹ This group worked together to publish *Tribuna* for nine issues before Diaz-Infante absconded from East Chicago. Through the newspaper, Diaz-Infante utilized the growing ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community's political power to solicit donations and advertisement

⁹⁶ "Survey of Spanish Speaking Peoples Planned," *The Hammond Times*, June 19, 1960. These credentials included membership into the Ford Foundation, a doctorate at the National University of Mexico and studies at both Harvard University and the Sorbonne in Paris.

⁹⁷ Martinez formed a committee consisting of members from the League of United Latin American Citizens, Union Benéfica Mexicana, and Cuauhtémoc, a fraternal organization. Refer to "Region Latin American Form Survey Committee," *The Hammond Times*, June 22, 1960. The League of United Latin American Citizens honored Diaz-Infante at an annual dance, refer to "Hold Annual Cotillan Ball," *Latin Times*, July 7, 1960.

⁹⁸ "Letter to Dr. Hector P. García from Joseph Maravilla, July 22, 1960" in Hector P. García Papers at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

⁹⁹ "Statement of Dr. Hector P. García, April 19, 1962" in Hector P. García Papers at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

from politicians within the machine. Diaz-Infante served as the Editor-in-Chief for eight of the issues, and his editorials serve as insights into his mentality.

Diaz-Infante's first article in *Tribuna*, "Let's Be Positive," served two functions: to integrate Diaz-Infante (and *Tribuna*) within the community and to set an agenda for the paper. After associating himself with families that "broke through the barriers of the lack of tolerance and social acceptance to achieve academic distinction in different professional fields" and "families who came here in the early 1920s," Diaz-Infante advocated for unity to bring about "political maturity."¹⁰⁰ While recognizing leading, predominantly ethnic Mexican families, Diaz-Infante associated himself with the growing portion of the community becoming attached to the political machine. A month later, the *Tribuna* declared "We Have Approached Political Readiness," detailing that with recent voter registration, the community became ready for "direct political participation."¹⁰¹ The motive behind organizing the community for the election season proved peculiar; however, considering the individuals involved, such as Jesse Gomez (elected as the city's first Latino councilman) and Enos Guanajuato (a future president of LULAC's state administration), this move served as a way of further integrating Diaz-Infante into the middle-class. However, the presence of individuals like Gomez and Guanajuato offered Diaz-Infante leverage with the machine, as it could harness the political organization for its members in the upcoming election.

Maravilla suspected Diaz-Infante of having an ulterior motive and began to research his credentials. He recognized similarities between Diaz-Infante and a character in the pages of the GI Forum's bulletin. Through a letter-writing campaign, Maravilla feverishly wrote many groups

¹⁰⁰ "Let's Be Positive," *Tribuna*, August 4, 1960.

¹⁰¹ "Our Voice," *Tribuna*, September 8, 1960.

to determine the validity of Diaz-Infante's representations about his background. However, two of the first groups were the Ford Foundation and Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM).¹⁰² Both institutions wrote Maravilla back to express that they did not know of anyone by any of the provided names, discrediting Diaz-Infante's representations of his background.¹⁰³

Secretly, Maravilla devised a way to expose Diaz-Infante publicly. He wrote to Dr. García about his concerns. The earliest letter dates to July 22, barely a month since Diaz-Infante arrived and mentioned a letter that Maravilla wrote to García several days earlier. In this letter, Maravilla had expressed concern for his peers and neighbors who quickly attached themselves to Diaz-Infante. According to Maravilla, Diaz-Infante "claims that a donor has pledged \$2,000.00 towards the paper, and this donor will be kept unknown until the community pledges or coughs up an equal amount towards financing the paper."¹⁰⁴ He and others thought it was a ruse, yet everyone present at the meeting, Maravilla noted, donated at least fifteen dollars each, and one local community member pledged to pay the remainder needed to reach the necessary \$2,000. Maravilla said that some community members argued that a second bilingual paper was unnecessary and "that if the community was interested in getting a better newspaper, we should all pool our interests into the local news periodical and make it a better and bigger news

¹⁰² "Joseph Maravilla to the Ford Foundation, August 10, 1960" in Hector P. García Papers at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

¹⁰³ The newspaper the *Latin Times* reprinted these letters in a two-week series, "Why the American GI Forum Distrusted Marco Infante Martinez," *Latin Times*, September 24 and October 1, 1960.

¹⁰⁴ "Letter to Dr. Hector P. García from Joseph Maravilla, July 22, 1960" in Hector P. García Papers at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

sheet.”¹⁰⁵ The letter concluded with Maravilla pleading for Dr. García’s assistance as he felt that he had “gone as far as I [Maravilla] can on pure hearsay evidence.”¹⁰⁶

On September 2, 1960, Maravilla wrote Dr. García to finalize the plans to expose Diaz-Infante. In his letter, Maravilla wrote, “we plan to invite him to our GI Forum meeting via registered special delivery letter so that in case he doesn’t show up, we can have a receipt proving that he got the letter in his hands, was aware of the meeting, and refused to show.”¹⁰⁷ Maravilla also noted that he planned to invite all people that he felt should know of Diaz-Infante’s murky past. This letter also elaborated on Diaz-Infante’s dealings with *Tribuna* and further discussed his activities. Maravilla relayed that Mrs. Rosa Morfin of 3456 Massachusetts Ave in Gary provided room and board to Diaz-Infante; however, he paid nothing yet as he waited for a check from the Ford Foundation. Maravilla also referred to *Tribuna* as the vehicle which he used “to extort monies from local politicians and friends in business, and most important, through which he is able to publicize his personal ideologies and fancies in imposition upon an unsuspecting public.”¹⁰⁸

Although an outsider to the community, the Diaz-Infante affair offered a lesson in corruption, good government, and effective leadership. Through his newspaper and educator position, Diaz-Infante masked his corrupt, illegal acts under the guise of respectability politics and association with leading ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican families. These associations

¹⁰⁵ “Letter to Dr. Hector P. García from Joseph Maravilla, July 22, 1960” in Hector P. García Papers at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

¹⁰⁶ “Letter to Dr. Hector P. García from Joseph Maravilla, July 22, 1960” in Hector P. García Papers at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

¹⁰⁷ “Letter to Hector P. García from Joseph Maravilla, September 2, 1960” in Hector P. García Papers at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

¹⁰⁸ “Letter to Hector P. García from Joseph Maravilla, September 2, 1960” in Hector P. García Papers at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

granted Diaz-Infante his form of political currency that he could utilize to leverage donations for political advertisement from non-Latino political candidates and Latinos alike. By researching Diaz-Infante's background, Maravilla not only outed his fraudulent credentials but also elevated himself as an effective leader with his community in mind. And whether Maravilla meant it or not, this leadership simultaneously highlighted the focus of the politicians and aspiring politicians that Diaz-Infante duped. Simply put, Maravilla, when presented with action or inaction, chose to act. Whether altruistically or for his own political clout, Maravilla set into motion his own political resurgence.

Less than three months after Diaz-Infante's arrival, at a Founder's Week celebration for the local American GI Forum, keynote speaker Dr. Garcia publicly denounced and attacked Martinez as a "fraud." Martinez resented that, under the guise of meeting to discuss "publicly something which is affecting this city's large Spanish speaking population," he had walked into what he described as a "character assassination" by Dr. Garcia and Joseph Maravilla.¹⁰⁹ Reports claimed that after Martinez destroyed his G.I. Forum membership card, the confrontation between Martinez and Dr. Garcia "almost ended in blows."¹¹⁰ Rev. John Flanagan briefly restored order to the meeting hall inside Our Lady of Guadalupe before Martinez left for the third and final time; however, not before both he and Dr. Garcia declared their intent to file suit for defamation of character.¹¹¹ Despite this climactic confrontation between Dr. Garcia and Martinez, *The Hammond Times* would cease to cover the Diaz-Infante affair.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ "Tempers Flare at Forum Meeting in East Chicago," *The Hammond Times*, September 11, 1960.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Although *The Hammond Times* ceased to cover the Díaz-Infante Affair, the *Latin Times* kept the con-man as an essential subject of interest. Later in the month, Joseph Maravilla would release in an issue of *Latin Times* a tell-all

The national American GI Forum provided East Chicago's ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community an alternative to corrupt, local politics as a means to organize politically. Through participation and active use of networks based on their wartime service, the Latino community in Northwest Indiana attained a legitimate foundation for their partisan endeavors outside of the political machine in East Chicago. Members of these veteran organizations would prove instrumental in forming the "budding oak tree" that Maravilla envisioned. However, the community still had to branch out from politically active veterans to the inclusion of more of the community outside of the niche that served overseas. After his removal from the political machine while on the school board, which now relied on appointments from the mayor's office, Maravilla and his colleagues had to discover how to push for more political power by working outside of the machine. They hoped that their effort would demonstrate the importance of the Latina and Latino vote in the community, as a force against corruption. All they needed was an opportunity, and they believed that opportunity came in the form of a burro riding through their city in 1960.¹¹³

explaining why the G.I. Forum mistrusted Martinez from the beginning. The articles highlighted the role of regional cooperation in exposing Martinez as a fraud. The two-week series is itself a key historical document of the Diaz-Infante Affair as Maravilla provided copies of numerous pieces of correspondence and references material used to build the case against Martinez. *Latin Times* reprinted letters in their entirety to its audience. Refer to: "Why the American GI Forum Distrusted Marco Infante Martinez," *Latin Times*, September 24, 1960, and October 1, 1960. The *Latin Times* reprinted a mugshot of Diaz-Infante from twelve years earlier as well as several of his crimes in various cities across the United States after the public denunciation, refer to: "Wanted: Marco Ignacio Infante," *Latin Times*, December 10, 1960. The *Latin Times* even included Diaz-Infante's arrest in Tucson, AZ as front page news, reprinting both his mugshot and a letter from Bernard L. Garmire, Tucson's Chief of Police. Tucson arrested Diaz-Infante for two counts of "defrauding an innkeeper," and listed some of the con-man's alias within Garmire's letter (Refer to "Diaz Infante Arrested in U.S.," *Latin Times*, April 27, 1962, and "City of Tucson Meets Dr. Marco Martinez-Infante," *Latin Times*, May 11, 1962. For a list of aliases and some of the crimes associated with Diaz-Infante, refer to the final list issued by the *Latin Times*, "Bringing You Up To Date," April 27, 1962.

¹¹³ This is in reference to the symbol of the Viva Kennedy campaign printed in the October 15, 1960 issue of the *Latin Times*. The symbol included a portrait of JFK's face on a body dressed in a typical charro outfit with a bristling sombrero that had "Viva" written in it. Kennedy rode a donkey, whose face turned to give the portrait of Kennedy a broad smile.

The Latino community gained a significant opportunity for political involvement with the election of 1960. Democratic Candidate, John F. Kennedy, and his campaign manager and brother, Robert F. Kennedy, witnessed an untapped potential in the ethnic group.¹¹⁴ While a senator in Washington D.C., Kennedy appointed a member of the GI Forum in Arizona, Carlos McCormick, to his staff. As a Forumeer, as members of the GI Forum were called, McCormick had access to a national network of Latino veterans. McCormick's role as the national director of the "Viva Kennedy" campaign allowed Forum members the opportunity to directly engage within the Democratic Party during the presidential campaign while not devolving the Forum into a partisan entity.¹¹⁵ At the local level, the "Viva Kennedy" campaign would continue to integrate the Latino community into the political machine. By organizing around the Kennedy presidential campaign, Forumeers in Northwest Indiana made vital connections to the broader Democratic base that served as an entry into local politics. However, this opportunity to organize the Latino community offered Joseph Maravilla and his colleagues a chance to strengthen their community's involvement in city politics after Maravilla's removal from the East Chicago School Board in 1957.¹¹⁶

The "Viva Kennedy" Movement began in East Chicago in October of 1960, just a month shy of the presidential election. Robert Kennedy appointed Joseph Maravilla, Charles Cañamar, and Dr. Richard Rucoba as co-chairmen for Lake County and much of Indiana, which was because of the central site the county played for Latinas and Latino in the state.¹¹⁷ These men

¹¹⁴ For more on Viva Kennedy read the definitive survey García, *Viva Kennedy: Mexican Americans in Search of Camelot* and Francis-Fallon, *The Rise of the Latino Vote*, 53-83.

¹¹⁵ Ramos, *The American GI Forum*, 88.

¹¹⁶ "Twin City School Bill Signed," *The Hammond Times*, March 12, 1957.

¹¹⁷ "Viva Kennedy' Movement in East Chicago," *Latin Times*, October 1, 1960. Despite the three co-chairman representing the entire state, their political activities and organizing appeared limited to Lake County. Despite

were selected due to their connections to the GI Forum, like the other leaders of Viva Kennedy across the United States. Maravilla stood out as an obvious choice for the GI Forum after his work to expose the notorious Diaz Infante just a few weeks earlier. Relying on Latino veteran networks, these men put their organization into motion immediately, opening a physical headquarters on Main St. the next week and electing local city chairmen across the county.¹¹⁸ Initial efforts to organize the community focused on contacting ethnic and veteran's organizations in neighboring Gary, IN. Dr. Rucoba and Maravilla initially met with the leadership of neighborhood organizations such as Sociedad Mutualista Mexico, Brunswick Latin American Civic Club, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Gary American Mexican Organization.¹¹⁹ The efforts by these men one month short of the election relied heavily on the ties made by their time in both LAV and the GI Forum.¹²⁰

The Latin-American leadership prepared to host the first mass political rally for the Latino community in the state at the end of October. The rally, held in the Indiana Harbor neighborhood of East Chicago, occurred on Oct. 22nd and hosted a variety of Democratic candidates and officials not only from the local community but nationally. Event organizers prepared to host this rally the same day as a "Square Deal" caravan across the county to parade the seventeen local Republican candidates.¹²¹ The children of the "Square Deal" caravan chanted: "Kennedy, Kennedy where do you roam? In a beer can licking up the foam." The ardent

Latinas and Latinos, primarily ethnic Mexicans presence in the South Bend and Indianapolis metropolitan regions, as well.

¹¹⁸ "Viva Kennedy' Quarters Opened in East Chicago," *The Hammond Times*, October 9, 1960. City Chairmen included Rogelio Candelaria (East Chicago), Jesse Rodriguez (Gary), Valentino Martinez (Highland), and Joe Alamillo (Hammond).

¹¹⁹ "Gary Unites Under Viva Kennedy Club," *Latin Times*, October 15, 1960.

¹²⁰ Interview with Frederick Maravilla by the author, March 19, 2018.

¹²¹ "GOP Caravan to Visit Highland on Saturday," *The Hammond Times*, Oct. 21, 1960.

Kennedy supporters included their chant of "Kennedy is our man, Nixon in the garbage can."¹²² The local administration secured a close confidant of John Kennedy, Sen. Henry Gonzales (TX) to deliver the keynote speech, furthering the connections between the Latino and the broader community in Indiana.¹²³

The "Viva Kennedy" campaign also placed key ethnic Mexican Democratic leaders into closer connections with the city's Democratic leadership. East Chicago's Mayor Walter M. Jeorse donated his two donkeys to the "Viva Kennedy" campaign to promote the presidential nominee, as well as local candidates, Matthew E. Welsh (nominee for Governor) and Robert Pastrick (nominee for Secretary of State). The donkeys, endearingly renamed "Jack" and "Lynda" for the Democratic nominees John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson, remained in front of city hall for several days.¹²⁴ These public displays of political participation served different means for the Latino community and the city's administration. For city officials, such as Jeorse, this display was an attempt to retain the Latino vote, despite having removed the Latino representative on the school board. For the Latino community, these displays showed the initial steps of their inclusion into the political machine of Northwest Indiana.

¹²² Discussion in "East Chicago, Indiana in Photos" discussion board. Facebook March 16, 2018.

¹²³ "Viva Kennedy Rally Saturday," *The Hammond Times*, October 21, 1960. "Senator Gonzales to Speak," *Latin Times*, October 22, 1960.

¹²⁴ "Back Democrats," *The Hammond Times*, October 18, 1960.



“Back Democrats,” *The Hammond Times*, October 18, 1960.

The “Viva Kennedy” Movement in Indiana provided an important opportunity for shaping local political organizing and allowing ethnic Mexicans and Puerto Ricans in East Chicago.¹²⁵ Kennedy recognized the impact of his “Viva Kennedy” organizers and invited approximately one hundred of them to his inauguration on January 21, 1961. Invitees, from East Chicago, included Jose Alvarado (Chairman for the Illinois and Indiana region), Dr. Rucoba and Maravilla, as well as their wives.¹²⁶ However, the Maravillas could not afford to attend.¹²⁷ Aside from his prominent career in local organizations, and brief tenure as a member of East Chicago’s School Board, Maravilla also served as Inland Steel’s first Latino Safety Engineer and was

¹²⁵ The election of 1960 proved the closest presidential election of the 20th century. Although Kennedy beat Republican candidate Richard Nixon by eighty-four electoral votes, the senator secured only 0.2% more of the popular vote. At the point of Nixon’s concession, Kennedy carried eleven states by three percentage points or less, and Nixon carried five by an equal margin. States with strong “Viva Kennedy” Movements, such as Illinois and Texas provided Kennedy solid wins over Nixon. Refer to Ramos, *The American GI Forum*, 88-89 for a discussion about the role of the GI Forum and Latina and Latino vote in Kennedy’s election.

¹²⁶ “Viva Kennedy Members Invited to Inauguration,” *Latin Times*, January 7, 1961. The newspaper reprinted Mr. Alvarado’s invite as the cover-page story for their issue.

¹²⁷ Interview with Kathy Wilczynski (Joseph Maravilla’s daughter) by the author, February 2, 2018.

completing his twelfth and final year at Northwestern University for his bachelor's in philosophy.¹²⁸ Kennedy's campaign office also sent dozens of thank-you cards to members of the Viva Kennedy campaign in Indiana.¹²⁹ The election of Kennedy in 1960 had a profound impact on Louis Vasquez, who was motivated to enter politics as a precinct committeeman in Gary, IN.¹³⁰ Samora and Lamanna suggested that "the Kennedy campaign with its 'Viva Kennedy' groups (in 1960) did much to arouse the Mexican-American politically."¹³¹ Within East Chicago, the "Viva Kennedy" Movement reorganized itself around Dr. John B. Nicosia and his candidacy for mayor in 1963.¹³² This reorganization of the local Viva Kennedy movement provided a significant change. Aside from the ousting of Jeorse for Dr. John B. Nicosia in the mayor's office, the politically awoken Latino community placed their first member on the city council, Jesse Gomez Sr.

The Elected Stage: Jesse Gomez Sr. Paves the Way

Despite their support for Jeorse, as well as the hard work of the community during the Viva Kennedy Movement, the Latina and Latino community did not find itself adequately rewarded for their loyalty in East Chicago. The central idea of a political machine, that loyalty will net rewards, was not a reality for them, especially in terms of appointments to municipal

¹²⁸ "Busy Steelworker Earns Degree; Heads for Law School," *The Hammond Times*, June 15, 1961. The story included a photo of Maravilla with his son Daniel, who graduated from Washington High School (East Chicago, IN) when his father completed his undergraduate studies. Regrettably, Northwestern University Archive only contained his Graduation Announcement from the Chicago Campus's Evening Division on May 8, 1961.

¹²⁹ Interview with Frederick Maravilla by the author. Maravilla noted that he gave his card to a young man from Texas studying Mexican involvement in the election, but the card was never returned. The strategy of the "Viva Kennedy" campaign proved so successful that Robert Kennedy restarted the program for his campaign in 1968. Refer to "Viva Kennedy Campaign," *Latin Times*, April 19, 1968.

¹³⁰ "Weasel: The Autobiography of Louis Vasquez," *Steel Shavings*, 65.

¹³¹ Julian Samora and Richard A. Lamanna, "Mexican Americans in a Midwest Metropolis: A Study of East Chicago," *Mexican-American Study Project* (University of California, Los Angeles: July 1967): 85-86.

¹³² "Viva Nicosia," *Latin Times*, March 15, 1963.

jobs. These appointments represented an acceptance into the political machine. The lack of appointments expressed a denial of the community's broader inclusion into the political sphere. Appointments placed Latino veterans in positions of relative power; however, typically those responsible for appointing them possessed ulterior motives for whom they selected. Latino appointees granted typically Anglo appointers the opportunity to tap into the Latino community for political leverage. These appointments proved a low-cost investment as the appointees had little power and held subordinate positions where they could make little difference within the political system. To have any chance at change, the Latino community had to pursue representation via elected public officials.

The desire to find a seat at the political table in East Chicago led many members of the community to seek office positions with varying degrees of power. Capitalizing on the participation of the Latino community in Kennedy's election and growing resentment of Mayor Jeorse, Latino candidates desired to attain an autonomous position in the municipal administration. The previous reliance on the patronage system proved troublesome and unsatisfactory as Jeorse did not replace Maravilla with another Latino official. Whereas appointments efficiently allotted political favorites and "cronies" a position in the municipal administration, these appointments only lasted as long as the appointee was loyal. Elected positions allowed not only for temporary stability but the pursuit of an agenda separate from the status quo. Maravilla's removal not only provided the Latino community a call-to-action for the removal of Jeorse as mayor but also a lesson in playing the game of politics. To gain improvements for the community, an aspiring politician had to play their part for the political boss. Navigating this tightrope of responsive leadership to one's community and loyalty to the

machine offered an enduring lesson for the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican residents. Jesse Gomez Sr. adhered to this lesson when the primarily Latino Sixth District propelled him to a position on the city council in 1963.

In February of that year, Dr. John B. Nicosia filed for the mayoral race in East Chicago. Nicosia was the son-in-law of former Mayor Frank Migas (1939-1952), the Polish immigrant and former deputy sheriff who initiated Democratic rule in East Chicago. Migas lost a re-election bid to Jeorse in 1952, and now Migas's son-in-law (Nicosia) prepared to oust Jeorse from office.¹³³ Despite Jeorse's attempts to court the Latino community after his removal of Maravilla, such as loaning his donkeys to the Viva Kennedy Movement and appointing Latino officials to minor posts, Dr. Nicosia offered a more significant slice of the metaphorical pie.¹³⁴ With the support of the Latino community, both the Mexican majority and burgeoning population of Puerto Ricans, Nicosia pledged to appoint a Latino individual to head a city department.¹³⁵ In one of the closest mayoral races in the city's history, Nicosia toppled Jeorse by a mere 107 votes. Notably, Nicosia carried every precinct with a sizeable Latino community.¹³⁶ Issues of the *Latin Times* proclaimed "Ni-Co-Si, Gordo NO!" and contained numerous anti-Jeorse articles.¹³⁷ However, Nicosia also

¹³³ "Jobless Dad of 10 in Twin City Race," *The Hammond Times*, February 27, 1963. "Thirteen men have led the city on its course," *The Times*, February 23, 1993.

¹³⁴ Refer to "Back Democrats," *The Hammond Times*, October 18, 1960, and Appendix 2.

¹³⁵ Examining the lists of both Mayor Jeorse and Mayor Nicosia's administrations, labeled "East Chicago Civil City Officials and Supervisory Employees," reveals that Nicosia upheld this campaign promise with two Spanish surnamed officials in his administration: Juan Santiago- Electrician and Anthony Puntillo- Parking Meter Superintendent. Refer to "Election/City" Folder in East Chicago Room at East Chicago Public Library (Main Branch).

¹³⁶ "Precinct Vote for East Chicago Mayor," *The Hammond Times*, May 8, 1963. "6th District Supports Nicosia," *Latin Times*, May 10, 1963.

¹³⁷ The slogan, "Ni-co-si! Gordo NO!" appeared weekly in the *Latin Times* for the two months leading up to the May Primary. Some anti-Jeorse articles include: "16 Years for Jeorse, Why?" and "Las Falsas Promesas de Jeorse" in *Latin Times*, February 22, 1963; "Fairy Tales," *Latin Times*, March 1, 1963; "Warning to All Spanish-Speaking Citizens," *Latin Times*, April 19, 1963; and "They Say the Mayor Loves Us," "Loyalty," and "Jeorse Chooses Silence," in *Latin Times*, April 26, 1963.

relied on the internal shift of many members of Jeorse's administration to switch their allegiance to him during the primary season. Jeorse lost his control of the council as four members switched their support to Nicosia.¹³⁸ However, even minor posts switched their allegiances to Nicosia, notably Jeorse's health inspector: Jesse Gomez Sr.

Gomez boasted an impressive resume, which no doubt helped him establish the networks necessary to win the primarily Latino sixth district. A member of the GI Forum, Gomez had been a precinct worker for over twenty years, delegate to Indiana's Democratic convention four times, and an insurance salesman.¹³⁹ Speculating on the May Primary, the *Latin Times* even listed Gomez as a possible contender for the mayor's office, along with fellow Forumeer Dr. Rucoba.¹⁴⁰ The Primary race for the Sixth District consisted of a dozen candidates. Notably, Gomez ran against the present state director of the League of United Latin American Citizens, Enos C. Guanajuato. The *Latin Times* issued a hopeful claim after the May Primary stating that "1964 should be a bright year for the Latins- with a brand new mayor and a Latin to represent the Sixth District. Conditions will change!"¹⁴¹ This bit of optimism came only after some bitter infighting between members of the Latino community leading up to the election. These members took to the pages of the *Latin Times* to express their opinions publicly to the Latino community.

The first sighting of discontent with the political happenings of the upcoming election came in February, a few months before the primary. LULAC's Indiana Director, Guanajuato,

¹³⁸ These four men were Dennis T. Karas (6th District), Robert Pastrick (4th District), George Cvitkovich (5th District), and Joseph Zych (2nd District).

¹³⁹ "Jesse Gomez Biography," *The Hammond Times*, May 5, 1963. Numerous issues of *Latin Times* display his ads for insurance. A timeline of Gomez's career can be found in "Jesse Gomez File," in East Chicago Room at the East Chicago Public Library (Main Branch).

¹⁴⁰ "Who's Running," *Latin Times*, February 8, 1963.

¹⁴¹ "Sixth District Supports," *Latin Times*, May 10, 1963.

expressed his dissatisfaction with the precinct committeemen of the Sixth District over their preemptive selection of Gomez for the council seat in “Facts, Not Rumors.” According to Guanajuato, after he presented the precinct committeemen with his qualifications, the group asked him to concede and join them in their support of Gomez. Guanajuato claimed that these officials violated their role as representatives of the district and selected a winner without consulting the voters.¹⁴² The disagreement between Guanajuato and Gomez continued in three Letters to the Editor by members of the community: Joe Porras, Toby Boconegra, and the anonymous writer, “The Grocer.” Porras’s letter included his support for Guanajuato and his criticism of “the futile efforts... to disqualify a candidate [Guanajuato] with sincere efforts to serve his community” by “self-appointed leaders.”¹⁴³ “The Grocer” framed his reply to Porras along the theme of unity, asking Porras, “do you want to split the vote and thereby admitting an Anglo to win as in previous elections?”¹⁴⁴ Boconegra’s letter proved more assertive, mentioning that Guanajuato lived in the Third District and not the Sixth, as well as reminding the reader of Porras’s own “councilmanic defeat” in 1951, calling Porras as “self-appointed.” Boconegra concluded by asking why the Sixth District should support Guanajuato when his son-in-law, Vicente Garza, also ran against him.¹⁴⁵ Framing Guanajuato as an “opportunist,” Boconegra supported “The Grocer’s” defense of Gomez as “closer to the public pulse primarily because he does associate with us all the year around and thereby knows our needs and wants.”¹⁴⁶ In

¹⁴² “Facts, Not Rumors,” *Latin Times*, February 22, 1963.

¹⁴³ “Joe Porras, Letter to the Editor,” *Latin Times*, April 19, 1963.

¹⁴⁴ “The Grocer, Letter to the Editor,” *Latin Times*, April 26, 1963.

¹⁴⁵ “Tony Boconegra, Letter to the Editor,” *Latin Times*, April 26, 1963. For Vicente Garza, refer to “Vicente Garza Jr. Candidato a Councilman,” *Latin Times*, March 8, 1963.

¹⁴⁶ “Tony Boconegra, Letter to the Editor,” *Latin Times*, April 26, 1963. “The Grocer, Letter to the Editor,” *Latin Times*, April 26, 1963.

conjunction, these two responses to Joseph Porras paint Gomez as a genuinely democratic choice due to his relationship to his possible constituents.

After the contested May Primary, Gomez secured the top position by an unknown margin as neither the *Latin Times* nor *The Hammond Times* reported voting data for the Democratic Primary, only Republican. Whether because of the plethora of Democratic candidates for each district, or more attention focused on the mayoral races, the lack of this data leaves little room to explore the opposed views of community members. Gomez's win in the Democratic primary would not sit well with Jeorse. Gracious in defeat, Jeorse used his remaining months in office seeking retribution against those individuals who broke with his administration. Gomez's victory earned the future councilman a pink slip for his job in the city's health department. Jeorse dismissed Gomez for "allegedly neglecting his duties" by not carrying out health inspections. The article noted that Gomez's political involvement hastened his dismissal as he was initially "hand-picked" for the councilman seat by Jeorse but switched his support to Nicosia.¹⁴⁷ Due to the city's heavily democratic leanings, Gomez secured his council seat in November carrying 2,105 votes to the Republican candidate Richard Dougherty's 297.¹⁴⁸

Gomez's tenure as city councilman offered the Latina and Latino community a voice in the political discussions held within the town. Similar to studies of other "first" Latino elected officials, such as Mario T. García's discussion about the election of Raymond L. Telles in El Paso in 1957, Gomez served as a negotiator and power broker between his district and city

¹⁴⁷ "Political Ax Swings Again in Twin City," *The Hammond Times*, June 4, 1963.

¹⁴⁸ "East Chicago Results," *The Hammond Times*, November 6, 1963.

administration.¹⁴⁹ He held a position as the community's prodigal son, and in 1964 the Latin American Civic Political Club held a "testimonial gathering" in his honor.¹⁵⁰ Notably, Gomez worked in conjunction with Councilman James Dent to combat the segregation of construction crews in 1968. Spearheaded by Dent, one of two African American councilmen, the city council unanimously voted to cease the construction of two public housing complexes in the city.¹⁵¹ This action occurred as trade unions working the federally financed project continued to turn away laborers of minority groups.¹⁵² Gomez stated that "a man doesn't have to be qualified to be a laborer," as the trade unions turned away individuals that Gomez sent for employment as "not qualified."¹⁵³

The election of Jesse Gomez in 1963 proved a crucial step for the broader community towards representation and access to the benefits of patronage and municipal services. With an insider into the political machine, as well as the changing demographics of the Harbor neighborhoods, the community gained new attention and began to flex its political muscles. As the community delivered more support for the machine, they better articulated their reasoning for why their share of patronage and spoils should increase. Additionally, this set the stage for

¹⁴⁹ For Raymond L. Telles refer to Mario T. García, *The Making of a Mexican American Mayor: Raymond L. Telles* (El Paso, TX: Texas Western Press, 1998) or Mario T. García, "The Politics of Status: The Election of Raymond L. Telles as Mayor of El Paso, 1957" in *Mexican Americans: Leadership, Ideology, & Identity, 1930-1960* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).

¹⁵⁰ "Latin American Civic Political Club," *Latin Times*, April 17, 1964.

¹⁵¹ Councilman James Dent began his career as the councilman of the Fifth District, becoming East Chicago's first African American Councilman in 1935. He notably tackled the city's segregation of a pool (refer to "Negroes Fight Ban on Their Use of Pool," *The Hammond Times*, July 12, 1939. Dent died in office on April 14, 1972 and the city council voted for his wife, Mrs. Leculia Dent, to assume his position (as she had during his service in WWII (refer to "James Dent-Dead at 63," *The Times*, April 16, 1972, and "Mrs. Dent Sworn In," *The Times*, May 6, 1972). Posthumously, the federal government named Dent, along with eleven other public officials for misconduct by accepting bribes (refer to "Mayor Klen Says He Took No Bribe," *The Times*, September 10, 1972).

¹⁵² "Segregation Halts Work," *The Times*, May 28, 1968.

¹⁵³ "Integration Demanded," *The Times*, May 28, 1968.

competing interests within this community in the future. To garner more favor with this community, the Lake County Democrats hosted Henry Gonzalez, San Antonio's Congressman, in Gary. The event coordinated by a Mrs. Robert Vasquez slated Jesse Gomez, the only elected Latino, to do introductions.¹⁵⁴ Following through on a campaign promise, Nicosia appointed a Latino city engineer; however, in their study of East Chicago, Julian Samora and Richard Lamanna noted that the community was upset that Nicosia appointed a Dominican from New York instead of someone from the community that voted him into office.¹⁵⁵ It is unclear whether the East Chicagoans were unhappy that Nicosia appointed an outsider, or if the community resented a non-Mexican or non-Puerto Rican attaining a post that should belong to a resident. As the community continued to become involved, their political activity corresponded to a sense of entitlement to appointments within the machine and access to patronage.

The election of Gomez also led to other members of the community finding new ways to become involved and incorporate themselves into a growing Latina and Latino submachine in East Chicago. In 1965, nine Latinas formed The Gemini Club, their membership included Rosemary Gomez, the wife of Councilman Gomez.¹⁵⁶ Many of the charter members had direct connections to both municipal and union politics within the city and invited those acquaintances to their meetings. The women organized for two purposes: "participating in activities that promote community welfare and providing social activities for members and friends." One member noted that "there was no organization for Spanish-speaking women." In justifying their

¹⁵⁴ "County Demos Host Gonzalez, Henry Gonzales to Visit Indiana," *Latin Times*, October 2, 1964.

¹⁵⁵ Samora and Lamanna, "Mexican-Americans in a Midwest Metropolis," 95.

¹⁵⁶ "The Gemini Club, brief history," n.d. East Chicago History Room, folder "The Gemini Club." (East Chicago, IN). The other charter members included Pauline Mendoza, Margaret Rios, Clementina Perez, Ann Vasquez, Eva Arredondo, Matilda Flores, Dorothy Figueroa, and Carmen Romero.

organization, the founding Geminis proclaimed that: “We have furnished the sweat and backbreaking labor in industries. We have furnished the sons for the wars. Now it is time for us to reap the harvest of our toil and effort by stepping up into better jobs in clerical, administrative and government careers.”¹⁵⁷ Through fundraising and providing scholarships to young men and women, the Gemini Club sought to provide the skills and training necessary to make the younger generation qualified, particularly for municipal employment. Although the Geminis did not claim to be a partisan organization, they did devise programming to inform the community about political candidates, and to host them within their homes. The *Latin Times* questioned whether it was “possible that our own Latin community is strengthening better relations among its own people thru a common interest: civic and educational pride?”¹⁵⁸ The Geminis invited many politicians and municipal employees and appointees into their homes for public presentations and conversations about various issues.¹⁵⁹ Extending politics into the home allowed for a method of creating community and garnering support from the immediate neighbors who were invited to these presentations. Akin to how a political machine’s precinct committeeman knocked on doors, the Geminis opened their doors to create their own community, parallel to their husbands’ careers.

Notably, the *Latin Times* covered a single contentious story during Gomez’s first year in office. The paper reprinted a letter from Frank Velasquez about voting irregularities in the 38th

¹⁵⁷ “The Gemini Club, brief history,” n.d. East Chicago History Room, folder “The Gemini Club.” (East Chicago, IN)

¹⁵⁸ “Gemini Making Headway,” *Latin Times*, January 28, 1966.

¹⁵⁹ The first two presentations included a presentation from School Board Member Salvador Nunez, Jerry Barbar, director of Finances and Facilities for the School District, and Washington High School Dean of Boys Robert Segovia. See “Gemini Women Meet,” *Latin Times*, May 13, 1966 and “Gemini February Meeting,” *Latin Times*, February 4, 1966.

precinct of the sixth district during the May Primary. However, the request was to speak at the next common council meeting.¹⁶⁰ In their annual reflection about the community, *Latin Times* wrote a critical editorial, “Whose is the Blame?” about the Velasquez and Gomez conflict. The staff at the paper were conflicted about where they stood on the issue when summarizing their take. One unknown writer claimed that “by one Mexican accusing another Mexican he [Velasquez] was making the whole mexican [sic] community look bad. By the same token he [the writer] said that it was perfectly alright for an outsider of another nationality or race to accuse Gomez.”¹⁶¹ The rationale for this was that the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community could appear, even if only to an outsider, to be solidly behind Gomez. Inversely, the article’s other writer rested their defense on claims of respectability. Their response stated

For years and years when politicians have campaigned in the Harbor they have always complained it cost too much money. Meaning of course that our precincts were being run by crooks and that the workers were being paid off. Perhaps this situation was never true; still we have the stigma- and it has been hard to convince the people of our city that not all mexicans [sic] are crooks... It wasn’t Velasquez who hurt the image of the mexican [sic]- it wasn’t Velasquez who turned the voting machines to face the wall to enable others to spread the word about what goes on in the booths. If our “honest image was hurt it wasn’t Velasquez who did it.”¹⁶²

In trying to recognize their position within the city’s political arena, the writers noted the perception that their elected officials were “crooks.” Once again, the community made appeals and expressed their belief in good government, with responsive officials. Granted, “crooks” was an unjust label given the lack of elected or appointed representatives in the city’s history for the ethnic Mexican and recent Puerto Rican community before 1963. Although Gomez was indicted and stood trial, he was not charged with any wrongdoing.

¹⁶⁰ “Open Letter to George Cvitkovich on Outrageous Election Irregularities,” *Latin Times*, May 8, 1964.

¹⁶¹ “Whose is the Blame?” *Latin Times*, December 11, 1964.

¹⁶² “Whose is the Blame?” *Latin Times*, December 11, 1964.

However, the allegation of fraud divided even the normally cohesive unity of *Latin Times* staff. The conflict represented a broader schism for the community's future. If Velasquez's allegations were valid, would the unethical circumstances of gaining inclusion tarnish the possible accomplishments and success to come from gaining representation? And would taking an ethical, anti-machine approach only serve to hurt the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community by denying them access to patronage? The seeds planted decades ago by Maravilla and his colleagues had begun to bear fruit. Whether bitter or sweet, only time would tell.

Conclusion

Joseph Maravilla left the region before he could see the seeds he planted begin to bear fruit. In November of 1963, he and his family were awaiting their flight to the Panama Canal Zone, where he would begin work as the Safety Director for the Panama Canal Authority. As they waited in the terminal, their daughter Kathy remembered seeing her parents in tears.¹⁶³ They had just heard the news about John F. Kennedy's assassination in Dallas. An ardent supporter of Kennedy and a prominent member of the Viva Kennedy Movement in the Midwest, the political consciousness of Maravilla and the broader community had developed through their devotion to and support of Kennedy's campaign. Although his move to Panama meant that he was not present to witness the changes, Joseph Maravilla had helped facilitate a crucial change in how the Latinas and Latinos in East Chicago understood their relationship with the political machine, as well as their influence within it.

Maravilla and Jesse Gomez represented two different relationships with machine politics. Although each understood that playing the dutiful cog within the machine would grant them

¹⁶³ Interview with Kathy Wilczynski (Joseph Maravilla's daughter) by the author, February 2, 2018.

more power in their positions, their willingness to do so was different. Maravilla used the political machine to gain his office and then attempted to be anti-machine while in a position of power. He was unsuccessful. Jeorse used a new state law to give the mayor the power to appoint school trustees, thereby undoing a grassroots effort to separate the political machine and public schools. In doing so, the political machine gained new jobs for patronage as well as contracts through the school. In contrast to Maravilla, Gomez took a more moderate stance toward the machine, playing the game of loyalty and support to provide more opportunities for the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community. His election opened the flood gates for the residents of the neighborhood as their political awakening corresponded to new organizations that incorporated more than just veterans and their immediate families. This broader community engagement corresponded (ideally) to more votes and support for the machine. Likewise, this support meant more patronage jobs and access to middle-class, professional lifestyles for a greater share of the community than ever before. However, as the third chapter shows, this inclusion came with its own series of consequences and paradoxes about who was excluded when others found their seat at the table.

Eventually, in 1972, two politicians from the Latino community joined Gomez on the city council. Antonio Barreda and Isabelino Candelaria secured positions on East Chicago's City Council after the administration redistricted the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth District in 1971.¹⁶⁴ The redistricting left the predominantly Latino Sixth District without an incumbent. Eight individuals

¹⁶⁴ This redistricting left Jesse Gomez unopposed now as Fifth District Councilman and his colleague, George Cvitkovich (formerly Fifth District) now unopposed in the Fourth District. Both men won their contests with less than a fifteen hundred votes between the two. Refer to "E.C. Voting Returns Listed," *The Times*, September 21, 1971.

vied for the vacant seat, including Barreda and Candelaria. The election was a landslide in favor of Barreda, who secured the Sixth District with 1,010 votes to his nearest competitor, Teddie Warren's 299.¹⁶⁵ However, despite only gaining 143 votes, Candelaria attained a seat as Councilman-at-Large. *The Times* noted that Barreda, as well as two new councilmen, Roy E. Cooley (from the African American Third District) and Leo Marshall (First District), were members of the "political machine."¹⁶⁶ This association of all but one City Council member with the political machine provided critical context for understanding how Candelaria gained a council seat while winning a negligible amount of votes. Newly elected Mayor Robert Pastrick recommended George Lamb (incumbent Councilman-at-Large) to fill Pastrick's former position as City Controller. This promotion left Lamb's council seat vacant, and the City Council voted to fill it with Candelaria.¹⁶⁷ Despite not garnering a large number of votes Latinos made up a third of the council.¹⁶⁸

With public elected officials, the Latino community had a voting voice in city politics. These first elected officials represented the significant political power of the community when it mobilized to vote. However, visible changes to improve the conditions of the broader Latino community remained relatively scarce. The arrival of a new generation coming of age at the height of the Civil Rights Era presented a new avenue for discontent. As the third chapter

¹⁶⁵ "E.C. Council Balloting Unseats 2," *The Times*, September 29, 1971.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ "Pastrick Hoping to Restore Pride," *The Times*, January 3, 1972. Candelaria's appointment created the first minority voting bloc on the City Council in East Chicago's history with James Dent and Roy Cooley representing the African American population and Jesse Gomez, Antonio Barreda, and Isabelino Candelaria representing the Latina and Latino community.

¹⁶⁸ *The Times* ran stories that briefly sketched Barreda and Candelaria's backgrounds and aspirations while in office. Refer to: "Barreda: Cotton Picker to Councilman," December 6, 1971, and "Candelaria Lone Spokesman," January 17, 1972.

discusses, this new generation altered their methods and definitions of inclusion by advocating for broader and more confrontational methods of political involvement. The confrontational tactics popularized by civil rights groups in the 1970s forced the three Latino members of the East Chicago City Council to perform a balancing act and serve as negotiators between their constituents and colleagues.

Chapter Three: “Traditional passivity is a thing of the past.” Protest Politics confronts
Machine Politics in the Streets, 1968-1977

Arriving with his wife at their home in East Chicago on a chilly October night in 1970, Mayor John B. Nicosia found approximately two hundred members of the Latina and Latino community picketing his property. These men, women, and students marched two miles from the Union Benefica Mexicana, the community’s mutual-aid society, to chants of “We want the mayor” and “we want Baran out.”¹ Nicosia promptly turned to the squad of police officers blocking his driveway and told them to “get these pigs off my property.”² Dr. Nicosia then proceeded to use two police officers to help him elbow his way into his residence while simultaneously being barraged with questions and the din of the protestors. When approached by Victor Manuel Martinez of the Youth Advisory Board and bilingual paper the *Latin Times*, which organized the protest, Dr. Nicosia refused to talk about his controversial for Mitchell Baran, an Assistant Principal at Washington High School. The young photographer, Richard Regalado, attempted to capture the moment, outraging the mayor who then leapt at the youth. Nicosia shoved the camera into Regalado’s face, cutting his lip and knocking the cigarette from

¹ These shouts were about the alleged comments that Assistant Principal Mitchell Baran (Washington High School) referred to Mexicans as "lazy" and "ignorant." When two Youth Advisory Board members, Mrs. Susy Roque and Mrs. Irene Gonzales attempted to enroll Jesse Arredondo into Washington from out-of-town, they encountered "red-tape" when asked to provide guardianship papers. Assistant Principal Baran allegedly stated that the two women should not criticize the school's policies as "it was the Mexican-Americans who were ignorant and lazy."¹ According to Victor Manuel Martinez, the YAB immediately called for Baran’s resignation. The YAB led a group of about fifty Mexican-Americans to a school board meeting in response to Baran’s alleged comments. Refer to “Mexican American: Lazy, Ignorant,” *Latin Times*, September 25, 1970; “Latin Bias Protested,” *The Hammond Times*, September 29, 1970; “WHS Latins Boo Apology,” *The Hammond Times*, October 1, 1970; “Students Say: An Apology Not Enough,” *Latin Times*, October 2, 1970.

² “Mayor Explores at YAB Protest,” *The Hammond Times*, October 30, 1970.

his mouth.³ Members of the crowd rushed forward as the police officers pulled Nicosia off of Regalado and into the mayor's residence. Arriving at the scene, an additional twenty officers "restored order" and the protestors went to Our Lady of Guadalupe Church to plan their next steps. This discussion included filing a civil damage suit against the mayor. Regalado never filed charges.⁴

The public display and demand for action from the Latina and Latino community in the fall of 1970 offered Nicosia a new perspective on the very community that once proclaimed "Viva Nicosia" when the physician made his successful bid for mayor of East Chicago in 1963.⁵ Nicosia recognized the influence of the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community and played into this population accordingly, even announcing in 1968 that: "I urge all those concerned with human dignity and justice to support the boycott of California grapes. We cannot hope to eradicate poverty in this land while millions of our citizens are condemned to a life of misery and abject poverty. In America such poverty can no longer be tolerated."⁶ Nicosia's comment referred to the Delano grape strike, a labor strike fighting the exploitation of predominantly Filipino and ethnic Mexican farmworkers. Over its five-year duration, the strike grew to include boycotts, marches, and community organizing across the United States. Regrettably, like his

³ "Nicosia Hits Latin Youth as YAB Demonstrates," *The Hammond Times*, October 30, 1970. "Protests at Mayor's Home," *The Indianapolis Star*, October 30, 1970. "E. Chicago Mayor Attacks News Photog," *Chicago Tribune*, October 30, 1970.

⁴ "Attendance Off After Protest Demonstration," *The Vidette-Messenger of Porter County*, October 30, 1970.

⁵ "Viva Nicosia," *Latin Times*, March 15, 1963. The "John Nicosia Political Campaign Memorabilia" box within the East Chicago Room contained several green buttons of varying sizes. A red sombrero with "Viva Nicosia" decorated the button. The box also contained "Viva Nicosia" bumper stickers. Refer to "John Nicosia Political Campaign Memorabilia," in East Chicago Room at the East Chicago Public Library (Main Branch). The steering committee consisted of a dozen prominent members of the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican Community, such as Joseph and Frederick Maravilla, Joseph Porras, Henry T. Lopez, and Gus Figueroa.

⁶ "Boycott Grapes," *Latin Times*, October 4, 1968. This denunciation only appeared in the bilingual weekly paper, *Latin Times*, suggesting that it was not targeted at members of the broader community but instead a deliberate move to show support (and garner votes) among the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community.

predecessor, Mayor Walter Jeorse, Nicosia courted the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community and held ambivalent feelings about their inclusion in city's politics. However, the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican demonstrators' confrontation with Mayor Nicosia in 1970 reflected how they now saw themselves as politically important and capable of asserting their desire for equality. Whereas in previous years, the community organized in previous years for rallies in support of candidates and voting drives, members of the community now resorted to confrontational tactics against a clear and present entrenchment of corruption and discrimination.

Recognizing the limits of electoral politics, the community in the late 1960s and 1970s pushed for more militant and public displays of protest in East Chicago. Ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community members lamented the lack of support and improvements made to their sections of the city during a period of urban renewal. Particularly, as East Chicago's demographics changed, Latinos and African Americans constituted a greater portion of the city's population, while the ethnic European population declined. Activists pinpointed the corruption in city politics as a factor inhibiting their inclusion, charging that patronage meant protecting members of the machine even against claims of discrimination. The hidden costs of kickbacks for municipal employment barred working-class families from possible middle-class lifestyles.

Despite gaining elected representation in East Chicago, the broader ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community still encountered discrimination within the city. From the alleged comments to Baran to a lack of access to municipal employment, the community found their precarious position in the machine shaping their lived experiences. However, energized by the tactics and successes of the Civil Rights Movement, the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community found inspiration for new tactics to achieve their goals. Instead of relying on

participation in the political sphere a few times a year by voting for representation, ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican activists engaged in confrontational policies, such as walkouts and public, mass meetings. Organizations such as the Youth Advisory Board (YAB) of Indiana Harbor and the Concerned Latins Organization (CLO) popularized these methods in the 1970s. Although initial actions taken by the Youth Advisory Board represented a moment in the final months of 1970, they set a precedent for demands years later with the notorious CLO, which incorporated as the combination of various ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican groups across Lake County.⁷ Protests against discrimination by the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community began with discussions over a public recreational center. By targeting issues such as finances and transparency, these struggles over recreational and urban spaces became conversations about corruption, good government, and representation in the city.

Several key episodes helped define the years covered in this chapter. Latina and Latino protests in East Chicago began with marches against the placement of community centers in 1968, initiating the organization of the YAB. The continued calls for change saw the young, Democratic leader, Robert “Bob” Pastrick create a multiracial political machine and become the longest serving mayor in the city’s history. The Concerned Latins Organization (CLO) served as the primary vehicle for dissent against machine politics until it splintered in 1979. Through its advocacy, CLO articulated an anti-corruption stance that exposed practices while simultaneously pushing for the inclusion of ethnic Mexicans and Puerto Ricans by circumventing the often-unethical requirements of the political machine.

⁷ The Concerned Latins Organization incorporated on March 29, 1974, and included the Youth Advisory Board and thirty-four other organizations as incorporators, with Irene Gonzales of the YAB as the first president. Nicholas Kanellos Papers, CRA 273, Box Number 1. Calumet Regional Archives, Indiana University Northwest.

Outraged with the Political Machine: The Youth Advisory Board Takes to the Streets

Reflecting on his career, Antonio Barreda sat at a table in El Michoacano over breakfast. From the restaurant's front windows, Barreda could see decades of advocacy and hard-work surrounding Nunez Park in the Harbor neighborhood of East Chicago. From the Roberto Clemente Center to the historic Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, and even Nuñez Park in between were improvements made possible by Barreda and the community's public protests and expressed demands.⁸ Ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican members of the community leveraged the protests into political power and even positions within the city's administration. Through the outrage of a community, ethnic Mexicans and Puerto Ricans created space for themselves within the city's machine and pushed for new resources. According to Barreda, "It [the Walkout] was a genesis of our community. We evolved. People were coming out and saying Basta!"⁹

The denial of municipal services and improvements to the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican residents sparked further dissent. In 1968, the city of East Chicago received \$150,000 for the construction of three recreational neighborhood facilities. Jesse Gomez, the first ethnic Mexican councilman in East Chicago, criticized the location of the center for the Harbor region as it would not be accessible to the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican residents. The city council responded that the federal government's nonnegotiable criteria determined the locations.¹⁰ The

⁸ The Roberto Clemente Center was named in honor of the baseball player after his death delivering aid to the Puerto Rico. The recreation center became the first in the primarily ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican neighborhood. The naming of the center after a Puerto Rican acknowledged their growing presence in the community. Our Lady of Guadalupe Church became the first ethnic Mexican parish in the neighborhood, founded by the organizing effort of Cristeros in the 1920s.

⁹ Interview with Antonio Barreda by author. September 4, 2020.

¹⁰ "Federal Funding Sought," *The Times*, October 23, 1968.

ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican residents, outraged with the lack of progress made on their behalf, were not as willing to accept the regulations as an answer.

The continued denial of municipal services and improvements to the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican residents, such as the 1968 recreational center episode, facilitated new changes in community organizing. In July of 1970, several organizations including the Brown Berets, Latin Kings, Boy Scouts, and the Knights of the Altar, formed the Youth Advisory Board (YAB).¹¹ When they organized, the YAB issued six organizational goals, half of which dealt with providing the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community a recreation center. Overall, the organization desired "to help them [the youth] develop into a law abiding citizen of their immediate community."¹² With their hopes set on a recreational center, the YAB prepared for their first move in securing a facility. Marching from across town, a group of eighty-five members of the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community "invaded" city hall demanding an audience with Mayor Nicosia. The group, consisting of roughly thirty children, arrived at the building to highlight the plight for a recreational center. YAB spokesman, Antonio Barreda claimed that "we have asked and tried to see the mayor...He's too busy, out of town or ill. We're asking for a temporary center, but we want action now. We have tried, we have thought. We have done everything we could. Now we have a demonstration the way our government lets us."¹³ The march on city hall earned YAB members a private meeting with City Attorney Jay Given, Chief of Detectives Mike Arredondo, Division Commander Robert Stiglich, and Nicosia's

¹¹ "Form Youth Advisory Board," *Latin Times*, July 3, 1970. The membership consisted of twenty-eight individuals, eight women, and twenty men. *Latin Times* printed their membership list in the October 9, 1970 issue.

¹² "Form Youth Advisory Board," *Latin Times*, July 3, 1970.

¹³ "Latins Invade City Hall," *The Times*, August 9, 1970.

administrative assistant Peter Skafish. During this meeting, the city offered three alternative sites for the recreational center. The YAB consented to leave the project in the city's hands after providing their feedback.¹⁴ Utilizing a new tactic of marching and sitting-in, YAB managed to procure the active involvement of the city in building a recreation center. The administration's consent to work toward this goal seemingly pacified the group.

However, the city's administration delayed any action by not effectively communicating with the YAB, or by not providing a quorum of the city council at meetings. Gomez, the only Latino councilman, played a pivotal role as a negotiator between the city administration and protestors. Gomez secured a meeting between the City Council and YAB in November 1970. Only three other members of the council attended the meeting where over one hundred individuals presented "sheaf of petitions" concerning the issue in their community.¹⁵ Aside from taking the petition, the meeting could not take place due to the lack of quorum. The next week, the council meeting met quorum and allowed members of the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community to air their grievances. Individuals questioned why the city built a recreation center in the African-American neighborhood but not the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican in the Sixth District. These same individuals claimed, despite protests from both James Dent and James Thomas (the two African-American councilmen) that African-American children beat the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican ones that tried to use that facility.¹⁶ The council promised to look into these issues, as well as the unresolved conflict between Mayor Nicosia and the YAB over the reinstatement of Washington High School Assistant Principal Mitchell Baran.

¹⁴ "E.C. Agrees to Youth Center Request," *The Times*, August 13, 1970.

¹⁵ "Council Session Called on E.C. Latin Problems," *The Times*, November 12, 1970.

¹⁶ "Twin City Latins Gain Pledge," *The Times*, November 17, 1960.

The Baran Incident, The Washington High School Walkout, and Protest Politics

The arrival of the Arredondo family's children from Texas to the Harbor neighborhood of East Chicago marked the beginning of a push by the community for representation and inclusion. In 1970, when the Arredondo family decided to move to Indiana Harbor from Texas, they sent their two teenage sons ahead of them. Through Our Lady of Guadalupe, Susan Roque and Irene Gonzalez volunteered to serve as the children's guardians until their parents arrived.¹⁷ Roque and Gonzalez worked to enroll the Arredondo boys at their schools. At Washington High School, Assistant Principal Mitchell Baran refused to enroll one of the children on the basis that their enrollment papers were not correct. During the exchange, Baran allegedly referred to Mexicans as "ignorant and lazy." Originally covered in *Latin Times*, the newspaper staff argued that "The Mexican American people should demand from the School Board that they fire Mr. Baran and replace him with a Latin American teacher able to understand the problems of our youth."¹⁸

The alleged comments sparked outrage among students and the community alike. A freshman at Washington High School at the time, Gerry Magallan recalled overhearing his older sister and her friend talking about the comment on their walk home from school. The two women mentioned some confusion over what was said and who said it; however, Magallan recalled that they said "We are going to get this straightened out."¹⁹ Some students, like Sophomore Charles Johnson remembered feelings of uncertainty and confusion. According to Johnson, "We knew him [Jesse], they [Jesse and Gerry] had just got here from Texas, we accepted them into our

¹⁷ Interview with Antonio Barreda by author. September 4, 2020.

¹⁸ "Mexican Americans: Lazy, Ignorant," *Latin Times*, September 25, 1970.

¹⁹ Interview with Gerry Magallan by author. September 2, 2020.

group. Jesse was our age and Gerry a little bit younger. It [the alleged comment] was like hitting home. These were kids that we knew. Why would you keep them from enrolling?”²⁰

The tactic of the walkout was not new to the region nor the Civil Rights Era. In the 1940s, students at Froebel High School in Gary, Indiana, utilized the walkout to protest integration.²¹ However, in the 1960s the tactic became popularized during the East Los Angeles blowouts of 1968 when thousands of students walked out of their classrooms to protest educational discrimination and systemic hinderances to Chicano communities. After that, the tactic became repeated in predominantly ethnic Mexican communities across the United States. The walkouts granted youth an opportunity to advocate for change and insert themselves in conversations about equality and justice, even if they were ineligible to vote.²²

From the basement of Our Lady of Guadalupe, community members and students planned their action for October 2, 1970. *The Times* reported that the previous Thursday night, 250 community members met at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church where the decision to walkout originated.²³ Julie Cordova, a Freshman in 1970 at Washington, did not recall who started the talk about the walkout. However, she recalled that “I just remember everybody was talking about it [the walkout]... And, and of course you told everybody else too, you know? This has

²⁰ Interview with Charles Johnson by author. August 30, 2020.

²¹ “Gary School Pupil Strike Spreads: To Hire Attorney,” *The Hammond Times*, September 20, 1945 and “Striking Students Face Punishment,” *Journal and Courier*, September 4, 1947.

²² Mario T. García and Sal Castro, *Blowout! Sal Castro and the Chicano Struggle for Educational Justice* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001) and Dolores Delgado Bernal, “Grassroots Leadership Reconceptualized: Chicana Oral Histories and the 1968 East Los Angeles School Blowouts,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 19 (2): 113-142.

²³ “600 Take a Walk,” *The Times*, October 2, 1970.

happened. This is what we're doing."²⁴ Johnson noted that "The word for the walkout just got passed around" primarily by word of mouth.²⁵

On the morning of October 2, the students put their plan into action. When the first period bell rang, approximately six hundred students walked out of their classrooms to the front of Washington High School. Sophomore Charles Johnson recalled in 2020, "You would think it was only Latinos. But Black and White students walked out too."²⁶ The crowd of protestors included not only ethnic Mexicans and Puerto Ricans, but African American and ethnic European students as well. As Johnson noted, in the Harbor, there were a lot of different groups represented. This meant that you would have socialized or had classes with a lot of different people from the neighborhood, "the ones insulted might have been your friends and you wanted to support them."²⁷ Approximately six hundred of 1,700 students walked out of Washington.²⁸

Not all students walked out of their classrooms on October 2. Magallan recalled, "I got chicken cause [sic] I would be the only Freshman."²⁹ However, he remembered the protesters being so loud that even when the teacher closed the windows, they could still be heard from inside the classroom.³⁰ Another student, Morry Barak, recalled in 2020 that the protest "was much ado about nothing" and said that he did not walk out.³¹ However, the papers also noted that the school bells "failed to work," which added to the confusion and was likely the reason that

²⁴ Interview with Julie Cordova by author. September 10, 2020.

²⁵ Interview with Charles Johnson by author. August 30, 2020.

²⁶ Interview with Charles Johnson by author. August 30, 2020.

²⁷ Interview with Charles Johnson by author. August 30, 2020.

²⁸ "600 Take a Walk," *The Times*, October 2, 1970.

²⁹ Interview with Gerry Magallan by author. September 2, 2020.

³⁰ Interview with Gerry Magallan by author. September 2, 2020.

³¹ Interview with Morry Barak by author. September 9, 2020.

some students did not walk out.³² Johnson stated, “They [the administration and school] threatened who they could. I saw someone mentioned their coach not letting them. I think that the Freshmen, because they were new, were a group that they thought they could scare.”³³

In addition to the walkout and confrontation between Mayor Nicosia and the YAB on his yard, the protests against Baran continued with unprecedented tactics. After a brief suspension, the school board reinstated Baran on October 29th.³⁴ In response to his reinstatement, the newspapers carried stories about the "brown flu." YAB had asked parents to call the school and say that their children were sick, as a boycott of Washington High. On the first day of the "brown-flu," 342 students called in sick, which was double the typical absence rate of 150 students of the 1,732 enrollment.³⁵ The YAB halted the “boycott” the next day stating that the parents and adults would take over the responsibility of ousting Baran.³⁶

Some of the community’s leaders from the veteran community utilized newspapers to voice their support of the YAB and walkouts in 1970. Abe Morales, a member of the GI Forum and LAV, wrote a letter to the editor expressing his support for YAB. He claimed that “as individuals we have to become more involved in school affairs and show that we are really united and that the stereo typed traditional passivity is a thing of the past!”³⁷ The YAB understood that their unprecedented tactics also created anxiety and disdain in the community. In an editorial for the *Latin Times*, the YAB stated, “what we did was in fact the essence of a

³² “600 Take a Walk,” *The Times*, October 2, 1970.

³³ Interview with Charles Johnson by author. August 30, 2020.

³⁴ “Baran Restored to Post,” *The Times*, October 29, 1970.

³⁵ “Brown Flu’ Hits E.C.,” *The Times*, November 2, 1970.

³⁶ “Latins Halt Boycott,” *The Times*, November 3, 1970.

³⁷ “Letter to the Editor,” October 1970. Abe Morales Papers, CRA 260, Box Number 1. Calumet Regional Archives, Indiana University Northwest.

democratic process, the voice of the people making itself heard and felt upon our public servants.”³⁸ The YAB also issued a letter to the editor in *The Times*, the main newspaper in the region. The letter, entitled “Appeal,” listed the woes of the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community both in East Chicago and locally. These grievances included the Baran incident, lack of representation in the city workforce, and the corrupting influences of machine politics that restricted ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican participation in East Chicago.³⁹ In supporting these public protests and displays of dissatisfaction with the municipal government, the YAB articulated not only their anti-corruption principles but attempted to gain inclusion by circumventing the usual machine politics of rewards and patronage in election years.

Despite the success of the walkout, members of the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community criticized the actions encouraged by YAB and taken by the student body. Recalling the Baran incident, Frederick Maravilla (formerly of the LAV) referred to it as “a big commotion” the likes of which “had never happened before” in the community.⁴⁰ Maravilla stated that the issue occurred because Baran said that “you people don't understand,” when the Assistant Principal was trying to explain why the student from outside of the district could not enroll at Washington High School without becoming a ward.⁴¹ According to Maravilla, a local “Mexican populist saw it as discrimination and many students of Mexican extraction had a walkout.” However, the “protestors were in the wrong because the child belonged in the Gary

³⁸ “Youth Advisory Board,” *Latin Times*, October 9, 1970.

³⁹ “Appeal,” *The Times*, November 8, 1970.

⁴⁰ Interview with Frederick Maravilla by the author, March 19, 2018. Maravilla did note that in the late 1940s or early 1950s, African American students at Washington High School protested against the segregated swimming pool. The school city resolved this issue by turning the swimming pool into a woman’s gym. The district did not have a school pool until the construction of Central High School in 1986.

⁴¹ Interview with Frederick Maravilla by the author, March 19, 2018.

school system.”⁴² Maravilla was not the only member of the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community critical of the walkouts. In a letter to *The Times*, “Carl” of East Chicago proclaimed his identity, “I’m me! I’m Mexican-American! I disagree with those who are blowing up this situation with Washington High School Principal Mitchell Baran.”⁴³ Carl then turned his attention to the leadership of the YAB claiming that “The people behind this have used the students and haven’t given them any consideration. Too many of the students are angry when not all the facts are known.”⁴⁴

Several other members of the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican population across Lake County weighed in on the issue, such as Martin Reyes of Highland. Reyes’s middle-ground approach stated that:

I would like to caution all Mexican-Americans not to hold any animosity to the people of Mr. Baran’s ethnic background because Mr. Baran’s opinion is indeed in the minority. I also voice a negative opinion on irresponsible attitudes leaning toward a violence [sic] course of action. Violence would indeed prove one allegation: That we are ignorant. Reasoning and ironing out our grievances in a peaceful manner is the key to intellectual acceptance. If in truth Mr. Baran’s quotation is fact, a pox on him every time he consumes an enchilada. If the opposite is true, bon appetite!⁴⁵

The variety of opinions, published in both newspapers, highlight that the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community remained ambivalent about these new tactics.

Members of the community even took to the radio to voice their support or disdain for the protests. Magallan remembered dialing in to the station to hear some callers refer to Mexicans as “lazy.”⁴⁶ The radio station WJOB covered the protest on the segment “Party Line.” According to

⁴² Interview with Frederick Maravilla by the author, March 19, 2018.

⁴³ “Await Facts,” *The Times*, October 5, 1970.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ “In Minority,” *The Times*, October 7, 1970.

⁴⁶ Interview with Gerry Magallan by author. September 2, 1970.

Victor Manuel Martinez, an editor for *Latin Times*, the segment's goals were to "incite a revolution by making Latins angry at all the anglos [sic]" and "to make others hate Mexican American and Puerto Rican people."⁴⁷ Martinez responded to the segment's labeling of him as a "bad leader" and exclaimed that the anonymous callers to the show "do not have the guts to face the public opinion. They also could be people paid by some others who are against our movement."⁴⁸

Although the Baran incident and push for a recreational center proved a polarizing defeat, the tactics allowed the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community direct access to East Chicago's political officials. In a scathing opinion piece, Richard Gomez of the YAB demanded that the community "Fight Corruption With Votes!"⁴⁹ After spending the remainder of 1970 considering the demands from the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican protestors, the city council ultimately decided that they could do nothing. According to their decision, only the school board could fire Baran and federal regulations for the grant funds restricted the location of the recreation center.⁵⁰ However, the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community did not allow this defeat to end their protests. Victor Manuel Martinez noted "Alinsky Forces in the Area," paving the way for a renewed confrontation with city hall. Citing the aftermath of the Baran incident and protest on Nicosia's lawn, Martinez claimed that "politicians fear Saul Alinsky not because he might be a communist but because he teaches the citizens how to fight political corruption."⁵¹ Martinez and dozens of ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican leaders in Northwest Indiana would

⁴⁷ "Party Line Pushing for a Revolution...?," *Latin Times*, October 16, 1970.

⁴⁸ "Party Line Pushing for a Revolution...?," *Latin Times*, October 16, 1970.

⁴⁹ "Fight Corruption With Votes," *Latin Times*, December 4, 1970.

⁵⁰ "Council Extends Sympathies To Complaining E.C. Latins," *The Times*, December 15, 1970.

⁵¹ "Alinsky Forces in Area," *Latin Times*, December 4, 1970.

embrace the teachings of Alinsky in furthering their confrontational tactics against corruption in Northwest Indiana.

The Concerned Latins Organization, Alinskyism, and Confronting Corruption

The Concerned Latins Organization (CLO) continued the confrontational tactics of the Youth Advisory Board, which formed one of the central organizations in the coalition during the 1970s. Although the *Latin Times* popularized CLO's tactics and *The Times* often demonized them, members remained entrenched in their Alinsky training.⁵² CLO served as an opportunity for dozens of different ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican-interest groups in Northwest Indiana to unite under one umbrella for thirty-five different civic, religious, and political organizations within Northwest Indiana.⁵³ CLO "directed the energies of its members towards alleviating discrimination and oppression of Latins and others in three major areas: Employment, Housing, and Education."⁵⁴ Utilizing training they received from members of the Alinsky Institute (Industrial Areas Foundation), members of CLO engaged in confrontational tactics with local, state, and federal government officials to attain their objectives. In articulating their anti-discriminatory stances, CLO activists highlighted the exclusionary practices of an ethnic European machine in a majority-minority city. Denied access to municipal employment, Latinas, Latinos, and Black residents blamed policies, such as paying expensive fees and even more

⁵² The Concerned Latins Organization and the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), or Alinsky Institute, entered into a contractual obligation whereby CLO paid the institute for training and assistance from an organizer. IAF sent Ernesto Cortes and Peter Martinez as organizers to CLO for year-long training in exchange for \$3,000 later raised to \$8,000 with subsequent contracts. Refer to "Letter of Agreement," July 28, 1973. Industrial Areas Foundation records, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Illinois at Chicago, Box 55 Folder 743.

⁵³ "Articles of Incorporation of Concerned Latins Organization, INC.," March 29, 1974. Nicholas Kanellos Papers, CRA 273, Box Number 1. Calumet Regional Archives, Indiana University Northwest.

⁵⁴ "A History of the Concerned Latins," n.d. Nicholas Kanellos Papers, CRA 273, Box Number 1. Calumet Regional Archives, Indiana University Northwest.

illegal practices like ghost payrolling. Carmelo Melendez, a Puerto Rican member of CLO and former co-chairman, stated a central belief that “the focus of an action is to get a reaction.”⁵⁵ CLO indeed received reactions to their tactics, including public protests, such as attending public meetings en mass, and block-by-block organizing.

Recognizing that local politics consisted of ties between commerce, the city government, and education, CLO “ping-ponged,” between these fields, hitting one after another.⁵⁶ One such case involved the First National Bank in East Chicago where members of CLO went to each teller window with a bag of pennies and had the tellers count the sum manually.⁵⁷ In response to the protests, First National Bank filed a restraining order against several members of CLO, which the bank later claimed these members violated by visiting the bank individually, likely for personal business.⁵⁸ In an attempt to gain an affirmative action plan for the city, based on a ratio of “4:4:1 (Latin-black-white)” CLO protested at Lewin’s Clothing Store. The members entered the store demanded the business’s support where E.C. fireman and CLO member, Edward Egipciaco allegedly commented that “there would be a fire sale next week.”⁵⁹ Gomez defended Egipciaco referring to the claim as a “fabricated lie.”⁶⁰ Egipciaco received six-months’ probation, which led him to ask: “Am I guilty because I’m involved in the civil rights movement or am I guilty because I refused to become property of the city?”⁶¹ Egipciaco’s comment alluded

⁵⁵ Interview with Carmelo Melendez by the author, February 2, 2018.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ “Latins Ready to go to Jail,” *Latin Times*, August 3, 1973.

⁵⁹ “Racial Quota Urged,” *The Times*, July 12, 1973.

⁶⁰ Ibid. The *Latin Times*’ coverage added to Gomez’s quote with “a conspiracy to discredit Egipciaco for his involvement in the struggle for the recognition of the civil rights of Latin people.” Refer to “Harbor Whispers,” *Latin Times*, July 20, 1973.

⁶¹ “Egipciaco on Probation?” *Latin Times*, November 2, 1973.

to the inability of city employees to make their own choices, instead becoming “property” to the city.

CLO members attended public council meetings en masse. Instead of following the traditional proceedings of waiting to be recognized to speak, CLO members developed their plan. CLO member and steelworker David Castro Sr. recalled these tactics stating that:

We had a prepared text and three or four people ready to read it. They wouldn't recognize us so one guy stood up and started reading as loud as he could. A cop came over and escorted him out. Another person started where he left and he was escorted out. I got up and I got escorted out. When we got outside, we saw that they had a line of police cars directing us out of town.⁶²

Members frequently broke the conventional protocol of these proceedings as a way of ensuring that they received time to spread their message or share their opinion. Frequent headlines in *The Times* utilized terms such as “control” and “angry” when discussing CLO’s behavior during public meetings. When protesting the exorbitant physical exam fee for employment in East Chicago's Fire Department, CLO member John Gomez claimed: "somebody must be getting a kickback." City Attorney Given, a frequent target for CLO comments, responded that "I am tired of your smart ass remarks..."⁶³ The situation between CLO members and the city officials at meetings became so hectic that the city installed a “protective guardrail.”⁶⁴ The guardrail separated the representatives from their constituents, furthering the inclusion/exclusion of the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community. This added protection and the intensity of council meetings were results of CLO’s organizing abilities.

⁶² Interview with David Castro Sr., *Steel Shavings*, vol. 13 (1987) courtesy of David Castro Jr. Private Collection.

⁶³ “I Am Tired of Your Smart Ass Remarks,” *Latin Times*, August 10, 1973.

⁶⁴ “Police Oust Angry Latins,” *The Times*, July 9, 1974. Refer to Appendix 3.



"Police Oust Angry Latins," *The Times*, July 9, 1974.

CLO's greatest strength remained its organizing of the community. Castro noted that "to organize blocks you go door-to-door, talk to the residents, have house meetings, and get an idea what the problems are. Small things like a street light, a stop sign, curbs, garbage cans..."⁶⁵ This process of organizing allowed a small contingent of the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community to become representative of a diverse population. Melendez noted that "some were legal, some illegal, some didn't want to risk deportation..."⁶⁶ Typically, the "public, political sphere" reserved block-by-block organizing for encouraging individuals to vote for a candidate.

⁶⁵ Interview with David Castro Sr., *Steel Shavings*, vol. 13 (1987) courtesy of David Castro Jr. Private Collection.

⁶⁶ Interview with Carmelo Melendez by the author, February 2, 2018.

CLO altered this tactic to learn about the needs of the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community and include them in the public discourse.

The Concerned Latins Organization was dedicated to three major issues affecting the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican population in the region: education, housing (particularly the process of urban renewal), and employment.⁶⁷ Like many movements of the 1960s and 1970s, the CLO framed these issues in the terms of “justice and equality.”⁶⁸ Gordon Mantler noted that the rhetorical use of “justice” and “poverty” during the 1960s and 1970s offered working class communities an “effective way to organize... precisely because it had so many definitions.”⁶⁹ In addition, however, the CLO and its activism also offer an opportunity to explore how civil rights organizations engaged with an anti-corruption principle of transparency. Although Rich Gomez claimed in 1970 that voting could alleviate corruption, he and his fellow CLO members realized that protests and the subsequent public pressure could also prove as beneficial. In election years, voting became a way to articulate their power and influence; in off-years protests and visible forms of dissent became ways to pressure politicians and air grievances. Traditionally seen as civil rights struggles, these struggles highlighted a non-transparent municipal government that excluded these communities.

Education

⁶⁷ Interview with David Castro Sr., *Steel Shavings: Latinos in the Calumet Region*, vol. 13 (1987) courtesy of David Castro Jr. Private Collection.

⁶⁸ “Historical Information, Concerned Latins Organization of Lake County,” n.d. NKP, CRA 273, Box Number 1, File 7.

⁶⁹ Gordon K. Mantler, *Power to the Poor: Black-Brown Coalition & the Fight for Economic Justice, 1960-1974*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 2.

Active in educational issues since the alleged comments by Baran in 1970, many members of the CLO expressed a concern to continue their activism pertaining to education in East Chicago and neighboring Gary. Shortly after the CLO incorporated, Baran did leave Washington High School and the East Chicago School Board replaced him with an internal hire from their school and coaching staff, Mexican-American, Joseph Flores.⁷⁰ However, the activists from CLO did not recognize the replacement of Baran with Flores as a complete victory. During the 1970s, CLO members explored the educational disparities between the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican students, as compared to the rest of the student body. Through this research, they articulated demands for support for bilingual teaching aides, an extension of the bilingual program, and more “Latin” staff and teachers. In their pursuit of these changes, the CLO members highlighted the nefarious dealings of the Pastrick administration in inflated expenditures for administration staff as well as contracts awarded to the construction of the Washington Elementary School. In their push for transparency from the administration, members of CLO demanded that the Pastrick administration release the “Nicholson Report,” a study conducted by Purdue University Professor of Educational Administration, Everett W. Nicholson. The \$5,000 report included a study of the school city’s buildings and administration for the purpose of recommending changes to create a more efficient district.⁷¹

An important component of CLO activism became researching the issue at hand. An educational committee, steered by Indiana University Northwest Professor Nicolás Kanellos, worked to collect regional data about the “Spanish Americans” in the region as well as district

⁷⁰ “Baran Leaves Washington,” *Latin Times*, June 29, 1973.

⁷¹ “E.C. Shuffles School Posts,” *The Times*, June 26, 1973.

data from East Chicago and Gary. These data sets formed a crucial element of their educational activism, as well as provided data about housing and employment. Through the U.S. Department of Labor's report "Spanish Americans in North Central Region V: A Summary," Dr. Kanellos and his peers discovered the disparities for this demographic in the Chicago standard metropolitan statistical area (SMSA). Aside from noting that the Chicago-Gary SMSA possessed 50.9 percent of the entire region's "Spanish American" population, the report showed that this same group possessed the lowest average incomes, higher unemployment, and among the lowest educational levels, ranging from 9.4 years for men and 9 years for women over the age of twenty-five.⁷²

The reports from the School City of East Chicago offered a more detailed snapshot of the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican students from 1972. Within a district-wide report as well as fourteen individual reports covering each of the schools in the district, CLO members noticed some crucial disparities. As the district self-reported, "Spanish Surnamed" students comprised the largest demographic in the district (3,712 students) followed by African American students (3,688) and White (2,166).⁷³ CLO compiled data into a "Fact Sheet on East Chicago, Indiana" which detailed that "Mexican American, Puerto Rican and Black children are as much as 2 years behind Anglo classmates on the reading portion of the SAT." The fact sheet also claimed approximately 70% of Spanish surnamed students came from a home where Spanish was a primary language for at least one parent. Activists also detailed the educational policies that

⁷² "Spanish Americans in North Central Region V: A Summary," 1972. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. NKP at Calumet Regional Archive.

⁷³ "Elementary and Secondary School Civil Rights Survey, School City of East Chicago, November 6, 1972." In NKP at Calumet Regional Archive.

discriminated against the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican children. The district's use of an ability and track system to determine course placement relied on teacher recommendation and SAT reading scores at higher levels. The difficulty of the curriculum led to fewer minority students in higher-level courses. Secondly, the report highlighted that 85% of students in remedial courses were minority students. CLO claimed that this was because the test was administered by the only psychometrist, an Anglo, and the tests were only given in English.⁷⁴

In East Chicago, several bilingual teaching aides feared that the school city would eliminate the Bilingual-Bicultural Program, supervised by Dr. Robert Comer.⁷⁵ Under Section XI of the 1972 "Elementary and Secondary School Civil Rights Survey," the district responded that no teachers in the system teach any subject, outside of foreign languages, in any other language but English. Nor were any materials in any other language but English.⁷⁶ Within his weekly bilingual column in the English newspaper, *The Times*, CLO co-chair Carmelo Melendez noted that in 1973, there were a few instructors for a bilingual program at the elementary school level. However, this included one instructor for each of the schools.⁷⁷ In May of 1973, Melendez covered the formation of the United Latin Teachers' Aides of East Chicago (ULTAEC). Amid the conversations about cutting the program, ULTAEC revealed their precarious employment in the district. Melendez reported that without proper support for the aides, the dropout rate for "Latin" children would remain relatively high (79% in 1973). ULTAEC demanded a "career

⁷⁴ "Fact Sheet of East Chicago, Indiana," In NKP at Calumet Regional Archive.

⁷⁵ "Harbor Whispers," *Latin Times*, April 20, 1973.

⁷⁶ "Elementary and Secondary School Civil Rights Survey, School City of East Chicago, November 6, 1972." In NKP at Calumet Regional Archive.

⁷⁷ "Noticias Espanol," *The Times*, April 22, 1973.

ladder” that established their role in the school system, access to benefits, such as sick pay as they received no pay if they missed work.⁷⁸

Members of the CLO offered several possible solutions to assist the predominantly ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community. At a school board meeting, co-chairman Irene Gonzalez claimed that the board discriminated against the school-aged children of the community. Within the petition to the board, the CLO laid out several demands. These demands included that: the system extend its bilingual program to McKinley and Franklin Elementary Schools; hiring of more “Latin teachers and more Latin counselors;” establish a paraprofessional program; and an available recreational center in the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican neighborhoods open after school hours. Gonzalez and fellow activists demanded that the board placed them on the agenda, a motion that Richard Zuniga supported. Zuniga stated that “I think these people should be heard. I think we’re doing these people an injustice.”⁷⁹ None of Zuniga’s colleagues provided the second to his motion. The approximately twenty CLO members chanted over the meeting “Second the motion” and “we want justice.” However, when the board attempted to ignore the group and continue the meeting, members of CLO approached the board’s seats and grabbed the microphones. This action prompted Board President Thad Krajewski to adjourn the meeting.⁸⁰

Later that week, the English language paper, *The Times*, referred to the confrontation as “a Mexican standoff.”⁸¹ Although the CLO prevented the meeting from occurring, they did not appear on the agenda. Likewise, the board did not want CLO on the agenda but was unable to

⁷⁸ “Noticias Espanol,” *The Times*, May 13, 1973.

⁷⁹ “Angry Latins Disrupt E.C. School Session,” *The Times*, January 22, 1974.

⁸⁰ “Session Disrupted,” *The Times*, January 22, 1974.

⁸¹ “School board rebuffs,” *The Times*, January 24, 1974.

complete their other points. The newspaper turned to noting the bureaucratic obstacles between the two groups, notably that “Perhaps the board would be more sympathetic if its members were directly responsive to the citizenry. They might be more responsive if they were elected. Legal machinery exists for injecting that responsiveness.”⁸² The bilingual newspaper, *Latin Times*, claimed that the demands seemed fair given the demographic breakdown: a third White, a third Black, and a third Latino. According to a blurb in the paper, “Many Latins are not aware of that ratio and when they learn of it, it is a galling experience- that one item is enough to make a hot head of any concerned citizen.”⁸³

Despite these early standoffs, little changed between the school board, Superintendent Robert Krajewski, and the CLO, aside from the pressure placed on the administrative school board. In the summer of 1974, the CLO charged the school board with “insensitivity toward the Latin community.”⁸⁴ Co-chairman Carmelo Melendez referred to the practice of placing immigrant children into special education courses instead of bilingual courses as “education assassination.”⁸⁵ The groups demands went further by requesting that the board fire teachers that use their classroom instruction period “having coffee breaks and reading magazines or newspapers.”⁸⁶ The CLO and nearly 150 supporters argued for more teachers and counselors, especially since the community was a third “Latin.” In the exchange, Supt. Krajewski referred to the children as “language handicapped” and a parent rushed toward the board to grab him. CLO members restrained the parent and the board called for police, which were not used. In response

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ *Latin Times*, January 25, 1974.

⁸⁴ “Latins Accuse E.C. Schools: ‘Insensitive’,” *The Times*, June 4, 1974.

⁸⁵ “Latins Accuse E.C. Schools: ‘Insensitive’,” *The Times*, June 4, 1974 and “Education Assassination,” *Latin Times*, June 7, 1974.

⁸⁶ “Education Assassination,” *Latin Times*, June 7, 1974.

to the demands of the increased crowd of community members, Krajewski and the board took the demands under consideration and said that they were in the process of hiring one more teacher and the district already had one “Latin” counselor.⁸⁷ Focusing on representation in education counseling, CLO activists articulated their demands within the language of political machines and patronage. For CLO, the obstacles that Latinas and Latinos faced in the school district stemmed from the lack of representation of this community in counseling positions.

The CLO managed to incorporate community members as a part of their demonstrations against the various members of the district’s administration and the school board. As accomplices, the parents provided bodies to aid the CLO as a reliable representative body. The inclusion of these parents also added to the pressure placed on the board for possible solutions and as dissenters against policies they saw as detrimental to their children’s’ education. When the school board planned to defund the fledgling bilingual program, parents demanded that the district reduce staff. The parents and CLO activists also demanded that the administration release “The Nicholson Report” from 1972, which still had not been made public by 1975.⁸⁸

By targeting the lack of transparency concerning school finances, CLO even garnered broader interracial community support. During the planning for constructing Washington Elementary School, community members targeted both the price for the school’s construction and the unavailable “Nicholson Report.” A letter to the editor by East Chicagoan Louis Terme proclaimed that by withholding the \$5,000 report, paid by taxpayers Superintendent Krajewski “is not a friend of the East Chicago taxpayers.”⁸⁹ During the calls for a new elementary school,

⁸⁷ “Latins Accuse E.C. Schools: ‘Insensitive’,” *The Times*, June 4, 1974.

⁸⁸ “Parents: Reduce Staff To Fund Bilingual Course,” August 29, 1975.

⁸⁹ “Withheld report,” *The Times*, February 22, 1973.

the CLO joined at hearings and public meetings with a broad coalition of racial, political, and interfaith groups to protest what they viewed as untransparent and exorbitant changes to their built environment. In the winter of 1974, the East Chicago School Board held a hearing about the proposed construction a \$14 million Washington Elementary School. Held in the auditorium of Washington High School, over two hundred residents came to voice their concerns and express their frustration with what they viewed as an exorbitant price tag. In the newspaper coverage, a resident is seen with a sign “Mayor Pastrick’s \$14 Million Swindle.”⁹⁰ Many of the residents did not like that the city would lease-purchase the school. As *The Times* reported, “For the many persons present who had the night before chastised the East Chicago Park Board for allegedly awarding an illegal contract, the hearing became more than just a school issue. It was an attack on the political system.”⁹¹ The city awarded a park contract, valued at \$5.1 million to Lawrence Bursten and Sol Seidel of Milwaukee, without bidding, on November 12, 1974. The city offered the Washington Elementary school contract to these same two contractors. This sparked the formation of the short-lived organization, The Coalition of Concerned Citizens, which included the CLO, the NAACP, the Northern Indiana Political Action Alliance, and the East Chicago Black Caucus.⁹² Pastor Robert Davis, of the Indiana Harbor United Methodist Church proclaimed that “This community doesn’t have the trust necessary that’s found in open and honest elected and appointed public officials.”⁹³ Former school board president, Charles

⁹⁰ “State Tax Men Hear E.C. Plan,” *The Times*, December 12, 1974.

⁹¹ “State Tax Men Hear E.C. Plan,” *The Times*, December 12, 1974.

⁹² “State Tax Men Hear E.C. Plan,” *The Times*, December 12, 1974.

⁹³ “State Tax Men Hear E.C. Plan,” *The Times*, December 12, 1974.

Thornburg questioned why Superintendent Krajewski omitted the Nicholson Report's evaluation of personnel, particularly the excessive number of out-of-town administrators.⁹⁴

These solutions granted the campaign several successes, and none were as impactful as the signing of the state's bilingual education bill. After pushing for bilingual education, Indiana agreed to a bill guaranteeing the support and teaching of bilingual support in public schools in 1976.⁹⁵ The House Enrolled Act (HEA) 1324, passed on February 25, 1976, by the State of Indiana's General Assembly stipulated five provisions. These provisions included the notification of parents regarding their children's placement in bilingual programs and a right to refuse placement, state assistance in developing bilingual programs, and the funding of bilingual programs for a minimum of up to five years.⁹⁶ The grassroots efforts of CLO facilitated state-wide changes, allowing them to flex their political influence as a movement outside of the political machine.

However, some of the accomplishments proved fleeting, as CLO members faced political repercussions for their activism. In the Fall of 1973, Governor Otis R. Bowen appointed Melendez to serve on a state commission for the Status of Spanish Heritage Peoples of the State of Indiana.⁹⁷ However, after an incident of police violence against protestors over a dispute about urban renewal, Bowen fired Melendez within a month of appointing him. Within the reprinted Governor's memo, Bowen declared that "The purpose of the commission was to give recognition

⁹⁴ "State Tax Men Hear E.C. Plan," *The Times*, December 12, 1974.

⁹⁵ "Bilingual Law Marked," *The Times*, February 26, 1976.

⁹⁶ HEA 1324 (1976). See: Carmen Simich-Dugeon and Timothy Boals, "Language and Education Policy in the State of Indiana: Implications for Language Minority Students," *TESOL Quarterly*, Vol. 30 No. 3 (Autumn, 1996): 537-555.

⁹⁷ "Officials Appointed," *The Times*, October 16, 1973.

and status to the thousands of wonderful Spanish heritage people in the state of Indiana. I had hoped that the objectives would be to help solve problems in their behalf peacefully rather than create problems that make solutions more difficult.”⁹⁸

Melendez told a different story about his firing. In a 2018, Melendez recalled that he quit before Bowen fired him and that the public printing of his letter was a political maneuver to discredit him and the CLO.⁹⁹ After the incident, Melendez printed his reply:

It does not seem possible that a man in your position would forget or ignore the right for an individual to speak at least on his own behalf... Very clearly, you have passed judgement on me without considering or granting me the opportunity to speak to you personally, as you have done with the Latin community in East Chicago... Your decision to remove me is correct or I refuse to give up my independence given to me by the 14th Amendment and all those given to us by the constitution. Gov. Bowen, I refuse to be a puppet.¹⁰⁰

Despite the successful implementation of a statewide bilingual education bill, Melendez’s comments highlighted an understanding of the activist’s relationship with the governor.

Melendez claimed that Gov. Bowen’s appointment sought to control Melendez as “a puppet.”

Housing

The Concerned Latins Organization likely felt the pressure of the city’s long urban renewal projects, initiated by Mayor Walter Jeorse in 1958.¹⁰¹ While reconceptualizing the city, Jeorse, as well as his successors Nicosia and Pastrick, overwhelmingly focused on the predominantly ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican, as well as Black, districts in the city.

According to the CLO, these urban renewal projects led to the removal of 10% of its housing

⁹⁸ “E. Chicago Man Fired By Bowen,” *The Times*, October 31, 1973.

⁹⁹ Interview with Carmelo Melendez by the author, February 2, 2018.

¹⁰⁰ “E. Chicago Man Fired By Bowen,” *The Times*, October 31, 1973.

¹⁰¹ “Urban Renewal Project No. 1,” *Latin Times*, June 7, 1958.

units, an “exodus of 11,000 citizens” and a betrayal “that only substandard, vacant buildings would be demolished.”¹⁰² This program originally called for \$11 million in spending over fourteen years; however, by 1973 had spent over \$23 million and surpassed the fourteen-year window.¹⁰³ The CLO organized protests pertaining to East Chicago’s proposed urban renewal program, Guadalupe Homes. The city initiated the project in 1970 but did not begin work until 1972. The project provided a backdrop for the CLO’s activism about Mayor Pastrick’s political machine, access to housing, and an extension of employment opportunities for ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican residents.¹⁰⁴ Paired with the Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) urban renewal program in the Harbor, CLO members entered an already contentious debate.

The urban renewal program in East Chicago targeted the primarily ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican neighborhoods exclusively. In a letter to the Editor, Raymond J. Vince utilized the language of corruption to discuss the “Urban Renewal destruction racket” proclaiming “its about the ‘worse racket’ barring any and all evil ever in the history of East Chicago, Indiana.”¹⁰⁵ Vince proclaimed that “Freedom of its people seem to be dying rapidly, while politically appointed tax-eating bureaucrats seem to be calling all the plays.”¹⁰⁶ The urban renewal program razed St. Jude’s Catholic Church, headed by Father William Denis Devine since his arrival to the community in 1953. Robert Segovia and Father Devine established an English language program for Latino and Latina steelworkers at Inland Steel and ministered to the growing Puerto Rican community in the city.¹⁰⁷ The destruction of the church deprived the ethnic Mexican and Puerto

¹⁰² “Historical Information, Concerned Latins Organization,” n.d. Nicolás Kanellos Papers, CRA, IUN Box 1 File 7.

¹⁰³ “Latins, Bowen Clash,” *The Times*, October 18, 1973.

¹⁰⁴ “Latin Group Plans Housing,” *The Times*, January 4, 1970.

¹⁰⁵ “Letters to the Editor,” *Latin Times*, May 18, 1973.

¹⁰⁶ “Letters to the Editor,” *Latin Times*, May 18, 1973.

¹⁰⁷ “Bon Voyage Fr. Devine,” *Latin Times*, June 22, 1973.

Rican community of an essential ally. For the commercial buildings in the neighborhood, the message from Mayor Pastrick was simple, “modernize their business district or God bless you...!”¹⁰⁸

The federal urban renewal program led CLO to enter the fray quite dramatically. During the East Chicago Chamber of Commerce annual dinner, featuring Indiana Governor Otis Bowen as the speaker, activists clashed with East Chicago and Lake County police officers. A group of approximately forty Latinas and Latinos that picketed the event from the parking lot of the Knights of Columbus Hall surrounded Gov. Bowen’s car upon his arrival. As newspapers reported, “...police plunged into the mass of picketers in a free swinging attempt to remove them from the governor’s path to the hall.”¹⁰⁹ The *Latin Times* reported that the clash began when East Chicago Officer Arreguin initiated the violence after calling the protestors “motherfuckers.”¹¹⁰ Three of the protestors were arrested. Police officers accused Puerto Rican, Carmello Garcia, 33, of attempting to strike an officer. Officers arrested Puerto Rican, Reinaldo Ortiz, 55, for striking an officer on the head after jumping on his back. His son, Richard Ortiz, claimed that ECPD denied the elder Ortiz, who was a cursillista, a Christian layperson trained to become a Christian leader, access to his lawyer.¹¹¹ St. Catherine’s Hospital treated Sharon Gonzalez, 20, for injuries from a chemical spray after she broke through police lines, striking Commander Eugene Williams on the neck and attempting to kick his groin.¹¹² However, the *Latin Times* also added that police officers hit an eight-year-old with their vehicle and arrested WJOB radio host Dan

¹⁰⁸ “Modernize or Get Out,” *Latin Times*, September 7, 1973.

¹⁰⁹ “Angry Latins Clash With Bowen, HUD,” *The Times*, October 18, 1973.

¹¹⁰ “Pregnant Women, child beaten,” *Latin Times*, October 19, 1973.

¹¹¹ “Pregnant Women, child beaten,” *Latin Times*, October 19, 1973.

¹¹² “Angry Latins Clash With Bowen, HUD,” *The Times*, October 18, 1973.

Bowman.¹¹³ At his dinner speech, Governor Bowen listed his work in developing the Spanish Heritage Commission and claimed that “It is difficult to me to understand why they (the Latinos) are picketing this evening.” Antonio Rodriguez told the paper that Gov. Bowen refused to meet with the CLO members in Indianapolis and failed to respond to a telegram sent by Irene Gonzalez.¹¹⁴

The dramatic clash between activists and law enforcement prompted a federal and community reaction. Within a month, the U.S. Housing and Urban Development agency sent regional administrator George J. Vavoulis and Choice Edwards, the HUD director in Indianapolis to meet with the CLO. The group, joined by Dr. Howard Campbell, Director of East Chicago Housing and Redevelopment, and members of the redevelopment commission, met in St. Patrick’s Church in Indiana Harbor.¹¹⁵ The *Latin Times* coverage of the event pinpointed the blame on a Latino police officer, highlighting intra-racial conflict, The paper went so far as to report that CLO believed that the Wednesday night clash “was premeditated by the former city attorney Jay Given, who controls the Police Department, City Hall, and even the Chamber of the City Council.”¹¹⁶ The coverage proclaimed that “Big thing, Chief Stiglich, your men, under an entire Democratic administration, acted like a pack of vicious hounds against those who were protesting before a Republican Governor for the lack of better housing in the Harbor section of the city.”¹¹⁷

¹¹³ “Pregnant Women, child beaten,” *Latin Times*, October 19, 1973.

¹¹⁴ “Latinos, Bowen Clash,” *The Times*, October 18, 1973 and “Pregnant Women, child beaten,” *Latin Times*, October 19, 1973.

¹¹⁵ “HUD Eyes Renewal,” *The Times*, November 2, 1973.

¹¹⁶ “Pregnant Women, child beaten,” *Latin Times*, October 19, 1973.

¹¹⁷ “Pregnant Women, child beaten,” *Latin Times*, October 19, 1973.

The confrontation initiated a heated conversation within the predominantly ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community over leadership and representation. The *Latin Times* questioned “Are they going to present their resignations to the Governor? Or are they going to keep on acting like Robert Segovia, Councilmen Jesse Gomez, Antonio Barreda, Isabelino Candelaria, Gus Figueroa and other Latin leaders who prefer to protect those who are also abusing them.”¹¹⁸

Despite these conflicts, CLO maintained a focus on housing. At their annual convention, held on December 9th at the Katherine House Boys Club, Eddie Egipciaco announced that the CLO rejected the idea of multi-family dwellings that HUD wanted to develop in the neighborhood, instead favoring single family units along the historically ethnic Mexican neighborhood of Block and Pennsylvania avenues.¹¹⁹ According to a public statement, the convention’s five hundred delegates stressed that housing was a top priority issue. The CLO resolved to meet with the city councils and mayors of East Chicago and Gary “to take action on flotation of municipal bonds that would make available ample mortgage money at the maximum interest rate of 5 percent.”¹²⁰

Employment

The issue of discrimination in municipal employment presented the CLO with a significant hurdle to overcome. David Castro Sr. recalled his time on the jobs committee of the CLO by noting, “The way we were taught by Saul Alinsky’s group- they would send us

¹¹⁸ “Pregnant Women, child beaten,” *Latin Times*, October 19, 1973.

¹¹⁹ “Projects Reviewed,” *The Times*, November 26, 1973.

¹²⁰ “The Public Speaks,” *Latin Times*, December 21, 1973.

organizers- was to go for the easiest first.” He continued, “Affirmative Action wasn’t easy but [it was] easier than urban renewal.”¹²¹ Castro’s claim reflected a priority system. Without representation in municipal sectors of employment and politics, ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican and African American communities could not efficiently confront urban renewal. By confronting discrimination in municipal employment, the CLO hoped to garner more visible success and in return more community support. Carmelo Meléndez, the co-chair of the organization with Irene González, noted that “city hall used employment as a way to employ cronies.”¹²² The patronage system of city employment allowed public officials the autonomy to hire close friends and family into well-paid city positions. The involvement of the CLO members like as Egipciaco and Gomez, two of the parties involved in the *Dawson v. Pastrick* case, influenced this decision to focus on affirmative action as well. Egipciaco also served as one of the representatives for the Minority Policemen and Firemen group within the CLO coalition.

Whereas the class action lawsuit allowed for racial cooperation between ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican and African American firemen, the formal incorporation of the CLO in 1974 restricted its scope and membership to the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community. The coalition was organized with the purpose of promoting the “public welfare, health, and safety of the Latin Community in Lake County in a non-profit, non-political, and non-sectarian manner, and to unite all Latin organizations in Lake County.”¹²³ Article V of the CLO’s bylaws defined the membership of these Ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican populations as “one class and open to

¹²¹ Interview with David Castro Sr., *Steel Shavings*.

¹²² Interview with Carmelo Meléndez by the author, February 2, 2018.

¹²³ “Concerned Latins Organization, Inc,” Articles of Incorporation, March 29, 1974. Nicolás Kanellos Papers, CRA, IUN Box 1 File 8.

all persons and organizations (consisting of more than ten members which meet on a regular basis) who have exhibited an active interest in the purposes of this organization, paid their dues, and agreed to abide by the By Laws and policies of this organization.”¹²⁴ The articles aimed to unite the thirty-five Ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican organizations in the city under a single board of directors, which would consist of a member from each organization, as well as an alternate.¹²⁵ The representatives of their respective organizations and Ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican communities dedicated their energies “towards alleviating discrimination and oppression of Latinos and others in three major areas: Employment, Housing, and Education.”¹²⁶ These issues were central points of contention for the community prior to the CLO organizing.

Members of the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community began articulating their grievances through the pages of the *Latin Times* as early as 1970. Discrimination within city government, and specifically in the East Chicago Fire Department (ECFD), was clear to many of the activists. In a series of articles and letters to the editor in the *Latin Times*, the Youth Advisory Board, which would become a vital organization under the CLO, used the ECFD as a prominent example of discrimination in the East Chicago ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community:

¹²⁴ “Concerned Latins Organization, Inc,” Articles of Incorporation, March 29, 1974. Nicolás Kanellos Papers, CRA, IUN Box 1 File 8.

¹²⁵ The full list of organizations included into the Concerned Latins Organization included: Apostolicos and Guadalupanos; Block and Pennsylvania Chapter; Black Oak Chapter; Calumet Boycott Committee; Christian Family Movement; Borinque Unidos de Norte Indiana; Calumet Homes Chapter; Youngstown Steel Chapter; Concerned Citizens Group; Concerned Latins Boosters; Drummond and Parrish Avenue Chapter; Enchanters and Friends; Inland Galvanizer Dept. Chapter; La Liga Latina; La Raza de Bronze; Latin American Students League; Latins for Progress; Northwest Latin Chamber of Commerce; Lincoln Street Chapter; Mexican American Parents Association; Minority Fireman and Supporters; Northside Chapter of East Chicago; Southside Chapter of East Chicago; Operation March; Our Lady of Guadalupe Church; Primera Iglesia Christiana de Gary; The Gypsies; Youth Advisory Board of East Chicago; United Latin Teachers’ Aides; Bishops Committee for the Spanish Speaking; Holy Angels’ Mothers; 139th Street Group; East Gary Workers at U.S. Steel Chapter; E&J&E Workers Chapter; and Latinos de Gary.

¹²⁶ “Historical Information, Concerned Latins Organization,” n.d. Nicolás Kanellos Papers, CRA, IUN Box 1 File 7.

You are ignorant and lazy. You are socially inferior. And you won't do anything about it. Accept it. That's what the power structure believes about the Latins in Central Harbor... This is why the Fire Department has 175 Anglos, 9 Blacks, and 7 Latins... This is why the current price for a job in the Fire Department is \$3,000.¹²⁷

Future CLO member John Gomez's essay, "Sleeping Giant," captured the frustration of a community. Gomez proclaimed that:

We can no longer tolerate a system that employs a fraction of a percent of our people in city jobs, then to keep us quiet will appoint one of our people as Chief of Police or Fire Department or will appoint our people as Asst. Superintendent of this or that department.... We Latins (the sleeping giant) are finally waking up, but remember that's not enough. Action speaks louder than words.¹²⁸

These claims proved not entirely unfounded, as CLO members later highlighted corrupt practices of cronyism and patronage politics within city government. A more representative municipal work force should have been one result of the changing demographics of the city. Between 1960 and 1970, the City of East Chicago's "White" population decreased from 34,410 to 19,235, whereas Latinos increased 9,421 to 14,384.¹²⁹ Yet the employment of ethnic Mexicans and Puerto Ricans by city government did not keep pace with their growing numbers. Acting on these changing demographics and their anger with the status quo, the Alinsky Institute would provide the burgeoning ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican activists an ideology for action against discrimination in East Chicago.

Recognizing past and present discrimination by the ECFD, the CLO initially demanded that only Latinos and African Americans fill the twelve vacancies in the department, which initiated a discussion concerning a new hiring policy. This demand by CLO members Tony

¹²⁷ "Open Letter to the Community from the Y.A.B.," *Latin Times*, October 30, 1970.

¹²⁸ "Sleeping Giant," *Latin Times*, November 20, 1970.

¹²⁹ "Population 1970" November 7, 1972, pg. 9. IAF records, Special Collections and University Archives, the UIC Box 97 Folder 1064.

Rodriguez and John Gomez led Councilman-at-Large John D. Klobuchar to make a motion that Mayor Robert Pastrick “appoint one third black, one third white and one third Latin” workers to the ECFD. However, the councilman received no second.¹³⁰ CLO members highlighted numerous policies designed to limit minority firemen from gaining employment in the fire department. Under the illusion of a “color-blind” system, these policies emphasized “...the promulgation, normalization, and standardization of American myths of exceptionalism, meritocracy, and ‘color blind’ neutrality- myths that, in turn, are used to rationalize, codify, and maintain structural racism while advancing the false narrative that America is ‘beyond race.’”¹³¹ Aside from the lack of representation, the CLO targeted two policies as discriminatory and constricting for the hiring of Latinos and African Americans to the fire department: the 24 hours on/48 hours off work schedule and the exorbitant price of physical examinations.

Members of the CLO claimed that “the present system of working 24 consecutive hours and 48 hours off allows the majority of the Anglo firemen to hold two jobs.”¹³² This practice allowed the department to retain members who would typically retire because they were able to collect two salaried positions. The *Latin Times* followed this up with a suggestion that “for safety regulations and for a first rate performance while doing their job all the East Chicago firemen with twenty years of service should submit themselves to a physical examination to see if they are still in good condition to perform their duties as firemen.”¹³³ This policy would also force current firefighters to realize how expensive the fee for a physical exam—ranging from \$200 to

¹³⁰ “Regular Session of the Common Council, Monday, May 31, 1973,” East Chicago City Ordinances Book 18, p. 261-262. Maintained by the City of East Chicago, Indiana City Clerk Office.

¹³¹ Goldberg, *Black Firefighters and the FDNY*, 7.

¹³² “Ask Eight Hour Fireman Day,” *Latin Times*, July 20, 1973.

¹³³ “Physical Exam for Firemen,” *Latin Times*, August 10, 1973.

\$400—would be for those interested in city employment.¹³⁴ The policy would also present conditions for older members of the fire department to retire instead of holding a position that they may not be able to perform. According to the 1971 annual report of the ECFD, some members of the department in 1971 included men appointed nearly thirty years prior, many of them still retaining the rank of “Firefighter.”¹³⁵ Due to the policy in place, these members could realistically work two or three days a week and moonlight at other positions.

Beginning in 1973, members of the CLO engaged in confrontational protests to pressure the city’s administration into passing an affirmative action program based on a ratio of “four-four-one” for the hiring of firemen. Through this ratio, the CLO hoped that the inclusion of four Latinos and four African Americans for each new white recruit would create a ECFD that more accurately represented the near even three-way split of the city’s demographics. Castro noted the dilemma of this cause stating that “Who were we to say we represented the community? We had to make them deal with fifty of us. That meant going to council meetings, pressuring businesses, banks, to get credibility.”¹³⁶ Meléndez referred to this as “ping-pong.” The “CLO hit the bank, school, city government,” he said, “all with the goal of getting somebody to get a reaction. The focus of an action is to get a reaction.”¹³⁷ Meléndez stated that “Hispanics while large in numbers could not convince powers that be to listen to them.”¹³⁸ Two key events were the

¹³⁴ “I Am Tired of Your Smart Ass Remarks...,” *Latin Times*, August 10, 1973.

¹³⁵ “1971 Annual Report, Fire Department and Fire Prevention Bureau for the City of East Chicago.” East Chicago Collection CRA, IUN Box 1 File 18.

¹³⁶ Interview with David Castro Sr., *Steel Shavings*.

¹³⁷ Carmelo Meléndez interview.

¹³⁸ Carmelo Meléndez interview.

Summer Protests of 1973 and the continued public conflict at city council meetings with City Attorney Jay Given.

The most important protest occurred when the CLO targeted Irv Lewin's Clothing Store. The City of East Chicago administration responded negatively to the proposed ratio and methods of the CLO. Eddie Egipciaco, a CLO member and one of the seven Latino firemen on the payroll in East Chicago, was suspended. Accusing him of threatening the politician, businessman, and radio announcer Irv Lewin, the City of East Chicago placed Egipciaco on probation in November 1973.¹³⁹

According to *The Times* reporter, Egipciaco entered the store with fellow members and allegedly commented that "there would be a fire sale next week."¹⁴⁰ Egipciaco participated in the struggle for affirmative action hiring in the city and was a block organizer along with Castro. In response to the case against Egipciaco, sixty members of the Ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community demonstrated outside of Mr. Lewin's business.¹⁴¹ Councilman Jesse Gomez, the first elected Latino official in Indiana, denounced the police officers that signed a letter accusing Egipciaco of offering "a fabricated lie" adding that it was "a conspiracy to discredit Egipciaco for his involvement in the struggle for the recognition of the civil rights of the Latin people."¹⁴² The Civil Service Commission investigated the matter and forwarded Egipciaco's disciplinary case to the Board of Public Safety for an administrative hearing in September.¹⁴³

¹³⁹ "Egipciaco on Probation?" *Latin Times*, November 2, 1973.

¹⁴⁰ "Racial Quota Urged," *The Times*, July 12, 1973.

¹⁴¹ "Harbor Whispers" *Latin Times*, July 20, 1973.

¹⁴² "Harbor Whispers" *Latin Times*, July 20, 1973.

¹⁴³ "Concerned E.C. Latins Again Clash with Board," *The Times*, July 26, 1973.

The board concluded its case after a two day hearing in September, but Given decided to delay a decision.¹⁴⁴ On October 25, 1973, the Board found Egipciaco guilty and sentenced him to probation.¹⁴⁵ Commenting on his probation, Egipciaco questioned the verdict against him: “Am I guilty because I’m involved in the civil rights movement or am I guilty because I refused to become property of the city?”¹⁴⁶ Given ruled that the punishment “was not severe enough” for the activist.¹⁴⁷

Egipciaco’s probation occurred after the city agreed in August of 1973 to implement an affirmative action program for hiring firefighters. The East Chicago Board of Safety agreed to fill nine vacancies with four African Americans, four Latinos, and one white applicant. After this was fulfilled, the next forty-five hires would be hired along with a 2-2-1 ratio and a 1-1-1 ratio for the next ten. Once the fifty-fifth position was filled, the hiring process would default to the highest scores on civil service listings.¹⁴⁸ This decision came only months after two of the three members of the Board of Public Safety, Henry Lopez and Dr. E. L. Broomes, supported the ratio against Given, the lone holdout.

The CLO was renowned for its public presence at city meetings, and one of the organization’s frequent targets was Given, whom they accused of running the political machine in East Chicago. Members of the CLO attended city council meetings en masse and were often escorted out, or asked to leave these meetings. Castro recalled that:

¹⁴⁴ “Hearing Concludes,” *The Times*, September 14, 1973.

¹⁴⁵ “Fireman Is Guilty,” *The Times*, October 25, 1973.

¹⁴⁶ “Egipciaco on Probation?” *Latin Times*, November 2, 1973.

¹⁴⁷ “Fireman Is Guilty,” *The Times*, October 25, 1973.

¹⁴⁸ Allsup, “Concerned Latins Organization,” 256.

We had a prepared text and three or four people ready to read it. They wouldn't recognize us so one guy stood up and started reading as loud as he could. A cop came over and escorted him out. Another person started where he left and he was escorted out. I got up and I got escorted out. When we got outside, we saw that they had a line of police cars directing us out of town...¹⁴⁹

Getting kicked out of meetings was a common occurrence for the CLO activists. When city administrators filibustered meetings or refused to recognize their right to speak, members broke protocol and interrupted the councilmen. CLO member John Gomez, who was also an applicant to the ECFD said that, "somebody must be getting a kickback" from the physical examination fees. This claim of corruption garnered a reaction from Attorney Given, who told the members of the CLO, "I am tired of your smart ass [sic] remarks..."¹⁵⁰ The barrage of interruptions and accusation of corruption forced the outburst from Given and provided the CLO supporters with a new talking point. This comment made Given the subject of ridicule the following week by the *Latin Times*, which ran a gossip column that said:

Our City Attorney Jay Given really overwhelmed us with his eloquent vocabulary this week. His parents must really be proud of him, spending all that money to send him through law school to learn such three letter words. If they would have invested a little more money, Mr. Jay Given might have come out with a four letter [sic] word. Here's to education.¹⁵¹

This quip in the gossip column only continued the *Latin Times*' tradition of targeting Attorney Given. The gossip column allowed the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community an opportunity to construct their narrative and retain their confrontational demeanor against the corrupt status quo. In response to Given's claims that the firemen's issue could not be solved "overnight," an anonymous editorial reminded Given that the "firemen's issue is not something

¹⁴⁹ Interview with David Castro Sr., *Steel Shavings*.

¹⁵⁰ "I Am Tired of Your Smart Ass Remarks..." *Latin Times*, August 10, 1973.

¹⁵¹ "Hello! My Name is Tillie," *Latin Times*, August 10, 1973.

new" but instead an issue the community has posed to the city administration since 1967.¹⁵² However, according to the minutes of the city council and the East Chicago newspaper, *The Calumet News*, this instance never occurred. The CLO and the *Latin Times* even critiqued Given's claim to Mayor Pastrick that the ratio was "illegal." They said it was a reason that the issue was not solved sooner.¹⁵³

Given's criticism of the affirmative action made sense in the context of broader opposition to affirmative action nationally. In preferring minority groups over white candidates, the new ratio would still be discriminatory, but this time against whites. Given's unfavorable legal opinion further encouraged the CLO to target the attorney. When meeting to discuss the proposed ratio, Given's every action proved fair game for criticism. In a meeting concerning the ratio and whether or not the Board of Public Safety would endorse it, Given arrived twenty-five minutes late. When members criticized his tardiness, Given stated: "as soon as you get appointed to this board and become chairman you can begin the meetings anytime you want." The attorney then walked out of the meeting for a few minutes to get a cup of coffee.¹⁵⁴ The antagonism to affirmative action at the municipal level complemented the prolonged legal struggle in the district courts to force change within the ECFD.

Beyond community protests, the issue of discrimination in the ECFD and the implementation of an affirmative action program resulted in one of the longest civil lawsuits in the history of the U.S District Court. Before the CLO made affirmative action one of the three pillars of their activism, minority firefighters already were engaged in fighting discrimination

¹⁵² "Atty. Given is right... but..." *Latin Times*, August 3, 1973.

¹⁵³ "Harbor Whispers," *Latin Times*, August 10, 1973.

¹⁵⁴ "Concerned E.C. Latins Again Clash with Board," *The Times*, July 26, 1973.

through the courts. The initial complaint, filed by James S. Dawson, Edward H. Egipciaco, and Xavier Becerra on August 3, 1971, set into motion a case that the courts did not completely resolve until December 10, 1986.¹⁵⁵ The documents produced amounted to more than a thousand pages of complaints, orders, minutes, reports, and much more. For brevity, I refer primarily to the materials filed after the “Supplementary and Third Amended Complaint,” from May 23, 1973. However, the whole range of material warrants further attention. Regardless of promises by the city, including by the up-and-coming young Democrat Robert Pastrick, who had recently been elected mayor, the affirmative action hiring program was not implemented until a U.S. District Court ruled in favor of the CLO and against the City of East Chicago in 1975.¹⁵⁶ But the case did not end there. The city continued to appeal the lower court’s decision until 1986. *Dawson v. Pastrick* therefore offers scholars insight into the changing politics and discussions surrounding a contentious period in the history of affirmative action.

The cast of characters within the courtroom ranged from the controversial lawyer, Jay Given, to the newly elected Mayor Robert Pastrick, who was the main defendant in the case. It also involved minority firemen and union representatives for the ECFD. Recently appointed Judge Allen Sharp, named to the United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana, by President Richard Nixon in 1973, presided over the case. The most important members of the case were the plaintiffs, who were nineteen Latino and African American men between the ages of twenty-four and thirty-six. Each man brought to the case his own story, a

¹⁵⁵ “Civil Docket for *Dawson et al vs. Nicosia et al* and *Dawson v. Pastrick* 71 H 215,” Case # 2:71CV215, Session # 021-85-0179, Box 3 Location 466 960 BAN. NARA, Chicago.

¹⁵⁶ *Dawson v. Pastrick* 441 F. Supp. 133, United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana, November 15, 1977. No. 71 H 215. “Judge Sharp Rules for C.L.O.,” *Latin Times*, February 7, 1975.

vignette in comparison to the thousands of pages the class-action produced. Many similarities existed between these men's stories. At a time when the ECFD did not have a residency requirement (and a growing number of white firefighters lived outside of the city), sixteen of the plaintiffs resided in East Chicago. All expressed an interest in applying for a job with the ECFD when they turned eighteen. Many of the men noted the corruption involved in gaining employment. Rubén Ceja claimed that his precinct committeeman said, "he could not have such employment unless he would pay at least \$2,000." After passing the physical examination, Shannon Landers claimed a councilman told him the job would cost \$1,400. The necessity for political support and a bribe, although not listed on the application, was a requirement that some applicants knew about, causing them to delay their decision to apply. Men like the CLO member John Gomez and Carlos Ventura applied despite their uncertainty, and neither of them were offered jobs.¹⁵⁷

James Dawson, whose name became attached to the title of the case, best made the case in support of affirmative action and an inclusive labor force. These debates at the heart of the case solidified Dawson's reputation as a champion of the would-be firefighters. A veteran of the U.S. Navy (1961-1965), Dawson became tired of working the swing shift in the industrial sector and decided to apply for the ECFD in July of 1965. However, unlike many of the Anglo applicants at the time, the ECFD delayed hiring Dawson until December 1, 1968.¹⁵⁸ Several of

¹⁵⁷ "Stipulation of Facts," Filed September 12, 1974. *Dawson v. Pastrick* Case # 2:71CV215, Session # 021-85-0179, Box 3 Location 466 960 BAN. NARA, Chicago. The plaintiffs in the case were Xavier Becerra, William Mackey, Edward Egipciano, James Dawson, John Thomas, John Luellen, William Turner, Sanford Spann, Soloman Ard, Sandy Harrel, William Chavis, Ray Anguiano, Charles Orange, Thomas Brannon, Lorenzo Munoz, Ruben Ceja, Shannon Landers, John Gomez, and Carlos Ventura.

¹⁵⁸ Interview with James Dawson conducted by author, October 23, 2018.

the plaintiffs listed were employed firefighters, primarily in the lowest rank of pipeman, and driver. At the time of the initial complaint, Dawson held the rank of pipeman.

Before filing the class-action suit, Dawson said that talks with the Fire Department's chief were "to no avail." The department suggested various proposals to Dawson and the minority firemen. At the time, the department consisted of five stations with three shifts. One proposal suggested placing a person of color at each station for each shift. However, this total of fifteen was less than the already employed seventeen firemen. Dawson noted his outrage that the proposed solution "would be going backward." According to Dawson, "most proposals we ignored" because "they didn't make sense." He concluded, "We eventually quit entertaining that nonsense."¹⁵⁹

Once the plaintiffs filed the lawsuit, Dawson noted that "some of the people quit talking to us," especially "the older guys," he said. "The younger guys," he continued, "these are people we went to school with." They supported the plaintiffs. This generational tension led to one altercation when Dawson wanted to raise the flag at Station Four, a task reserved for the lowest ranked firefighter, which he was, but was challenged by another firefighter. The other man claimed that Dawson was "doing unpatriotic things." To which Dawson responded with a question: "how much time did you spend in the service?" The man had spent none. Although this quieted some of the backlash against them, the minority firemen experienced an internal conflict with their colleagues as the lawsuit and grassroots activism continued.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ James Dawson interview conducted by author, October 23, 2018.

¹⁶⁰ James Dawson interview conducted by author, October 23, 2018.

Judge Sharp declared that the plaintiffs had proven discrimination in the hiring process. Although John Gomez of the CLO and his fellow plaintiffs had filed their initial complaint on August 3, 1971, the City of East Chicago did not admit to discriminatory hiring practices against Latinos and African-Americans until 1975. Despite Judge Sharp's ruling that East Chicago "shall conduct affirmative recruitment of minorities," it declined "to impose mandatory quotas as a remedy in this case."¹⁶¹ If East Chicago refused to submit a report detailing the number of vacancies, the number and racial composition of applicants for those vacancies, and the number and racial composition of hired candidates, the court reserved the numerical quota as a possible future measure.¹⁶² However, it was now within the city's best interest to grant minority firemen a place within the department before further court intervention.

With this first verdict, the members of the CLO took to the *Latin Times* to reflect on the verdict and their work with the case. In a press statement supporting the court's ruling and the progression of the case, CLO president Irene González stated, "For months we talked, demonstrated, and fought with the city fathers to admit that what they were doing to Latinos and Blacks in the Fire Department was clear and overt discrimination." But, she said, "from the mayor on down they denied it and would not come to terms."¹⁶³ Her comment echoed a previous statement made by Carmelo Meléndez at a City Council meeting where he likened attending the meetings to therapy, stating that "all we do is let out steam and all you see is them [the City

¹⁶¹ *Dawson v. Pastrick* 441 F. Supp. 133, United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana, November 15, 1977. No. 71 H 215.

¹⁶² *Dawson v. Pastrick*, No. 71 H 215.

¹⁶³ "Judge Sharp Rules for C.L.O.," *Latin Times*, February 7, 1975.

Council] looking at you but nothing is done.”¹⁶⁴ Tony Rodriguez added to this sense of pessimism by stating that, "Even our own representatives in the council would not help."¹⁶⁵

The comments by González and Rodriguez, and the *Latin Times*' portrayal of the court case as tied to the CLO instead of the ordinance push, reflected the parallel and contemporary struggles that the group took at the municipal and district court level. Through their grassroots advocacy, common actors in the push for the ordinance and the class-action lawsuit felt pressured (and incentivized) to acquiesce to their position. However, the coverage of the case by the *Latin Times* failed to mention James Dawson and the African American community, erasing the multi-ethnic push by, and for, minority firemen.

Although the CLO and the minority division of the ECFD rejoiced over this decision, there was backlash over the possibility of court-mandated diversification in the region. The potential ruling of Judge Sharp on *Dawson v. Pastrick* could pave the way for further affirmative action and support of the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972. The act granted the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) the right to sue in district courts when it found that an employer had discriminated in its hiring based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.¹⁶⁶ Recognizing the ramifications of Judge Sharp's ruling, a letter from Stephen B. Fowdy, the Superintendent of Schools in Whiting, Indiana, to Judge Sharp, expressed dissatisfaction with the verdict. Primarily bashing the "quota system" behind affirmative action, Fowdy questioned Sharp:

¹⁶⁴ "Regular Session of the Common Council, Monday, November 11, 1974," East Chicago City Ordinances Book 18, p. 545. Maintained by the City of East Chicago, Indiana City Clerk Office.

¹⁶⁵ "Judge Sharp Rules for C.L.O.," *Latin Times*, February 7, 1975.

¹⁶⁶ "Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972," approved March 24, 1972.

How many ‘minority’ judges are there in the federal system? Would you want to stand trial where your liberty, property, rights or life was at stake by a minority judge that was not qualified and only guilty of bribery? Or would you rather stand trial before the most competent judge that was available? Would you want to be operated on by a surgeon that was at the bottom of his class because he got into medical school on the ‘quota system,’ or would you rather have the best qualified one, regardless of race or color, perform the operation? The answers are obvious to 75% of the people of the nation. Why do judges have such a difficult time understanding these truths?¹⁶⁷

Fowdy’s letter to Judge Sharp stated many of the common arguments against affirmative action hiring. It repeated the idea that hiring “qualified” candidates and hiring diverse candidates was necessarily at odds. It also repeated stereotypes about what kind of jobs Fowdy considered applicable to this decision. These two critiques of the policy were reflected in Randall Kennedy’s conclusion that, “Racial affirmative action is limited in that it often directly assists only those who are already positioned to take advantage of enlarged opportunities.”¹⁶⁸

Judge Sharp’s ruling in favor of the plaintiffs gave the CLO momentum in pushing for a broader, municipal ordinance. Although the prolonged legal battle in *Dawson v. Pastrick* remained incomplete, Sharp’s decision in 1975 provided a necessary boost to the CLO as the organization prepared to rewrite municipal ordinances that best combatted racial discrimination. Whereas members such as Egipciano and Gomez were direct participants in the class-action lawsuit at the district level, many other CLO members simultaneously engaged at the local level to create a municipal ordinance.

After Judge Sharp announced his decision, the Common Council agreed to work with the CLO in forming an ordinance to combat discrimination in East Chicago. The City Council read

¹⁶⁷ “Letter to Judge Sharp from Stephen B. Fowdy,” February 7, 1975. On file within *Dawson v. Pastrick* Case # 2:71CV215, Session # 021-85-0179, Box 3 Location 466 960 BAN. NARA, Chicago.

¹⁶⁸ Randall Kennedy, *For Discrimination: Race, Affirmative Action, and the Law* (New York: Vintage Books, 2015), 89.

an affirmative action ordinance, City Ordinance 3083, on April 28, 1975. At this meeting two opposing groups presented two possible futures for the proposed legislation. Puerto Rican Councilman Isabelino Candelaria and Councilman George Cvitkovich offered opposing plans for the document. Candelaria proposed that the “proper committee” take the ordinance for “further study and amendments.” However, Cvitkovich proposed that the entire City Council meet with CLO, the Chamber of Commerce, and other interested groups to discuss the ordinance. Furthermore, forwarding the document to a committee would keep the ordinance there for a minimum of thirty days before a second reading.¹⁶⁹ During the second reading of the ordinance, Human Rights Commission Director Leo Miller accurately summarized the proposed change and stated:

We have Ordinance 3026 that is now in effect; if every Contractor and Sub-Contractor did what they were suppose[d] to do under the present ordinance, we wouldn't need the new amendments, we wouldn't need a new ordinance all they would have to do is what the old ordinance said to do. We are not asking, under the existing ordinance, for unqualified people to be put to work in East Chicago, we are not asking for blacks and browns to be put on just because they are black or brown, we are asking for equal opportunity, we are asking for a set of guidelines that they could follow very easily under good faith efforts.¹⁷⁰

Miller emphasized that this ordinance would offer an “equal opportunity,” and wasn't intended to “discourage and keep contractors out of the city,” as Councilman Gus Kouros feared.

Prior to the vote, the City Council received letters of support from the Parish at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church; Bishop's Committee on Spanish Speaking People of the Gary Diocese; Edward Sadlowski, Director of the United Steelworkers of America, District No. 31; the

¹⁶⁹ “Regular Session of the Common Council, Monday, April 28, 1975,” East Chicago City Ordinances Book 18, p. 623. Maintained by the City of East Chicago, Indiana City Clerk Office.

¹⁷⁰ “Regular Session of the Common Council, Monday, June 23, 1975,” East Chicago City Ordinances Book 19, p. 3. Maintained by the City of East Chicago, Indiana City Clerk Office.

American Legion Post #508; League of United Latin American Citizens Post #259; the Chamber of Commerce; and Local 1010.¹⁷¹ To emphasize the stakes of the ordinance, David Castro read a letter from Architect & Engineers, Inc., which implied that minorities could not do the work. Castro stated that, “if the Council goes against the ordinance then they are saying the same, that the minorities cannot handle the job; in order to have better opportunities for the young and the minorities every facet of the ordinance must be approved.”¹⁷² Councilman Kouros asked, “ten years from now when the minorities will be White, will this ordinance apply for them?” David Castro and Susan Roque responded to Kouros. Castro stated that “we are dealing with the problem today and not ten years from now,” whereas Roque stated that “if a person is qualified and meet [sic] the criteria it applies to all people.”¹⁷³ The ordinance, deemed the “Affirmative Action Ordinance,” passed on July 28, 1975 by a vote of eight to one, with Kouros abstaining.

Although the members of the CLO won their battle for representation in the municipal workforce, the organization ceased to operate by the end of 1977. It successfully created municipal legislation—City Ordinance 3083—that allowed for a more representative racial composition of city employees. This broader municipal legislation in conjunction with the court-approved plan stemming from *Dawson v. Pastrick* offered minorities a degree of inclusion into municipal employment.

The Splintering of the Concerned Latins Organization

¹⁷¹ “Regular Session of the Common Council, Monday, July 28, 1975,” East Chicago City Ordinances Book 19, p.18-19. Maintained by the City of East Chicago, Indiana City Clerk Office.

¹⁷² “Regular Session of the Common Council, Monday, July 28, 1975.”

¹⁷³ “Regular Session of the Common Council, Monday, July 28, 1975.”

Despite having gained ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican representation, at the height of CLO's activism, only three ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican politicians sat on the City Council: Jesse Gomez Sr., Antonio Barreda of the YAB, and Isabelino Candelaria. Despite being a third of the council, CLO still noted the considerable exclusion of the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community in East Chicago. Whereas Gomez received praise for his negotiations between the YAB and city administration in 1970, the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community offered harsher criticism of him just a few years later. Maria Contreras praised Gomez in 1970 stating that "he was there not as a Latin representative, but as [a] member of the Mexican-American race. He is one of us and he also felt the impact of the remark made by the assistant principal of Washington High School."¹⁷⁴ However, the *Latin Times* reported that in 1972 a young man called Gomez and Barreda "coconuts" meaning "that both public representatives are brown on the outside but white in the inside."¹⁷⁵ Melendez argued that the Ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican representation "played both sides" and "to us [CLO] represented the government that put decisions against us."¹⁷⁶

Organizer Peter Martinez attributed this decline to the debate over forming a multi-ethnic organization across the entire county, effectively moving away from CLO's focus in East Chicago and neighboring Gary. Beginning in 1975, Peter Martinez noted the move towards a multi-racial organization. In a memo to the Executive Director of IAF, Edward Chambers, Martinez noted that the move did not work. Martinez claimed that organizers Timoteao and

¹⁷⁴ "No Pressure," *The Times*, October 9, 1970.

¹⁷⁵ "Coconuts at the Council," *Latin Times*, May 26, 1972.

¹⁷⁶ Interview with Carmelo Melendez by the author, February 2, 2018.

Weissert could not pull any more than two votes for a multi-ethnic organization.¹⁷⁷ Martinez advised IAF that the two other organizers “should resign and there is nothing they can accomplish without Irene’s support and more specifically, more importantly without being able to organize a multiracial group in Chicago. There is no power in an all Latin organization.”¹⁷⁸ Martinez also noted that Irene Gonzales mistrusted the two organizers and that if Gonzalez did not change the organization’s mind, then IAF should break the contract.¹⁷⁹ However, a move towards a multi-racial organization occurred in 1977 under a new director of CLO, Leo P. Arnoult.¹⁸⁰

Leo Arnoult’s tenure with the Concerned Latins Organization represented a turning point in the organization’s history and their vision for future organizing. Complicated by his outside role as a non-Latin and non-East Chicagoan, his move from community organizer to the interim director of the organization spelled disaster for the organization. His report to IAF, detailing the rise and fall of the all Latin organization signaled the end of a group that Arnoult expressed no interest in assisting. In a memo between Peter Martinez and Ed Chambers, Martinez discussed the possibilities for moving Arnoult out of Lake County. According to Martinez, “he [Arnoult] has definitely decided on his own that the organizing effort in Lake County is at a point where it makes no sense to keep staff on any longer.”¹⁸¹ In a progress report, Martinez relayed to

¹⁷⁷ "Memo to Ed Chambers from Peter Martinez," April 30, 1975. Industrial Areas Foundation records, Special Collections and University Archives, the University of Illinois at Chicago Box 130 Folder 1417.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Refer to "Staff Report and Evaluation of the Effort to Build an East Chicago Citizens Power Organization," April 30, 1977. Industrial Areas Foundation records, Special Collections and University Archives, the University of Illinois at Chicago Box 55 Folder 743.

¹⁸¹ "Memo to Chambers from Martinez," April 6, 1977. Industrial Areas Foundation records, Special Collections and University Archives, the University of Illinois at Chicago Box 131 Folder 1425.

Chambers Arnoult's adaptation to Lake County. According to Martinez, "Leo is holding up pretty well, keeping his head under a lot of pressure, thinking very clearly and using me well."¹⁸²

Arnoult continued to pursue the possibility of a multi-ethnic organization for the duration of his tenure. Arnoult provided an essential time frame for the development of the Temporary Organizing Committee for an East Chicago Citizens Organization from its formation on January 14, 1977, until the disaffiliation between the Concerned Latins and Industrial Areas Foundation on April 21, 1977. According to Arnoult, "within the committee's timetable they had hoped to generate enough institutional support to decide by May 31st that they could continue on a staffed basis."¹⁸³ When this institutional support failed to manifest, IAF and CLO discontinued their partnership. The dissident faction of CLO that remained saw the removal of IAF from their organizing efforts.

Castro explained the internal dispute over whether to continue using Saul Alinsky's organization. At the time CLO averaged forty to fifty members a meeting, and the meetings became polarized between those who wanted to end the affiliation and those who wanted to maintain it. Castro sided with those that desired to separate from the IAF. Castro disliked that IAF sent trainees as organizers, especially after many members of CLO, such as Castro, attended the training sessions at the Alinsky Institute in Chicago already.¹⁸⁴ The discontent between these two caucuses in CLO held drastically different opinions of the outside organizers. After the resignation of the two institute organizers, William Wistart and Timothy Vasquez (at the

¹⁸² "Progress Report," n.d. Industrial Areas Foundation records, Special Collections and University Archives, the University of Illinois at Chicago Box 131 Folder 1426.

¹⁸³ "Staff Report And Evaluation of the Effort to Build An East Chicago Citizens Power Organization," April 30, 1977. Industrial Areas Foundation records, Special Collections and University Archives, the University of Illinois at Chicago Box 55 Folder 743.

¹⁸⁴ Interview with David Castro Sr., *Steel Shavings*, vol. 13 (1987) courtesy of David Castro Jr. Private Collection.

recommendation of Martinez), a dissident faction demanded change between the Alinsky Institute and the CLO. According to Rich Ortiz and Mario Diaz, “the future of the organization is uncertain.”¹⁸⁵ This faction accused “the CLO leadership of allowing policymaking to be made by the Alinsky institute.”¹⁸⁶ The dissident faction presented a list of demands, including that the CLO immediately cancel the IAF contract, adhere strictly to the organization's constitution, elect two parliamentarians for two month periods, and make committee chairpersons neutral to the operations of the organization.¹⁸⁷ However, when these demands were put to the vote, the committee voted five-to-zero against the list.¹⁸⁸ In response to this Ortiz and Diaz leaked their list and claim to the newspaper. According to Martinez’s memo, when prompted for an opinion the co-chair of CLO, Irene Gonzales “panicked and instead of talking to anybody else said that she had no comment on the thing.”¹⁸⁹ Martinez advised CLO leadership to implement a press release and claim that “they are not interested in wallowing in internal pettiness but are concerned about pursuing the needs of the Latin community such as the affirmative action program which they had just won a major victory on Monday night at city hall.”¹⁹⁰ Castro and the part advocating for disconnecting lost the vote and many walked out from CLO. Reflecting on this instance, Castro stated, “I think the guys who spearheaded the walk-out were planted there by the city. Their purpose was to destroy the organization.”¹⁹¹ Regrettably, Martinez encountered the existence of this dissidence faction as well. Previously, Martinez noted in the

¹⁸⁵ “Alinsky Controls CLO’: Members,” *The Times*, July 31, 1975.

¹⁸⁶ “Alinsky Controls CLO’: Members,” *The Times*, July 31, 1975.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ “Memo from Martinez to Ed & Dick,” July 31, 1975. Industrial Areas Foundation records, Special Collections and University Archives, the University of Illinois at Chicago Box 130 Folder 1417.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ “Memo from Martinez to Ed & Dick,” July 31, 1975. Industrial Areas Foundation records, Special Collections and University Archives, the University of Illinois at Chicago Box 130 Folder 1417.

¹⁹¹ Interview with David Castro Sr., *Steel Shavings*, vol. 13 (1987) courtesy of David Castro Jr. Private Collection.

July training prep materials a few comments about the two delegates attending on behalf of CLO.

Martinez stated that:

Esther Franco: narrow in the race, pulls people. In her 40's, divorced, lives alone. A good worker in the organization right now.

Mario; pain in the ass, had to take him for political reasons.¹⁹²

Despite this mention, there seems to be little mention in Martinez's memos to the administration of the Industrial Areas Foundation about severe discontent before this public claim.

Some members attribute the demise of CLO to the internal disputes of members and the formation of a “cult of *personalismo*.” John Gomez, a CLO member that critiqued the employment process of firefighters, quit the organization in 1974. He claimed that the organization is a “cult of *personalismo*” mentality, which “stifled forth-right discussion and dialogue among the membership.”¹⁹³ The leadership of the organization remained relatively consistent across CLO's lifespan with Irene Gonzales retaining the presidency, or sometimes co-chairing with Carmelo Melendez. Reflecting on the trouble of unity in organization, David Castro stated “the kind of unity we need is like *la hormiga*, the ant. Not like *las cucarachas*, the cockroaches, who'll all disappear if you step on one. *Las hormigas* get the job done in the group. Too many people only care about themselves.”¹⁹⁴

The CLO's refusal to form interracial solidarity highlights the failure for both oppressed groups to coalesce and work together. Instead, they traveled along “separate but equal paths” as Brian Behnken argued about Mexican Americans and African Americans in Texas. This refusal

¹⁹² “Sketch on people coming to training session,” July 7, 1975. Industrial Areas Foundation records, Special Collections and University Archives, the University of Illinois at Chicago Box 130 Folder 1417.

¹⁹³ Allsup, “Concerned Latins Organization,” 259.

¹⁹⁴ Interview with David Castro Sr., *Steel Shavings*, vol. 13 (1987) courtesy of David Castro Jr. Private Collection.

by its membership to move away from a single-ethnic group defense cost the leadership the support of IAF as well as many of its most active members. With the withdrawal of IAF, the Concerned Latins Organization broke apart and much of its membership either retired from activism, or formed newer, smaller groups in the region.

Conclusion

Protests proved an important way to articulate grievances between the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community, on the one hand, and the political machine, on the other. Previously, the ballot box had been the most utilized way for the community to express their disdain with political bosses and attempt change, or further align themselves with the incumbent for inclusion and support. However, the immense activism and actions in the 1960s and 1970s instead offered an opportunity to circumvent, and explicitly target, machine politics and the confining nature of its inclusion. The CLO activists targeted policies, such as ghost payrolling, nontransparent municipal government, and inaccessible representatives as corrupt practices perverting local democracy in East Chicago. Through their civil rights struggles, the CLO argued that these struggles, traditionally seen as anti-discriminatory were also struggles against corruption. They continued to appeal for good government and leaders.

Although the CLO remained active for a relatively brief period, it left an enduring legacy. Gonzalez, Melendez, Egipciaco, and their colleagues witnessed the changing demographics of their community. As ethnic Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Black residents became the city's majority they found it hard to have an impact on local policy. Ethnic Europeans remained in charge. Through demanding both loudly and publicly for their fair share, the CLO pursued the

affirmative action hiring ordinance, an opportunity to gain access to employment by circumventing practices, such as expensive physical exams and paying elected officials. Their protests, and support from community residents, highlighted that the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community would not remain passive before the political machine and wait for change. Instead, they utilized actions for direct change and confrontations aimed at exposing corruption wherever possible.

Akin to Chicago's Mayor Richard Daley, Mayor Robert Pastrick found his political machine in East Chicago undergoing a crisis. A white-run machine in a city undergoing changes to its racial demographics would not survive. Pastrick, sooner rather than later, would need to incorporate these groups into his machine. While some activists continued their anti-corruption stance in a plethora of neighborhood organizations, others found themselves joining the very machine they protested as members of the CLO. As cogs in the machine, these changing alliances presented the community with a series of new challenges in the coming decades.

Chapter Four: “To attain undreamed heights”: Latino Leadership in Local 1010, Latinos as Establishment, and Sadlowski’s Steelworkers Fight Back Campaign, 1970-1981

After numerous attempts at the presidency, he finally heard the words: Arredondo wins. Jesse Arredondo, of East Chicago, the son of a steel family, and a veteran of World War II heard this announcement, sealing his victory to become the President of Local 1010 of the United Steelworkers (USW). By thirty-nine votes, Arredondo had secured access to a coveted position of union leadership and with it gained access to the power structure of the steel industry. However, this victory did not happen overnight. Starting a year before the June 1970 election, Arredondo canvassed every possible watering hole of Local 1010 from the union hall to taverns to local stores, looking for votes. Within the four-person slate, Arredondo hoped to win the “Hispanic Vote,” which constituted nearly thirty percent of the vote overall.¹ Arredondo recognized that although the union was undecided over their four choices, which included Jim Balanoff, Bill Bennett, and Bill Gailes, Arredondo could rely on Latino unity in the mill to secure a solid voting bloc. Notably, Arredondo defeated Gailes, who ran the local when the previous President, John Sargent, became ill. Gailes served as an unofficial Interim-President for nearly eighteen months and believed that he was the only candidate who could become president.² As the first Latino president of one of the largest locals in the national labor movement, Arredondo had accomplished something that no other Latino had.

¹ “Roberto Flores Oral History” interview conducted by James B. Lane quoted in *Steel Shavings: Steelworkers Fight Back, Inland’s Local Union 1010 and the Sadlowski/Balanoff Campaigns, Rank and File Insurgency in the Calumet Region during the 1970s*. vol. 30 (Valparaiso, IN: Home Mountain Printing, 2000), 27.

² “William Andrews Oral History” interviewed conducted by James B. Lane, *Steel Shavings*, vol. 30, 27.

Arredondo's presidency paved the way for the future inclusion of the Latino community in the upper levels of the union's administration. Followed by the election of Hank "Babe" Lopez in 1973 to the President of Local 1010, the 1970s reflected a changing direction of representation in the union, as well as the demographics of the labor movement overall. Zaragosa Vargas noted that in the 1970s, the United States Spanish-speaking population almost doubled from 4.5 to 8.7 million, including an estimated 1.1 million undocumented individuals.³ Alongside other historians such as Lane Windham and Allyson Brantley, Vargas argued that this new and diverse labor movement kept working-class struggles alive during an era of backlash against organized labor by industry and conservative allies in Congress.⁴ In the Calumet Region, the growing presence of Latino steelworkers made them an important voting bloc within the union's election. The Latinos in the union were hardly unified. As the relative newcomers to the mill, Puerto Ricans aligned more with rank-and-file efforts to reform the union, whereas the older generation of ethnic Mexicans offered a more conservative and pro-international vision.

The role of Latino leadership offers crucial insight into the rank and file of the broader community. In 1975, Francisco A. Rosales and Daniel T. Simon claimed, "Chicano union leaders, important from the beginning, gradually have become more prominent as presidents of important union locals. That the vast majority of leaders reflect the general attitudes of other trade unionists is probably indicative of the ideological orientation of rank and file Chicano

³ Zaragosa Vargas, "Latino Workers," in *American Latinos and the Making of the United States: A Theme Study* (Washington D.C.: National Park Service, 2013), 205.

⁴ Vargas, "Latino Workers," 205-206; Lane Windham, *Knocking on Labor's Door: Union Organizing in the 1970s and the Roots of a New Economic Divide*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2017); and Allyson P. Brantley, *Brewing a Boycott: How a Grassroots Coalition Fought Coors and Remade American Consumer Activism* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2021).

workers.”⁵ After centuries of serving as marginalized laborers in dozens of industries, Latinas and Latinos, particularly after the 1960s, became prominent leaders across the labor movement.⁶ Vargas claimed that the civil rights movement and the Vietnam War “helped to radicalize Latino workers, many who broke into leadership positions.”⁷ The diversity of the steel mills, as well as the diminishing barriers to previously segregated departments simultaneously paved the way for this gradual advancement that Rosales and Simon discussed. However, the leadership of Latinos in Local 1010 differed from the leadership seen elsewhere, like the Amalgamated Clothing Workers in El Paso, or the United Farmworkers Movement in the Southwest.⁸ Instead, Arredondo and Lopez offer an opportunity to explore a more conservative and pro-international union leadership. Whereas in other places and unions, Latinas and Latinos organized against this leadership, this chapter highlights an opportunity to explore the inverse. Almost seen as inherently progressive in the scholarship concerning Latinas and Latinos in the labor movement, this chapter about leadership highlights a more conservative, and in the case of Lopez, corrupt form of leadership by Latino leadership.

⁵ Francisco A. Rosales and Daniel T. Simon. “Chicano Steel Workers and Trade Unionism in the Midwest, 1919-1945,” *Aztlan*. Vol. 6 no. 2 (1975), 273.

⁶ Vicki L. Ruiz, *Cannery Women Cannery Lives: Mexican Women, Unionization, and the California Food Processing Industry, 1930-1950* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1987); Zaragosa Vargas, *Proletarians of the North: A History of Mexican Industrial Workers in Detroit and the Midwest, 1917-1933* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993); Camille Guerin-Gonzales, *Mexican Workers and American Dreams: Immigration, Repatriation, and California Farm Labor, 1900-1939* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994); Stephen J. Pitti, *The Devil in Silicon Valley: Northern California, Race, and Mexican Americans* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004); Justin Akers Chacón, *Radicals in the Barrio: Magonistas, Socialists, Wobblies, and Communists in the Mexican American Working Class* (Chicago, Haymarket Books, 2018); and Eduardo Contreras, *Latinos and the Liberal City: Politics and Protest in San Francisco*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019).

⁷ Zaragosa Vargas, “Latino Workers,” 204.

⁸ Nancy MacLean, *Freedom Is Not Enough: The Opening of the American Workplace* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 176-179.

Within some branches of the labor movement, this advancement began locally. In the steel industry, Latinos, such as Jesse Arredondo and Hank ‘Babe’ Lopez, utilized their connections within the community to build a base of support. Their re-election to various positions within the local before their presidencies reflects the growing importance of Latinx steelworkers as voters. The frequency of their appearance at USW conventions and among the elites of the union also express the influence of these men. Arredondo’s advancement occurred through the tutelage and connections formed by his father Miguel Arredondo, a principal organizer for the Steel Workers Organizing Committee during the New Deal. As opposed to Arredondo’s deep familial ties to the union through his father, Lopez relied on developing a base, originally of Latino support, or his “tamale constituency,” as he called the Latino voting bloc. Lopez’s electoral strategy often reflected more on his charisma and affable demeanor to garner support, much like the ward bosses of the 19th century. Neither Lopez nor Arredondo were bereft of support outside of Latino steelworkers. The two labor leaders formed connections with the municipal political machine, which garnered support for them from these municipal election chests and networks. However, these connections proved severe hindrances, especially for Lopez, when confronted with a growing group of dissenters from within the union.

Narratives about the pursuit for representation in unions often neglect to critically analyze what comes after the victory, or at what cost that victory is attained. Arredondo and Lopez served as the first and second Latino presidents of Local 1010; however, more importantly, they were also victims of union politics and their own self-serving desire for power and influence. Despite being the crucial figures in one of the most important districts of the USW, Arredondo and Lopez’s careers in Local 1010 reflect lackluster careers and charges of corruption that tarnished their historic elections. As the local heads of the union, Arredondo and Lopez had

access to the structures of power within the political end of labor, a possession retained mainly by their slate and allies. Whereas Arredondo used these structures of power to elevate his allies, akin to patronage politics in the city, Lopez was more blatant with how he wielded the power of his office. Not only did Lopez award his allies, but he extended his influence into connections with the Democratic political machine in East Chicago. Whereas most critics of Arredondo characterized him as an ineffective leader, Lopez was a shrewd negotiator who willingly engaged in corrupt practices like the misuse of union funds and tampering with union elections.

As Presidents of Local 1010, Arredondo and Lopez found themselves at the center of crucial conversations about democratic unionism. With the rise of famed steelworker, Ed Sadlowski's district and eventual nationwide push to "take back the union," Arredondo and Lopez found themselves as symbols of the International Union. Whereas Sadlowski and his allies expressed claims to represent the "common steelworker," the steelworkers that were a part of his insurgent Steelworkers Fight Back campaign targeted the establishment as disconnected. For Arredondo and Lopez, this included highlighting connections with dubious individuals, union budgets that benefited themselves and their allies, as well as the use of unethical democratic governing practices during union elections. Lopez and his administration would become the target of a lawsuit, *Marshall v. Local 1010* (1981) that highlighted the various unethical and corrupt practices that Lopez hoped would allow him to retain his office. Meanwhile, Latino and Latina steelworkers, whose number was growing, had to consider their place and whether unity among Latinos should outweigh the allegations of corruption.

The allegations of corruption in Arredondo and Lopez's presidencies offers an opportunity to engage in the debate about corruption in labor history.⁹ Particularly, in their leadership roles, Arredondo and Lopez serve as windows into how steelworkers, and to a lesser extent, the community, understood and characterized corruption in Local 1010. According to David Witwer, labor historians have neglected to engage corruption in the labor movement in favor of narratives of industrial workers organizing to demand just and fair working conditions.¹⁰ In defining corruption in labor unions, historian Jennifer Luff claimed that:

For union members, corruption meant a breach of leaders' duty to represent members' interests. Thus, autocratic leadership, undercutting existing or potential contractual standards, or failing to organize new members could all qualify as corruption. For opponents, the opposite standard applied. When unions simply exerted power, through organizing or bargaining, over employers or sectors of the economy, corruption threatened.¹¹

Luff's point that in labeling corruption, we could fall into the trap of seeing it everywhere rings true. Corruption became what Witwer referred to as a "political interpretation of corruption" utilized by management, conservatives, disgruntled rank and file, to associate with elements of the labor movement. These allegations, whether valid or grossly overexaggerated, could

⁹ For historical tackling of union corruption see the scholarship of David Witwer. *Corruption and Reform in the Teamsters Union* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003) and *Shadow of the Racketeer: Scandal in Organized Labor* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009).

However, as discussed in the Up for Debate conversation in a 2011 issue of *Labor*, scholars have noted the presence and role of corruption, albeit not as thoroughly as Witwer. See: Michael Kazin, *Barons of Labor: The San Francisco Building Trades and Union Power in the Progressive Era* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989); Steve Fraser, *Labor Will Rule: Sidney Hillman and the Rise of American Labor* (New York: Free Press, 1991), 245-255; Nelson Lichtenstein, *The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit: Walter Reuther and the Fate of American Labor* (New York: Basic Books, 1995), 272-276; Sidney Fine, *Without Blare of Trumpets: Walter Drew, the National Erectors' Association, and the Open Shop Movement, 1903-1957* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 18, 51-52, 75; Thaddeus Russell, *Out of the Jungle: Jimmy Hoffa and the Remaking of the American Working Class* (New York: Knopf, 2001); Nelson Lichtenstein, *State of the Union: A Century of American Labor* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 162-166.

¹⁰ David Witwer, "The Chapter Left Untold: Labor Historians and the Problem of Union Corruption," *Labor: Studies in Working Class History of the Americas*, Vol. 8 Issue 2 (Summer 2011): 37-57.

¹¹ Jennifer Luff, "Historical Contributors versus Sectoral Tendencies," Up for Debate in *Labor: Studies in Working Class History of the Americas*, Vol. 8 Issue 2 (Summer 2011): 77.

complicate our understanding, or inflate the presence of it. Instead, Luff claimed that "... 'union corruption' generally appears in one of two contexts: as a canard cynically spread by labor's enemies or as a description of frequently craven union leaders who betrayed militant members' interests."¹² Whereas Arredondo and his tenure as president highlighted this form of inept leadership, this chapter contributes to Luff's analysis of corruption in labor history by highlighting the very tangible and corrupt administration of Lopez. Together, these two administrations highlight an instance where the items that made Arredondo's leadership inept and unresponsive to the rank and file steelworkers were exacerbated under Lopez, likely due to the increased role and intertwined dealings with municipal machine politics.

Regardless of the presence and extent of corruption by these individuals the community retained a desire for Latinos to assume the top-tier positions in the union, which came to fruition in 1970. For a period of six years, two Latinos served as the President of Local 1010: Jesse Arredondo (1970-1973) and Hank "Babe" Lopez (1973-1976). The bilingual newspaper, *Latin Times*, praised the elections of Arredondo and Lopez, even though in the case of Lopez it was often a voice of criticism toward his political loyalties. The newspaper staff saw the elevation of two Latinos into such prominent positions as an indicator of the success of their community within formerly ethnic European power structures. As Latinos noted when they entered municipal politics, the opportunities made available through union politics would allow them a piece of the pie. Within the workscapes of the steel mill, Latinos in union offices could grant their supporters, which included fellow Latinos, opportunities to gain appointments on union staff, either locally, regionally within the district, or sometimes internationally. These

¹² Luff, "Historical Contributors versus Sectoral Tendencies," 79.

appointments offered Latino steelworkers an opportunity to replace the gear of blast furnaces with a suit and tie, removing them from the dangerous work often left to Black and Latino steelworkers.

Although the community and Latino steelworkers desired a Latino President of Local 1010, the careers of Arredondo and Lopez and their respective Presidencies were not equivalent. The ascension of Arredondo to President of Local 1010 is characteristic of a climbing the social ladder through his professional career; however, once at the top, Arredondo's term proved lackluster and prone to ineffective leadership. Lopez proved a staple in Latino representation in Local 1010, serving several terms as Financial Secretary before becoming President. As President, Lopez's corruption and connections to the local machine politics of East Chicago Mayor Robert Pastrick became central points of the opposition. Through a critical examination of Arredondo and Lopez's Presidencies in Local 1010, this section problematizes the often optimistic glorification of breaking racial barriers. Despite overcoming significant obstacles to earn their respective positions in the union, Arredondo and Lopez became part of a culture of corruption.

The conflicts between union leadership and the insurgent rank-and-file movement occurred at a pivotal moment in the history of steel and the labor movement more generally. As Jefferson Cowie observed, "In short, the new occupational opportunities for women and minorities arrived just as the call for broad economic justice was in decline. The result was heightened competition for dwindling opportunity."¹³ Scholars, such as Cowie, Joseph Heathcott, and S. Paul O'Hara have attributed the economic decline of industrial cities, like East Chicago,

¹³ Jefferson Cowie, *Stayin' Alive: The 1970s and the Last Days of the Working Class*. (New York: The New Press, 2010), 239.

during the 1970s to deindustrialization.¹⁴ As David Bensman and Roberta Lynch observed, “The silent, empty mills, like gaping cavities, provoked disbelief, outrage, and fear in dozens of mill communities from Buffalo to Birmingham. Few places were more intensely shaken than the Calumet region of Illinois and Indiana, steel’s heartland.”¹⁵ The dwindling opportunities from the steel industry would force East Chicagoans to turn to municipal politics to provide them with stable employment. The ominous specter of plant closings and mass layoffs served as a vital catalyst for former steelworkers to turn to the municipal political machine.

The Arredondo Presidency

Before Arredondo’s successful campaign for President of Local 1010, he ran unsuccessfully for the office. In 1962, the *Latin Times* gossip column claimed that Arredondo would run for president of 1010. The column noted that an encounter with Arredondo led to the former union official claiming that John Sargent assured him the Rank-and-File Caucus would slate Arredondo for President of Local 1010.¹⁶ The following week an anonymous writer submitted a letter declaring their support for Arredondo for President. In retaining their anonymity, the writer stated that “I know of his past service in the affairs of Local Union 1010. This service needs no questioning. It is one of honesty and efficiency to his fellow workers.”¹⁷ The writer went further to separate Arredondo from the “evil element” in union politics. According to the author, “You find people who are constantly curling their greedy tentacles with their own ‘clicks’ therefore, steelworkers should not be allowed to be trampled under by a few

¹⁴ S. Paul O’Hara has covered this phenomenon in the region with their work on Gary, Indiana. See: “Envisioning the Steel City: The Legend and Legacy of Gary, Indiana,” in *Beyond the Ruins: The Meanings of Deindustrialization*. Ed. Jefferson Cowie and Joseph Heathcott (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003).

¹⁵ David Bensman and Roberta Lynch, *Rusted Dreams: Hard Times in a Steel Community* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 91.

¹⁶ “The Latest by Sara and Eleanor,” *Latin Times*, April 13, 1962.

¹⁷ “Letters,” *Latin Times*, April 20, 1962.

greedy idiots.”¹⁸ The author’s clear demarcation between Arredondo and the “evil element” highlighted the greed and inept leadership from the position’s predecessors. Arredondo, according to the author, offered an opportunity to place in a leader that would be responsive to the union’s rank-and-file.

Arredondo even organized a *Junta*, or meeting, to discuss the upcoming election at the Union Benefica Mexicana, the community’s mutual aide society for its ethnic Mexican residents.¹⁹ The decision to hold a kickoff meeting to weigh the options of running for the office at the ethnic Mexican hub of political activity reflected a clear understanding that Arredondo’s best hope for ardent supporters would come from within the community. However, when the caucus published their slate, Arredondo was not slated for President. Instead, he ran for Secretary of the Grievance Committee.²⁰

Despite the slight in 1962, Arredondo still sought the presidency. The *Latin Times* speculated as much when they declared in a neighborhood news column that “I hear Jesse Arredondo trying realhard [sic] for candidate for president of Local 1010 U.S.W. here’s hoping he makes it.”²¹ In 1964, Arredondo joined a crowded race for the presidency as four caucuses advanced candidates for the race. Two independent candidates, not associated with a caucus or slate, also ran for the office. Arredondo headed the Steelworkers for Action Caucus.²² Whereas incumbents campaigned on their record, opponents alleged “a political machine operation and the domination by the international union.”²³ Arredondo and the Steelworkers for Action Caucus,

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ “Atencion Miembros De La Local 1010,” *Latin Times*, May 18, 1962.

²⁰ “Vote Rank & File,” *Latin Times*, June 15, 1962.

²¹ “Nickie’s Quickies,” *Latin Times*, March 13, 1964.

²² “Steelmen to Elect Officers,” *The Hammond Times*, May 31, 1964.

²³ “Steelworkers Local to Elect New Officer Slates Thursday,” *The Hammond Times*, June 15, 1964.

organized their slate as a reaction to the unresponsive leadership from the political machine of pro-international representatives that dominated Local 1010's politics.

The anti-international stance in the 1964 election promised to generate a lot of momentum at polling places. The union expected steelworkers to cast 10,000 ballots for the approximately 17,000 steelworkers represented by Local 1010.²⁴ This momentum, the incumbents hoped, would divide their opposition enough to allow them to retain their union offices. The challengers hoped that the turnout would result in them being able to oust incumbents across the executive board. Although the incumbents were removed, not all challengers saw their slates gain representation on the executive board. The election proved to be a defeat for Arredondo and the Steelworkers for Action Caucus, which failed to gain any office in the election. Arredondo garnered 1,235 votes, whereas John Sargent, former President of Local 1010 (1941-1943) won the office with 4,138 votes.²⁵ Sargent lambasted not only the previous administrations acquiescing to the international union but also the pro-company contract amendments in 1962. Specifically, Sargent claimed that the amendment allowing steelworkers to work over time, while others were laid off, contributed to the "great deal of demoralization and dissension [that] exists within the local."²⁶

Despite this loss, as well as the criticism leveled about the "political machine operation" emerging in the local, Arredondo's future plans for campaigning proved almost counterintuitive. After witnessing unionists oust the pro-international machine in 1964, Arredondo continued to strengthen connections with East Chicago's political machine. Mayor Walter Jeorse appointed

²⁴ "5 Seek Presidency Over Steelworkers," *The Hammond Times*, June 18, 1964.

²⁵ "Sargent Heads USW's 1010," *The Hammond Times*, June 24, 1964.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

Arredondo to the Fair Employment Practices Commission, a position he retained under Mayor John B. Nicosia. Nicosia even named Arredondo to the city's Board of Health, which included Babe Lopez, who had defeated Arredondo in 1960.²⁷ These connections to the East Chicago political machine were not the first for the Arredondo family. Jesse Arredondo's brother, Miguel Arredondo, ascended to the rank of Detective and Lieutenant in East Chicago's Police Department.²⁸ Their other brother, José, became the first Latino state representative in Indiana and utilized his connections to Nicosia's machine to become the first auditor as well, garnering nearly 20,000 votes (the largest for a Latino candidate in Indiana at the time).²⁹ The Arredondo family, whose father helped organize ethnic Mexican steelworkers during the days of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee, began to tie their ascent of the socio-political ladder with East Chicago's municipal machine.

Arredondo believed he had a shot at the presidency of the local. Recognizing a split between Black steelworkers and their previous coalition of the Rank-and-File, Arredondo pushed for a bloc of support from the Latino steelworkers. Notably, Arredondo was not the only candidate to run on an ethnic vote. Chairman of the Black Caucus, Bill Gailes ran an all-black slate after breaking from Balanoff's slate and dividing their Caucus. The newspaper, *The Times*, noted that some observers labeled the 1970 union election a "racial election."³⁰

The election highlighted the intersections of the voting blocs. Arredondo relied on the Latino vote but did not limit his slate to only Latinos and utilized "vote getters on his slate" to

²⁷ "Health Board 'In Dark' on Cafe Cleanup," *The Hammond Times*, January 20, 1966.

²⁸ See: *Maria's Journey*.

²⁹ "Demo, GOP Leader Vote Saturday," *The Hammond Times*, May 8, 1970.

³⁰ "Arredondo Leads Steelworkers," *The Times*, June 22, 1970.

attract possible voters.³¹ Gailes recognized that “If I’d have supported Balanoff, the whole slate would have walked in.”³² The incumbent president, Bill Bennett, offered a conservative platform between the union and company. Balanoff supporter Mike Olszanski compared the two caucuses in this way: “His [Bennett’s] caucus was pro-International, conservative, anti-communist, and soft on the company, while ours was militant leftwing, and basically a black-white coalition with some support from the Puerto Ricans.”³³ However, Olszanski noted that this isolated Mexican unionists, who served as the majority among the Latino steelworkers. On Election Day, Arredondo narrowly defeated his competition. Due to the split between Balanoff and Gailes, Arredondo, by thirty-nine votes, became the President of Local 1010. However, Arredondo’s slate failed. The only other member of the United Steelworkers for Progress was John Gutierrez (Inner Guard). Despite the ample competition, for the first time in the history of the local, Latinos and African Americans held all but one executive office.³⁴ Support down ballot for candidates on the same slate did not seem to exist, as even tallies suggest that some unionists voting along racial lines, allowing Arredondo, for instance to win the presidency, and his opponent Babe Lopez, to win financial secretary for the fifth time. All four caucuses gained positions in the executive board, which would create strange bedfellows and alliances on the executive board, as Arredondo and his caucus held little political power in the executive board.

The *Latin Times* expressed considerable joy over Arredondo’s election (as well as Lopez’s fifth term as Financials Secretary). In the local gossip column, “Terry’s News & Views,” Terry titled the section after a childhood game, “Doctor, Lawyer, Indian Chief.” He

³¹ “Roberto Flores Oral History,” *Steel Shavings*, 27.

³² “Bill Gailes Oral History,” *Steel Shavings*, 27.

³³ “Mike Olszanski Oral History,” *Steel Shavings*, 28.

³⁴ “Arredondo Leads Steelworkers,” *The Times*, June 22, 1970.

claimed that “I know all of you remember playing that childhood game and few of us do manage to become exactly what we dreamed, some go a notch or two higher than their goal, and a favored few manage to attain undreamed heights. Such is the case of Jesse Arredondo.”³⁵ In a letter to the editor, an East Chicago resident named Raymond J. Vince claimed, “This is only the beginning of a Mexican-American Movement, it’s long overdue, they have been ‘short-changed’ much too long.”³⁶ Along with the positive reinforcement for Arredondo’s recent election, supporters also praised Lopez for his fifth election to Financial Secretary in 1970.³⁷ Recalling the previous year, *Latin Times* noted the election of Arredondo as one of the period’s crucial events.³⁸ Although Arredondo and Lopez often found themselves as opponents in union politics, the Latino community praised their collective accomplishments within the local’s politics. For a community familiar with the patronage system of political machines, the more political capital that members of their community garnered, the greater the benefit to the city’s residents.

Despite all the optimism behind his election, many considered Arredondo’s presidency to be lackluster. This was likely due to the diversified slates encompassing the fourteen-person executive board posts. Union member Jim Robinson claimed that “President Arredondo was a nice guy but not a real strong leader. He took a lot [of] flak and didn’t seem to give it back very strongly.”³⁹ Arredondo’s term in fact included a lack of support for environmental and community concerns and extended an ineffective patronage system into 1010 politics. Although relatively minor incidents for Arredondo’s presidency, such deficits highlighted the feeling of

³⁵ “Terry’s News & Views,” *Latin Times*, June 26, 1970.

³⁶ “Letter to the Editor, Raymond J. Vince,” *Latin Times*, July 3, 1970.

³⁷ “Letter to the Editor, Raymond J. Vince,” *Latin Times*, July 3, 1970. “Alfaro-Arredondo Head Respective Locals,” *Latin Times*, June 26, 1970.

³⁸ “It Happened in 1970,” *Latin Times*, January 8, 1971.

³⁹ “Jim Robinson Oral History,” *Steel Shavings*, 56.

rank-and-file unionists, and even members of the Latino political community, of corruption in the union. These incidents highlight the unresponsive, and sometime inept, leadership of Arredondo as president, in favor of acquiescing to the international.

Recognizing that the steel mills were the “biggest polluters” in Northwest Indiana’s environment, several Rank-and-File members wanted to form an environmental concerns committee. After Joe Gyurko made a motion to form the committee, Mike Olszanski seconded it. According to Olszanski, “Arredondo thought we’d make fools of ourselves. Big mistake.”⁴⁰ Despite Arredondo granting the committee no budget, the group of steelworkers took samples of Lake Michigan and photos of the area. Initially, Arredondo provided what appeared to be some support for the committee. Committee Chairman George Dawkins showed the local samples with above standards of chemical oxygen, oil, and grease. After presenting their initial findings, Arredondo added four more members to the committee.⁴¹ Recognizing that the committee would not idle, “Arredondo suspended the committee after a few meetings and then put his own people on, and they didn’t do anything.”⁴² One of the final actions of the committee occurred at the end of Arredondo’s term. The Environmental Committee agreed to create a seminar for citizens in the region; however, they never set a time, place, or date.⁴³ Unfortunately, Arredondo’s response and the attempts by the steelworkers were not unique to Local 1010. In their study about neighboring Gary, Indiana, Andrew Hurley labeled this phenomenon as “working-class environmentalism.”⁴⁴ Hurley claimed that from within the mills steelworkers organized early

⁴⁰ “Interview with Mike Olszanski,” conducted by James B. Lane *Steel Shaving: Steelworkers Fight Back*, 34.

⁴¹ “Checkers Increased,” *The Times*, February 4, 1973.

⁴² “Interview with Mike Olszanski,” conducted by James B. Lane *Steel Shaving: Steelworkers Fight Back*, 34.

⁴³ “E.C. Plans Pollution Fights Unit,” *The Times*, April 1, 1973.

⁴⁴ See Andrew Hurley, *Environmental Inequalities: Class, Race, and Industrial Pollution in Gary, Indiana, 1945-1980* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), chapter four “Tired of Working in Pollution and Having It Follow Us Home: Working-Class Environmentalism.”

responses to pollution; however, they became disenchanted with lackluster responses from union and management. In response, steelworkers sought alternative strategies to fighting pollution often separate from middle-class reform groups.⁴⁵ By stuffing the environmental concerns committee with his rubber stamps, or people who will vote in accordance to his opinions, Arredondo lessened the momentum of the rank and file while avoiding direct agitation with the company over the concerns of his constituents.

When Inland Steel's female steelworkers presented grievances concerning their working conditions, Arredondo and the union leadership took little action. A dozen of the steelworkers protested outside of the union offices in the harbor neighborhood, claiming that Inland Steel placed them in dangerous new positions during a period of operational phaseouts as the plant began to scale back or eliminate departments. In response to the protest, Arredondo claimed that "the real culprit is Inland Steel."⁴⁶ While the deflection was not new, the activism around gender solidarity reflected a burgeoning development in Local 1010 and the region. Although this small scale protest predates the formalization, in 1977, of a Women's Caucus in the Calumet Region, the organization reflects the changing demographics of steel. According to Mary Margaret Fonow, "It [the Calumet Region] had the highest concentration of women and minority male Steelworkers in the country, and the political culture and institutions of the region made it possible to mobilize women Steelworkers around a class-specific feminist agenda."⁴⁷ The formalization of these movements occurred in contrast to the ambivalent responses from

⁴⁵ Hurley, *Environmental Inequalities*, 78.

⁴⁶ "USW Gals Picket Hall," *The Times*, December 2, 1970.

⁴⁷ Mary Margaret Fonow, *Union Women: Forging Feminism in the United Steelworkers of America*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 96. For more on the organization and activism of women steelworkers in the Calumet Region see Fonow, *Union Women*, chapter five, "Mobilizing Women Steelworkers for Their Rights," and chapter six, "Making Waves: The Calumet District 31 Women's Caucus."

leadership like Arredondo and more token approaches of his successor Lopez. Fonow noted that their early actions intensified and formed connections throughout the district while working as a part of Sadlowski and rank-and-file campaigns in the mid-1970s. These connections, stemming from a push for local autonomy against a pro-international leadership, provided a foundation for connecting networks of gender-based activism throughout the Calumet.⁴⁸

The operational phaseouts preceded a diminishing steel industry especially in the aftermath of signing a new union contract in August of 1971. *The Indianapolis News* proclaimed that “Tens of thousands of steelworkers have been laid off and many furnaces are cold as steel users draw from inventories stockpiled against a strike that was averted five days ago.”⁴⁹ Within the Calumet Region, the numbers of joblessness in steel proved staggering. After laying off 8,000 steelworkers, or half of the hourly labor force, Inland Steel also reduced work weeks. Neighboring Youngstown Sheet and Tube laid off approximately 60% of their 10,000 person workforce.⁵⁰

Arredondo extended his influence as the President of 1010 to create a patronage system outside of the immediate local. When the international leadership of USW needed a Spanish-speaking steelworker to expand their operations into Latin America, Arredondo nominated his friend Leo Arreguin.⁵¹ Within the 1010, Arreguin served as one of the earliest members slated as a part of the Unity Ticket, initially as a Guard then as a Griever for No. 2 Open Hearth.⁵² The staff at *Latin Times* noted that “Arredondo’s recommendation may be hurting him if he decides

⁴⁸ Fonow, *Union Women*, 96.

⁴⁹ “Thousands in Steel Laid Off,” *The Indianapolis News*, August 6, 1971.

⁵⁰ “Layoff Lists Grow,” *The Times*, August 6, 1971.

⁵¹ “Leo Arreguin May Go South,” *Latin Times*, February 11, 1972.

⁵² “Four Latins on One Union Slate,” *Latin Times*, June 14, 1958. “Unity Slate is Winner at Inland,” *The Hammond Times*, September 11, 1956.

to seek reelection as president of one of the largest Union Locals in the nation.”⁵³ In a letter to Arredondo from the local *mutualista*, Union Benefica Mexicana (UBM), President Lorenzo Paredes and Secretary Alfonso F. Martinez vehemently opposed the recommendation. Their letter to Arredondo highlighted the brief and tainted career of Leo Arreguin. According to Paredes and Martinez, Arreguin had “managed to make for himself a record second to none in his dealings within the labor movement and in this community in local and national organizations.”⁵⁴ The letter included several key highlights, such as Arreguin’s dismissal from the Masonic Lodge “Hijos de Juarez” for the “misappropriation of funds,” request to resign as Griever of Local 1010 in 1959 for “mishandling funds,” and a pending lawsuit by the UBM in Lake Superior Court for a missing \$50,000 from the organization’s budget.⁵⁵ Paredes and Martinez concluded that the Latinx community “shunned and ostracized him [Arreguin] publically [sic] for his shoddy conduct...”⁵⁶ Although the international did not appoint Arreguin to the coveted post in Latin America, Arredondo’s amicable association with a seedy character, such as Arreguin, would negatively impact his career.

Arredondo also strengthened ties to the international and their representatives throughout the Calumet Region. Arredondo worked closely with the Subdistrict 2 Director, Joseph Jeneske, particularly when preparing for the expiration of union contracts in 1971. Jeneske, previously worked with Local 1010 Financial Secretary Tom Conway to write checks to nonexistent

⁵³ “Leo Arreguin May Go South,” *Latin Times*, February 11, 1972.

⁵⁴ “Letter to Arredondo from Lorenzo Paredes and Alfonso Martinez,” January 27, 1972. Letter found in Roberto “Bob” Flores Papers. Box 2, “Scrapbook, Political Scandals.” Calumet Regional Archives (Gary, IN)

⁵⁵ “Letter to Arredondo from Lorenzo Paredes and Alfonso Martinez,” January 27, 1972. Letter found in Roberto “Bob” Flores Papers. Box 2, “Scrapbook, Political Scandals.” Calumet Regional Archives (Gary, IN) The letter noted that the pending lawsuit was Case #267-986. Accounting for inflation, this amount is equivalent to approximately \$329,000 today.

⁵⁶ “Letter to Arredondo from Lorenzo Paredes and Alfonso Martinez,” January 27, 1972. Roberto “Bob” Flores Papers.

arbitrators, only to cash them for themselves. This scheme led to Local 1010 being placed on administratorship when Arredondo first entered union politics in the 1950s.⁵⁷ This amicable relationship with another dubious international representative led Arredondo into the ire of the rank and file unionists in 1972. Arredondo, an avid supporter of Samuel Evett, used his position to strengthen Evett's campaign in the Calumet Region. When the union and Democratic Party organized a testimonial to align with a celebration and remembrance ceremony for the 1937 Memorial Day Massacre, Arredondo saw it as a chance to strengthen the campaign. As president, Arredondo attempted to get the executive board to purchase fifty tickets for \$500 for a testimonial in support of Evett. A letter to the editor at *The Times* noted that Arredondo ended up using funds from the PAC fund as opposed to the union's general fund, which the PAC funds did not require approval of the union to purchase these tickets. The anonymous author concluded that "We don't like it [Arredondo circumventing unionists vote] and we don't really believe that any of our old union buddies died on Memorial Day in 1937 to help create an appointive union bureaucracy."⁵⁸

In 1973, the United Steelworkers' decision to sign the Experimental Negotiating Agreement (ENA) with management of the steel companies sparked a renewed effort of grassroots activism. The ENA noted that the steelworkers forfeited their right to strike in return for individual bonuses of \$150 starting with each new contract.⁵⁹ This occurred as an effort to stabilize the steel industry, which had already begun to decline both in the Calumet Region and nationwide. However, steelworkers and Rank-and-File activists viewed forfeiting the right to

⁵⁷ See Needleman, *Black Freedom Fighters in Steel*, 260, footnote 66.

⁵⁸ "No choice allowed," *The Times*, May 25, 1972.

⁵⁹ Mike Olszanski, "The 1010 Rank & File in SWOC/USWA Strikes: A Social Movement Becomes a Bureaucracy," 34. Unpublished manuscript in author's possession. Cowie, *Stayin' Alive*, 39.

strike as a significant disbarment of the working class.⁶⁰ Olszanski noted that “Under ENA, a local could in fact strike, but only on local issues. Since all big ticket economic issues were industry wide, that left the local to negotiate small change items, and made the possibility of a local strike remote.”⁶¹ The ENA attempted to guarantee steady production in basic steels unhampered by strikes or stockpiling. According to Cowie, “forfeiting the right to strike, however, became one of the central bones of contention between the rank-and-file activists, who saw it as disarming the working class, and the union, which saw it as a reasonable bargain and a step forward in institutional strength by providing more security for steel labor.”⁶² This created fruitful ground for struggles in the Calumet region over local autonomy and pro-international forces, both within the District race and eventually the Local 1010 elections.

The frustration by steelworkers in the locals helped shape a crucial District Direct race in the Chicago and Calumet Region. In 1972, Joseph Germano’s position as the District 31 Director was open, after nearly three-decades of his incumbency. Germano handpicked his assistant director Sam Evett as his successor and Evett, who never worked in the mill, gained the support of USW President Abel, Germano, the entire USW staff, and Mayor Richard Daley, a crucial political player for Chicago’s southside, which fell within the USW’s 31st District.⁶³ This support extended into Lake County, Indiana, where Daley’s counterpart Robert Pastrick and members of the Democratic Party throughout the region expressed their support for Evett.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Cowie, *Stayin’ Alive*, 40.

⁶¹ Olszanski, “The 1010 Rank & File in SWOC/USWA Strikes,” 35.

⁶² Cowie, *Stayin’ Alive*, 40.

⁶³ Cowie, *Stayin’ Alive*, 38-39.

⁶⁴ See: “USWA Honors Samuel C. Evett,” *The Times*, May 10, 1972 and “Evett: ‘Passing of Power,’” *The Times*, May 14, 1972.

However, Evett's candidacy would not occur without contest. Ed "Oilcan Eddie" Sadlowski threw his hardhat into the ring. Sadlowski, a young, third-generation steelworker from the Calumet Region, quickly ascended the ladder of leadership from when he started working at U.S. Steel South Works in 1956 to becoming president of Local 65 in 1964 (at the age of twenty-five).⁶⁵ Relying on the frustration with ENA, Sadlowski initiated a grassroots campaign for District 31 Director in the largest district in the union. Under the slogan "It's time to fight back," Sadlowski's campaign incorporated the amicable relationship between the union's administration and management, the union's support for speed-ups, and the exclusion of African Americans, Latinos, and women from the International Executive Board.⁶⁶ However, as Cowie noted, "When Journalist Judith Coburn interviewed him, she found the missing piece in his new working-class hero persona- a piece largely missing from the male-dominated insurgencies of the first half of the seventies in general: respect for the role of women."⁶⁷ At a time where the racial and gender makeup of the steelworkers and labor movement changed, Sadlowski's attention to these issues gave him leverage over Evett.⁶⁸

The international, as well as proxies for Arredondo at Local 1010, diligently worked to deny Sadlowski the opportunity to be on the ballot. The election rules stipulated that a candidate could only be listed on a ballot if they received nominations from at least 18 locals in the district. However, despite District 31 having 287 locals, no opposition candidate had appeared on the

⁶⁵ "USW Contest Emerges," *The Times*, October 16, 1972.

⁶⁶ Cowie, *Stayin' Alive*, 40.

⁶⁷ Cowie, *Stayin' Alive*, 41.

⁶⁸ As Cowie observed, "Unions, dwindling in strength and numbers to their pre-New Deal status, also grew to become some of the most diverse institutions in American life." See Cowie, *Stayin' Alive*, 239-240. On gender, see Fonow, *Union Women* and for race see Needleman, *Black Freedom Fighters in Steel*.

ballot since 1946.⁶⁹ Sadlowski allies and proxies noted that the incumbent Germano changed meeting times for nominations, often secretly or without notice.⁷⁰ Recalling their experience in the nominating process at Local 1010, one steelworker described:

Two ballot boxes, slotted tops unlocked and folded back out of the way, were placed in the front of the hall. Six persons at a time from each of two sides were invited to step forward and cast their ballots, and then to please leave the hall. When the crowd thinned out somewhat it was announced that ballots would be passed out to those who remained.⁷¹

The alleged comments noted “unlocked” ballot boxes completely open for members to cast their ballots. If true, the blatant manipulation offered the election committee at Local 1010, appointed by Evett supporter, Arredondo, complete control to alter the results. However, the fervor against Arredondo, Evett, and the status quo proved quite an obstacle at Local 1010.

Dissenting steelworkers took to community newspapers to channel their frustration with the election’s integrity. Phrases within the Local 1010 newspaper criticizing Sadlowski supporters included “dissidents” and “cry babies,” reflecting the clear bias internally against Sadlowski. One steelworker and Sadlowski supporter, asked, “If I am a ‘dissident’ isn’t the right to dissent a privilege guaranteed to steelworker members? Or must we all fall in line to avoid being subjected to his irrational name calling?”⁷² Arredondo’s appointee and proxy, Joe Wolanin, noted that “Attempts to cast shadows in the outcome are political ploys by sore losers, make no mistake about it.”⁷³ However, Sadlowski’s supporters noted that Wolanin, as well as his boss, Arredondo, “are unhappy over the dissidents because these dissidents threaten to overturn

⁶⁹ John Fraire, “Campaign of Ed Sadlowski,” (Undergraduate Thesis, 1978), 61-62. Fraire worked at Inland Steel from June 1976 until August of 1977, as well as some summers.

⁷⁰ Fraire, “Campaign of Ed Sadlowski,” 62.

⁷¹ “Members cheated,” *The Times*, December 17, 1972.

⁷² “Dissent a right?,” *The Times*, January 3, 1973.

⁷³ “Criticism rapped,” *The Times*, December 8, 1972.

their playpen with elections in February and June of 1973.”⁷⁴ The Evett and Sadlowski contest could solidify Arredondo’s opportunities for reelection, or offer a bleak premonition of his possible struggles to retain his office.

In February 1973, steelworkers throughout the district lined up to choose between Sadlowski and Evett. Prior to the election Evett outpaced Sadlowski by a six-to-one ratio in nominations across the district’s locals.⁷⁵ Although initially ahead of Evett by a couple thousand votes, results suddenly ceased to come in around midnight. As one supporter for Sadlowski noted, “Now, in Chicago politics this can mean only one thing: it means they’re stealing the election.”⁷⁶ When the results came back in, Evett beat Sadlowski by approximately 2,000 votes. Although Sadlowski and his supporters would push for a supervised re-run of the election, which would occur in November 1974, the immediate fallout of the charges of suspicion had immediate consequences for Arredondo and his position in 1010.

Arredondo stepped aside, after serving as President of Local 1010 for three years. “Before the rumor mill speeds into full swing,” he explained his decision about not running for reelection in the pages of the *Local 1010 Steelworker*. He stated:

A union president has to make many decisions. Union politicians slither up to them and fill them full of lies. Multiply the number of people who think their own situation is the most important one or who feel wronged by the company in areas the union can do nothing about by the number of political factions and you end up with a lot of people voting not for a better union but for some small token of revenge. Add to that the racial overtones. I am very proud of my heritage as a Mexican American and feel deeply distressed about the good possibility it will be used against me. My withdrawal may help to prevent race from becoming an issue.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ “Playpen threatened,” *The Times*, December 17, 1972.

⁷⁵ “Evett Leads 6-1 In USW Race,” *The Times*, December 10, 1972.

⁷⁶ Quoted in Cowie, *Stayin’ Alive*, 42.

⁷⁷ “Arredondo’s Address,” *Local 1010 Steelworker*, March 1973.

Although these final remarks on his decision to not run credit a frustration with union politics, the newspapers noted more opportunistic reasons. This decision struck many as last-second, and some gossip columns thought his withdrawal only set the stage for his re-election campaign.⁷⁸ *The Times* noted that “The current president of Local 1010, Jesse Arredondo, said before the election that he would not run again if the local did not give Evett a plurality of votes.”⁷⁹ This comment referred to the District 31 Director position, which saw renowned, youthful Ed Sadlowski defeat Samuel Evett 3,535 votes to 1,910 in 1010.⁸⁰ The contest, which Sadlowski won among Local 1010 voters but lost district-wide, was scheduled for a re-run. After eighteen months, the Department of Labor confirmed significant irregularities and fraud in the election and supervised a new election which Sadlowski won by a two-to-one margin (39,637 to 20,058 votes).⁸¹ The *Latin Times* claimed that Jesse Arredondo’s support for Evett made him one of several “strange bedfellows” in the District 31 Director election.⁸² However, the paper reported that Arredondo, as well as his peers Gavino Galvan, Hank “Babe” Lopez, Alex Bailey, Joe Hurley, and Leo Hernandez, all became more amicable with each other and the International in hopes of securing a newly vacant International Representative Job.⁸³ When Evett lost to the growing Rank-and-File Movement under Sadlowski, Arredondo stepped down from the Presidency to take a staff job.⁸⁴ While Latino leaders across the union double-downed on their support for the pro-international United Steelworkers, Sadlowski and his allies moved to

⁷⁸ “Harbor Whispers,” *Latin Times*, August 4, 1972.

⁷⁹ “Balanoff to Run For Rank, File,” *The Times*, May 6, 1973.

⁸⁰ “Balanoff to Run For Rank, File,” *The Times*, May 6, 1973.

⁸¹ “Sادلowski Officially District 31 Director,” *The Times*, December 3, 1974. “The new man of steel: Ed Sadlowski raises the beams,” *Chicago Tribune*, December 29, 1974.

⁸² “Harbor Whispers,” *Latin Times*, September 13, 1972.

⁸³ “Harbor Whispers,” *Latin Times*, May 19, 1972. “Harbor Whispers,” *Latin Times*, September 13, 1972.

⁸⁴ “Interview with Mike Olszanski,” conducted by James B. Lane *Steel Shaving: Steelworkers Fight Back*, 57.

formalize their grassroots movement into the national Steelworkers Fight Back movement in 1975.

“Number One Latin Leader!”: Lopez’s Campaign for Presidency of Local 1010

With no incumbent present for the presidential election, newspapers began to speculate on possible successors to Arredondo. Altering Lopez’s nickname “Babe” to “the Baby,” the bilingual *Latin Times* noted in their social column that “Hank ‘the Baby’ Lopez is trying to make a big jump from putting his mark on checks. I’m afraid it takes more than knowing how to mark your X on a check to handle the job.”⁸⁵ While covering James Balanoff’s plans to run for the presidency for the first time since his defeat to Arredondo in 1970, *The Times* noted that: the “Administration choice to run for 1010 president against Balanoff is the union’s current Financial Secretary, Henry (Babe) Lopez. Lopez has made no formal announcement of his candidacy but his bumper stickers are in evidence around the Calumet Region.”⁸⁶

Could Lopez possibly follow in Arredondo’s footsteps? An editorial in *Latin Times* grappled with this question. The editorial claimed that:

Local 1010 needs more responsive leadership to assure that the steelworker gets what is rightfully his. Balanoff could bring back initiative and independence. Hank has to have formidable support among the Latins. This support does not exist. The ‘Hot Tamale’ constituency, as Hank refers to the Latins, has a nagging doubt as to the ‘Babes’ real intentions.⁸⁷

Another article, “What Are the Babe’s Chances For President of Local 1010,” directly stated that “If we had to predict “Hank’s” chances as of this date, we would be forced to say that he couldn’t win.”⁸⁸ This article followed the editorial in casting doubt on Lopez’s true intentions for

⁸⁵ “Tillie” *Latin Times*, May 11, 1973.

⁸⁶ “Balanoff to Run for Rank, File,” *The Times*, May 6, 1973.

⁸⁷ “Editorial,” *Latin Times*, May 11, 1973.

⁸⁸ “What Are The Babe’s Chances For President of Local 1010?,” *Latin Times*, April 27, 1973.

desiring the presidency. According to the author, “Hank’s sincerity seemed to lessen with each year that he was in power. Where once he was one of the ANTI’s his associations and other enterprises bound him more tightly to the establishment.”⁸⁹ Lopez’s growing association with the establishment and away from his roots as anti-establishment remained a clear and present issue for the “Tamale constituency.”

However, there was not always hostility between Lopez and the community. Just a few years earlier, *Latin Times* declared “Hank ‘Babe’ Lopez... an outstand[sic] citizen!” The article declared that “Hank ‘Babe’ Lopez has demonstrated, not through words, through deeds that his love for his fellow man is a deep-seated feeling which can draw upon his time and energies at any time of the day or night.”⁹⁰ The community of East Chicago held a testimonial banquet for Lopez to celebrate his community involvement. Among his accolades included numerous appointments to committees in the city, such as the Committee on Economic and Social Opportunities, Citizens Education Committee, the Board of Health, and groups such as the NAACP, the Union Benefica Mexicana, and the League of United Latin American Citizens.⁹¹ However, this community support proved fleeting.

Despite the lack of support from within the Latina and Latino community, many opponents to “Babe” Lopez recognized his leadership qualities and chances in the upcoming election. Robinson, who criticized Arredondo for his lack of strong leadership, stated that “Hank Lopez was a formidable opponent, a very affable politician who’d stand out on the corner of Michigan and Guthrie talking to the many people during shift changes who stopped in at Busy

⁸⁹ “What Are The Babe’s Chances For President of Local 1010?,” *Latin Times*, April 27, 1973.

⁹⁰ “Hank ‘Babe’ Lopez... an outstanding citizen!,” *Latin Times*, April 13, 1973.

⁹¹ “Steelworkers’ Testimonial Planned for Lopez,” *The Hammond Times*, April 5, 1967.

Corner Drugs.”⁹² In announcing his bid for the presidency, Lopez addressed this establishment-identity that many associated with him. Central to his platform was that “he will make full reports to the membership on next year’s negotiations.”⁹³

Lopez and Arredondo had a complicated relationship during their time in the union; however, this was not unique to their relationship in union politics. Roberto Flores switched slates in 1973 to run on Lopez’s slate as Treasurer. Flores stated “Jumping slates can cause bad blood; but if a rival slate offers you a higher position, it’s an opportunity you might not otherwise have.”⁹⁴ Despite Lopez’s entry into the leadership of Local 1010 resulting in Arredondo losing his reelection for Financial Secretary in 1960, the two developed a working relationship in time for Lopez’s bid for the presidency. Responding to Arredondo’s alliance with Lopez for his presidential bid, steelworker Roberto Gil claimed that “both men are letting our Union be controlled by outsiders who have nothing to do with our Union...”⁹⁵ Although Arredondo and Lopez had more often been in opposing caucuses and never slated together, their mutual support for Evett and cozy relationship with the international led the two to become “strange bedfellows” once again.

Within this complicated relationship between Arredondo and Lopez, as well as the lack of support within the pages of the community’s *Latin Times*, arose a central issue: should Latinos support Lopez solely because he is Latino? Just days before the election, an editorial in the *Latin Times* asked the same question. The author presented the problem directly: “Since he [Lopez] is a Latin consequently we should endorse him. But the truth is that before we endorse a candidate

⁹² “Jim Robinson Oral History,” *Steel Shaving: Steelworkers Fight Back*, 57.

⁹³ “Lopez Seeks Office,” *The Times*, May 17, 1973.

⁹⁴ “Roberto Flores Oral History,” *Steel Shaving: Steelworkers Fight Back*, 57.

⁹⁵ “Harbor Whispers,” *Latin Times*, March 16, 1973.

we have to explain to the community what this man has done not for a small clique of individuals but for the community.”⁹⁶ The article proceeded to question Lopez’s involvement in the community, asking questions such as “When have the Latinos seen Hank boycotting the stores where they sell non-union lettuce?” or “Where was Hank when the Baran issue erupted at Washington High School?”⁹⁷ Although the article never explicitly answered the question posed in its introduction, it concluded with an illuminating hypothetical: “If we supported Hank Lopez and he were to win (which we seriously doubt) we would be sorry for the type of things his advisors could get him to do. It would be shameful to be reminded that ‘He was our man.’”⁹⁸ Just six years before Lopez’s announced his intention to run for President of 1010, the community lauded him as an “outstanding citizen.” However, years of a “no sweat” mentality, led Lopez to ignore the struggles of his community.⁹⁹ Whereas men such as Arredondo and Lopez started their careers as infallible examples of the Latino community, their involvement within Local 1010 served only to cheapen their status as those that paved the way.

Regardless of the lack of support in the *Latin Times*, history repeated itself once again as Balanoff lost the presidential seat to another Latino, Hank ‘Babe’ Lopez. Despite the reunion between Balanoff and Bill Gales, whose separation and formation of a Black Caucus led to Balanoff’s defeat to Arredondo by thirty-nine votes, Lopez secured the presidency 3,948 to 3,526 votes.¹⁰⁰ How had Lopez managed to secure a narrow victory, especially when many held Balanoff as the “sure-in” victor?

⁹⁶ “Latinos Should Support Latinos,” *Latin Times*, June 8, 1973.

⁹⁷ “Latinos Should Support Latinos,” *Latin Times*, June 8, 1973.

⁹⁸ “Latinos Should Support Latinos,” *Latin Times*, June 8, 1973.

⁹⁹ “No sweat” is a phrase that many articles credit as being a slogan for Lopez.

¹⁰⁰ “Steelman Pick Lopez as Leader,” *The Times*, June 26, 1973.

In a surprising twist, the *Latin Times*, which had criticized the Lopez campaign heavily in the election season, declared “Lopez No. 1 Latin Leader.” In discussing the “uphill struggle” of Lopez’s campaign, the staff of the newspaper acknowledged their previous stance as well as how Lopez managed to defeat Balanoff. According to the newspaper’s staff:

We must acknowledge the fact that the official mandate of some city officials including the Latin element involved in politics was welcomed, respected, accepted and supported by the steelworkers’ community and other elements working hand in hand with what some people call the political machine. Without this support Lopez never could have been elected president of the United Steelworkers of America, Local 1010.¹⁰¹

The article noted some of these influences to include Vince Kirrin, publisher of the *Calumet News* and former Superintendent of the Water Department, Lake County Democratic Chairman and Mayor of East Chicago, Robert Pastrick, “Latin Kingmaker,” Robert Segovia, and East Chicago City Attorney Jay Given.¹⁰² Surprisingly, these endorsements and their financial support occurred despite some believing that they would not. In a “Letter to the Editor,” Raymond Vince claimed that “If Hank Lopez thinks for one second the Lake County Democrats will help his cause, he is badly in error, politics today, and questionable labor leaders are ‘prominent’ these days, finally the people are awakening.”¹⁰³ Vince suggested that the “awakening” of the community meant that ineffective and questionable leaders at all levels would slowly find themselves confronted with past misdeeds and ideally removed. These connections between Lopez (as a leading figure in the labor sector of the region) and the leading characters in the Democratic machine of Northwest Indiana, would prove crucial for Lopez’s demise as he found himself more intertwined with the cronyism of a culture of corruption in his role as President of 1010.

¹⁰¹ “Lopez No. 1 Latin Leader,” *Latin Times*, June 29, 1973.

¹⁰² “Lopez No. 1 Latin Leader,” *Latin Times*, June 29, 1973.

¹⁰³ “Letter to the Editor,” *Latin Times*, May 4, 1973.

Lopez's inauguration as President of Local 1010 highlighted a crucial turning point in the local's history. As the *Latin Times* claimed, "politics is sometimes a dirty game, but politics is also interesting and beautiful. Hank Lopez, through politics became the choice of the people who placed him as the Number One Latin Leader!!! Now the steelworkers have 'to make the best' of Lopez's leadership."¹⁰⁴ Although previous administrations retained a connection to municipal politics, Lopez's tenure as President of 1010 heightened the visibility of the two bedfellows: municipal government and labor. In his inauguration address, Lopez claimed that "Tonight is one of the greatest events of my life." However, he recognized that "A few people aren't here tonight simply because they don't like the idea of being a union member. Their ranks are growing and the labor movement will die if we don't reverse that trend."¹⁰⁵ In the 1970s, Lopez's recognition that the labor movement began to stagnate, and even decline, accurately reflected the national trend. According to one steelworker, "The average worker became disenchanted, and people were elected with a quarter of the members voting."¹⁰⁶ However, in its three brief years, the Lopez administration provided its opposition with a new, internal threat to the unionization of USW: blatant corruption.

"OUR BUCKS DISAPPEAR HERE": Corruption, Administratorship, and Murder: Hard Times at Local 1010

Within two years it became evident to many members of the rank and file that "a type of ward politics had crept in [to the local] by the time Hank Lopez was president."¹⁰⁷ Members began to vehemently critique and demand financial reports from Lopez's administration, often

¹⁰⁴ "Lopez No. 1 Latin Leader," *Latin Times*, June 29, 1973.

¹⁰⁵ "Hank Lopez Inauguration Address," July 1973. Reprinted in Lane, *Steel Shaving: Steelworkers Fight Back*, 57.

¹⁰⁶ "Mike Mezo Oral History." *Steel Shaving: Steelworkers Fight Back*, 62.

¹⁰⁷ "Mike Mezo Oral History." *Steel Shaving: Steelworkers Fight Back*, 61.

reminding him of his call for transparency when he ran for the position in 1973. Although Arredondo's term as President of 1010 proved lackluster, Lopez's term proved to be three years of intense drama meant to highlight the growing presence of corruption in the local and uproot it from its firm entrenchment. Opponents to Lopez and the machine politics of East Chicago, as well as those that infiltrated the Union, focused on Lopez as the primary reason for corruption.

The new publication, *Voice of the Rank and File*, at Inland Steel, served as an instrumental medium for steelworkers' frustration with Lopez. Particularly, the official newspaper of Local 1010 proved overly pro-Lopez and the Combined Caucus. As President, and with the Executive Board under his control, Lopez appointed an ally, Martin Connelly, to serve as the paper's editor. In distributing an alternative publication, the Rank-and-File circumvented the dominating reach of Lopez's patronage machine (and thus the International) within Local 1010. The instances of frustration with Lopez allow us a glimpse at how the Rank-and-File Caucus defined corruption and what issues they found pressing.



Courtesy of *Steel Shaving: Steelworkers Fight Back*, 62

By using a comparison to a well-known phrase from President Harry Truman, “The Buck Stops Here,” a comic in the publication placed blame for Local 1010’s financial situation

literally at the desk of Lopez. According to Cliff “Cowboy” Mezo, “The Lopez Administration has financial troubles. They have overspent every month to pay off political commitments.”¹⁰⁸ As the cartoon noted, the Rank-and-File members knew that “our bucks disappear here,” at the desk of Lopez; however, they had to convince others that this was the case as well. Through targeting the intimate relationship between Lopez and Vince Kirrin, and the many spent on the annual Christmas Party, the opposition in the union hoped to build a foundation for ousting Lopez in 1976.

Lopez received attention for his amicable relationship with Vince Kirrin, publisher of the pro-machine politics newspaper, *The Calumet News*. Possibly in exchange for his financial support of Lopez’s presidential campaign, Kirrin received the bid to print Local 1010’s ballots. According to an article by the young son of Cliff “Cowboy” Mezo, named Mike, Kirrin received \$12,000 dollars for printing \$1,500 worth of ballots.¹⁰⁹ Prior to Lopez’s election, the *Latin Times* called for Mayor Pastrick to expose the connection between Kirrin and Lopez and claimed that “Mr. Kirrin is attempting to cloud his investment in the election of the Presidency of Local 1010.”¹¹⁰ The Kirrin-Lopez relationship became a prime example of loyalty. According to the *Latin Times* “no one can really appreciate the loyalty of the two, whether Kirrin would cut off his nose to spite his face and please the Babe is yet to be seen – but that’s loyalty.”¹¹¹ When Lopez ran for president, the *Latin Times* reported that Kirrin provided Lopez’s campaign, “unlimited financial and other support.”¹¹² These fiscal connections led the opposition to believe that Lopez

¹⁰⁸ “Cliff Mezo in *Voice of the Rank and File*, 1974. Quoted in Lane, *Steel Shaving: Steelworkers Fight Back*, 62.

¹⁰⁹ *Voice of the Rank and File*, June 1975. Quoted in Lane, *Steel Shaving: Steelworkers Fight Back*, 63.

¹¹⁰ “Expose Kirrin-Lopez Vendetta,” *Latin Times*, May 4, 1973.

¹¹¹ “Latins Should Support Latins,” *Latin Times*, June 8, 1973.

¹¹² “Lopez No. 1 Latin Leader,” *Latin Times*, June 29, 1973.

granted Kirrin the contract in exchange for his work to place him at the head of 1010. James Balanoff requested an investigation into previous costs for ballots and Mezo asked for the costs from two years back.¹¹³

However, the Rank-and-File Caucus also attacked the Lopez Administration over their expenditures for the annual Christmas Party, mostly their growing tab for booze at the Officer's Party. There appeared to be a discrepancy with how much the local allocated the leadership for their officer's cart at the Christmas party. According to Mezo, the union voted and approved \$650 for the party's budget, to which Lopez countered that the union membership approved \$600.¹¹⁴ At a follow-up meeting, Mezo asked how much the 1973 Party cost the union, to which Financial Secretary James Alexander responded \$760.¹¹⁵ Although minor compared to the printing contract awarded to Kirrin, the Christmas Party became another instance of corruption. However, whereas the Kirrin contract highlighted the manipulation of elected office to assist others, all within the confines of grey corruption, or legal albeit unethical acts, the Christmas Party became an example of corrupt leadership.

The pressure from the Rank-and-File Caucus worked. Sub-District Director Peter Calacci and Director Ed Sadlowski believed that Local 1010 mishandled funds and placed the union on administratorship under Lopez's former running mate, Fred Gardner.¹¹⁶ Director Sadlowski commented that administratorship "was not a common" action and estimated that "98 percent of the 350 locals in the USW have never been placed in administratorship."¹¹⁷ Yet, the international

¹¹³ Local 1010 Minutes, September 19, 1974 as quoted in Lane, *Steel Shaving: Steelworkers Fight Back*, 62.

¹¹⁴ Local 1010 Minutes, November 7, 1974 as quoted in Lane, *Steel Shaving: Steelworkers Fight Back*, 62.

¹¹⁵ Local 1010 Minutes, December 5, 1974 as quoted in Lane, *Steel Shaving: Steelworkers Fight Back*, 62.

¹¹⁶ "1010, 1011 Face Probe," *The Times*, March 2, 1975. "Western Union Telegram, IW Abel to Bob Flores," Roberto Flores Papers, CRA 371.

¹¹⁷ "1010,1011 Face Probe," *The Times*, March 2, 1975.

placed 1010 in administratorship twice in twenty years.¹¹⁸ However, the Commission determined that all of the twenty-two officers in his administration should be replaced. The commission ruled that “Although the cost is staggering, no evidence was shown indicating impropriety or falsifying of cost.... Although it is extremely urgent that Local Union 1010 address its fiduciary responsibilities and obligations immediately...”¹¹⁹ Lopez wasted no time in expressing his frustration to the media. Lopez “labeled the procedures as undemocratic, and maintained that no investigation was made before the local was taken over and the officers were suspended.”¹²⁰ Although the opposition knew that corruption permeated Lopez’s administration, they were unable to find irrefutable evidence.¹²¹ If they could not oust Lopez through an investigation, they would have to ensure that he was not re-elected.

Frustrated with the blatant corruption, several left-leaning union members turned to the twice-beaten Jim Balanoff to run against Lopez in 1976. According to Sadlowski, Balanoff “wasn’t enthusiastic because he had been defeated twice and didn’t think he was sellable.”¹²² Reuniting with Gailes, who headed the African American Caucus and whose separation from Balanoff allowed Arredondo to win in 1970, Balanoff formed an impressive slate. Instead of seeking office himself, Gailes requested that Balanoff slate William Andrews, a young African American crane operator, for Vice-President.¹²³ Despite Lopez’s fiscal troubles as President of 1010, Balanoff and Andrews Rank-and-File slate faced significant challenges.

¹¹⁸ The first in 1955 under Don Lutes.

¹¹⁹ “Commission Report,” as quoted in Lane, *Steel Shaving: Steelworkers Fight Back*, 63.

¹²⁰ “USW’s Lopez ‘Bitter,’” *The Times*, May 5, 1975.

¹²¹ “Case #A-3239- Investigation,” May 1, 1975. Roberto Flores Papers, CRA 371.

¹²² “Ed Sadlowski Oral History,” in Lane, *Steel Shaving: Steelworkers Fight Back*, 64.

¹²³ “Bill Gailes Oral History,” in Lane, *Steel Shaving: Steelworkers Fight Back*, 64.

Balanoff's pursuit of the Local 1010 presidency became one of the many efforts by steelworkers across the nation to reform the union. Nationally, Ed Sadlowski, the District 31 Director in Chicago for the union, led this push when he ran for the presidency of the United Steelworkers International against Lloyd McBride. This campaign continued Sadlowski's 1973 campaign for District 31 Director that proclaimed the union should "Elect a Steelworker."¹²⁴ Although his bid was unsuccessful, Sadlowski's reform movement within steel inspired countless pushes at the level of the local against corruption and conservative unionism by Rank-and-File movements.¹²⁵ These pushes included the effort by Balanoff to oust the pro-international President of Local 1010.

The race between Balanoff and Lopez wastense. First, when Balanoff announced his presidency he said his slate was the anti-corruption ticket. According to Balanoff, 1010 was "reeling from the exposure of corruption and fraud investigations. The membership has had enough of inept leadership which has botched up just about everything its touched."¹²⁶ However, his friend Cowboy Mezo noted that "To many of his [Lopez's] supporters, what Babe was doing wasn't that bad. 'Those gringos have been stealing for many years: it's time us Mexicans got a little bit of the pie.' I don't think he thought he was doing bad."¹²⁷ Whether a verbatim claim, or not, Mezo's point highlighted a vital transition. Previously, Latinos argued for good government

¹²⁴ For more on Sadlowski's 1973 campaign see: David Bensman and Roberta Lynch, *Rusted Dreams: Hard Times in a Steel Community*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 132-134.

¹²⁵ See: Mike Stout, *Homestead Steel Mill: The Final Ten Years*, for an account of the Rank-and-File Movement in Local 1397. See: James B. Lane, *Steel Shavings. Steelworkers Fight Back: Inland's Local Union 1010 and the Sadlowski/Balanoff Campaigns, Rank and File Insurgency in the Calumet Region During the 1970s*. (Gary, IN: Cattails Press, 2000). The steelworkers' struggle was an extension of the working class movements described by Jefferson Cowie in *Stayin' Alive: The 1970s and the Last Days of the Working Class* (New York: The New Press, 2010).

¹²⁶ "Balanoff Seeks '1010' Post," *The Times*, February 29, 1976.

¹²⁷ "Cliff 'Cowboy' Mezo Oral History," *Steel Shaving: Steelworkers Fight Back*, 66.

and responsive leadership; however, now they perpetrated corrupt acts. Second, Lopez more often ignored these discussions about corruption, instead opting to redbait Balanoff. Lopez's slate, the Combined Caucus, distributed bumper-stickers reading "Keep the Commies Out of 1010" and "Vote for True Americans, But Don't Vote for Communist Balanoff."¹²⁸ Lopez's flyers pleaded with union members to "Keep It An American Labor Organization."¹²⁹

Under the flag of the Combined Caucus, Lopez and his colleagues campaigned for reelection against Balanoff and the Rank-and-File movement. Lopez and the Combined Caucus said they were "Combined for workers – instead of against them."¹³⁰ The flyer boasted Lopez's accomplishments, particularly in embracing women steelworkers as full members of the union apparatus. He appointed the first woman to both the Safety Committee and Negotiations Committee.¹³¹ The flyer noted how extensive Lopez's machine was within the union as he had the support of twenty-seven of the twenty-nine Grievors and pulled together a diverse slate of officers, which included Bob Flores as Treasurer, James Alexander and Dave Brooks, two Black steelworkers as Financial and Recording Secretary respectfully, and Darlene "Doll Morris" Mills, a Black woman, as a Trustee.¹³²

When the April election arrived, union members took to fourteen different polls to decide in a ten candidate race for president whether Balanoff or Lopez would secure the presidency.¹³³ By nearly a two-to-one margin, Balanoff became the next President of Local 1010, defeating

¹²⁸ "Philip Nyden Oral History," *Steel Shaving: Steelworkers Fight Back*, 66.

¹²⁹ "Combined Caucus Comments, 1976 Flyer," *Steel Shaving: Steelworkers Fight Back*, 67.

¹³⁰ "Combined Caucus Candidates," 1976 Pamphlet. Roberto Flores Papers, CRA 371.

¹³¹ "Combined Caucus Candidates," 1976 Pamphlet. Roberto Flores Papers, CRA 371.

¹³² "Combined Caucus Candidates," 1976 Pamphlet. Roberto Flores Papers, CRA 371.

¹³³ "Steelworker Vote Begins," *The Times*, April 8, 1976. As later reported, the other eight candidates split seven hundred votes.

Lopez 6084 to 3081.¹³⁴ The papers held that it was the “biggest turnout in 1010 history.”¹³⁵ Responding to Balanoff’s call for unity, Lopez stated that he would “help however possible to make the union better.”¹³⁶ However, as recent months would show, Lopez worked hard to prevent Balanoff from winning and staining the victory. Balanoff recalled that Lopez and his allies were not only unsupportive but on Election Day, he claimed there was an even more nefarious plot in the works. According to the testimony of Balanoff, committee member Dale Bronson told Balanoff on election day that although he would win “you ain’t going to be installed. The election is all screwed up already.”¹³⁷ According to Balanoff, Lopez told him that he “would never sit in the president’s chair.” Lopez’s brother and secretary-treasurer of the election committee, Raymond Lopez told Balanoff that “You might get in, but you will be out. This election is going to be out.”¹³⁸ The following day, acting on Lopez’s orders, members of the election committee burned supposedly unused ballots.¹³⁹ Unable to utilize his machine and the international to retain his office, Lopez’s allies would turn to the Secretary of Labor to overturn an election that he and his cohort failed to fix.

Despite Balanoff defeating Lopez by a near two-to-one margin, Lopez attempted to steal his reelection. The first charge appeared when an East Chicago police officer, John Cardona, sped down the Dan Ryan Expressway to deliver ballots with poll watcher William Carlotta, a Lopez ally.¹⁴⁰ This incident prompted a larger Department of Labor investigation leading to the

¹³⁴ “Local 1010 Election Results Tally,” Roberto Flores Papers, Box 1 Folder 1. Calumet Regional Archive (Gary, IN)

¹³⁵ “New Leadership Voted by ‘1010,’” *The Times*, April 11, 1976.

¹³⁶ “‘1010’ Fighting Union Promised by Balanoff,” *The Times*, April 12, 1976.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ *Marshall v. Local 1010, United Steelworkers, etc.* 664 F. 2d 144- Court of Appeals, 7th Circuit. (1981)

¹⁴⁰ “Police Aide Questioned,” *The Times*, April 15, 1976.

Seventh Circuit Court. The court case, *Marshall v. Local 1010 (1981)*, highlighted the corrupt tactics utilized by Lopez and his Official Combined Caucus. However, the Combined Caucus, defeated in the 1976 election, initiated the investigation for their failure to ensure transparent elections, hindering their challengers in the Rank-and-File. Balanoff stated that “the case could set a dangerous precedent. It could open the way for incumbents who are worried they will lose an election to knowingly have their election committee break the rules and have an election thrown out by their own manipulations.”¹⁴¹

Marshall v. Local 1010 offered a crucial examination of the influence of Lopez, and the attempts of his colleagues to manipulate elections. In preparation for the 1976 election, Lopez and his administration drafted an election committee of eighty-seven individuals, eighty of whom were allies to Lopez and the incumbents.¹⁴² In the testimony of several of these committee members, the attempt by Lopez to steal the election became clear. Lopez’s Combined Caucus held crucial positions on the election committee of Local 1010. Martin Connelly served as its chairman, as well as the salaried editor of the union’s newspaper (a patronage position filled by Lopez when he became president). Woodrow Rancifer, served as vice-chairman of the election committee and the salaried appointee to Chairman of the Local 1010 Committee on Political Education. Lastly, Loreto Gonzalez served as secretary of the election committee and was the brother-in-law to Lopez.¹⁴³

The effort for a government supervised rerun began when John Hurley protested the election of officers a week after the election. Like Lopez and the rest of the Combined Caucus’

¹⁴¹ “Vote Wrongdoing Hearing Slated,” *The Times*, October 12, 1976.

¹⁴² *Marshall v. Local 1010, United Steelworkers, etc.* 664 F. 2d 144- Court of Appeals, 7th Circuit. (1981)

¹⁴³ *Marshall v. Local 1010*, 3.

slate, Hurley lost his re-election to the post of Vice-Chairman of the Grievance Committee before he filed his complaint. When Hurley said he intended to take the issue to the USW International, Balanoff argued that “The Lopez people ran the election. I had only five out of 90 people on the election board. Their chairman Marty Connelly is the one who burned the unused ballots. He said he made an honest mistake and the members certified the election. Lopez and his people took a beating. How bad do you have to beat them?”¹⁴⁴ Unbeknownst to the Rank-and-File at the time of the complaint, Hurley’s protest to the international was drafted by a staff representative of the international. Through the case, the district court discovered that this letter was identical to one that Lopez had his Executive Board sign. The only member not to sign the letter demanding an overturn to the election was Lopez, who directed an executive board member, whose address was already on the return envelope, mail the protest.¹⁴⁵ In fact, when Hurley first protested the election and its outcomes at a Local 1010 meeting on April 15, Lopez who chaired the meeting voted the protest down. In fact, Hurley went through lengths to proclaim that he was no longer affiliated with Lopez, or his Combined Caucus.¹⁴⁶ The deliberate subterfuge by Lopez, Hurley, and allies in the international, attempted to position the struggle as an internal conflict within Lopez’s administration. When the international did not provide the reply Hurley or the Executive Board within the mandated three months, Hurley lodged his complaint with the Department of Labor.¹⁴⁷

Hurley’s complaint resulted in the Department of Labor investigating the local. Ahead of the Department of Labor hearing, Balanoff repeated the obvious: Lopez and his administration,

¹⁴⁴ “Election Charges Probed,” *The Times*, May 17, 1976.

¹⁴⁵ *Marshall v. Local 1010*, 6-7.

¹⁴⁶ “Defeated Candidate Requests Election Probe,” *The Times*, August 1, 1976.

¹⁴⁷ *Marshall v. Local 1010*, “Complaint, Civil Action No. 11-77-64,” filed February 22, 1977.

including Lopez's family, ran the election. In responding at upcoming meeting, Balanoff made it clear that "I don't believe that losers who run an election should get another crack at it."¹⁴⁸ Balanoff even claimed that a rerun would cost the local an estimated \$80,000 to facilitate a new election. Additionally, Local 1010 ran the 1976 election under the same guidelines of the supervised Sadlowski and Evett election in 1974, which was facilitated by the Department of Labor.¹⁴⁹ Despite already utilizing existing guidelines and procedures in their election, Local 1010 received unfortunate news from the Department of Labor. As laid out in their complaint, the Department of Labor recognized several violations committed by the local during the 1976 election. These violations included a failure to elect officers by secret ballot, failure to provide safeguards, and failure to preserve ballots for a year.¹⁵⁰ The plaintiffs made their intent clear: the District Court should nullify and void the April 8th election and the local should conduct a new election under the supervision of the Department of Labor.¹⁵¹ The local paper carried the most confusing statement of the report, that the violations "may have affected the outcome of election of all officers."¹⁵²

The defendants were clear in their response. In a three-part statement, the defendants relied on the relationship of Hurley with the incumbents and the interpretation of Title IV of Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959. The defense claimed that "Hurley and his co-conspirators seek, contrary to law, to benefit from their own wrongdoing." The defense also argued that the case was both "inconsistent with Title IV of LMRDA" and

¹⁴⁸ "Vote Wrongdoing Hearing Slated," *The Times*, October 12, 1976.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *Marshall v. Local 1010*, "Complaint, Civil Action No. 11-77-64," filed February 22, 1977.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² "Voting Overturn," *The Times*, February 24, 1977.

“arbitrary and capricious because it is contrary to the Secretary’s otherwise consistent interpretation of Title IV...”¹⁵³ LMRDA provided unions with federal oversight to protect them from corruption, as well as communism. According to Cowie, “Republicans backed the bill hoping that the more conservative rank and file would use the tools to oust their liberal leaders. Union dissidents, however, banked on the opposite: using the act as a valuable tool for getting federal oversight for free and fair elections, when, that is, they could get the government to budge on promises at all.”¹⁵⁴ Balanoff and his administration were perplexed about how the Department of Labor sought to utilize protections for challengers to allow incumbents to force a re-run in an election whose integrity the incumbents tarnished. The subverting of LMRDA’s intent aligned with an opportunity to associate Balanoff with violating election integrity. Balanoff’s frequent repetition that the violations occurred under the very caucus that issued the challenge highlight an effort to make sure everyone, regardless of their attachment to the union, or a particular caucus would not believe otherwise.

The duration of the proceedings and pace of the court posed a new problem as the court did not reach a verdict by the 1979 election. The Rank-and-File Caucus, now the incumbent, agreed to let the Department of Labor supervise the 1979 election, “if the Secretary would simply agree that the alleged violations in connection with the 1976 election had been the responsibility of the incumbent-selected election committee...” Labor Secretary Ray Marshall declined to supervise the election.¹⁵⁵ In the 1976 election, no charges of discrepancies in the voting procedures occurred. Despite the lack of violations reported in the 1976 election, the

¹⁵³ Marshall v. Local 1010, “Amended Answers,” 1-3.

¹⁵⁴ Cowie, *Stayin’ Alive*, 34.

¹⁵⁵ Marshall v. Local 1010, 9-10

Department of Labor continued its investigation into Local 1010 and their push for supervising a rerun of the 1973 election.

The efforts by Marshall, the international, and Combined Caucus to overturn the election and force a re-do of an election five years later proved perplexing. Aside from their attempt to apply labor law designed to protect challengers against incumbents and that another election had occurred, Lopez, the former President of Local 1010, proved unable to reattempt his campaign. Although Arredondo received a position in Texas with the international after his decision to not run for reelection in 1973, Lopez received a position in East Chicago Mayor Robert Pastrick's administration.¹⁵⁶ Lopez became the Parks Superintendent in East Chicago.¹⁵⁷ Since his victory in 1973, *Latin Times* believed that Lopez had desires outside of labor. According to their yearly recap, "With this office [President of 1010] securely in his grasp Lopez could conceivably be the Latin candidate for mayor of E. Chicago. Hank showed he could garner support in all quarters."¹⁵⁸ Likely the result of Lopez's strong connections to East Chicago's municipal government that led to his election as President of 1010 in 1973, this appointment served as a crucial step in Lopez's downfall.

In 1979, "Babe" Lopez disappeared. Nobody saw him after he left a function at an Our Lady of Guadalupe Church.¹⁵⁹ According to Ed Sadlowski, Joe Gyurko joked that "the Babe's in the Canal."¹⁶⁰ Lopez's son Jeff claimed that since the December 12th disappearance "the [Lopez]

¹⁵⁶ The accolade, King of Steeltown, derives from a documentary about the 1999 Democratic Primary between Robert Pastrick and Stephen Stiglich. See: *The King of Steeltown: Hardball Politics in the Heartland*. (1999). The accolade refers to the Mayor of East Chicago, a heavily Democratic city within the shadow of steel mills.

¹⁵⁷ "Park Boss To Quit," *The Times*, March 4, 1977.

¹⁵⁸ "1973, It was a very bad year," *Latin Times*, December 28, 1973.

¹⁵⁹ "Babe Lopez Missing for A Week," *The Times*, December 19, 1976.

¹⁶⁰ "Ed Sadlowski Oral History." *Steel Shaving: Steelworkers Fight Back*, 124.

family has had difficulty getting anyone in the police department to answer his questions.”¹⁶¹ According to the Lopez family, Lopez’s colleagues seemed “unconcerned” for Lopez’s well-being. The city administration even noted that Lopez was fired ten days before his disappearance, “because the park superintendent refused three times to come to city hall to answer questions raised in the audit.”¹⁶² This referred to a recent investigation into the park’s department expenditures by the Indiana State Board of Accounts.

A few weeks into 1980, Hammond police found Lopez’s body. Gyurko’s crude joke proved correct, while looking for the car of a drunk driver in the Calumet Canal, police divers found Lopez’s Oldsmobile. In the passenger seat sat Lopez with a gunshot to the back of his head. The subsequent investigation raised as many questions as answers. The Hammond Police Department never solved the case, unable to find evidence to prove that Vince Kirrin ordered the assassination of his former friend.¹⁶³ According to James Alexander, “At the funeral mass for Hank Lopez, Balanoff was sitting there saying things like, ‘You can’t keep messing around.’ People were staring, but he wouldn’t shut up.”¹⁶⁴ Albeit it a poorly timed comment, Balanoff was correct. Lopez played a dangerous game within the machine politics of East Chicago, trading favors for appointments and lucrative contracts. This game caught up to him when he went from a powerful player in Local 1010, to a small actor in the municipal politics of East Chicago. Lopez’s untimely death proved only one ending for the footprint he left in the region.

¹⁶¹ “Family Fears for E.C. Aide’s Life,” *The Times*, January 7, 1980.

¹⁶² “Family Fears for E.C. Aide’s Life,” *The Times*, January 7, 1980.

¹⁶³ “Henry Lopez: Books still not closed on one of Lake County’s most notorious killings,” *The Times*, December 14, 2009. This investigation resulted in over 180 page report. It is not the purpose of this paper to delve into the dense details of this case.

¹⁶⁴ “James Alexander Oral History,” *Steel Shaving: Steelworkers Fight Back*, 124.

While Hammond detectives scoured the region for leads about Lopez's murder, the Northern District of Indiana in Hammond approached a verdict about the investigation into Local 1010. Whether or not Lopez believed he could retain his office or force a rerun and taint the Rank-and-File with the stain of corruption, the District Court proved unwilling to support the perplexing and tenuous arguments of the Department of Labor. The court ruled that "a vacation-and-rerun remedy is unwarranted where an incumbent faction intentionally violates LMRDA election rules while losing an election in order to seek invalidation of the election through suit by the Secretary."¹⁶⁵ The intent of the legislation to protect challengers against incumbents and not the opposite, heavily influenced the court's decision. Additionally, the fact that Lopez's administration violated the election's integrity and still

Despite the efforts of Lopez and his administration to force a new election, the court denied the request of the Secretary of Labor to host a new election because the court did not believe that after winning by a two-to-one margin that the outcome would be different.¹⁶⁶ Lopez, already buried, failed to force a reelection, ending the brief moment of prominence of Latino leadership in Local 1010's administration.

Conclusion

Lopez's defeat by the insurgent Rank-and-File Movement in USWA's Local 1010 signaled a success against the corruption that plagued the union for decades. Latinos served as both corrupt administrators of the union who extended the hardball machine politics of East Chicago, and reformers who dissented against the status quo in hopes of establishing a more democratic unionism. Understanding the role of Latinos in Local 1010 illuminates how this

¹⁶⁵ Marshall v. Local 1010, 11.

¹⁶⁶ Marshall v. Local 1010, 10.

group of steelworkers understood their role in union politics, as well as their ascension out of the everyday laboring of the steel mill and into jobs as elected officials.

However, the removal of these corrupt forces occurred as steel deindustrialized. The mills had not recovered from the layoffs after contract negotiations in August of 1970. Some departments closed permanently. Elsewhere, entire mills abandoned production and local union halls shuttered their doors permanently. Whereas children once followed their parents into the mill, as the number of jobs dwindled, so did the opportunities and availability for employment in the steel industry.

The experiences of Latino steelworkers offered a rich yet complicated view of the intertwined municipal and union politics of a notoriously corrupt city. Arredondo and Lopez, initially opponents for leadership roles in 1010, found themselves “strange bedfellows.” The connections both had to East Chicago’s political machine, as well as the union’s international, made these one-time opponents into allies, however reluctant. Their respective careers also highlight the influences of power as each man turned from an outsider, which was less the case for Arredondo, to becoming ingrained in the establishment of 1010. Although Arredondo and Lopez had distinguished careers and were instrumental in paving the way for future representation in Local 1010 by other Latinos, their careers as Presidents of 1010 were problematic. However, their careers allow an opportunity to discuss themes such as corruption and unionism outside of the agricultural sector that is predominate in the field.

The two administrations highlight complementary understandings of corruption. While Arredondo did not have the scandals often associated with Lopez, both men had connections to the international and municipal machine politics. Arredondo and Lopez adopted strong connections to machine politics in the city of East Chicago and ineffectively ran 1010. Through

adopting a system of patronage and cronyism, Arredondo and Lopez first sought to improve their own careers and then improve the careers of their friends and supporters. This occurred despite the input of the community, or the poor character of the individual, as seen with Leo Arreguin and the collusion between Lopez and Kirrin. Although the international was unable to prove a mishandling of funds during their twenty-one years in office, this paper expressed the questionable actions in their careers. Arredondo refused to create an effective Environmental Concerns committee. Or Lopez, in the face of the grassroots movement of Steelworkers Fight Back, intentionally violated an election's integrity in hopes of having the Department of Labor order a re-run of the election. In pursuit of inclusion and social mobility, Latino unionists engaged in a broader system of corruption.

Their careers, particularly Lopez's, offer a bleak picture of how Latinos would fare in machine politics. In particular, the proto-machine that Lopez built in Local 1010 proved unviable as a growing grassroots movement of rank-and-file steelworkers became discontent with his inept leadership and outright corruption, as they saw the legal awarding of ballot contracts. Lopez's presidential bid became a vital lesson as he left the mill and participated in Mayor Robert Pastrick's efforts to entrench his multiracial machine, an endeavor that proved fatal for Babe Lopez.

Chapter Five: “This is America. No. This is East Chicago.”: The King of Steeltown and a
Multi-Racial Machine

From the bed of a pick-up truck, Ricardo “Street Wise” Moreno posed for a photograph. Over his right shoulder, he slung his rifle, adorned in a hoodie, his arm hugged a coffin draped in a Mexican flag. Moreno held a procession for the empty coffin to symbolize the lack (and death) of Mexican political power in East Chicago. To accompany the procession, Moreno published a piece, equal parts eulogy and reflection, in *The Times*. In “Messing around with an idealist,” Moreno lamented his self-proclaimed obsession for a Mexican mayor in the city. He proclaimed that “I mean there were more ‘Mexicans’ in my hometown than anything else. The ‘Blacks’, the ‘Polish’, and all the rest didn’t have the numbers. We did. So why didn’t we have a ‘Mexican Mayor’?”¹ Moreno, the idealist, noted that all the ethnic Mexican community had to do was “vote for one guy... just pull the lever.” He continued that “We [Mexicans] didn’t need ‘coalition’” likening the struggle for Jesse Jackson and his Rainbow Coalition and the election of Harold Washington to Mayor of Chicago. Instead, Moreno, the realist, realized that “Mexicans have resigned themselves to the fact that the ‘Raza’ would never come together... One of the first things they [political machine] do in politics, is to throw in another Mexican to ‘slice the vote.’”² Until the community was able to overcome these tricks and tactics from the machine, the political power of Mexicans in East Chicago was as good as dead.

Moreno recognized that unity proved tenuous at best when faced with an organized political machine that knew how to form coalitions and foster disunion among potential challenges. Missing from Moreno’s eulogy was the presence and growing prominence of Puerto

¹ “Messing around with an idealist,” *The Times*, May 28, 1989.

² “Messing around with an idealist,” *The Times*, May 28, 1989.

Rican political power in the city. After decades of pushing for representation, the political machine of Mayor Robert Pastrick began to incorporate more Puerto Ricans into its apparatus than ethnic Mexicans. Pastrick's attempt to maintain a balanced machine became the last attempt to retain power in an ethnic European machine in East Chicago. Whereas Moreno claimed that a "Mexican Mayor" would not need a coalition, Pastrick embraced a multi-racial political machine wherein every group was represented and given a share.

Although Pastrick's political machine incorporated a multi-racial cast of politicians, the balance between these groups proved tenuous at best. As the ethnic European community dwindled within the small, industrial city's demographics, the census recorded significant increases in the Hispanic and Black community. Census records detailed that between 1970 and 1980, East Chicago lost 15.3% of its total population; however, the city had a 33.7% percent change in its "Hispanic" population, which became the new majority in the city.³ These two groups clashed with each other, and at times were deliberately played against each other, in hopes of garnering more benefits for their community. Former "Latin Kingmaker," Robert Segovia, who established a significant network of patronage found his influence dwindle. Segovia's influence grew from his position as Personnel Chief in the school to include allies in hiring positions in Human Resources and the Parks Department. Segovia's influence dwindled as some Latinos discovered they could bypass Segovia's sub-machine by expressing loyalty directly to Pastrick. Coupled with problems toward dis-unity among ethnic Mexicans and Puerto Ricans, Pastrick and his multi-racial machine found itself challenged, particularly around election season.

³ "Hispanics on the Rise," *The Times*, March 20, 1983.

As Pastrick entrenched support for his political machine, the economic nature of East Chicago underwent significant changes. The steel industry, which began a gradual decline after the 1959 Strike, found the hard times exacerbated.⁴ However, what pundits labeled a “Decade of the Hispanics” in the industrial community coincided with the loss of the very employment that led them to the lakefront city. However, starting in 1980, *The Times* carried frequent stories about layoffs in the region’s steel mills. Initially, optimistic, mills such as Inland Steel believed that they would only have to layoff approximately 120, additional layoffs and furloughs followed, including the stoppage to facilities in the mill, such as the 44-inch hot strip (400 workers) and No. 3 blooming mill (210 workers).⁵

As East Chicago’s longest-serving mayor, Pastrick played an instrumental role in how Latinos and Latinas began to associate their relationship with machine politics. His political ascendancy coincided with the changing demographics of the community, which after 1970, became increasingly settled by Black, Latina and Latino residents.⁶ Pastrick’s election to the mayor’s office, after winning the Democratic Primary in 1971, brought in a diverse city council

⁴ S. Paul O’Hara has covered this phenomenon in the region with their work on Gary, Indiana. See: “Envisioning the Steel City: The Legend and Legacy of Gary, Indiana,” in *Beyond the Ruins: The Meanings of Deindustrialization*. Ed. Jefferson Cowie and Joseph Heathcott (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003). Historian Jefferson Cowie has framed the “last days of the working class” as a tale of deindustrialization that lessened the significant gains of the movement in the 1960s and 1970s. See: Cowie, *Stayin’ Alive: The 1970s and the Last Days of the Working Class*. (New York: The New Press, 2010); *Beyond the Ruins: The Meanings of Deindustrialization*, ed. Jefferson Cowie and Joseph Heathcott (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003); and David Bensman and Roberta Lynch, *Rusted Dreams: Hard Times in a Steel Community* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987). For former steel towns in general see: Kathryn Marie Dudley, *The End of the Line: Lost Jobs, New Lives in Postindustrial America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Sherry Lee Linkon and John Russo, *Steeltown U.S.A. Work and Memory in Youngstown* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002); and Judith Schachter Modell, *A Town Without Steel: Envisioning Homestead* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998).

⁵ In May 1980, Inland Steel laid off approximately 1,000 workers. For coverage on the first month of lay-offs at region steel mills see: “Massive Layoffs Expected at USS,” *The Times*, May 4, 1980; “More Idled At Mills,” *The Times*, May 9, 1980; “Layoffs Mount at 2 Steel Mills,” *The Times*, May 25, 1980.

⁶ “Population 1970” November 7, 1972, pg. 9. IAF records, Special Collections and University Archives, the UIC Box 97 Folder 1064.

that included three Latinos and two Black candidates. Like the rise of a Democratic Machine in Chicago and its inventor, the Bohemian immigrant Anton Cermak, Pastrick sought to establish his own “house for all peoples.”⁷ Whereas Cermak incorporated German, Polish, Czech, and Jewish communities into leadership positions within the machine that were once exclusively Irish dominated, Pastrick had to account for the growing presences of ethnic Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Black residents. At Cermak’s time, these relative newcomers represented smaller percentages of Chicago’s residents, or communities that residential segregation could marginalize. However, as future Chicago mayors and other political bosses, like Pastrick, discovered, these new demographics forced them to reconceptualize their understanding of an ethnic European political machine that truly served as a “house for all peoples.”

However, the concept of an inclusive, or all-encompassing, political machine is fraught with challenges. As Cermak’s successors in Chicago discovered, the vision appeared more pragmatic than practical. In exchange for bringing in votes, political bosses ensured the correct individuals distributed spoils in terms of patronage accordingly. However, in a multiracial machine, these spoils must carefully balance across all groups to guarantee their loyalty to the machine. As Pastrick discovered, the very same conflicts between groups that he and his predecessors once exploited could become annoyances and threats to his machine’s stability. The elevation of Puerto Rican community members conflicted with the ethnic Mexican community and their sub-machine under Robert Segovia, who saw his political influence wane as Pastrick

⁷ See: “A House for All Peoples,” in *American Pharoah: Mayor Richard J. Daley, His Battle for Chicago and the Nation*, 50-91; John Allswang, *A House for All Peoples: Ethnic Politics in Chicago, 1890-1936* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1971); Roger Biles, *Richard J. Daley: Politics, Race, and the Governing of Chicago* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1995); and Steven P. Erie, *Rainbow’s End: Irish-Americans and the Dilemmas of Urban Machine Politics, 1840-1985* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990).

solidified his position. Segovia's influence became the focal point of the Black community, which protested the ethnic Mexican political boss' control over patronage positions in the school city. Throughout these challenges, Pastrick constantly searched for a middle ground that maintained a delicate sense of balance between each group within the city.

How Pastrick navigated these challenges and developed his charismatic political persona was the subject of a documentary film, "The King of Steeltown."⁸ The "King of Steeltown" offers insight into politics in the deindustrialized lakefront city. Covering the last campaign of the 20th century, the film touches on numerous issues, from canvassing to funding to absentee ballots. However, center stage in the documentary and campaign became the re-imagining of East Chicago, an industrial city brought low by decades of deindustrialization, divestment, and suburbanization. The economic decline in the community exacerbated conflict between Black and Latino communities as employment in manufacturing ceased being the primary employer for East Chicagoans. Instead, residents turned to the city and municipal employment as a way to survive. As Main Street became a boarded up stretch of former storefronts, theatres, and clubs, a point emphasized by Stiglich and Pastrick's opponents, these two men vied over the majority black and brown community to either retain control of the machine or wrest it from the hands of the other. For Pastrick, his political legacy and the multi-racial machine he built was at stake.

This chapter argues for the central role of Robert Pastrick in developing and entrenching machine politics in East Chicago. Countless Latinas and Latinos developed their political identities and relationship with machine politics during his tenure as Mayor of East Chicago, creating a lasting influence. The chapter will explore the rise of Pastrick into the mayor's office

⁸ *The King of Steeltown* (Sautter Communications, 2001).

and the emphasis he placed on establishing a multiracial machine. However, this emphasis was not without challenges. The dwindling influence of Robert Segovia, who the Black community targeted for his exclusion of them from school employment and Puerto Ricans targeted for excluding them in favor of ethnic Mexicans, fueled this immense challenge. The chapter will then turn to how Pastrick sought to preserve patronage amid deindustrialization and a changing urban environment. Without the extensive taxes that the heavily industrialized manufacturing industry provided East Chicago, the machine did not possess the budget to fund public projects and employee former industrial workers in search of new work. Despite his work in countering, or alleviating the economic, political, and social woes of deindustrialization, in 1999 he faced his greatest challenge as a diverse group of activists, including municipal employees, banded together to support Stiglich for mayor of East Chicago. At the center of these debates and transitions within East Chicago's history were the predominantly ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community members, serving as cogs within the machine, some in need of replacement, and detractors, seeking to root out what they saw as a rusted machine in hopes of a new vision for the city's future.

The Rise of Pastrick

There is likely no political figure in the entirety of East Chicago's history, and perhaps the history of the region that looms as large as Robert "Bob" Pastrick. A 1945 graduate of Bishop Noll High School, a private Catholic school in neighboring Hammond, Indiana, Pastrick went on to attend University of Notre Dame. After his freshmen year, he enlisted in the US Army Special Services Division and later continued his education at Denver University, St. Joseph College, and Indiana College of Mortuary Science. Pastrick would continue his family's business, working as a funeral director at the Oleska-Pastrick Funeral Home in East Chicago. It

was during this time as a funeral director, that Pastrick pursued his ascendant career in politics, ultimately becoming the city's longest serving mayor from 1972 to 2004. Pastrick became a prominent figure locally, across the state, and even nationally as he went on to serve the Executive Board of the National Democratic Mayors Caucus and a Democratic National Committee Delegate and Super Delegate for eleven Democratic National Conventions.

Throughout this impressive career, Pastrick proved an ample student of politics, as well as the machinations of Democratic rule in East Chicago and Lake County. As Mayor Walter Jeorse and his administration razed the predominantly ethnic Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Black Block and Pennsy neighborhood in the name of urban renewal, Pastrick was present when a delegation delivered a petition of 150 signatures protesting the destruction.⁹ Pastrick was in the audience as the Councilman-Elect for the Fourth District, a position he started in 1956. However, upon his election, a letter to the editor at *The Hammond Times*, labeled Pastrick and many members of the East Chicago City Council as "Rubber Stamp Councilmen," for their quick approval of a \$1.6 million dollar bond to support Jeorse's slum clearance of Block and Pennsy, as well as New Addition.¹⁰ Interestingly, the author, credited as "An Audience Listener," notes Pastrick and the "rubber stamps" as present in "secret sessions" of the council "where all the other councilmen [with the exception of the three against the bond issue] were present to discuss

⁹ "Resolution No. R-58: Resolution Requesting the Reservation of Capital Grant Funds, Approving the Undertaking of Surveys and Plans for Indiana Harbor Urban Renewal Project No. I, and the Filing of an Application for Federal Advance of Funds, Regular Session of the Common Council, Monday March 12, 1956," East Chicago City Ordinances Book 14, p. 350-352. Maintained by the City of East Chicago, Indiana City Clerk Office. The city established a formal Department of Redevelopment on August 26, 1957. See: "Resolution R-71, Regular Session of the Common Council," East Chicago City Ordinances Book 14, p. 499-501. Maintained by the City of East Chicago, Indiana City Clerk Office.

¹⁰ "Rubber Stamp Councilmen," *The Hammond Times*, October 13, 1957.

the slum clearance and bond issues.”¹¹ However, Pastrick resigned from his seat on February 12th 1957 due to poor health that had led him to miss meetings for several months.¹² The Council, comprised of only one Republican who along with two Democrats, were all predominantly supporters of Mayor Jeorse voted to fill Pastrick’s seat with his wife, Ruth Ann Pastrick, who would have voted on the bond issue.¹³ Despite the outrage from the affected community in the neighborhoods deemed slums, the issue passed six to three.¹⁴ Regardless if Ruth Ann Pastrick voted under consultation of her husband, or her own opinion, the couple understood to vote in line with the Jeorse machine. Pastrick returned to his councilman position after a special election on November 8th, 1957.¹⁵

Pastrick’s return offered him numerous lessons about political machines, loyalty to the machine, and the growing political power of the city’s Latinas and Latinos. After his return to the city council, Pastrick discovered what happened when candidates attempted to push back against the machine when Jeorse removed Stanley Kwiat, Joseph Maravilla, and dissenters from the city’s school board. In 1960, Pastrick ran as the democratic nominee for Indiana Secretary of State, while also serving as the Indiana Youth Director for the Kennedy for President campaign. His involvement placed Pastrick in close proximity with Maravilla and the city’s Viva Kennedy Campaign. In an advertisement a week before the main election, the Lake County Democratic Central Committee, featured a “Vote Por El Partido Democrata,” which featured Kennedy at the top of the ticket and Pastrick’s portrait near the bottom. The paper told the readers “Baje La

¹¹ “Rubber Stamp Councilmen,” *The Hammond Times*, October 13, 1957.

¹² “Pastrick Resigns as Councilman in East Chicago,” *The Hammond Times*, February 12, 1957.

¹³ “Councilwoman,” *The Hammond Times*, February 28, 1957.

¹⁴ “Twin City Construction Fund OKd,” *The Hammond Times*, October 14, 1957.

¹⁵ “Pastrick Returns to Council Post in East Chicago,” *The Hammond Times*, November 10, 1957.

Primer Palanca” [Lower the First Lever!].¹⁶ The juxtaposition of Kennedy and Pastrick, both Catholics, together on the same promotional advertisement sought to solicit support from the predominantly Catholic ethnic Mexican community in the Indiana Harbor.

Pastrick even advertised in the bilingual *Latin Times*. Notably, Pastrick paid for advertisement space even after the race, despite being the councilman for the Fourth District and the majority of Latinas and Latinos were in the Sixth District. In December of 1960, Pastrick and Fifth District Councilman George Cvitkovich wished the readers of *Latin Times* a “Próspero Año Nuevo.” They were joined by two of the Councilmen-At-Large.¹⁷ These advertisements, particularly by elected officials that run city-wide or in districts near the Sixth, reflected the significance of this community as a voting-bloc for the Democratic Party. His early targeting of Latinas and Latinos included advertising in the *Latin Times*, even though they were not his constituents, suggested an early attempt to court this community and hinted toward the possibility of higher sights set by Pastrick. As the machine would find out, this bloc contained the power to alter the city’s political landscape.

In 1963, Pastrick ran for re-election. However, whereas he previously supported Mayor Jeorse, Pastrick was a part of the split away from Jeorse for the upcoming Dr. John B. Nicosia, joining others such as Jesse Gomez. With this switch of political allegiances, the *Latin Times* reminded its readership to “Vote por Nuestro Amigo Bob Pastrick, 4-F.”¹⁸ Nicosia won heavily in primarily Spanish-speaking precincts, a fact that the newspaper reminded him, as well as the politicians, such as Pastrick that left Jeorse’s camp. According to the paper, “The Sixth District,

¹⁶ “Vote Por El Partido Democrata,” *Latin Times*, October 29, 1960.

¹⁷ “Advertisement,” *Latin Times*, December 24, 1960.

¹⁸ *Latin Times*, April 19, 1963.

which is predominantly Spanish-speaking, in order to have had this Victory Dinner, had to carry its share of votes and then some to make up for the precincts that were supposed to have supported ‘Doc’ and didn’t come through.”¹⁹ The paper went a step further to note that if the Sixth District had not come out to vote, “Bob Pastrick would have lost his license bureau and would have been removed from politics...”²⁰ Pastrick won his primary re-election in the Fourth District, not disclosing his campaign finances to *The Hammond Times*.²¹ Nearly a year later, Nicosia appointed Pastrick to the second highest position in the city government: City Controller.²² Nicosia’s successful ousting of Jeorse only became possible by this direct courting of the Sixth District and its residents. In attaching themselves to Nicosia and his ticket, the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community began to tie their potential fortunes and spoils of the patronage system to the new mayor.

As Pastrick’s political career continued to ascend, his relationship with the Latina and Latino Sixth District became more direct. In 1970, he represented the Mayor’s Office during the Independence Day Parade.²³ Pastrick even served as part of a committee to honor “Boxcar” Ben Fernandez, an East Chicago native and eventual GOP Presidential candidate, when Fernandez started the National Economic Development Association.²⁴ Even though he was a Republican in a staunchly Democratic city, Fernandez was still a source of pride in his hometown. Latino boosters even organized bowling teams as a booster for Pastrick, such as Pastrick Playboys and

¹⁹ “Victory Dinner Has Empty Ring for Latins,” *Latin Times*, September 27, 1963.

²⁰ “Victory Dinner Has Empty Ring for Latins,” *Latin Times*, September 27, 1963.

²¹ *The Hammond Times*, May 8, 1963. “Dowling’s Campaign Cost \$2,996, Klen’s \$7,762,” *The Hammond Times*, June 9, 1963.

²² “Dotlich Chosen for East Chicago Council,” *Latin Times*, February 14, 1964.

²³ “Many Participate in Mexican Independence,” *Latin Times*, September 18, 1970.

²⁴ “Over 400 Honor Fernandez,” *Latin Times*, October 2, 1970.

the Pastrick Boosters. Pastrick took out advertisements in the bilingual *Latin Times* that rivaled the ones even put out by Latina and Latino candidates for public office.²⁵ In the 1990s, commentators speculated that Pastrick encouraged protests against Nicosia after an Assistant Principal at Washington High School referred to Mexicans as “lazy and ignorant.” Latinas and Latinos protested outside of Mayor Nicosia’s home, where the mayor hit a Latino photographer and dispersed the crowd with police, an action supposedly supported by Pastrick. Coupled with a federal investigation into Nicosia’s administration over a \$17 million sewer project, led Pastrick to encourage Nicosia to not seek reelection.²⁶ Decades later, Pastrick and his administration found itself in similar waters as the federal government initiated a prolonged corruption probe, as discussed in the sixth chapter.

This direct relationship in building a multiracial political machine that reflected the city’s changing demographics elevated Pastrick as the nominee for the Mayor’s Office in 1971. After the protests on Nicosia’s lawn and his labeling of the protesters as “pigs,” Nicosia decided not to run. Without an incumbent, the *Latin Times* speculated that Pastrick would be the present-administration’s candidate to face former Mayor Jeorse. However, the *Latin Times* noted that “The Latin American people on the other hand are talking about running their own candidate for Mayor.”²⁷ As a response to the “discontent” that the community felt over the lack of patronage opportunities, specifically positions as department heads, and continued workplace discrimination, this split could prove disastrous.²⁸ If Pastrick was unable to prevent the Latin and

²⁵ “A Call to Youth,” *Latin Times*, February 26, 1971.

²⁶ “Breaking his silence,” *The Times*, August 26, 2004.

²⁷ “Pastrick, Jeorse, or?” *Latin Times*, November 20, 1970.

²⁸ “Pastrick, Jeorse, or?” *Latin Times*, November 20, 1970.

Black split that the *Latin Times* speculated, he could risk losing the election to Jeorse, or another candidate. In a system that predicated political support on patronage for party loyalists, not delivering those spoils could spell not only discontent but favorable support for challengers to the political machine. To secure the Mayor's Office, Pastrick would have to offer more than the lip-service of his predecessors.

Entrenching the Machine

On December 1, 1970, Pastrick formally announced to an estimated crowd of 1,200 attendees that he would pursue the office of the Mayor of the City of East Chicago, U.S. Representative Ray J. Madden claimed that "Pastrick was tutored and learned the business [of politics] under two Democratic mayors [Jeorse and Nicosia]."²⁹ Madden, one of the challengers for the position, attempted to associate Pastrick with the machine politics that had dominated the community for nearly two decades. The paper suspected the crowded race would include an unnamed "Chicano" candidate, utilizing the identifier of the growing ethno-nationalist Chicano Movement in the Southwest. Additionally, the paper suspected Dr. Ed Broomes as an African American backed candidate, and two former city officials. Pastrick's greatest accomplishment was retaining control of the Democratic machine for over three decades. This feat proved only possible with Pastrick aggressively courting a multiracial ticket.

In Pastrick's formal announcement for candidacy, he began to develop the coalition that he would utilize his entire career. Pastrick proclaimed that "...a good and dedicated Mayor has the civic and moral obligation to serve and represent all the citizens. He should look after the welfare of the people, also work closely with different groups of citizens dedicated to find[ing]

²⁹ "Terry's News & Views," *Latin Times*, December 4, 1970.

solutions to the problems affecting our community.”³⁰ Pastrick then linked the Latin American people of East Chicago to the strengths of the Democratic process. According to his speech, “You [Latinos] have given us a very good example of respect for public and private institutions, also respect for law and order. All of these principles are products of your highest cultural values.”³¹ Remaining relatively general in his speech, Pastrick went on to proclaim that “You are the community and to you I direct my appeal for help and support.”³²

Utilizing the momentum of the civil rights movement in East Chicago and the region, Pastrick took time to praise recent protests and social movements. His speech turned to note that

Today, we have seen the aggressive Latin American Youth of our community furiously fighting for what they believe is right. They want changes in the School System; they want recreational facilities, respect, and attention from the public officials... I ask the youth for their support. I have faith in you young citizens, Heroes of Viet Nam, Leaders of tomorrow, who some day [sic] might assume the responsibilities I am looking for today.³³

Without noting specifics, Pastrick’s speech alluded to vital currents in the city and nation’s context of unrest. By reprinting the speech in the paper, Pastrick ensured that he acknowledged these events simultaneously with the political power of the Latino and Latina community.

Victor Manuel Martinez, Editor at the *Latin Times*, penned a crucial response to Pastrick’s formal announcement. Martinez’s article, “Politics concerns you,” reflected on the history of support and neglect by former Mayors of East Chicago. After briefly discussing some of the troubles Nicosia encountered, such as the protest on his yard and an issue of *Chicagoland* magazine accusing him of allowing illegal gambling to occur in the city, Martinez turned to the

³⁰ “Pastrick Makes Formal Announcement,” *Latin Times*, December 4, 1970.

³¹ “Pastrick Makes Formal Announcement,” *Latin Times*, December 4, 1970.

³² “Pastrick Makes Formal Announcement,” *Latin Times*, December 4, 1970.

³³ “Pastrick Makes Formal Announcement,” *Latin Times*, December 4, 1970.

relationship of the Sixth District with the mayor's office.³⁴ Reflecting on Nicosia, Martinez turned to the mayor's support for three prominent ethnic Mexicans as evidence of him attempting to make good on his promise of patronage for the community.³⁵ However, he noted that Nicosia could not even establish the recreational center in the Sixth District, as he promised in his initial campaign. The lack of this recreational center led to the rise of the Youth Advisory Board and later the Concerned Latins Organization. However, Nicosia's competitor proved no better for the Sixth District, as the editorial noted, they already encountered and lived under "Gordito's" administration previously. After reprinting Jeorse's alleged comments that "I do not need the rats nor the roaches of the sixth district to win the election" Martinez recalled that all the community saw from Jeorse were frequent insults, the destruction of their homes in the urban renewal programs that destroyed Block and Pennsy, and a lack of access to jobs. The editorial concluded that, "If elected officials expect us to keep our mouth shut when we see all these injustices perpetrated against our people is something that can't be done. Latins are tired and they are going to react again if things don't change in East Chicago."³⁶ Martinez would go on to publish a column entitled "Politics concerns you" another dozen times after this initial article. Half of these were published weekly leading up to the election in November 1971.³⁷

The election coincided with a redistricting of the city. Recalling the changes, in 2020, Antonio Barreda remembered Robert Segovia, a crucial Latino powerbroker in the community, telling him that he would run for Councilman of the Sixth District. Barreda recalled his

³⁴ "Politics concerns you," *Latin Times*, December 11, 1970.

³⁵ These positions included Joe Arredondo for Lake County Auditor, Mike Arredondo to Chief of Detectives in East Chicago Police Department, and Robert Segovia to Assistant Superintendent of Personnel at Public Schools.

³⁶ "Politics concerns you," *Latin Times*, December 11, 1970.

³⁷ *Latin Times*, October 1 through November 5, 1971.

amazement at being told he would run against his neighbor Jesse Gomez for a seat he had held since 1963. Barreda, a friend and supporter of Gomez that helped encouraged Segovia to back Gomez, in 1963, refused the opportunity. However, mimicking Segovia decades later, Barreda drew on a napkin. “See, my house is here, Jesse was here” and proceeded to draw a line down the middle of their street. With the redistricting, the Latino and Latina community of East Chicago gained a competitive chance in two different districts: the newly redrawn Fifth and Sixth.³⁸

As an incumbent, Gomez proved a tough force to remove from the newly redrawn council district; however, the Sixth District’s race would be much more chaotic. Barreda had built a name for himself with his activist work through the Youth Advisory Board. When Pastrick and the city honored “Boxcar” Ben Fernandez, Barreda gave one of the leading speeches, entitled “The Future of Our Youth.”³⁹ In his speech, Barreda proclaimed that “...politicians fight to control political power... criticism alone is not the solution to stop our youth from being violent... They need our attention, direction, understanding, and above all, our love.”⁴⁰ Invited to give the speech for his role with the Youth Advisory Board in pushing the city for improvements in the Latina and Latino neighborhoods, Barreda represented a form of direct and visible protest for inclusion. The Y.A.B. leveraged this political capital into endorsements for candidates, such as Atterson Spann, an African American candidate for Councilman-At-Large.⁴¹ The YAB’s endorsement included that Spann would offer the opportunity for better government that was more responsive to the community.

³⁸ Interview with Antonio Barreda with author. September 4, 2020.

³⁹ “Over 400 Honor Fernandez,” *Latin Times*, October 2, 1970.

⁴⁰ “Latins in a Stage of Upheaval,” *Latin Times*, October 23, 1970.

⁴¹ “The YAB Endorsement,” *Latin Times*, January 29, 1971.

The YAB extended this political capital when Barreda announced his campaign for the Sixth District. The *Latin Times* quickly endorsed his candidacy, stating that “A few weeks back we said that we were very much in favor of supporting a young and aggressive member of our community; someone with sincere ambitions to represent the people with dignity and decor [decor] before the City government.”⁴² Much like YAB’s endorsement of Spann, the newspaper’s endorsement of Barreda noted that he would offer an opportunity “for better government and better representation.”⁴³ In a letter to the editor, John Gomez, who worked with Barreda in Y.A.B. and a political group S.I.E.G.E., likened the support for Barreda with a concern for bettering all of East Chicago.⁴⁴ Barreda even made an appearance at a food drive hosted by gang turned youth organization, the Very Mellow People, or V.M.P.’s.⁴⁵

With his candidacy announced, Barreda and his campaign worked to consolidate their support, which included aligning themselves with Pastrick and incumbents in the city’s government. The week before the primary, the *Latin Times* declared in bold font, “PASTRICK OUR MAN.”⁴⁶ In the ten-page special issue, Pastrick’s endorsements were over a third of the paper, with two full-page advertisements. Barreda’s portrait and his letter supporting Barreda made the front-page. The candidate pleaded that voters “SUPPORT AND VOTE for a BETTER, MORE ACTIVE GOVERNMENT WITH FRESH IDEAS by electing ROBERT A. PASTRICK; THE MAN OF TODAY, NOT OF YESTURDAY. [sic]”⁴⁷ Barreda and his friends’ political group S.I.E.G.E. took out a page-and-a-half advertisement to endorse Pastrick, claiming that

⁴² “Barreda for Councilman,” *Latin Times*, April 2, 1971.

⁴³ “Barreda for Councilman,” *Latin Times*, April 2, 1971.

⁴⁴ “E.C. is my Concern,” *Latin Times*, April 2, 1971.

⁴⁵ “Volunteer Food Drive,” *Latin Times*, April 16, 1971.

⁴⁶ *Latin Times*, April 30, 1971.

⁴⁷ “The Big Decision,” *Latin Times*, April 30, 1971.

Pastrick's experience as a family-man and in the past two administrations would give him "the opportunity to approach the problems of East Chicago more constructively."⁴⁸

Isabelino "Candy" Candelaria, a Puerto Rican resident, chose to run against Segovia's pick of Barreda in the Sixth District race in the special primary in September of 1971. An employee at the Chicago Economic Development Corporation, Candelaria boasted a "thorough knowledge of the inner workings of city government." His two primary positions were for better housing and police protection in the Sixth District.⁴⁹ As a representative of the Puerto Rican community, Candelaria appeared wherever possible to join the political circles of the Democratic Party in East Chicago. He attended the dinner in honor of Ben Fernandez.⁵⁰ When the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community held a parade to support Pastrick's candidacy for mayor, Candelaria shared the role of Parade Marshalls with his competitor Barreda. In a moment of unity, the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community joined together to show their support for Pastrick, led by two competing candidates.⁵¹ Although they united for their support of aspiring political boss, Pastrick, Barreda and Candelaria divided over which one of them should represent their district.

The overwhelming support of the Latina and Latino community for Pastrick solidified his victory over Jeorse. Although, the ethnic Mexican community became a source of criticism by the defeated Jeorse and his political allies. The newspaper, *The East Chicago Globe*, blamed the "No Good Mexicans," for Pastrick's nearly two-to-one defeat of the former mayor. Responding to the accusations, *Latin Times* writer, Victor Manuel Martinez proclaimed that "It seems to me

⁴⁸ "S.I.E.G.E. Endorses "Bob" Pastrick," *Latin Times*, April 30, 1971.

⁴⁹ "E.C. Primary Candidates List Goals, Background," *The Times*, September 26, 1971.

⁵⁰ "Latins in Stage of Upheaval," *Latin Times*, October 23, 1970.

⁵¹ "Latins Parade for Pastrick," *Latin Times*, April 23, 1971.

that no matter how we Mexicans play our role in politics we always end up being criticized by the ‘clean and wise’ politicians who according to their own personal point of view we have ‘dirty hands.’ We are used politically or we are sold to the City Hall.”⁵² However, the *Latin Times* praised the election and its results. In an editorial, “Think About It Latins,” the paper noted that “You put aside your small differences, small problems to unite and made sure you put true representation in your city. You not only elected one Latin, you voted big enough to elect two. By this action you influenced the city to appoint a third Latin to the Council.”⁵³ Although the article ignored the redistricting that made this possible, the author attempted to link the community’s use of the ballot box with garnering political power.

In the aftermath of the Sixth District’s crowded primary in October of 1971, Pastrick discovered an opportunity. As predicted, Barreda, a Local 1010 Steelworker, won with 1010 votes and his nearest competitor, Teddie Warren, with 299. Candelaria secured a distant third with only 143 votes.⁵⁴ By appointing a Councilman-At-Large, George Lamb, to City Controller, Pastrick encouraged his slate of Democratic councilmen to appoint Candelaria to fill the vacancy.⁵⁵ As the newspapers reported, this appointment shifted the balance toward “a bloc of minority representation” for the first time in the city’s history.⁵⁶ Although, with the low polling by Candelaria, it is uncertain that he had garnered much Puerto Rican support, or if the crowded primary likely contributed to his lackluster performance despite newspapers calling him a frontrunner. That said, his appointment by Pastrick still served as an opportunity to garner favor

⁵² “Those ‘No Good Mexicans,’” *Latin Times*, May 7, 1971.

⁵³ “Think About It Latins,” *Latin Times*, January 14, 1972.

⁵⁴ E.C. Council Balloting Unseats 2,” *The Times*, September 29, 1971.

⁵⁵ “Key Jobs,” *The Times*, January 4, 1972.

⁵⁶ “Pastrick Hoping To Restore Pride,” January 3, 1972.

with the Puerto Rican community, a move that would begin to net Pastrick support in the years to come as the influence of the ethnic Mexican political boss Segovia waned.

These appointments extended to other positions in the city as well. Pastrick appointed John Segovia, a Washington High School graduate, as Assistant City Attorney under City Attorney Jay Given.⁵⁷ With the approval of Pastrick, the City Council appointed Barreda to the Economic Development Commission, whose goal was to diversify the business district of the city.⁵⁸ Pastrick hired Noah Atterson Spann, a Black clothing store owner to his administrative assistant and Victor Torres, a supporter of Robert Segovia, to Parks Superintendent.⁵⁹ Although minor positions, these appointments, offered a diverse array of political newcomers prime positions to elevate their communities within the machine. Particularly, Torres' appointment to a department head placed him, and consequently his political boss Robert Segovia, in a position to distribute jobs to the Latinos and Latinas of East Chicago. Commenting on these appointments, the *Latin Times* claimed, "To some people who didn't believe that Mayor Pastrick was really going to change things at City Hall these appointments have made them realize that the Mayor is trying to be his own man not subject to dictatorial orders from former Mayor John B. Nicosia..."⁶⁰ With the ability to hire in the school system and parks department, the ties between the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community and Pastrick appeared to be a promising partnership.

Despite the promise of these appointments, Pastrick's amicable relationship with the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community began to deteriorate almost as quickly as it was

⁵⁷ "All City Paid E.C. Attorneys Will Be Pooled," *The Times*, May 11, 1972.

⁵⁸ "For the People," *Latin Times*, January 28, 1972.

⁵⁹ "Pastrick Appoints Aides," *The Times*, December 29, 1971.

⁶⁰ "Surprising Chances At City Hall," *Latin Times*, February 4, 1972.

formed. In 1972, the *Latin Times* responded to a series of columns from *The East Chicago Globe* that attempted to ferment disunion both within the Latina and Latino community but also within the ethnic Mexican community. In noting the rising prominence of the Arredondo family, consisting of a County Auditor, Chief of Detectives, and Local 1010 President, the *Globe* attempted to note that the Arredondo dynasty “would create many internal problems for R.A.P. [Pastrick’s initials]. First, with Senor Segovia and secondly with the city’s envious Puerto Ricans.”⁶¹ A letter to the editor, entitled “Down with Anglo Tutelage,” emphasized the external attempts to break the unity among East Chicago’s Latina and Latino residents. The editorial noted that “In politics, we have not taken a second spot, we have taken a third. It is alright for us to back a white Anglo candidate or a black but not a Latin. They [the machine] have said ‘We gave you three councilmen.’ In fact, they gave us nothing that we have not worked and suffered for.”⁶² The letter framed the tertiary position of the community as a result of an “Anglo power structure,” that allowed East Chicago’s dwindling white community to retain political power. The letter concluded with the question, “Will they [the Pastrick administration] reciprocate what we have done for them at each election?”⁶³ The frustration over the attempts to divide the community began to be articulated as a frustration against the particular form of politics that the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community found themselves incorporated in and discontented with at a moment where they began to realize their potential political power.

The relationship deteriorated further with the next election and rumors of a growing Latino political machine to oppose Pastrick in a future election. In 1975, the race for City Clerk,

⁶¹ “Jay’s Machiavellianism,” *Latin Times*, March 31, 1972. The editorial reprinted chunks of the articles from the *Globe*.

⁶² “Down With Anglo Tutelage,” *Latin Times*, April 28, 1972.

⁶³ “Down With Anglo Tutelage,” *Latin Times*, April 28, 1972.

Robert Segovia-backed candidate Barreda appeared as one of the race's frontrunners against the opposition from Charlie "Tuna" Pacurar. Rumors within the community and reprinted in the newspapers hinted that Segovia and his 20-20 organization prepared to groom Barreda to run eventually for mayor. The 20-20 organization, which consisted of twenty steelworkers, city employees, precinct committeemen, and more, donated twenty dollars a month to create a funding arm to support Latinos in their campaigns for political office. This move brought Segovia, who the paper described as the "undisputed political godfather in the Latin Community," into a prominent position in his community. With his push for Barreda in the City Clerk election, *The Times* reported that "This has driven a wedge between old line supporters of Mayor Robert A. Pastrick in the white community, who feel Barreda's candidacy for city clerk was forced on them."⁶⁴ However, these resentments were not isolated to the white community. In an effort to court the African American vote in the city, Pastrick and the local chapter of the NAACP held a testimonial for their slate. According to a reporter, "For black voters, the city clerk race may not be so much of a race for someone as it may be against someone."⁶⁵ In the delicate balance required for Pastrick's machine, black voters resented and rejected the gains made by Segovia and the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community. Their decision to not support Barreda would make it clear to Pastrick that his success would rely on a cooperating Black vote. Without their support, Barreda became the only member of Pastrick's slate of candidates to not win their election, losing to Pacurar by 847 votes.⁶⁶ As a stark rebuke of the growing prominence of Segovia and the alleged attempts to build his own "Latin" machine,

⁶⁴ "Clerk Race Hints Power Struggle," *The Times*, April 18, 1975.

⁶⁵ "Black Votes Courted," *The Times*, May 2, 1975.

⁶⁶ "Pacurar Only Winner Over Pastrick Team," *The Times*, May 7, 1975.

Barreda's defeat signaled a chief concern for Pastrick to confront in order to entrench his political machine.

Following these rumors of an eventual "Latin" mayor from the Democratic Primary, a coalition of City Councilmen attempted to force Pastrick to remove Robert Segovia from his positions as Assistant Superintendent. To pressure Pastrick, a five-member bloc on the City Council refused to approve Pastrick's appointees for the school board unless he removed, or reassigned, Segovia from his position, where he oversaw hiring.⁶⁷ Segovia claimed that Black political boss and former gambling racketeer, James "Sonny" Peterson was "out to politically undo him."⁶⁸ The conflict between a "Latin" and Black political boss emphasized the decades long dispute between these two communities and their access to municipal resources. In criticizing Segovia, Peterson hoped to forge new opportunities for his community in a minor power struggle that could reverberate into a city-wide opportunity to public school employment.

Segovia and his bloc of supporters responded to these attempts to distill his political clout. In rare fashion, the newspaper covered extensively the precinct committee elections in 1976. Segovia recognized that the precincts would hold considerable power in how elections within the city operated. Hours before the filing deadline, dozens of "Latin" candidates filed, withdrew, and refiled for the Democratic and Republican party races, many of these individuals were affiliated with Segovia and Robert Cantrell. Precinct positions that normally went unopposed now had to campaign to retain their position, many blaming Pastrick for allowing Segovia to file these oppositions candidates.⁶⁹ The Lake County Republican party immediately

⁶⁷ "Pastrick Lacks Jeorse Flair for Command," *The Times*, September 10, 1975.

⁶⁸ "Segovia Incurs Peterson's Ire," *The Times*, September 9, 1975.

⁶⁹ "Election Holds Surprise," *The Times*, March 31, 1976.

challenged 43 of the filings from East Chicago claiming that “They are not bonified Republicans. They are not Republicans in good standing.”⁷⁰ The county organization feared that this move by Segovia and Cantrell was an attempt to seize control of these positions “to have a greater say in candidate selection...” in municipal elections.⁷¹ Coordinating together allowed Segovia and Cantrell to guarantee opposition in races across the precincts. Additionally, this coordination allowed for a degree, allegedly, of influence over voters.

These attempts proved ineffective for Segovia. In December 1976, the City Council compromised with Pastrick, approving his request for \$700,000 in revenue sharing funds.⁷² In exchange for this approval, Pastrick removed Segovia from his role as personnel chief, which offered him a vital role in hiring for the school system and in controlling numerous patronage positions. In order to prevent any discontent over one racial group possessing exclusive autonomy over hiring, the position was now advised by a tri-racial committee. Reportedly, the reorganization plan utilized a tri-racial committee to avoid “the possibility that opinion [Latino public opinion] might catapult Segovia into martyrdom.”⁷³

The setbacks continued for Segovia and his network of supporters within the Pastrick machine. In 1977, Segovia’s political clout within the patronage machine dwindled when five of his chief supporters lost their “political plums” within the East Chicago Park District. Former Local 1010 President, Hank “Babe” Lopez, who Segovia backed when Lopez ran against Arredondo. Despite this previous support, which helped Lopez win his first campaign, he removed Segovia’s supporters from the department when he was appointed Park Superintendent

⁷⁰ “County Republicans Challenge 47 Names,” *The Times*, March 31, 1976.

⁷¹ “County Republicans Challenge 47 Names,” *The Times*, March 31, 1976.

⁷² “E.C. Council Seeks Ouster of School Exec,” *The Times*, December 21, 1976.

⁷³ “Segovia Axed as Personnel Chief,” *The Times*, December 28, 1976.

after losing his presidential election.⁷⁴ Since his appointment, in 1972, Victor Torres utilized his department head position to award Segovia loyalists. Torres' ousting and Lopez's maneuvering delivered a critical setback for Segovia's political clout. No longer able to distribute uncontested employment to his supporters in either the public schools or the parks, Segovia's clout within the city became a fraction of his former capabilities.

After removing Segovia's influence from the department, Lopez encountered a major problem in his Parks Superintendent position two years later. On December 12th, after an Advent event at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in East Chicago, Lopez disappeared. A week later his family heard nothing from him and an unidentified employee of his at the parks department claimed that Lopez left the office on the 12th "to meet somebody after receiving a few threatening phone calls."⁷⁵ Coincidentally, days before Lopez went missing, Pastrick suspended him from his position for refusing to meet with Indiana State Board of Accounts.⁷⁶ A few weeks later, Hammond Police pulled Lopez's Oldsmobile with his body in the driver seat from the Grand Calumet River dividing Hammond from East Chicago.⁷⁷

The timing of Lopez's suspension and the presence of the Indiana State Board of Accounts became suspect for Hammond Police Department's investigating officers. Two weeks after the body was found, the State Board of Accounts found that East Chicago Park and Recreation Department had two chief financial discrepancies. The first discovery revealed that \$9,575 in funds, collected from parking fees and rental fees from the Marina were missing and never transferred to the City Controller. The former Marina director claimed that he handed all

⁷⁴ "Politician Loses Clout," *The Times*, March 20, 1977.

⁷⁵ "Babe Lopez Missing," *The Times*, December 19, 1979.

⁷⁶ "Parking Job Pending," *The Times*, January 8, 1980.

⁷⁷ "Lopez Body Found," *The Times*, January 30, 1980.

money over to Lopez personally; however, all records were in a stolen truck and these receipts were not included in the missing sum. Furthermore, the parks department accounts payable fund was nearly \$200,000 overdrawn in 1978, Lopez's first full year as superintendent.⁷⁸

Former activists of the Youth Advisory Board (YAB) and the Concerned Latinos Organization (CLO) formed a new group, Hispanos for Justice in the wake of the discovery of Lopez's body. The organization's members expressed concern over the role of politics in Lopez's murder and demanded a variety of actions, each ideally to add transparency to the justice system's investigation. Spokeswoman Susan Roque, formerly of the YAB provided pages of petitions to the Lake County Prosecutor demanding a thorough investigation into Lopez's murder. Egipciano, formerly of the CLO, questioned if the missing funds were utilized for political campaigns in the community. Aurora Gonzales claimed that Crawford was "on trial too" as the petitioners expressed concern that "there will be a coverup because of politics involved in the county justice system."⁷⁹ The group later even attempted to involve the Arredondo family, chiefly Miguel Arredondo (Lake County Police Chief) and Jose Arredondo (Lake County Sheriff). However, the brothers stated that they could not because Lopez's murder fell under Hammond's jurisdiction.⁸⁰

The group of activists were not the only residents of the region to demand answers about Lopez's murder. While Latina and Latino activists demanded county action, Hammond Police Detectives turned to studying the audit and the questions it raised about Lopez's tenure, as well as his predecessor, Torres.⁸¹ This was coupled by a scathing editorial from *The Times* entitled

⁷⁸ "E.C. Park Funds Short," *The Times*, February 14, 1980.

⁷⁹ "Lopez Death Investigation Asked," *The Times*, February 22, 1980.

⁸⁰ "Involvement Is Sought," *The Times*, March 6, 1980.

⁸¹ "Policemen Study Park Audit In Lopez Murder Investigation," *The Times*, February 20, 1980.

“Too little light shed.” The editorial noted a variety of factors contributing to the obstacles in the investigation such as “the political tendrils that snake throughout Lake County.” However, one of the more damning sections was the continued

failure of East Chicago’s city controller to furnish information about the park district bond revenues to the state examiners. They asked the controller to get the information from the park board in 1977 when they checked the district’s books. They asked again last month. The controller ought to be interested in providing data that might help clear up a vicious killing, yet his procrastination- or refusal?- conveys the opposite impression.⁸²

Like the concerns of activists from *Hispanos for Justice*, the newspaper expressed grave concern over the behavior of members of Pastrick’s administration and their cooperation, or lack thereof.

Although the case remained unsolved, Lopez’s murder became an integral component of many events having to do with, or related to, political malfeasance in the region. Investigators questioned whether the body of a Chicago mob enforcer, found dead in East Chicago, might have been the man that killed Lopez.⁸³ When police discovered a Puerto Rican-led drug-trafficking scheme in the city’s mechanical department, newspapers questioned whether the scheme led to Lopez’s death.⁸⁴ The almost folkloric nature of Lopez’s unsolved murder spawned numerous stories, including that the administration framed Lopez, or that he was rumored to be preparing to speak to federal authorities about corruption in the region.

However, newspapers and local gossip began to tie Lopez’s murder to another just eighteen months after his death. In 1981, a gunman assassinated City Attorney Jay Given outside of the Elk’s Lounge in front of hundreds of attendees gathered for a fundraiser. Given was there to support Atterson Spann’s campaign. The Lake County Metro Squad questioned the Puerto

⁸² “Too little light shed,” *The Times*, February 25, 1980.

⁸³ “Lopez Shot By Mob Hit Man?,” *The Times*, June 4, 1980.

⁸⁴ “Top Pastrick Aide, 3 Others Suspended,” *The Times*, December 23, 1980.

Rican Deputy Chief of Police, John Cardona, who claimed he was there as a “spy” for Segovia against his rival Given.⁸⁵ Juxtaposing Given’s assassination with Lopez’s murder, *The Times* noted that “Both once occupied lofty levels- prized positions- in the hierarchy of exclusive East Chicago political circles.”⁸⁶ However, much like Lopez, Given found himself in the spotlight in the numerous federal investigations into Lake County politics. Pastrick implicated Given, in 1977, when the mayor testified that the misuse of \$60,000 in city funds to purchase gifts for political fundraisers by the Sanitary District Superintendent “was traditional” and done with the support of City Attorney Given.⁸⁷ While serving as City Attorney, a federal grand jury included Given in a 1976 probe tied to a \$5.3 million bond issue for park improvements done by Metro Construction Company.⁸⁸ The Federal Bureau of Investigation became involved when investigators discovered that someone had tampered with the bullets and shell in police custody.⁸⁹ Much like Lopez, *The Times* noted the suspicion surrounding Given’s assassination. The paper declared that “A common speculation has been that Given was shot to keep him from revealing incriminating information. Given had long been in the city’s inner circle, and he had a probing mind. He was the type of person to know the location of skeletons in closets.”⁹⁰

Whether Lopez and Given’s murders were an attempt by the administration to close ranks by permanently silencing dissenters, or simply unrelated and grisly ends, these acts highlighted the growing presence of Latinos in the political machine. Lopez, who broke away from his former boss, Segovia, attained a chief political position that allowed him to award his friends

⁸⁵ “E.C. Deputy Chief Questioned in Killing,” *The Times*, June 29, 1981.

⁸⁶ “Explosive Secrets Die With Given,” *The Times*, May 17, 1981.

⁸⁷ “Explosive Secrets Die With Given,” *The Times*, May 17, 1981.

⁸⁸ “Explosive Secrets Die With Given,” *The Times*, May 17, 1981.

⁸⁹ “Cardona Faces Disciplinary Action in Weapon Violation,” *The Times*, August 10, 1981.

⁹⁰ “Clues in Slaying Scarce,” *The Times*, May 25, 1981.

with employment. Cardona, a relatively high-ranking police officer, allegedly used his position to murder Given. The Lake County prosecutor refused to prosecute Cardona due to a lack of evidence.⁹¹ However, suspicion continued to arise as the newspaper noted that Cardona was the only police officer on duty that night to not take a polymorph test.⁹² Police sergeant, Gus Flores, a Puerto Rican officer, claimed that “Because we’re aware of that feeling (a lack of public confidence), we’ve left that part of the investigation (questioning people) mostly to the state police.”⁹³ The presence of Cardona and his alleged affiliation with Segovia tainted the already dwindling influence of the political boss.

In June 1982, the long downward spiral of Segovia’s political career and clout within Pastrick’s administration reached its final point. The school board, all but one, Sanford Spann, were Pastrick appointees, decided to not renew his contract. The newspaper account noted some anger at this decision but that “others said the Latin community is ready for change.”⁹⁴ Spann, a relative of Atterson Spann, whose fundraiser was the site of Given’s assassination, claimed that the dissent came from community members “who don’t want the black population to have an active part” and “are saying the Latins should control the city rather than the blacks.”⁹⁵

Barreda’s position within Pastrick’s machine became tenuous. A chief lieutenant in Segovia’s 20-20 organization, Barreda’s career in East Chicago politics became one of the last remaining bastions of Latino political power in the city. However, in March of 1983, ahead of

⁹¹ “E.C. Deputy Chief Questioned in Killing,” *The Times*, June 29, 1981.

⁹² “All except one,” *The Times*, October 21, 1981. Cardona did take a polygraph test during the initial investigation but not after the discovery of tampered evidence. Suspicion about Cardona changed over time. A witness that previously believed Cardona was with Given later claimed that he was not. See: “Cardona Not With Given,” *The Times*, August 16, 1981.

⁹³ “Jay Given Bullet Casing Altered,” *The Times*, July 14, 1981.

⁹⁴ “E.C. school boss fired,” *The Times*, June 22, 1982.

⁹⁵ “E.C. school pick questioned,” *The Times*, July 1, 1982.

Pastrick's push for re-election, he fired Barreda, then serving as the Human Resources Director for the city. Recalling the incident to *The Times*, Barreda made it clear that Pastrick questioned his loyalty and his involvement in the political group, 20-20, and their endorsement of his opponent, former Police Chief Stephen Stiglich. According to Barreda, when confronted with why he did not give a pro-Pastrick speech at their endorsement meeting, Barreda claimed that "there are many things happening outside this room. This is neither the time nor the place to discuss them."⁹⁶

However, Barreda's former role as Human Resources Director continued to haunt him. In 1985, U.S. District Court Judge James Moody sentenced Barreda to one year in federal prison for a ghost payroll scheme conducted while serving in Pastrick's administration from September 1981 through September 1982.⁹⁷ Barreda received the maximum sentence after the plea-bargaining agreement with the U.S. Attorney's office, avoiding a retrial on the original eighteen felony charges for conspiracy to steal \$3,727 through the ghost payee, Javier Garza. Allegedly, Barreda's wife Maria cashed Garza's checks and kept \$100 per check for back rent on a tavern Garza leased from the couple. The prosecution claimed that Barreda's actions "damage the public's confidence in its officials." The prosecution then read from Barreda's pre-sentence report where he claimed that he was "only doing what everybody else did."⁹⁸

During a decade of intense federal prosecution against corruption in Lake County, the role of Latino political power underwent significant changes. Internal conflict, facilitated by the community and administrative changes by Pastrick, saw the steady removal of Segovia from

⁹⁶ "Pastrick fires Barreda," *The Times*, March 13, 1983.

⁹⁷ "Former councilman gets 1 year for theft," *The Times*, October 13, 1985.

⁹⁸ "Former councilman gets 1 year for theft," *The Times*, October 13, 1985.

access to the machine's patronage positions. Latinos found themselves under a spotlight as the victims of murder, alleged suspects, and perpetrators of corruption. These instances, coupled with the death of Jesse Gomez, discussed in the first chapter, deprived the community of a seasoned generation of leadership. As East Chicago's industrial landscape underwent a significant economic transition during deindustrialization, the lack of patronage positions and fewer steel jobs exacerbated the community's fragile relationship with city hall. Not only did some manufacturing industries shutter but those that remained reduced production. Each of these outcomes reduced jobs in the region and directly impacted the livelihood of its residents. Without steel and the industrial nature of the region, residents would need to discover a new viable way to live. And without the tax revenue of the heavily industrialized city, East Chicago's political machine needed a new source to fund their public works projects and straining patronage army.

From Steel to Lake Boat Casinos: "It's not easy to fight city hall, especially in E.C.": The Community and Council at Odds

Deindustrialization joined several other factors in the city and across the county in altering how community members viewed the political machine and their public officials. The crackdown by federal authorities against unethical, corrupt practices raised suspicion by citizens against the entrenched incumbents. The dwindling tax base, which relied heavily on industry that now saw factories permanently shut down, or severely scaled back, impacted the city's ability to distribute patronage appointments in municipal employment. However, existing employees saw attempts at salary increases, often protested by residents.

East Chicago Common Council meeting minutes reflected the presence of various sectors of the city lamenting the changes to the city's landscape. Activists from Frente Unido-Hispano

Americano, a student organization at Indiana University, protested the city's closure of two recreational centers within the Latina and Latino community, done so in the interest of budget cuts. President Myrna Gonzales claimed that "The Latin community only wants a just and equal share of their tax money to enjoy the community."⁹⁹ Fellow Frente Unido member, Jose Cruz invoked the 1980 census, which noted that "Hispanics" were now East Chicago's majority.¹⁰⁰ Susan Roque, formerly YAB and Hispanos for Justice, asked the council directly "Will there be another center closed in the future?" A question circumvented by the council and its president.¹⁰¹ Steelworkers even arrived to question how the recently closed Coke Plant at Jones & Laughlin utilized the \$22,000,000 Economic Development Bond approved by the council in 1976 for them to construct a new facility. One worker proclaimed that "The Union feels there is no need for so many of their membership to be out of a job."¹⁰²

Amid the layoffs in region steel, in 1984, the Common Council proposed salary increases for themselves and Mayor Pastrick. Community residents, overwhelmingly Latinas and Latinos, arrived to a special meeting about the annual budget to protest and oppose these raises. Esther Franco, formerly of the CLO and now an organizer with Hispanic Americans for Progress, noted that the organization was promised by Pastrick that he would be talking to the council about these raises, to which the council denied having met with the mayor. Another Latina questioned how the council could give themselves a raise "when the city hasn't even paid their outstanding NIPSCO bill" from 1979. Richard Ortiz pointedly noted that "Elected officials should not be

⁹⁹ "Regular Session of the Common Council, September 14, 1981." Page 22. Records maintained by East Chicago Clerk's Office.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² "Regular Session of the Common Council, March 8, 1982." Page 167. Records maintained by East Chicago Clerk's Office.

give[n] raises when so many other people are not employed.”¹⁰³ Concluding the meeting, Susan Roque spoke to the crowd of attendees to let them know that Hispanic Americans for Progress had repeatedly attempted to make meetings with various members of the city administration, such as the City Controller and the Finance Committee on the City Council; however, none of their correspondence received a response. Her colleague, Irene Gonzalez, added that their organization would continue to use “all avenues to stop the salary raises.”¹⁰⁴

Some community members took to the paper to decry the elected officials and administration of the city. In an article, East Chicagoan Juan Andrade proclaimed that “There are many games to chose [sic] from, but there is no bigger and profitable game than the one played at the luxurious city hall palace. The past four years to say the least, have been that of public servants becoming self servants.”¹⁰⁵ Andrade criticized members of the city council for voting to build an island for industrial waste in Lake Michigan, a tax increase to pay off city lawsuits, and the rejection for a hiring ordinance to develop the marina district, a crucial site for future development in the city.¹⁰⁶ Similarly to the Latinas and Latinos who attended and criticized the city’s inaction at council meetings, Andrade viewed the city’s leadership as ineffective. For Andrade, much like the representatives of various organizations, the self-serving actions taken by the council highlighted their blind-eye to the real issues impacting the city. Andrade’s comments stemmed from the council considering a new possible solution: gaming.

¹⁰³ “Special Meeting of the East Chicago Common Council, August 22, 1983” Page 538. Records maintained by East Chicago Clerk’s Office.

¹⁰⁴ “Special Meeting of the East Chicago Common Council, August 22, 1983” Page 540. Records maintained by East Chicago Clerk’s Office.

¹⁰⁵ “Councilman queried,” *The Times*, April 22, 1987.

¹⁰⁶ “Councilman queried,” *The Times*, April 22, 1987.

East Chicago was not alone in turning to gaming and legalizing gambling to offset the woes of deindustrialization and the urban crisis. Chloe Taft's *From Steel to Slots* explored how in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania the postindustrial city shifted "from an era of manufacturing dominance to an economy based in service, entertainment, and finance."¹⁰⁷ As Taft and other scholars of casinos and gaming noted, this period marked a significant, national transition that "coincided with a broader economic shift toward riskier financial dealings."¹⁰⁸

The "casino capitalism" of lakefront gaming along the industrial shores of Lake Michigan both complement existing studies but also highlight the careful pairing between machine politics and gaming. The casinos could offer a solution to the dwindling city coffers and provide an avenue to put money back into the city and conversely employment. Additionally, a major project like developing a casino could become a profitable opportunity for those with the necessary knowledge and connections.

However, Indiana faced a problem similar to one many other states faced in adopting gaming: lotteries and gambling were illegal in Indiana. By the Indiana Constitution, bingo and other forms of gambling were illegal.¹⁰⁹ Although this had hardly stopped the region, which had carried on informal yet organized bingo and lottery efforts for decades. However, after Illinois legalized bingo in 1971, Democratic members of Indiana's State House of Representatives

¹⁰⁷ Chloe E. Taft, *From Steel to Slots: Casino Capitalism in the Postindustrial City* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), 4.

¹⁰⁸ Taft, *From Steel to Slots*, 97. See also: Charles T. Clotfelter and Philip J. Cook, *Selling Hope: State Lotteries in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989); John Dombink and William Norman Thompson, *The Last Resort: Success and Failure in Campaigns for Casinos* (Reno, NV: University of Nevada Press, 1990); Robert Goodman, *The Luck Business: The Devastating Consequences and Broken Promises of America's Gambling Explosion* (New York: Free Press, 1995); and Bryant Simon, *Boardwalk of Dreams: Atlantic City and the Fate of Urban America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

¹⁰⁹ CITE STATE CONSTITUTION

repeatedly attempted to legalize it, failing six times between 1975 and 1987.¹¹⁰ In 1987, State Representative Chester Dobis, of Merrillville in Lake County, again pushed for a public referendum on the issue. Recognizing the notorious and blatant continuation of gambling across the region, Dobis claimed that “Bingo is one of the most abused and violated laws in Indiana, next to the speed limit when it was at 55 mph.”¹¹¹ The Illinois Department of Revenue agreed with Dobis, claiming that “It just seems to me it’s wrong... to make something illegal and turn the other way. It breeds so much contempt for the law. It allows law enforcement to play god... I would be very surprised if there are not public officials taking payoffs for not enforcing the law.”¹¹² These comments reflected the reality in East Chicago, where Mayor Jeorse’s administration became the subject of a Senate Racketeering Hearing for receiving gifts in exchange for granting pinball licenses. When Nicosia ran against Jeorse, in 1963, he claimed that illegal gambling flourished under Jeorse’s administration, a claim repeated when candidates sought to replace Nicosia in 1971.

Legal debates in the state capital of Indianapolis held the future for East Chicago and its neighboring cities. In 1988, Indiana State Senate Finance Committee advanced Senate Bill 25 to the General Assembly.¹¹³ Despite the bill having some bipartisan support, Indiana’s Democratic Governor, repeatedly pledged to veto “any legislation for casino gambling.”¹¹⁴ However, this initial measure did not pass. In 1992, a new endeavor made by representatives in Southern Indiana to allow gaming on the Ohio River, legislators expanded this bill to include gaming on

¹¹⁰ CITE ILLINOIS LEGALIZING. For Indiana see: “Vote offers difficult choices,” *The Times*, December 16, 1987.

¹¹¹ “Vote offers difficult choices,” *The Times*, December 16, 1987.

¹¹² Comments by Illinois Department of Revenue Gary Schechter, see: “Vote offers difficult choices,” *The Times*, December 16, 1987.

¹¹³ “Agreement found on lottery vote,” *The Times*, January 14, 1988.

¹¹⁴ “Gary wants casino,” *The Times*, January 12, 1989.

Lake Michigan.¹¹⁵ However, it was not until a compromise during a special session that Indiana's General Assembly legalized gaming for 1994.

However, some of the criticism about the potential gaming revenue stemmed from Pastrick's own backyard. Former CLO chairman and firefighter, Ed Egipciaco challenged the transparency behind the contract. Whereas cities, such as neighboring Gary, Indiana saw twenty-five separate contracts for their gaming license, East Chicago only received one bid by Showboat Marina Partnership. In fact, Pastrick's administration endorsed Showboat Marina a month before residents voted at the November 2, 1993, referendum to even decide if they wanted gaming. Newspapers revealed that the list of partners in Showboat Marina included a former Indiana Democratic chairman and even that "several city officials already have resigned their posts to become investors in the Showboat project."¹¹⁶ Commenting on the lack of contracts, Pastrick claimed that "I have made it very clear that this process has never been closed and that the application process is still open. Anyone can still apply, and I've tried to make that as clear as I know how."¹¹⁷ Egipciaco attempted to stall the Indiana Gaming Commission from holding hearings for the one contract. Judge Lorenzo Arredondo issued an emergency order that barred the hearings claiming that other applicants were discouraged from applying, acting on Egipciaco's request. However, the city noted that since Egipciaco did not post the \$1 million cash bond that the court should modify the order and allow the hearing, which it did.¹¹⁸ The millions that politicians expected the casino to generate in East Chicago could prove the life preserver that the city needed.

¹¹⁵ "Riverboat bill floats through Ind. House," *Post-Tribune*, January 28, 1992.

¹¹⁶ "UCO, Showboat officials pleased with initial talks," *The Times*, January 13, 1994.

¹¹⁷ "E.C. bids for casino 'still open,'" *The Times*, January 31, 1994.

¹¹⁸ "East Chicago casino hearings to resume," *The Indianapolis Star*, October 19, 1995.

The Machine's Greatest Challenge

In March 1999, *Indiana Business Magazine* ran a cover story entitled “Last City Machine in America,” which prominently featured Mayor Robert Pastrick. A decade earlier, in 1989, *U.S. News & World Report* labeled East Chicago as “the last city machine in America.” What made East Chicago a unique community where something as bygone as the urban political machine endured? And how did elected officials respond to something that became, particularly during the Progressive Era, so synonymous with poor government and corruption? In the quote accompanying his photo, Pastrick declared that “East Chicago has always been a very political community since Day One, as long as I’ve lived here.”¹¹⁹ And through this aura of hyper-political activity, the label became not a moniker to deride the community but one where Pastrick found great pride. East Chicagoans were involved and cared about civic participation. The article noted that this sort of old-style politics survived because of the city’s anomalous status. The journalist noted that “When taxes go up, residents generally don’t holler because industry is footing most of the bill for what remains one of the most expensive city governments and school systems in the state.”¹²⁰ The article noted how despite the clear division that Pastrick and Stiglich’s feud created in East Chicago and the county, little change would likely occur regardless of the result. According to the article, “Stiglich decries the politics of patronage as ruining the city, but local Democrats say it’s unlikely anyone will ever take the politics out of East Chicago. It’s as much a part of the city as the steel-mill blast furnaces.”¹²¹ No matter who

¹¹⁹ “Last City Machine in America,” *Indiana Business Magazine* March, 1999. Mayor Robert Pastrick folder at East Chicago Public Library Main Branch, East Chicago Room.

¹²⁰ “Last City Machine in America,” *Indiana Business Magazine* March, 1999, p. 10. Mayor Robert Pastrick folder at East Chicago Public Library Main Branch, East Chicago Room.

¹²¹ “Last City Machine in America,” *Indiana Business Magazine* March, 1999, p. 54.

sat in the mayoral office, East Chicago and its focus on politics were going nowhere. In a few months, this insight would prove exactly true as the city's longest incumbent mayor prepared to face his most significant challenge yet.

In 2001, Chris Sautter released the astonishing *The King of Steeltown: Hardball Politics in the Heartland*, a documentary about East Chicago Mayor Pastrick's 1999 campaign against Democratic Primary challenger Stephen R. 'Stig' Stiglich. In East Chicago, a one-party town, the primary would determine which candidate would become mayor. The project began after Pastrick's son Kevin mentioned that the elder Pastrick's legacy should be preserved.¹²² The race offered one of the most difficult challenges Pastrick faced in his career. Stiglich, a former member of Pastrick's administration as the Chief of Police, now turned dissenter, sought to portray himself as an authentic voice for the community. The documentary highlighted the contentious nature of this primary. Stiglich rallied a vocal community aggravated by Pastrick whereas Pastrick and his cadre of supporters worked to portray Stiglich as a disingenuous outsider. Although Stiglich balanced between these two warring camps, the emphasis of the documentary was Pastrick and his suave political maneuvering.

Chris Sautter, a native Hoosier, was the central creative and organizing force behind the documentary project. According to an advertisement in *The Daily Journal*, Sautter, who wrote, produced, directed, and financed the film spent two years working on the documentary. The film cost \$50,000 and the New York International Independent Film & Video Festival named it Best Political Documentary in 2001.¹²³ At the time, Sautter was serving as a consultant for Pastrick,

¹²² "E.C.'s 'hardball politics' make it to the big screen," *The Times*, October 9, 2001.

¹²³ "Political documentary at historical society," *The Daily Journal*, November 15, 2001.

which he previously had done in 1995 as well.¹²⁴ Sautter owned a consulting firm in Washington D.C. and would go on to serve as a chief recount advisor for Al Gore's failed bid for the presidency.

Newspaper coverage revealed the reception of the documentary, which was shown not only in Indiana but also Los Angeles, Washington D.C., and New York. According to Sautter, "East Chicago politics is legendary throughout the state. I think there is a lot of interest in that area."¹²⁵ In his account of a showing of the film in Indianapolis, Indiana political commentator Brian Howey, noted that "In Indianapolis, the audacity of the situation tickled the audience. They laughed one of those laughs that kind of churns through the audience like a wave. Oh, those Lake County boys... hoo-boy... it's a different world up there. It is."¹²⁶ The documentary and bygone style of politicking in the 1999 primary proved how exceptional and almost archaic campaigns in East Chicago, and the region, were.

The 1999 primary proved vicious. Pastrick, the incumbent mayor since his first election in 1971 faced Lake County's Democratic Party chair, Stephen Stiglich. Previously, Stiglich served as East Chicago's Police Chief for ten years, as well as a former Lake County Sheriff. The two men faced off in the previous election; however, 1999 proved a closer race. In discussing their available finances at the end of January 1999, *The Times* reported that they raised comparable sums (\$58,500 for Pastrick and \$52,000 for Stiglich) "with practically no overlap from individual contributors."¹²⁷ The two men competed in what *U.S. News & World Report* labeled in 1989 as "the last city machine in America." In cementing his machine,

¹²⁴ "E.C.'s 'hardball politics' make it to the big screen," *The Times*, October 9, 2001.

¹²⁵ "Filmmaker gets back to roots in Indiana," *The Times*, November 24, 2001.

¹²⁶ "Manous and the King of Steeltown," *The Times-Mail*, February 22, 2003.

¹²⁷ "Pastrick, Stiglich close," *The Times*, January 25, 1999.

Pastrick, the city's longest serving Mayor, had embedded Latinos and African Americans as essential members of his political machine, a vital component to his longevity. These were the same forces that Stiglich sought to utilize to oust his former boss from the mayor's office.

However, with the economic downturn in the city during the 1980s and 1990s, Latino and African American members of his administration started to become some of Pastrick's chief critics. Anthony Copeland, a Black firefighter and East Chicago resident began to pen biting editorials against Pastrick and his machine. In his first editorial, Copeland lamented that "Black, white, or brown, the lives of East Chicago citizens will be affected by backroom dealings of our city government... They will have to answer why they have auctioned off our children for the casinos."¹²⁸ The organization of Citizens for Action, a group of predominantly Black, Latino, and Latina residents and city employees began to articulate their frustration to fellow residents.

Pastrick's critics also extended to his political opponent and former Police Chief, Stiglich. The campaign mailers sent to the residents of East Chicago reflect a vicious mud-slinging battle between the two candidates. East Chicagoans checked their mailboxes each day to new flyers diminishing either Stiglich or Pastrick almost daily. One two-page flyer entitled "The Bob Pastrick Story: Then and Now" detailed the career of Pastrick from his election to City Council and later Mayor of East Chicago. The flyer innocently asked, "Remember Main Street 1975?" with a picture of a thriving and bustling downtown. However, the next page made the point extremely clear as recent photos of that same downtown depicted boarded-up buildings in various states of disarray, vacant storefronts, and empty lots to depict Main Street "After 43

¹²⁸ "Speaking out against injustices in East Chicago," *The Times*, February 13, 1994.

years of the Mayor's failed leadership."¹²⁹ The juxtaposition of a thriving downtown with its present condition only twenty-four years apart painted a bleak portrait of the political machine and its operation of the city. The bullet points near the photos made the point clear: Stiglich wanted to portray Pastrick and his allies as out of touch "with East Chicago Working Men and Women." The flyer repeated his criticisms that Pastrick used the 160 municipal jobs and \$6.7 million in salaries as "political payoffs" to "Pastrick's Pals." The flyer even repeated the qualms with the gaming industry, claiming that "Riverboat gambling hasn't produced the 2,000 jobs Pastrick promised for East Chicago residents. Those jobs that were created are mostly part-time, low wage jobs."¹³⁰

Pastrick and his team followed a similar suit by attempting to portray Stiglich as an unethical candidate. The Pastrick campaign sent out a six-page folded flyer to residents. The flyer's front page featured a smiling Stiglich with the word "Cheater" beneath the portrait. The flyer contained five "facts" about Stiglich's "Long History of Cheating East Chicago." These facts included footnotes to sources, typically newspaper accounts that covered instances such as when Stiglich plead guilty to vote buying and filing a false campaign finance report in 1979. After unfolding the complete flyer, the reader was greeted with a recap that included six cropped reprints of the newspapers. The headlines declared, sometimes ambiguously, damning bits, such as "Police officer sues sheriff for harassment," "Tax Penalty Write-Off," "State audit finds fund irregularities," and "\$2,000 payoffs alleged in tape."¹³¹ While Stiglich continued to attack

¹²⁹ "The Bob Pastrick Story: Then & Now," 1999. Robert Pastrick Folder at East Chicago Public Library Main Branch, East Chicago Room.

¹³⁰ "The Bob Pastrick Story: Then & Now," 1999. Democratic Primary 1999 folder at East Chicago Public Library Main Branch, East Chicago Room.

¹³¹ "Cheater," 1999. Democratic Primary 1999 folder at East Chicago Public Library Main Branch, East Chicago Room.

Pastrick's administration over issues within the campaign, Pastrick's team focused on presenting Stiglich as an unethical and unreliable candidate for the office.

Stiglich and his campaign responded the next week to this mailer. Declaring that "Pastrick sinks to all time low..." the flyer reprinted one of the cropped articles in its entirety. By doing so, Stiglich's campaign pointed out that "\$2,000 payoffs alleged in tape" was an article that was not even about Stiglich's tenure as Lake County Sheriff but his predecessor. The attempt by Pastrick supporters to attribute prior misconduct to Stiglich was an attempt to portray the opponent as an unethical and ineffective leader. This effort at misinformation highlighted the power of utilizing corruption as a political word and tool to discredit competition in politicking across the region. Much like Witwer concluded, in unions corruption served as a "politically charged word" utilized by warring factions regardless of the validity of the claims.

With the campaign in full force, normal governance almost completely ceased. While Pastrick and his administration continued public service work, the City Council met only sporadically from March 1999 until June 1999. Normally meeting biweekly in Regular Sessions, which held a consistent time and date, the Common Council cancelled these meetings on April 12th, April 26th, and May 10th. All three cancellations were announced, or at least marked, three dates in advance.¹³² In lieu of regular sessions, the council held a single Special Session at 1 PM in the afternoon on April 14th.¹³³ The meeting was to discuss the purchasing of a defunct business to build a new fire station. However, the meeting did not note how many individuals were able to

¹³² See "Regular Meeting of the East Chicago Common Council," April 12, 1999. (East Chicago Clerk's Office). "Regular Meeting of the East Chicago Common Council," April 26, 1999. (East Chicago Clerk's Office). "Regular Meeting of the East Chicago Common Council," May 10, 1999. (East Chicago Clerk's Office).

¹³³ "Special Session of the East Chicago Common Council," April 14, 1999. (East Chicago Clerk's Office).

attend. At the public portion, the Council President told the audience that “if they wanted to talk to their Councilman they could do so after the meeting.”¹³⁴ The absence, whether deliberate or not, of political discourse and comments from the public at council meetings is an archival surprise. Given the immense amount of political activity, the extension of campaigning into the common council chambers is expected, and commonplace in election years in East Chicago. It is possible that members of the city council were busy campaigning themselves, or that the administration did not want to provide the venue for political discourse. Even the recording of comments are the special sessions are sparse, half-page accounts, most of which are the roll-call. This transparency issue highlights both the importance of non-municipal sources in exploring this election as well as newspaper accounts.

Although neither Pastrick nor Stiglich were Latino, Latinos played a significant role in each party’s move toward the mayoral office. Former Chief of Police, Augusto “Gus” Flores Jr., recalled the 1999 primary for Jerry Davich’s book, *Crooked Politics in Northwest Indiana*. According to Flores, “On Election Day in May 1999, Bob Stiglich and I spent most of the day riding throughout the city, checking the polling places. I’ll never forget what Stig told me at 1:00 pm that day: ‘Gus, we’ve been buried in concrete.’ Sadly, he was right.”¹³⁵ Unbeknownst to Pastrick, his political surrogates leveraged municipal work and public projects, particularly concrete work, to curry favor for their political boss. These political surrogates in Pastrick’s campaign included its fair share of Latino confidants and officials. In fact, five of the infamous Sidewalk Six were Latinos. These men included former city engineer Pedro Porras, former Parks

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Jerry Davich, *Crooked Politics in Northwest Indiana*. (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2017), 63.

Superintendent Jose Valdez Jr., former City Controller Edwardo Maldonado and two former councilmen Adrian Santos and Joe De La Cruz. These men were joined by Greek-American councilman Frank Kollintzas in what *The Times* and *Chicago Tribune* labeled the Sidewalk Six. As journalists noted, Pastrick and his allies were bolstered by casino revenue projects.¹³⁶

These supporters proved vital components of Pastrick and Stiglich's campaign for the mayor's office. When Stiglich went to county to file his candidacy, him and his supporters donned bright blue baseball-style jackets with eight-inch font "Stiglich" stitched across the back.¹³⁷ Supporters took to the newspaper to write letters of support for each candidate. In one, a Latino resident asked for all residents "to rally around Pastrick" proclaiming that "Mayor Robert Pastrick has made a solid commitment to give the residents of East Chicago the very best city services that he can, and you can believe he won't let us down."¹³⁸ Another proclaimed that "His [Pastrick's] achievements in city government are without fail, and his leadership is unequalled, so my conclusion is that a vote for Pastrick is a vote for my generation."¹³⁹ Another writer rhetorically questioned "Why is it that we only get city improvements shortly before election time? Why is that city job applications are in an abundance around election time? Why are there so many promises made to city workers before election time?"¹⁴⁰

Latino and Latina residents of East Chicago who did not firmly identify with one of these two camps still voiced discontent with Pastrick's administration and the need for change. Whether this change was to be externally, with Stiglich assuming the mayor's mantle, or

¹³⁶ "Pastrick turns up campaign enthusiasm," *The Times*, March 11, 1999.

¹³⁷ "Filing," *The Times*, February 20, 1999.

¹³⁸ "East Chicago improved, thanks to Mayor Pastrick," *The Times*, March 12, 1999.

¹³⁹ "Voting for Pastrick helps the young generation," *The Times*, March 31, 1999.

¹⁴⁰ "Writer examines Pastrick's accomplishments as mayor," *The Times*, April 25, 1999.

internally, with Pastrick seeing the error of his previous governance, remains unclear. However, these undecided residents still recognized the urgency for change and transparency within local governance. In an editorial, Colleen Aguirre responded to the bond issue for an \$80.5 million municipal service building, stating that “We have to stop this extreme overspending and take this whole project back to the drawing board.” Aguirre drew a parallel with neighboring Hammond, who was utilizing their casino revenue to build a similar sized building for only \$15 million.¹⁴¹ Streetwise Moreno, who held the funeral for ethnic Mexican political power, did not find Stiglich the candidate to counter the political machine he despised. Moreno described Stiglich as “...a spiteful ex-wife. Been in bed with the mayor [Pastrick] for some 20 years and filed for divorce. Destined to be a bridesmaid and never a bride. ‘I want what you have’ will not suffice as a platform.”¹⁴² For Moreno, and likeminded residents, replacing one political boss with another would not work for the city in the long-term.

Latinos and Latinas within the city rarely supported alternatives to the two frontrunners. Within the race, Jorge Benavente, a Latino optometrist, represented himself as a younger alternative to both Stiglich and Pastrick. Benavente claimed that he believed “people are looking for something different.” When announcing his candidacy he acknowledged the uphill struggle and noted that “I know I’m up against two very powerful men, but I have a lot of energy.”¹⁴³ Some residents decried the corruption of the Democratic Party Primary and threw support behind Angel Acosta. Although a negligible amount of voters followed this strategy, this tactic does highlight the limits of subverting partisan elections, particularly in regions dominated by single-

¹⁴¹ “East Chicago police station cost is way out of line,” *The Times*, February 3, 1999.

¹⁴² “Stiglich is covetous of the mayor’s throne,” *The Times*, April 25, 1999.

¹⁴³ “Third Dem files for mayor in East Chicago,” *The Times*, February 21, 1999.

party politics. Running in the Republican primary in the Democratic stronghold of East Chicago insured that Acosta would likely both run unopposed and secure a spot on the November ballot. However, this strategy would result in few returns in a straight-ballot city, where Democratic voters rarely cross the party line on their ballots.¹⁴⁴ One Republican voter even proclaimed that the East Chicago GOP needed a new leader, since former Pastrick ally and GOP leader Robert Cantrell, “shows a lack of loyalty to the Republic Party,” and openly campaigned for Stiglich.¹⁴⁵

Latinos became important surrogates for Pastrick, as his challengers pushed vital community issues, such as the appointed school board. Since Mayor Jeorse removed the democratically elected school board in the 1950s, the Mayor of East Chicago retained complete control and appointed school board members. When Stiglich adopted the rallying cry that “We’re going to take politics out of the schools. We’re going to let you run the schools,” Pastrick turned to cite Chicago public schools, claiming that CPS improved because of the active involvement of Mayor Richard M. Daley.¹⁴⁶ School Superintendent John Flores echoed this belief when he expressed concern that elected school boards might not be the administrative cure-all the district needed. Citing the gradual improvement of ISTEP scores and “other academic performance indicators,” Flores credited programs such as accountability standards for educators and remedial programs for students as elements of improvement. Flores claimed “For the most part, this School Board has allowed me to proceed with initiatives... that maybe wouldn’t have been allowed in the past.”¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ “File,” *The Times*, February 19, 1999.

¹⁴⁵ “East Chicago’s GOP needs new leadership,” *The Times*, April 25, 1999.

¹⁴⁶ “School board a top dispute,” *The Times*, January 25, 1999.

¹⁴⁷ “Board,” *The Times*, January 25, 1999.

During the election season, Pastrick kept the multiracial machine well-balanced. After a vacancy in the City Engineer office, Pastrick promoted Pedro Porras to the position. The previous post holder clashed with Board of Public Works members, which included Edwardo Maldonado and George Weems over wanting to break down street resurfacing contracts into smaller, more numerous contracts to allow for more competition. Maldonado and Weems disagreed and allowed Reith-Riley Construction Co. to maintain the concrete contract. Under Porras' predecessor, the city spent \$1.4 million to resurface 26 miles of streets, Porras hoped to match that amount.¹⁴⁸ Pastrick also received criticism from Colleen Aguirre and Citizens in Action for naming Noah Atterson Spann as his campaign co-chair along with Margaret Gomez, the daughter-in-law to former City Councilman Jesse Gomez Sr. Spann, the twice-convicted county commissioner, received 20 years in 1988 for taking kickbacks on janitorial contracts and again in 1990 for paying \$60,000 in bribes over a purchasing scheme in East Chicago.¹⁴⁹ Aguirre claimed that "If that's the best [Pastrick] can do, oh well. It doesn't say much about our city does it?"¹⁵⁰

Pastrick's spokeswoman, Myrna Maldonado worked as a buffer between Pastrick and the press, often to varying degrees of success. When activist Gilda Orange claimed that the City Clerk denied her copies of City Council meeting minutes, Orange alleged it was because the city was reviewing the copying fee, which charged residents a dollar per page for copies.¹⁵¹ Countering the charges of non-transparency, Maldonado told the press that "the mayor favored a

¹⁴⁸ "New city engineer appointed in East Chicago," *The Times*, February 24, 1999.

¹⁴⁹ "Spann's political rebirth unfolds," *The Times*, March 14, 1999

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ "City's copying fee under review," *The Times*, March 10, 1999.

significantly lower fee” and that an ordinance lowering the fee would appear in a few weeks.¹⁵² However, when *The Times* ran a story about the expenditures of region mayors, Maldonado proved less successful in navigating the pressing questions of newspaper staff. The reporter noted that Pastrick spent about \$4,200; however, the credit card statements were edited with black ink and white-out, consequently blanking out numerous expenditures and some statements were outright missing.¹⁵³ Maldonado claimed that the blanked out items were personal and not reimbursed by the city; however, state officials expressed concern over blanking out copies of city credit cards. The Indiana Commission of Public Records noted that documents pertaining to city accounts should, by law, remain unaltered for three years minimum.¹⁵⁴

However, the presence of the Latino and Latina community, as well as the Black community, at least in Stiglich’s camp, did not go unnoticed. When Stiglich and his supporters attempted to utilize absentee ballots, a legitimate form of voting, Pastrick’s camp called foul. In the documentary, Kevin Pastrick grew frustrated over hearing about Stiglich supporters gaining traction among absentee votes. In their previous contest, in 1995, absentee votes played a controversial role in the race between Pastrick and Stiglich. After the 1999 election, “election officials [in 1995] kept voting records sealed for 20 months, briefly released them in shambles and then whisked them back into storage.”¹⁵⁵ The Indiana Senate voted on and passed legislation to increase public accountability for election records after the records were no longer needed,

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ “Plastic boosts Mayors’ travels,” *The Times*, March 11, 1999.

¹⁵⁴ “Plastic boosts Mayors’ travels,” *The Times*, March 11, 1999.

¹⁵⁵ “State Senate bill would open election records,” *The Times*, February 16, 1999.

particularly in leaving the decision about destroying records to the state entity, the Indiana Commission of Public Records, as opposed to municipal and county entities.¹⁵⁶

In the recent contest, individuals from the East Chicago Police Department asked Lake County Sheriff's Department to investigate complaints of voter fraud. Although the election board was already investigating over two dozen absentee challenges over issues ranging from signature forgeries to residency violations, the board was unaware of the Sheriff Department's investigation. According to the newspaper accounts, Pastrick's campaign "declined to comment on the investigation or to say whether the complaints were lodged by people connected with the mayor's campaign."¹⁵⁷ Similar to the election board, Stiglich's campaign did not know about the pending investigation. The request from the ECPD came the same week that the election board reprimanded the Pastrick campaign for providing absentee voters with ballots already marked Democratic, instead of allowing them to choose their party.¹⁵⁸

The Sheriff Department's investigation over absentee voting presented another possible tactic used in the contested primary race. With two weeks until the primary, the election board noted that an approximate 2,000 absentee ballots were mailed to residences in East Chicago, a drastic increase from the 645 in the last election.¹⁵⁹ However, Stiglich repeated anecdotes of residents telling him that they wanted to vote absentee so that their vote counted and circumvented any possible fraud done by the incumbent. However, one unnamed Stiglich supporter noted that "Absentee ballots lend themselves to intimidation, and Stiglich has no

¹⁵⁶ "State Senate bill would open election records," *The Times*, February 16, 1999.

¹⁵⁷ "Election," *The Times*, April 17, 1999.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ "Absentee ballots soar in E.C.," *The Times*, April 19, 1999.

ability to intimidate anybody.”¹⁶⁰ Whether the supporter alluded to the large envelopes in mailboxes indicating what residencies planned to vote absentee painting a bullseye for possible municipal employees, or the ties between the Pastrick campaign and the post office, intimidation proved inevitable. Within days of the investigation, Lake County Sheriff John Buncich announced that his department uncovered Stiglich supporters offering residents money in exchange for their vote, evidence of voter impersonation, and urging voters to vote particular candidates.¹⁶¹ Despite only releasing information about alleged improprieties from the Stiglich camp, Buncich proclaimed that “It appears the whole darn thing is tainted.”¹⁶²

However, as the newspaper and Stiglich supporters noted, Buncich was an integral part of the tainted primary race. William Walker, an attorney and self-proclaimed Stiglich supporter, noted that he received complaints from nearly a dozen individuals about ECPD and Sherriff Department officers harassing black residents, including bringing them in for hours of questioning at the precinct. Walker relayed to *The Times* that “All these are older black people who remember well the days of night riders and the Klan, and how law enforcement officers were used by the Klan to intimidate.”¹⁶³ Despite proclaiming that the Sheriff’s Department would remain neutral and impartial during the investigation the newspaper revealed that Buncich attended a \$5,000 a plate fundraiser for Pastrick at the Four Seasons Hotel in Chicago.¹⁶⁴ Buncich’s support for Pastrick became a point by which the newspaper and Stiglich’s campaign attempted to discredit the attempt to discredit absentee votes in the 1999 primary.

¹⁶⁰ “Ballots,” *The Times*, April 19, 1999.

¹⁶¹ “E.C. hit by vote fraud,” *The Times*, April 20, 1999.

¹⁶² “Fraud,” *The Times*, April 20, 1999.

¹⁶³ “Fraud,” *The Times*, April 20, 1999.

¹⁶⁴ “Buncich attended posh fund-raiser before probe began,” *The Times*, April 20, 1999.

Stiglich and his camp were not without their faults in the election process. Pastrick and his camp issued challenges when ten pro-Stiglich candidates appeared as candidates at the last minute.¹⁶⁵ Supporters of both candidates attended a Lake County Election and Voter Registration board meeting and for six hours attempted to wrest control of the election from Stiglich sympathizers.¹⁶⁶ In an editorial describing the “shenanigans,” staff from *The Times* proclaimed that:

Partisan passion and ploys were in full play. Implied and open threats were made.

The principals in this war by proxy stayed away from the scene.

And Lake County voters saw, once again, how the clash of titanic egos, the nursing of old grievances, the manipulation of government machinery, the shameless quest for unbridled power continue to contribute to [the] degradation of public life in the region.¹⁶⁷

The newspaper acknowledged “obvious discrepancies” between the log as it appeared at 11:43 am and copies made of the log shortly after noon. The additional ten candidates on the log, but not the copies, led Pastrick’s supporters to believe that candidates were filed past the deadline. Whether filed past the deadline or withheld to prevent counter-filings by Pastrick’s camp, the newspaper believed the activity should be investigated as those tactics, although common, had no place in politics. The paper went so far as to criticize Pastrick’s chief proxy, Joseph Allegretti, an East Chicago attorney, who the paper labeled “Republican by registration but an obvious Pastrick-brand Democrat by employment.”¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁵ *The Times* originally reported that these were pro-Pastrick candidates; however, retracted and corrected the alleged loyalties in the following issue. See “Candidates wrongly identified,” *The Times*, March 13, 1999.

¹⁶⁶ “Board uncovers filing improprieties,” *The Times*, March 12, 1999.

¹⁶⁷ “Election board shouldn’t investigate itself,” *The Times*, March 15, 1999.

¹⁶⁸ “Election board shouldn’t investigate itself,” *The Times*, March 15, 1999. For Allegretti’s complaints see: “Confidence,” *The Times*, March 19, 1999.

This was not the extent of dirty tactics in the primary race. A March shipment of campaign materials, weighing 150 pounds, of pre-stamped, pro-Stiglich brochures went missing, only for East Chicago Post Office staff to find the shipment three weeks later in a maintenance closet.¹⁶⁹ The Postal Service administration relieved Jose Lopez, the acting post master of the East Chicago branch, from his position pending an investigation. Although Lopez signed for the shipment, the administration could not prove that he deliberately hid the campaign materials. *The Times* connected Lopez's familial ties to numerous high-ranking Latinos across Pastrick's administration and on the city payroll. These included City Controller Edwardo Maldonado, Police Lieutenant Francisco Maldonado, and two nephews and a son in the East Chicago Police Department.

The dramatic flair for the primary race intensified weeks before the election, when the election board nullified the nearly 2,000 absentee ballots less than a week from the deadline for absentee voting.¹⁷⁰ Stiglich angrily responded to the decision stating that "They are going to try to steal [the election] again. I'm sure that 99.9 percent of all those [absentee] ballots are proper and countable."¹⁷¹ The board made the decision after Buncich and Pastrick surrogates presented the board with five instances of violations within the absentee ballots. Despite only presenting five instances, the board unanimously decided to throw out all 2,000 absentee ballots. The board also failed to provide the Stiglich campaign and the five accused violators advance notice of the hearing.¹⁷² Although the county prosecutor managed to have the State Police take over the

¹⁶⁹ "Vanished mail found," *The Times*, April 16, 1999.

¹⁷⁰ "2,000 absentee ballots trashed," *The Times*, April 21, 1999.

¹⁷¹ "Board," *The Times*, April 21, 1999.

¹⁷² See: "Five named in vote fraud investigation," *The Times*, April 21, 1999 and "Ballots," *The Times*, April 22, 1999.

ballots, the newspaper, exhausted with the “shenanigans” in county politics, called for federal action in the race.¹⁷³

Despite the numerous dirty tactics on both sides, the race provided surprising results for both parties. An early poll claimed that nearly half of the respondents claimed they were undecided as to who they would vote for in the primary (41%) as opposed to 32.8% (Pastrick) and 16.7% (Stiglich).¹⁷⁴ Surprising some, Stiglich conceded defeat before election officials tallied absentee votes. Pastrick, who promised in 1995 that he would not seek an eighth term, won his eighth term, 5,772 to 3,790.¹⁷⁵ However, the County Prosecutor continued to call for intervention, as the night before the election, ECPD arrested the chief mechanic of the election board, after he was called to investigate allegations of machine tampering at a polling site. The mechanic was arrested by Pastrick’s son, the police chief, and one of the Pastrick campaign’s lawyers, who arrived together. The police chief arrested the mechanic for double parking, later changed to resisting arrest and possession of an unregistered handgun, which was dropped.¹⁷⁶

As the arrest of the election board mechanic would show, the shenanigans in East Chicago were far from over. The attention garnered by Pastrick and his surrogates in the primary led to one of the largest federal Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act probes in U.S. history. Despite promising to not run for re-election, Pastrick would face the consequences of the 1999 primary again in four short years.

Conclusion

¹⁷³ “Shenanigans in E.C. demand federal action,” *The Times*, April 22, 1999.

¹⁷⁴ “Undecided hold E.C. election fate,” *The Times*, April 25, 1999.

¹⁷⁵ “Mayor on way to eighth term,” *The Times*, May 5, 1999.

¹⁷⁶ “Prosecutor calls for jury to investigate police,” *The Times*, May 5, 1999.

“The King of Steeltown” ended with Pastrick’s closest confidants, political surrogates, and allies sitting around a table at Casa Blanca Restaurant. Even as a child, I remember the restaurant, located down the street and across the tracks dividing the north and south side of East Chicago, being a central site for politics. Conveniently located a short walk across the railroad tracks from city hall, it served as a central site for fundraisers and rallies. Sitting around the table, Pastrick’s campaign manager, aides, and loyalists shared a laugh about how hard the race was, and sighed in relief that Pastrick had won. The ending scene, before the credits roll, is light-hearted and relaxing. However, the means by which Pastrick won the 1999 race revealed unethical behavior, entrenching the image of old-style machine politics.

As the titular “King of Steeltown,” Pastrick’s career highlighted the difficulty in maintaining a balanced machine in a drastically changing city. Within the changing demographics of the deindustrialized community, Pastrick had to incorporate and balance ethnic Mexican, Puerto Ricans, and Black residents and aspiring political leaders into the machine so that an ethnic European machine could persist in a city where they became the minority. Navigating this tightrope presented Pastrick with frequent challenges from those that felt excluded from patronage, or frustrated with the growing visibility of corruption. Notably, political power, Robert Segovia became a focal point as Puerto Ricans and Black residents alleged Segovia only hired ethnic Mexicans and excluded others from employment in the school system. Additionally, the growing disunity in the community led to internal conflicts, such as Lopez distancing himself from Segovia to further his career at the expense of Segovia’s influence.

Pastrick managed to retain his office; however, the primary, as well as the documentary created to cement his legacy held the very key to his demise. The means by which Pastrick’s

surrogates secured support across the city became the center stage for a corruption probe during the next election cycle. At the center of this probe were five of the city's highest ranked Latino officials, the chief components of Pastrick's well-oiled machine. Their active roles in what the newspapers would dub the "Sidewalk for Votes" scandal would tarnish the reputation and public image of Pastrick's legacy. Stiglich recounted before the election that "I had one woman tell me, 'They asked me to take her [Stiglich's] sign down and they'd give me a new sidewalk. The fact that we're getting sidewalks, that's [paid for] with public funds. We're entitled to that.'"¹⁷⁷ In fact, Pastrick's campaign co-chair, formerly convicted Spann, credited these public service projects as a vital reason for their victory. The massive public works projects, launched to coincide with the campaign, led to the city repaving nearly every side street, replacing some sidewalks, and landscaping at homes and businesses across the city.¹⁷⁸ Compared to the joyful laugh at the end of *The King of Steeltown*, the reality proved no laughing matter. A probe by the Indiana State Attorney General would pave the way for a former-Pastrick administration member and Stiglich supporter, Puerto Rican George Pabey, to become the city's first Latino mayor.

¹⁷⁷ "It's Pastrick vs. Stiglich in Democratic Primary," *The Times*, April 25, 1999.

¹⁷⁸ "Pastrick retains hold on East Chicago," *The Times*, May 5, 1999.

Chapter Six: Dethroning a King: The Rise of George Pabey

Announcing his candidacy from the Mexican Restaurant, Casa Blanca, George Pabey began a campaign to become as the first Puerto Rican mayor of East Chicago. The restaurant, a favorite of the city's politicians, as well as those aspiring to rub elbows with them, sat across the railroad tracks from city hall and the mayor's office. The venue presented an opportunity to associate the campaign within a site of political power and influence at the restaurant as well as an opportunity to bridge connections between the Puerto Rican and ethnic Mexican community, which found itself at odds during the Pastrick. The attempt at reconciliation would still be one of many steps Pabey would have to take during the campaign. Although a stone's throw from the restaurant's parking lot, Pabey's road to the mayor's office contained numerous obstacles for the ardent opponent of Pastrick's machine.

However, Pabey was not always an outsider to the political machine and its enormous patronage army. Although Pabey never admitted to paying for the opportunity to become a police officer, he documented the extent of this practice, particularly in the court case *Dawson v. Pastrick*, emphasizing how common it was and the likelihood Pabey too paid for his position in the patronage army of Pastrick's Democratic machine. Although Pabey never publicly admitted to buying his position, many of his contemporaries have admitted that it was part of the procedure. Once on the city payroll, Pabey rose through both the police union and departmental hierarchy. He followed Puerto Rican Augusto Flores as Police Chief and served as his Vice-President in the union. A few years after becoming chief, Pabey left his post to join the fellow former city-officials turned investors into the casino development on the lakefront. Despite this relatively amicable relationship, Pabey's support for Stiglich over Pastrick brought the former police-officer into a new role as a dissenter against the machine. Pabey represented someone

once in, never wholly out, of the political machine. Even those that called for a generation of new Democratic and Latino leadership, often failed to see that many of the leaders they turned to matured in the very system they opposed.

With the new century, pundits speculated on the new generation of political leaders that could rewrite the history of the city and county. Framing their speculation of “Dominant Democrats” and “Resurgent Republicans,” *The Times* profiled a new generation of political leaders, many, if not all, associated in some way with the previous generation.¹

Although not a newcomer to the status quo of East Chicago and Lake County politics, Pabey opposed his former boss, attaching himself to an increasingly vocal movement across the city and county. This movement of a newer generation of Democratic candidates distanced themselves from their predecessors and expressed a clear disdain for the older style of politics that they labeled corrupt. As Pabey strived for the mayoral office, the U.S. District Court under Judge Rudy Lozano began hearings and interviews concerning racketeering scandals across the county, notably former Congresswoman and Gary City Clerk, Katie Hall.² However, the dockets would come to include Mayor Pastrick and many of his political surrogates for their use of city funds, granted through casino revenues, to complete public work projects to curry favor in the 1999 election. The “sidewalk for votes” scandal began to make clear the extent of the status quo in maintaining a nefarious and uneven playing field to the benefit of the entrenched Democratic machine.

¹ “Ready to lead?,” *The Times*, November 7, 2002.

² The first Black woman to represent Indiana in the U.S. House of Representatives. Hall is primarily known as the sponsor to make Martin Luther King Jr.’s birthday a national holiday, which President Ronald Reagan signed into law in 1983. However, she would become Gary’s City Clerk after losing her congressional seat.

Pabey's mayoral pursuit continued the trend during the 1960s and 1970s of underrepresented minority groups flexing their political muscles to become mayors. In the 1960s, Richard Hatcher of Gary, Indiana and Carl Stokes (Cleveland, Ohio) became the first Black mayors of major cities in the United States.³ The 1980s witnessed more electoral gains for Black Mayors in major urban regions, as well as primarily ethnic Mexican politicians in the Southwest, notably Henry Cisneros (San Antonio, Texas) and Harold Washington (Chicago, Illinois).⁴ As Jaime Sánchez has noted, "while the ascendancy of Black and Latino politicians was historically concurrent, studies on Black and Latino candidates do not generally intersect."⁵ Pabey's candidacy came at a time when the Puerto Rican community in East Chicago began to outpace the city's entrenched ethnic Mexican community. Concurrently with this changing Latino demographic, East Chicago continued towards the path of an entrenched majority-minority city, with 51.6% of the population identifying as Latino and 36% as African American.⁶ Within the city's political landscapes, Pabey's political influence as a Puerto Rican followed decades of internal competition between Puerto Rican and ethnic Mexican politicians for influence and patronage. This division hindered the political power of the broader Latino community and as

³ On Black Mayors see: James B. Lane, *City of the Century: A History of Gary, Indiana* (Indiana University Press: Bloomington, IN, 1978); John M. Allswang, "Tom Bradley of Los Angeles," *Southern California Quarterly* 74, no. 1 (April 1992): 55-105; Roger Biles, "Black Mayors: A Historical Assessment," *Journal of Negro History* 77, no. 3 (Summer 1992): 109-125; David R. Colburn and Jeffrey S. Adler, eds., *African-American Mayors: Race, Politics, and the American City* (University of Illinois Press: Urbana, IL, 2001); William E. Nelson Jr., "Black Mayoral Leadership: A Twenty-Year Perspective," in *Black Electoral Politics: Participation, Performance, Promise*, ed. Lucius J. Barker (Routledge Publishing: New Brunswick, NJ, 1990), 228-245; J. Phillip Thompson, *Double Trouble: Black Mayors, Black Communities, and the Call for a Deep Democracy* (Oxford University Press: New York, 2006).

⁴ Jaime Sánchez Jr., "What Are We?": Latino Politics, Identity, and Memory in the 1983 Chicago Mayoral Election," *Modern American History* 4 (2021): 267.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ "G001, Geographic Identifiers- 2010 Census Summary File 1" United States Census Bureau, 2000 Census Report.

discussed in the fifth chapter, allowed Pastrick to form an entrenched machine continuously vying with itself for a larger slice of political clout.

Pabey's uphill struggle for election to the mayor's office represented a clear understanding of corruption by a Latino candidate. Like how activists in the 1960s and 1970s dissented from the status quo of their political worlds to achieve victories as Latina and Latino candidates, Pabey became a midwestern representative of mayoral elections, such as Raymond L. Telles (El Paso), Henry Cisneros (San Antonio), or Harold Washington (Chicago). Notably, unlike Washington's multi-racial and dissenting stance from the status quo of a post-Daley Chicago, Pabey's campaign proved complicated with the inclusion of Lonnie Randolph, a Black political leader in the community. This understanding of corruption and Pastrick's political machine gained media attention when Pabey challenged the use of absentee voting by Pastrick surrogates in their 2003 primary.

Reformer or Dissenter: George Pabey's History within the Machine

Pabey entered the world of East Chicago politics through the East Chicago Police Department. In December of 1972, Pabey graduated from Indiana Law Enforcement Academy in Bloomington, Indiana becoming a Patrolman for ECPD.⁷ A Puerto Rican resident of the city, Pabey became one of the many Latino, Latina, and Black residents to benefit from Pastrick's multiracial and balanced machine. Within ECPD, Pabey found some success as a representative of his colleagues. In 1977, East Chicago police officers elected Puerto Ricans Gus Flores and George Pabey as President and Vice President of the Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge 59.⁸ It is

⁷ "13 Finish Law Course," *The Times*, December 22, 1972.

⁸ "FOP Officers," *The Times*, January 17, 1977.

likely that like the plaintiffs in *Dawson v. Pastrick* and as mentioned in an account by Flores, Pabey paid for this opportunity. It was his initiation into East Chicago's political machine.⁹

Similar to his ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican predecessors, Pabey utilized neighborhood organizations to establish himself as a leader within the Puerto Rican and Latino community. In 1983, members of the Puerto Rican cultural group, Hijos de Borinquen (Sons of Puerto Rico) elected Pabey President of the Puerto Rican Parade Committee.¹⁰ Working with fellow officers of the parade committee, Pabey and his colleagues held a large celebration for the second annual parade, with the President of the Puerto Rico Senate, Miguel Hernandez-Agosto, even in attendance.¹¹ As President of the committee, Pabey continued to grow the parade, in 1986, going so far as to promise a "warm San Juan welcome" for all attendees and securing the sponsorship of Coca-Cola and Budweiser. American and Eastern Airlines worked to handle travel arrangements for Miss Puerto Rico, and government officials from the island invited to the parade.¹² Pabey remained a philanthropic staple in the Puerto Rican mutual aide community. Together with fellow Puerto Rican officer Joe De La Cruz, the Puerto Rican Parade Committee and Hijos de Borinquen, the groups raised nearly 28,000 for Puerto Rico after Hurricane Hugo in 1989. One fundraiser was a Bail-a-thon where police officers mockingly arrested public officials and people pledge money for their "bail." The mutualista, Union Benefica Mexicana donated their hall for a dance-a-thon which raised \$15,000.¹³

⁹ For *Dawson v. Pastrick* see Chapter Three. On Flores admitting to paying a city councilman for his job as a police officer see the Prologue to Jerry Davich, *Crooked Politics in Northwest Indiana* (Charleston, SC: History Press, 2017).

¹⁰ "Puerto Rican Cuisine offered," *The Times*, October 14, 1983.

¹¹ "Puerto Rican dignitary," *The Times*, July 24, 1984.

¹² "'Warm San Juan welcome' planned," *The Times*, June 16, 1986.

¹³ "Relief: East Chicagoans provide aid to P.R. Hugo victims," *The Times*, October 24, 1989.

Likewise, Pabey's career was not without its own controversies. On Halloween, Pabey responded to reports about gunfire around 9PM. Upon arrival, Pabey chased Gilberto Bonilla, seventeen-year-old Washington High School student. Pabey claimed Bonilla pointed a gun at him and he responded by shooting the youth in the neck.¹⁴ However, the shooting occurred away from witnesses, at least accounts claimed. Newspapers and the police framed Bonilla as a "gang member" and the culprit of the shooting. However, at a gathering of friends and family, community members insisted that Bonilla did not belong to a gang and that this was an embellishment to "cover their [ECPD] tracks."¹⁵ Friends of Bonilla, some affiliated with gangs and others not, provided different accounts. These friends said that the group found the non-functional gun in the alley while drinking beer. When police arrived and ordered everyone to line-up along the fence, Bonilla became scared and ran away.¹⁶

The consequences of the shooting continued into November. After denied the right to see the body, the Bonilla family pushed to hire an independent pathologist.¹⁷ Official reports noted that Bonilla's gun "was not loaded" but did not remark on the family and friend's claims about the gun's functionality. According to Police Chief Flores, Pabey and his family began receiving "threatening phone calls" and fliers with "derogatory remarks about police" circulated throughout the city. Flores described the fliers as "show[ing] a picture of a policeman blowing a kid's head off."¹⁸ An unidentified person painted their white van with the message that "Pabey Must Pay," which also featured a tombstone with Bonilla's initials.¹⁹ In criticizing the

¹⁴ "E.C. police kill teen gang member," *The Times*, November 1, 1985.

¹⁵ "Family denied request to view body," *The Times*, November 3, 1985.

¹⁶ "Family denied request to view body," *The Times*, November 3, 1985.

¹⁷ "Bonilla family to hire independent pathologist," *The Times*, November 4, 1985.

¹⁸ "Threats not tolerated," *The Times*, November 7, 1985.

¹⁹ "E.C. chief: Threats won't be tolerated," *The Times*, November 7, 1985.

“unwarranted lumps” that ECPD took for the shooting, Flores emphasized that the investigation was not being covered-up and that ECPD would hand the investigation over to Indiana State Police.²⁰ After an investigation by state police, a discovery of two shots fired and the gun did function but was unloaded and jammed.²¹ The state concluded and sided with Pabey’s report. In a 1987 column about the prevalence of “deadly force” in the region’s police departments, a reporter noted that “To this day Pabey works a desk job and prefers not to talk of that night.”²²

In 1990, Pabey was promoted from desk work to the position of Chief of Police. Pabey replaced the former Police Chief, Augusto “Gus” Flores, who retired for “health reasons.”²³ As mentioned in the fifth chapter, Pastrick worked to ensure that positions within his administration maintained fair division among the various demographics within the community. Particularly, this aimed to prevent the level of community dissent and frustration from within the machine that could threaten Pastrick’s hold. Pastrick hired Flores as a consultant, a position formerly held by Antonio Barreda and Atterson Spann, when it was termed administrative assistant.²⁴ Pabey’s promotion offered the police-veteran an opportunity to continue to establish himself as a leader within a drastically changing community.

His tenure as East Chicago Police Chief occurred simultaneously as many of Pabey’s early lessons in Lake County politics. He used his position to continue to repair the divides between ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican residents during the ousting of Robert Segovia. A group of Latinos within the community and city’s administration formed a committee, which met

²⁰ “Threats not tolerated,” *The Times*, November 7, 1985.

²¹ “2 shots fired night Bonilla died,” *The Times*, November 14, 1985 and “Tests verify police reports of shooting,” *The Times*, November 24, 1985.

²² “Deadly force: Who’s ready for it?,” *The Times*, September 20, 1987.

²³ “Pabey elevated to top position with East Chicago police,” *The Times*, January 17, 1990.

²⁴ “Ex-chief to be E.C. consultant,” *The Times*, March 23, 1990.

at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church's Hall, to discuss social issues throughout the city. Antonio Barreda claimed that "the rise is the social-economic problems affecting our community, the loss of employment from the steel mills."²⁵

Pabey's tenure within the Puerto Rican Parade Committee encountered legal issues in 1990 as well as a push for a more open election. The State of Indiana dissolved the organization as the officers failed to submit annual financial reports from 1986-1989.²⁶ Given the reported philanthropic efforts, as well as corporate sponsorships gained for the annual parade during these years, the absence of submitted financial reports is concerning. After the dissolving of the previous group, a new one emerged but election disputes quickly arose. A Lake County Superior Court Judge ruled a 1990 election invalid and ordered a new election between the two opposing factions, one led by George Pabey, who represented the original group that the state dissolved. The other faction, led by Alfredo "Freddie" DeJesus, pushed to fight for the control of a select few over the organization and make it more democratic for the state's Puerto Rican community.²⁷

Election day provided two opposing perspectives to the election. The new vote, held at the Superior Court building in East Chicago, became a site of "salsa music and the tangy odor of pastillas" as hundreds lined up to vote for the new executive board. One Puerto Rican woman commented that:

To have all these people come out and express themselves through the ballot box is a victory in itself. It's the little guy running against the politicians. I think it was wrong for

²⁵ "Tragedies prompt Hispanics to examine social problems," *The Times*, August 7, 1991.

²⁶ "Election to decide future of parade committee," *The Times*, May 8, 1992.

²⁷ "Election to decide future of parade committee," *The Times*, May 8, 1992.

the police chief to get involved in running for something like this because it has divided the community.²⁸

This commentator saw their effort as a push against the status quo of politically connected Puerto Ricans that operated the organization since its inception in the 1980s. However, Hilda Pabey, George's wife, commented that "This is definite the end of it. They wanted an open election and they got it. People came out because they're concerned, and now we can get to the business of uniting again."²⁹ In emphasizing unity, the former camp deflected from the messages of transparency and open democracy.

The very localized conflict over the parade and its committee is illuminating into the prevalence of politics in East Chicago. Although Pabey and his supporters would win the open election, the episode provides an insight into how, despite a career in law enforcement, Pabey was very much a political figure in city politics. Pabey may have won, 1,159 to DeJesus' 373, yet DeJesus claimed it was "the community" that won, as they now gained the opportunity to voice their opinion.³⁰ Whereas previously, Puerto Rican members had to attend five meetings to vote, now all of the estimated 30,000 to 40,000 Puerto Ricans in Northwest Indiana gained the opportunity to vote for the group behind the annual celebration.³¹

As Police Chief, Pabey worked closely with Pastrick to combat the rising violence and gang presence within East Chicago. When appointed to the position, Pabey identified gangs and violence associated with them as a top priority for his administration.³² The Marktown

²⁸ "Hundreds turn out for E.C. parade vote," *The Times*, May 30, 1992.

²⁹ "Parade," *The Times*, May 30, 1992.

³⁰ "E.C. cop chief wins 'jefe' of Puerto Rican parade," *The Times*, June 2, 1992. "Police chief to lead Puerto Rican Parade," *The Times*, June 2, 1992. "Unity slate sweeps offices in Puerto Rican parade vote," *The Times*, June 4, 291992.

³¹ "Parade," *The Times*, June 2, 1992.

³² "Pabey elevated to top position with East Chicago police," *The Times*, January 17, 1990.

neighborhood, an English-styled urban worker community built during the Progressive Era, invited Pabey to a neighborhood meeting over the rising amount of “gang-related shootings” in the district.³³ Under Pabey’s leadership, the ECPD held weekly three-hour workshops on issues impacting the community. Pabey claimed that “By working together, the citizens and the police can initiate positive change.”³⁴ One officer worried that “If we don’t do something, this is going to become another South Chicago.”³⁵ Pabey attempted to bring known gang members to the table to discuss the issues.³⁶

In these meetings, Pabey became a public face of the city’s administration. Through coordinating and meeting with community activists and residents, Pabey gained exposure to the community. When the United Citizens Organization (UCO) held a forum at St. Patrick’s Catholic Church, Pabey discussed with attendees the growing community policing program, which involved the active use of foot patrols throughout the city.³⁷ Pabey even met with UCO activist and leader, Yolanda Vasquez in her dining room as an effort to encourage support from residents within areas selected for community policing efforts. For their cooperation, gangs targeted Vasquez and shot several rounds through her front doors days after the meeting.³⁸ Despite Pabey gearing up for an intensive patrolling by his officers, a career change during this planning left the attempt to fall short.³⁹

³³“Marktown residents meet to air concerns over gangs,” *The Times*, January 29, 1993.

³⁴ “E.C. police plan workshops on crime concerns,” *The Times*, February 16, 1993.

³⁵ “Combating gangs in E.C.,” *The Times*, February 19, 1993.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ “E.C. forum to discuss community policing program,” *The Times*, April 2, 1993.

³⁸ “E.C. police chief asks residents to help make community policing efforts work,” *The Times*, May 15, 1993; “Residents demand protection after neighborhood gunfire,” *The Times*, May 18, 1993; and “Speak at your peril: Home of community activist shot at,” *The Times*, May 18, 1993.

³⁹ On the lackluster crime fighting programming for the summer by Pabey and Pastrick see: “Patrols hit streets in East Chicago,” *The Times*, October 13, 1993.

However, Pabey's work as police chief became limited by his resignation from the position to join the Pastrick surrogates affiliated with casino gaming. In September of 1993, Pabey became one of the "exodus" from the city's administration and Democratic officials in the region to Showboat Casino. Pabey joined African American Robert Hoggs, the former Indiana Democratic Party State Chairman, Michael Pannos and Tom Cappas, lawyer for School City of East Chicago to join the Showboat Marina Partnership.⁴⁰ Despite the bids for gambling licenses being open, Showboat Marina Partnership was the only bid in East Chicago for the license. An editorial from *The Times* questioned if the city's decision to turn to gaming during the economic downturns was "a gamble or a fix?" by the municipality. The editorial claimed that

These people are not fools. They would not be giving up something solid for the pleasure of riding a passing wave. Obviously, with all the Democratic connections in the party's stronghold in Northwest Indiana and a Democratic administration in Indianapolis that is great pals with the area's Democratic powerhouse, East Chicago Mayor Robert Pastrick, the Showboaters think their project is a sure bet.

Is it?

We hope it means it is only a prudent gamble, not a fix. In East Chicago, one never knows.⁴¹

Pabey was not the only member of the multi-racial machine to hitch their livelihoods on the casino venture. Hoggs left his position as Director of the Central Services Department; however, he was also in charge of the city's sanitary district and the treasurer for the East Chicago Democratic Party. They were joined by ethnic Mexicans R. Louie Gonzalez, chairman of the Indiana Port Commission and John Flores, Principal of Central High School. In discussing these partners, former State Democratic Party Chair Pannos said that "There's not a single person in the group that doesn't bring something to the table. I'm not talking about the politics of it. I'm

⁴⁰ "Pabey joins casino exodus," *The Times*, September 21, 1993.

⁴¹ "A gamble or a fix," *The Times*, September 22, 1993.

talking about significant benefit to both the community and company.”⁴² Pastrick’s administration influenced the lobbying for casinos across the region and nation, as his son Scott Pastrick worked with his client, Donald Trump, to discuss the gaming industry in neighboring Gary.⁴³ Summarizing the exodus at the end of the year, the newspaper’s headline, which was as long as the summary, proclaimed “Thank you for calling the mayor’s office. Press ‘1’ now if you are resigning to work for Showboat Casinos; if you already work there, press ‘2’; all other casinos please hold.”⁴⁴

Residents varied in their responses to Pabey leaving his city position for a partnership with the casino. One Latino resident thanked Pabey “for his dedication and his professionalism during his tenure” and suggested that the city appoint another Latino to the post, specifically Commander John Ramos.⁴⁵ In expressing their support for the interim chief and advocating his appointment, another resident noted that United Citizens Organization expressed dissatisfaction with the pick. The resident questioned “Are some of the citizens of East Chicago unhappy and dissatisfied because of the news or are they unhappy and dissatisfied to find out that Craig Love is now acting chief of police?”⁴⁶ And some residents, such as “Streetwise” Moreno, who once held a funeral for Mexican American political power, claimed that residents should “hustle and forget about George Pabey and Bob Hoggs resigning their jobs...”⁴⁷ It seemed that Pabey’s resignation would form another rift in Pastrick’s multi-racial machine.

⁴² “Riverboats,” *The Times*, September 25, 1993.

⁴³ “Casinos,” *The Times*, September 26, 1993.

⁴⁴ *The Times*, January 2, 1994.

⁴⁵ “E.C. resident recommends new police chief,” *The Times*, September 24, 1993.

⁴⁶ “E.C. residents should support Craig Love for chief of police,” *The Times*, October 6, 1993.

⁴⁷ “Entrepreneurs should seize opportunity from casinos,” *The Times*, October 27, 1993.

The vacant chief of police position created new problems in the community. Given the past debates over appointments and how they trickle-down into the system of patronage, such with Segovia, the vacancy left by Pabey seemed to initiate new tensions. The Latino residents likely saw the position as one curated for a Latino candidate, specifically a Puerto Rican, as they helmed the police chief position for the past two appointments. This makes the alleged dissatisfaction by the predominantly Latino and Latina United Citizens Organization more comprehensible. Despite claiming that residents should forget Pabey resigning and hustle, “Streetwise” Moreno sang a new tune as the debate intensified and remained unresolved in the winter. Moreno declared “Let’s get away from the ‘ethnic politics’ that continues to polarize our community and promote the best qualified officer to the position of chief of police.” He went so far as to conclude his opinion with Pastrick’s original 1971 campaign promise, repeating verbatim the mayor’s words (still unresolved twenty-one years later) that: “I would like to get politics out of the departments, with a commission overseeing and not a mayor. I don’t want to see a policeman come to city hall for a promotion. I don’t like seeing clubs use their influence for a promotion.”⁴⁸ Pastrick would solve this dilemma by appoint a Latino, Frank Alcalá to Chief of Police, and the former plaintiff that sued the city over discrimination in their hiring practices, James Dawson, as the city’s first Black fire chief.⁴⁹ Commenting on the appointments, Mexican-American councilman, Jesse Gomez, the son of the city’s first ethnic Mexican councilman echoed Moreno. Gomez claimed that “Pabey was not mindful of keeping politics out of the

⁴⁸ “Police chief should be most qualified not connected,” *The Times*, December 9, 1993. Pastrick’s comments from *The Times*, April 13, 1971.

⁴⁹ “Pastrick fills key positions,” *The Times*, February 4, 1994.

department. That's (politics in the department) been a common perception, and Pabey made no effort to change that perception."⁵⁰

Despite no longer being a member of Pastrick's administration, Pabey retained a minor role in the political scene of the region. In 1994, he worked on the Committee to Elect John C. Aguilera for Fifth District County Council in Lake County.⁵¹ Notably, reporters noted that Aguilera stood against the Pastrick and machine-backed candidate, Jesse Gomez Jr., the youngest son of the city's first elected ethnic Mexican councilman.

A scandal in the summer of 1998 provided Pabey an avenue to reinsert himself into municipal politics. City Controller, as well as the treasurer of the East Chicago Democratic Central Committee, Edward Maldonado, claimed that Police Chief Frank Alcala approached him about initiating the process for ECPD. Maldonado emphasized that the wage-withholding program, which donated one percent of each check to the Democratic Party was voluntary.⁵² Although not as vocally critical of the program as his two predecessors, Stephen Stiglich and Gus Flores, Pabey remained relatively neutral and claimed that the program was unprecedented in his twenty-two years with the department.⁵³ However, the growing dissatisfaction with this "voluntary" club would become a central plank of Pabey's campaign for mayor.

Before Pabey would adopt criticism of the program for his mayoral campaign, his predecessor Stiglich and political surrogate Flores did. Flores noted that some of the enrolled officers feared losing perks, such as take home cars, or specialized assignments. For other

⁵⁰ "Pastrick," *The Times*, February 4, 1994.

⁵¹ Pabey served as a the chief contact for Aguilera's fundraisers. His name and number appeared on promotions for Aguilera events, for example, see: "HOOP HERE IT IS!!! 1st Annual Basketball Tourney," *The Times*, July 29, 1994.

⁵² "One percent clubs E.C. officers," *The Times*, August 23, 1998.

⁵³ "Officers," *The Times*, August 23, 1998.

enrollees, they simply might want to curry favor with politicians. However, Flores noted the outcome would be the same as “Police officers who are doing their job daily and doing a good job are overlooked. That demoralizes the police department.”⁵⁴ His boss, Stiglich, echoed the concerns about officer bias, claiming that the club would “take law enforcement backward—from being professional and unbiased to law enforcement based on politics. This hurts the community.” However, as the newspaper noted, Stiglich as the County Democratic Party Chairman used a similar withholding program for county employees.⁵⁵

A vestigial structure of the old political machine, the “voluntary” donations by state and municipal employees to the Democratic Party typically left law enforcement immune from the campaign contributions. This immunity encouraged officers to remain unbiased instead of stoke fears that law enforcement were beholden to the incumbent and entrenched political machine. A representative and staff attorney of the Indiana Law Enforcement Academy labeled the problematic nature of these donations by claiming that “We want our law enforcement officers to be totally unbiased in their enforcement of the law. If they are closely tied to politics, that would have a tendency to affect their ability to be unbiased.”⁵⁶

Municipal employees criticized the withholding program as unfair and political necessary for career advancement in East Chicago. In their coverage, *The Times*, noted that Alcalá and the twenty-six officers that volunteered to join the withholding program were mainly supervisors or specialists, which were positions that (at the Mayor’s request and the City Council) were vulnerable positions. By donating to the Democratic Party, these individuals likely hoped to

⁵⁴ “Officers,” *The Times*, August 23, 1998.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ “One percent clubs E.C. officers,” *The Times*, August 23, 1998.

retain their supervisor roles and avoid being bumped down to patrol. However, officer and precinct committeeman, Richard Medina, expressed a clear frustration with the program.

Previously, Medina's superiors reassigned him from detective back to patrol, which was likely why he was not approached to enroll in the program.⁵⁷ In an interview with *The Times*, Medina claimed that

If I knew that I could get promoted fairly by testing, by seniority, or any other selective process, I would never have gotten involved in politics. But because of the fact the police department is so damn political, the only way you are going to get ahead is through politics... Whoever gives the most, whoever kisses a—the most, whoever lines up politically, is going to get promoted. That's the city of East Chicago.⁵⁸

Whether a disgruntled employee or a victim of partisan behavior, Medina became a vocal critic of Pastrick, his administration, and the status quo in the community. In 1999, he would join the race, and secure the second most votes, for Council-at-Large.

Some municipal departments where enrollment in the program was minimal, such as the East Chicago Fire Department, did not have these same fears because merit, a combination of testing and seniority, influenced their promotions. This combination occurred due to the activism of the Concerned Latins Organization and *Dawson v. Pastrick* in the 1970s. Emiliano "JR" Perez, a firefighter, claimed that when the party attempted to encourage the program in the fire department the previous year that "I think everyone sent them back empty, except one or two who signed up."⁵⁹

Cement Votes: The Sidewalk Six/Sidewalk for Votes Scandal

⁵⁷ Medina's discrimination suit resulted in a federal jury awarding him \$750,000 in December of 2002. Police Chief Alcalá and Mayor Pastrick, as well as Medina's eight fellow officers were all dropped from the suit before the verdict. See: "Record settlement for East Chicago cop," *The Times*, December 29, 2002.

⁵⁸ "Officers," *The Times*, August 23, 1998.

⁵⁹ "Special Protection," *The Times*, August 23, 1998.

In 1999, a fierce Democratic Primary between long-time incumbent Robert Pastrick and his former Chief of Police, Stephen “Stig” Stiglich led to one of the most extensive cases of corruption in Indiana history. According to the U.S. Attorney’s Office, Pastrick’s administration transformed an estimated \$20 million in public funds to concrete and landscaping work for votes in the primary. This operation was made possible by Latino members of Pastrick’s machine facilitating the exchanges with voters’ homes, businesses and even Our Lady of Guadalupe Church. In the ensuing legal battles, the Latino members of the scandal received harsher sentencing than their ethnic European counterparts. However, some of the precarious elements of the race included how current and former municipal employees of Pastrick’s administration abandoned their support for their long-time boss in favor of his opponent.

Although not a member of the notorious Sidewalk Six, nor yet a candidate for office, Pabey was at a significant part of his career in the 1999 election. He arrived to the county building on the first filing day to submit his paperwork to run for Councilman-At-Large in East Chicago.⁶⁰ The race would rise to a thirteen candidate field.⁶¹ As a Puerto Rican resident and former city administrator, Pabey became a vital surrogate for Stiglich’s campaign in the 1999 primary. Pabey, a close Stiglich ally, secured the third Council-at-Large position, where all seats went to Latinos (two Puerto Ricans and an ethnic Mexican). Upon winning his election, Pabey vowed to be an “independent voice” on a city council that became overwhelmingly unanimous, or rubber stamp as Pastrick entrenched his hold over the city’s political scene.⁶² Pabey’s primary competition, fellow Puerto Rican, Joe De LaCruz, sought his fifth term and according to *The*

⁶⁰ “First day filers,” *The Times*, January 21, 1999.

⁶¹ “Western Lake County election filings,” *The Times*, February 20, 1999.

⁶² “Big turnover coming for City Council,” *The Times*, May 5, 1999.

Times “responded [to the challenge of Pabey] with an onslaught yard signs, door-to-door campaigning and neighborhood improvement projects, such as sidewalk replacements and street repairs.”⁶³

Newspaper coverage noted a continuation of the antics surrounding the election. After winning a race for City Judge, former State Senator Lonnie Randolph noted that despite ECPD and Lake County Sheriff officers harassing his supporters, and accusing his brother of voter fraud, no charges were filed in the investigation.⁶⁴ In discussing the counting of nearly 2,000 impounded ballots, which might impact the races, newspaper claimed that Pabey and his fellow Council-At-Large-elect officials would likely retain their victories. However, an aura of uncertainty reigned over the election. *The Times* noted that the attorney appointed by a Porter County judge, due to the candidates ties within the county, did not even know the extent of untallied ballots for the election.⁶⁵

Even once officials counted absentee ballots, the specter of 1999 continued to make headlines. In 2000, Pabey, who remained untainted by the 1999 absentee votes controversy, and City Judge Randolph found themselves at the center of a judicial commission. *The Times* obtained payroll records, which showed that Randolph hired Pabey three weeks after their victories in the primary election as a court bailiff. According to the reporting, the Indiana Supreme Court’s Code of Judicial Conduct prohibited municipal employees, such as Pabey, from seeking or holding elected office.⁶⁶ Responding to the story, Pabey believed that he could retain

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ “Randolph rolls to victory in city judge race,” *The Times*, May 5, 1999.

⁶⁵ “Many East Chicago ballots still uncounted,” *The Times*, May 7, 1999.

⁶⁶ “New councilman’s court job may put judge in hot water,” *The Times*, January 6, 2000.

his court position until sworn into office.⁶⁷ However, as the reporting noted, Pabey resigned the morning of December 29, 1999, when he was sworn into office, but the payroll listed that the courts paid him for sixteen hours of holiday pay for New Year's. When the reporter called the City Court offices, they allegedly asked why Pabey was at the offices if he no longer worked there, providing the reporter a gem of a quote "Don't you ever ask me that. I'm a city councilman. I go wherever I want."⁶⁸

Pabey and his employment outside of the city council continued to become problematic for the first-term official. In 2000, former mayoral candidate Dr. Jorge Benevente and CLO activist Eddie Egipciaco accused Pabey of cronyism for his job in a consulting company that worked with the County Recorder's office. This came after Pabey demanded from Human Resources Commission a complete list of consulting contracts and city employee costs for the Pastrick administration. Egipciaco saw the move as hypocritical as Pabey held his county position despite the Lake County Council pushing county offices to cut expenses. The extent of the charge of cronyism is dubious, as Dr. Benevente was a candidate for County Recorder. Pabey referred to the questions raised as "politically calculated" after the incident.⁶⁹ However, during the confrontation at the start of the meeting, Pabey's language turned to using a homophobic slur to refer to Benevente and Egipciaco.⁷⁰ Recalling the incident for the newspaper, Pabey claimed "I swear I don't know what I said. Everything went off. I was on fire."⁷¹

⁶⁷ "Court," *The Times*, January 6, 2000.

⁶⁸ "Records show Pabey paid after resignation," *The Times*, January 6, 2000.

⁶⁹ "Councilman tees off on opponents," *The Times*, March 15, 2000.

⁷⁰ "Councilman," *The Times*, March 15, 2000.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

Whether a calculated move by the administration to limit future public comments over the financial crisis facing the city, or a genuine concern over patronage in the city, the incident provided more dramatic flair for its attendees. The attendees held conflicting views about the patronage positions in the municipality. Egipciaco noted that “We’re trying to eliminate the patronage jobs around here, but he (Pabey) is out there getting one for himself.” Pabey claimed that he could not support the city’s proposed plan to reduce employment by twenty percent before they considered cutting contractors and consultants from the city’s payroll. Dr. Benevente agreed; however, he believed Pabey needed to set an example with his own employment at the county level.

Citizens in Action member Gilda Orange took a different position on the city’s employment issues. Turning attention away from the heated argument between Pabey, Benevente, and Egipciaco, Orange asked Myrna Maldonado why the administration’s East Chicago TV News program nor public relations department employed Black residents. According to accounts, Maldonado “peppering her speech with profanities” began her own screaming match against Orange. Expressing regret over the incident to *The Times*, Maldonado blamed the internal divisions in the city’s political hierarchy after the 1999 election. Maldonado claimed that “The political agendas are still strong and so are the affiliations. I’m dealing with political issues here, not issues relating to government.”⁷² Describing the atmosphere for the reporter, Maldonado proclaimed “I thought, God, I’m in a zoo.”⁷³

However, the outburst provided little fanfare outside of the incident. Aside from a comical column in *The Times* that advertised “Early Christmas shoppers wondering what to get

⁷² “Councilman,” *The Times*, March 15, 2000.

⁷³ Ibid.

East Chicago Councilman George Pabey or the city's spokeswoman Myrna Maldonado might consider the book 'Cuss Control: The Complete Book on How to Curb Your Cursing.'"⁷⁴

Perhaps one of the most amusing hooks for a book review, the column then turned into a standard summary of the forthcoming title. The vote over the new payroll cycle and confronting the financial crisis concluded with Pabey and Medina, both critics of Pastrick, as the dissenting votes against the ordinance. By distributing three million in casino revenues, Pastrick and his administration managed to keep their patronage army, as well as a system of consultants and contracting appoints intact.⁷⁵

Pabey and his colleagues' trip gained attention for its blatant expense during a fiscal crisis. In a segment "Stupidity in the News," a columnist lambasted the decision for East Chicago to send six councilmen to a conference of the National Puerto Rican Coalition in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The columnist noted the approximately \$15,000 price-tag to send six councilmen to the conference at the Wyndham El San Juan Hotel. Pabey was joined by fellow Puerto Rican councilman, Joe De La Cruz, as well as Adrian Santos, Richard Medina, Randall Artis, and Donald Koliboski. Although the conference lasted four days, only two councilmen (De La Cruz and Santos) left after the conference, while the remaining councilmen stayed to enjoy the beachfront hotel, including its casino and six restaurants, causing a lack of quorum for the regularly scheduled council meeting. De La Cruz claimed that the trip allowed him "a better insight, a viewpoint of the Puerto Rican community."⁷⁶ Colleen Aguirre, a supporter of Medina and Pabey, lambasted the decision to send councilmen to the conference, stating "What do we

⁷⁴ "Book claims cussing is a curse you can control," *The Times*, April 3, 2000.

⁷⁵ "City to return to old payroll cycle," *The Times*, June 13, 2000.

⁷⁶ "It's government of the stupid, by the stupid, for the..." *Indianapolis Star*, April 23, 2002.

care of what's going on in Puerto Rico? Puerto Rico should be sending people here on how to not conduct business.”⁷⁷ An editorial in *The Post-Tribune* criticized Pabey and Medina, for partaking in the expensive trip while simultaneously criticizing the city for its fiscal irresponsibility.⁷⁸

Despite the expenses-paid trip, courtesy of a Pastrick Administration, Pabey and his supporters continued to look forward to the upcoming election as anti-administration candidates. Recognizing the importance of the 2002 precinct committee elections, commentators noted that Pabey, and his fellow anti-administration candidates, would confront numerous obstacles in their campaigns, in 2003. A chief challenge being that Citizens in Action and some of the vocal critics of the Pastrick administration lost their election for precinct committee, such as Aguirre, Anthony Copeland, and Gilda Orange. Some anti-machine activists, such as Aguirre, remained optimistic. Aguirre claimed that “Our group talked to a lot of people, we worked hard and made good inroads. The mayor's race is not a done deal. I don't think it's going to be a sure shot for Pastrick this time.”⁷⁹ Aguirre alleged that the election's results were dubious because of inadequate parking at polls and machine malfunctions, an echo of claims in the 1999 election.

However, despite the possibility of these irregularities, Pastrick retained a firm grip on political groups and the precinct committee. The Mexican American Precinct Alliance, a group within the committee of the ethnic Mexican precinct committee members, usually endorsed ethnic Mexican or Puerto Rican candidates. However, the group made a surprising endorsement when they supported an ethnic European candidate for State Representative for East Chicago

⁷⁷ “Puerto Rico Trip Proves Costly for East Chicago,” *The Post-Tribune*, April 9, 2002.

⁷⁸ “Darts,” *The Post-Tribune*, April 19, 2002.

⁷⁹ “Precinct winners eye next election,” *The Post-Tribune*, May 20, 2002.

over the incumbent, John Aguilera. His opponent claimed that “When I speak to the Hispanic people in East Chicago, they say John Aguilera has been out of touch with East Chicago. He’s never around.”⁸⁰

The retention of pro-Pastrick precinct committee members only further entrenched his grip on the city. Pastrick’s spokesperson, Myrna Maldonado, won her first elected office, joining the precinct committee. Responding to critics that claimed, Maldonado presented a clear conflict of interest due to her direct employment under Pastrick, she claimed that “I’m here to help folks get registered to vote, to increase voting habits in the precinct and to make sure people know that they have the right to vote.”⁸¹ Maldonado went further to criticize the defeated representatives from Citizens in Action, stating that “Their message is negative always, and that’s unfortunate. Quite frankly, sometimes you get tired hearing all the negatives.”⁸²

However, if Pabey desired the mayoral seat, he would confront a new problem with the casino and his family. Shortly after the election, the administration placed Pabey’s cousin, Lt. William Pabey and two other officers, on suspension. The suspension occurred after officers used inside information, the winning combination, for a contest at the Casino called “Crack the Code,” which offered an opportunity at a one-million-dollar grand prize. Colluding with employees at the casino, the officers got the winning combination and began to try their luck. However, the casino discovered the collusion, when one of the officers turned against his fellow conspirators in the casino and police department, allegedly over one employee no longer wanting

⁸⁰ “Aguilera pans city hall for snub,” *The Post-Tribune*, May 2, 2002.

⁸¹ “Precinct winners eye next election,” *The Post-Tribune*, May 20, 2002.

⁸² “Precinct winners eye next election,” *The Post-Tribune*, May 20, 2002.

to rig the contest. Each of the conspirators, the three police officers, one of their relatives, and two casino employees, received theft charges by Lake County prosecutor's office.⁸³

In East Chicago even the dead vote: Ordering a Special Election Amid Voter Fraud

Amid William Pabey's summertime conspiracy, his cousin's name began circulating as a possible contender for the mayoral race in East Chicago. Although Pastrick previously announced he would not seek another term, commentators noted that the mayor appeared ready for a re-election campaign. Political commentators at *The Post-Tribune* floated other names as possible challengers to Pastrick, including City Judge, Lonnie Randolph and State Rep. John Aguilera.⁸⁴

With the rumor-mill circling, reporter and East Chicago-native Michael Puente, called Pabey to ask about the event he would host later that day in June of 2002. Pabey's answer to the reporter was short and to the point: "Just show up."⁸⁵ However, the price-tag of \$100 dollars a plate at the Casa Blanca Restaurant, a favorite Mexican spot for East Chicago's politicians and aspiring politically oriented residents, suggested a campaign announcement. Previously announcing, both in 1995 and 1999 that he would not seek reelection, Pastrick still remained unannounced about his intentions to run for office or place a surrogate in the race.

Regardless of Pastrick's intent to run, Pabey's not-so-surprising announcement, rooted itself in the growing disdain for the status quo. Pabey claimed that his decision to run occurred in late 1999, after Pastrick claimed he would not seek a ninth term. He rallied hundreds of

⁸³ See: "Cops tied to casino scam," *The Post-Tribune*, May 23, 2002 "Police facing charges accused of conspiring with casino workers to fix promotion," *The Post-Tribune*, August 17, 2002, and "Three E.C. cops charged in casino scam," *The Times*, August 21, 2002.

⁸⁴ "Politics Notebook," *The Post-Tribune*, June 24, 2002.

⁸⁵ "Former EC police chief to announce race for mayor," *The Post-Tribune*, June 27, 2002.

supporters in the room with his promise that together “We’re going to stop the corruption and intimidation of elections!”⁸⁶ One Latina responded to a comment from Sheriff-Elect Roy Dominguez about the difficulty in imagining an East Chicago without Pastrick by succinctly stating that “Obviously, Sheriff-Elect Roy Dominguez has not taken a stroll through East Chicago recently. Yes, I can imagine an East Chicago without a Mayor Pastrick.”⁸⁷ Another Latino urged his neighbors to not fall for the typical campaign cycle. He noted that “You will start to see things being done around town, and a few people might even get a chance to work for the city, but beware. Once the election is over, it all stops.”⁸⁸ His plea went a step further to ask “Why don’t we put a stop to this man once and for all? Let’s stop playing his games and start one of our own.”⁸⁹ Left excluded from the machine, or marginalized in it, Latinas and Latinos began to articulate a new order for East Chicago: a political machine with a Latino at the helm.

However, within the Latina and Latino community this anti-corruption stance proved complicated. While decrying “Mayor Robert Pastrick’s Hispanic puppets,” one resident began to list their proclaimed “true Hispanic leaders.” The Latino author pleaded that East Chicagoans “Don’t install a Latin person who would benefit only an administration that would use the Hispanic community for its own gain.”⁹⁰ However, in advocating for the representative and responsive leadership for the community, the author listed several close Pastrick allies. In proclaiming Roy Dominguez as one such leader, the author omitted that Dominguez served on Pastrick’s 1999 campaign. Or in mentioning Adrian Santos and Joe De La Cruz, that those two

⁸⁶ “Pabey says he’ll run for mayor of EC,” *The Post-Tribune*, June 28, 2002.

⁸⁷ “Yes, I can imagine East Chicago without a Mayor Pastrick,” *The Times*, December 19, 2002.

⁸⁸ “Ignore Pastrick’s old games in favor of new leadership,” *The Times*, December 27, 2002.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ “Install a leader who will truly represent the region,” *The Times*, August 27, 2002.

were avid surrogates of Pastrick in his re-election efforts. Pairing them with anti-Pastrick politicians, such as Rich Medina and George Pabey, showed an almost counter-intuitive point. How could both staunch Pastrick surrogates and anti-Pastrick officials all be true representatives of the Latina and Latino community? The list, of all male, political leaders within the region reflected most of the elected Latinos from East Chicago to that point. The omission, whether deliberately or not, of any Latina political official reinforced the entrenched gendered idea of politics as a man's sphere. Especially given the history of Latina led movements in the region, such as Concerned Latins Organization, or activists such as Ester Franco and Colleen Aguirre.

During his campaign, Pabey navigated the political waters to form his own winning coalition among those frustrated with the city's legacy of corruption. Within a few months, Pabey claimed that his decision to campaign for mayor led to his forced resignation as an investigator for Lake County prosecutor's office. While targeting the required loyalty to the machine that allegedly led to his resignation, Pabey noted that Pastrick while doing a good job as mayor "has been in office for thirty-three years. That's enough."⁹¹ By framing his forced resignation as a form of retaliatory action for his decision to run, Pabey framed his campaign as an outsider and dissenter against the entrenched machine.

However, Pabey was not the only candidate to follow this pattern for their campaign against the entrenched machine. City Judge Lonnie Randolph announced his candidacy for the mayor's office. Judge Randolph claimed that "The problem is that when you have been raised in the city and see what it used to be and what it is now, I know I can do more."⁹² Judge Randolph

⁹¹ "Pabey sues prosecutor over firing," *The Times*, August 16, 2002.

⁹² "City judge to join E.C. mayor's race," *The Times*, January 17, 2003.

and Pastrick's administration found themselves at odds in recent years. Previously, Randolph ran for mayor in 1995 against Pastrick and Stiglich. In 1998, Governor Frank O'Bannon appointed Randolph as East Chicago's Judge where voters reelected him a year later.⁹³ While serving as judge, Pastrick attempted to abolish the court when City Council removed \$192,970 from Randolph's budget. Councilman Joe De La Cruz cited neighboring cities, such as Hammond, a community three times the size of East Chicago and a larger caseload with only a budget \$10,000 more for its judgeship.⁹⁴ Amid allegations of corruption and the indictments that came with the investigation of the 1999 primary, Randolph vocally called for Pastrick's resignation.⁹⁵ Randolph, much like Pabey, capitalized on the growing visibility of corruption and increased federal and state probes to add momentum to their campaign.

“It happens in East Chicago. It happens all the time. That’s the sad thing about it.”: Ghost Voting and Casting Doubt on Election Integrity

Although Pastrick held a firm grip of the precinct committee after the 2002 election, growing dissent turned attention to election practices within the city. Reporters from *The Times* newspaper worked diligently to gain access to election records to investigate claims of ghost voting and the misuse of absentee ballots. Pastrick, who ended the twentieth century in a place of particular strength, quickly found the balanced machine he built under attack and pressured in the first years of the new century. Reinvigorated by numerous investigations and increasingly

⁹³ “Randolph rolls to victory in city judge race,” *The Times*, May 5, 1999.

⁹⁴ “Money” *The Times*, December 11, 2002.

⁹⁵ “Challenger calls for Pastrick’s resignation,” *The Times*, February 20, 2003.

present allegations, journalists, community members, and a group of anti-machine dissenters worked to expose the machine and pull-on threads of their political misdeeds.

These recent events that casted doubt on the election's integrity carried the previous contentious debates over nearly every election for the past decade. In 2002, Officials from the Federal Election Commission began to scrutinize Indiana election law changes from 1993, particularly a secrecy clause concerning election records. In reference to the statute that closed all election records for twenty-two months by federal law, the official bluntly stated "I've never heard of such a law."⁹⁶ The newspaper reported that when Lake County's election board finally allowed them access to the previous records from 1995 that "Although those records had been continuously under seal, they had the appearance of having been trashed, strewn in a single large box. Election officials could not explain the mess and said they had never seen anything like it before."⁹⁷

However, in the months leading up to the primary, investigations began to unveil numerous cases of "ghost voting" in the previous precinct elections. Previously, two seemingly isolated incidents cast doubt over the integrity of the election. These incidents included a ballot casted by someone that moved to Maryland years before the election and another in the name of a dead man.⁹⁸ Reporters from *The Times* checked votes from individuals that previously had not voted or had not in several years revealed approximately a dozen instances "where the supposed voters were reported to have moved away, usually years ago." When the reporter spoke to the

⁹⁶ "Indiana secrecy falsely based on federal law," *The Times*, September 3, 2002.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ "Ghost voting riddles East Chicago precincts," *The Times*, September 6, 2002.

owner of one apartment manager, she identified four people that never resided in the building.⁹⁹ Although these may be minor instances found, throughout precincts, they proved vital in fending off critics of Pastrick. In the investigated precinct, Adrian Santos, a Pastrick critic, lost the election to Roosevelt Howard, Pastrick ally and a Black police commander, by eleven votes. Santos won by ten votes at the polls, only losing his lead in the absentee ballots, many of which filed from the buildings investigated by *The Times* and Federal Bureau of Investigation.¹⁰⁰ Both team of investigators relied on the poll book list to cross-examine residents with the addressees for absentee ballots. The investigation into absentee ballots from the previous election would continue to haunt the integrity of the upcoming election.

In some cases, the possibilities of ghost votes altering elections extended into courtrooms. Despite winning the primary election, Tia Cauley, a non-machine candidate, found the Lake County Superior Court ordered a new election between her and her pro-Pastrick opponent. Cauley alleged that Pastrick worked with East Chicago Republican Party Chairman, Robert Cantrell, to fix the election.¹⁰¹ Cantrell previously made headlines as a new generation of Republican voters accused Cantrell of establishing Republicans in the city and county that were actually Democrats. Cantrell even openly boasted to newspapers that Pastrick's administration contained "a built-in monstrous patronage system that's unreal. I can talk about it because I helped build it."¹⁰² This cooperation between Pastrick and the chair of the East Chicago

⁹⁹ "Ghost voting riddles East Chicago precincts," *The Times*, September 6, 2002.

¹⁰⁰ "Voting," *The Times*, September 6, 2002.

¹⁰¹ "Precinct battles goes to court," *The Times*, October 11, 2002.

¹⁰² "Chiabai," *The Times*, September 23, 2002.

Republican Party revealed a decades long mutual support that only entrenched the one-party politics in the city as Cantrell ensured little resistance.

Amid these instances of doubt over the integrity of the previous election, Pastrick announced his intention to run for mayor for the final time, again. However, as *The Times* reported this action from the “patriarch of politics in Northwest Indiana” had “surprise[d] no one.”¹⁰³ The decision to wait to announce his candidacy provided Pastrick several advantages aside from the spectacle of the reveal. While many figured that Pastrick would continue to run, the waiting allowed him an opportunity to see who his opponents would be, as well as their supporters. This decision granted Pastrick the opportunity to double-down on his support and work wherever possible at hindering his opponents’ network. However, it appeared that with the growing attention to Pastrick and East Chicago cemented the dividing line much as it had in 1999.

The 2003 Democratic Primary

Newspapers carried fewer stories of campaign shenanigans for the 2003 primary, as opposed to the 1999 primary. A developer, Hector Lopez, sued elements of Pastrick’s political machine during the primary for nixing his plans to build a banquet hall in the Indiana Harbor neighborhood. Lopez claimed that Pastrick’s surrogates mistakenly believed Lopez supported Pabey in the upcoming election.¹⁰⁴ The four defendants in the lawsuit, Councilmen Joe De La Cruz and Frank Kolintzas and two precinct committee members: Jose Valdez and Drake Morris allegedly conspired to end Lopez’s banquet hall. In 2000, Lopez purchased the American Legion

¹⁰³ “Patriarch Pastrick runs again,” *The Times*, December 2, 2002.

¹⁰⁴ “Developer sues over failure of banquet hall,” *The Times*, December 5, 2002.

Post in the Indiana Harbor to renovate it as Club Lexis. However, he encountered issues with the property's zoning, which the city had labeled as residential instead of commercial. The zoning of the former American Legion Post as residential proved concerning given that it had only ever been the Legion hall, a commercial space. This led to Club Lexis's business suffering from stalled rezoning procedures, which Lopez alleged Morris arranged in conjunction with the City Council. However, Valdez echoed the comments from the defendants that said they responded to concerns from residents. The defendants claimed that "They [residents] saw something like a gentleman's club. We saw women coming out of there, and we heard they were going to have dancers and all that."¹⁰⁵ Whether their opposition was rooted in these concerns of respectability and neighborhood sanctity, or a preemptive strike against a possible site for Pabey to organize, remained unsure. However, the incident highlighted how residents saw the looming political contest between Pabey and Pastrick.

Election Day proved an anxious affair for both Pabey and Pastrick's camps. With the polls tallied, Pabey led Pastrick by a mere 199 votes. However, after tallying the absentee ballots, Pastrick won the race by 278 votes. After election officials finished tallying absentee ballots, the final count in the three-way election was Pastrick (4,083), Pabey (3,805), and Randolph (2,289). Pabey and Randolph's similar messaging of a declining East Chicago and a non-transparent government likely appealed to the same voters. Residents that became increasingly frustrated with corruption and the status quo turned to two competing candidates,

¹⁰⁵ "Developer," *The Times*, December 5, 2002.

Pabey and Randolph, whereas machine loyalists only had to reiterate their support for long-time leader Pastrick.

At his swearing in ceremony at Benjamin Harrison Elementary School, Pastrick told the crowd of three-hundred attendees that “It is obvious that we need to take further steps in doing everything in our power to eliminate the element that spreads their venom through our neighborhoods.” Pastrick’s supporter and City Council President Frank Kollintzas, who the day before U.S. Attorney Joseph Van Bokkelen indicted concerning the 1999 primary, argued that “He [Pastrick] has been the catalyst, the glue that has kept us together.”¹⁰⁶ At the ceremony’s end, Pastrick once again pledged that this would be his final term and he would utilize it to improving the city that he stood at the helm of for three decades. The mayor made no mention of the growing investigation into his administration and insiders.

Familiar with the political scene of his city, Pabey called foul and the primary’s fate went into the courts. In July, LaPorte County Judge Steven King set a trial date at the orders of the Indiana Supreme Court. Pastrick’s attorney attempted to protest this decision as the deadline for primary recounts passed.¹⁰⁷ However, the delays occurred as legal teams protested the relationship of Lake County, and even Porter County judges with Pabey and Pastrick. Initially, the struggle appeared an impossible hurdle. Throughout the prolonged legal debate about absentee votes, Pabey and supporters articulated a changing discourse about corruption in the election.

¹⁰⁶ “Pastrick,” *The Times*, December 29, 2003.

¹⁰⁷ “Recount trial ordered in mayoral primary,” *The Times*, July 16, 2003.

For some, the contest took an issue over the utilization of a cohesive Hispanic vote. As Pabey began to pursue legal avenues to challenge the results of the primary, *The Times* framed the issue in terms of Hispanics taking power. According to the paper, “Comprising nearly half the voting-age population, many of Latin extraction flexed their muscles last year and got behind Councilman George Pabey to unseat Pastrick.”¹⁰⁸ The divide over the machine and Latina and Latino political dissenters even continued in the debate over the legal matters. Pastrick’s legal team expressed that there was no “vast conspiracy designed to limit Latino voters at the polling places.”¹⁰⁹ The Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund echoed this criticism, which originated from Pabey’s legal team. However, as the previous chapter and the makeup of the Sidewalk Six indicated, Pastrick was not without his Latino supporters in the community.

Central to the controversy of the 2003 primary was the same tool that Pastrick and Stiglich collided over in 1999: absentee ballots. Commenting on the trial, an editorial in *The Times* proclaimed that “This was the first time Pastrick, the city’s long-time mayor and still a major warlord in Democratic Party politics, didn’t come up with the winning votes at the polls. Those absentee ballots, however, came through for him.”¹¹⁰ The editorial noted that changes to absentee voting influenced the “voting mischief” in East Chicago, particularly the rules that permitted proxies for the voter to pick up absentee ballots on their behalf. Within Judge King’s three week trial into voter fraud in the election, he disqualified 155 absentee ballots; however, the large quantities of absentee ballots still left Pastrick with a victory by 123-vote margin.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ “E.C. vote battle rages on,” *The Times*, January 12, 2004.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ “East Chicago mayor race continues today,” *The Times*, July 22, 2003.

¹¹¹ “Judge Scolds E.C. Campaign Machine,” *The Times*, August 14, 2003.

In January 2004, Indiana Supreme Court Chief Justice issued an order for oral arguments in Pabey's voter fraud case. The decision, occurring a little over two months after Pastrick won his ninth term to office in the November General Election came as a surprise to all parties involved. Pabey's political ally and supporter, Rich Medina, who recently won his lawsuit against the city for their demotion and reprisal against Medina for his political affiliations, regained hope. Medina claimed that "I'm glad the Supreme Court is going to hear the case. They have restored my trust in the system." Likewise, Pabey claimed that "It's about time we got someone to listen to our case. I honestly feel good about our chances with the Supreme Court. It took them awhile, but [sic] I think they have all the facts."¹¹² Indiana Attorney General Steve Carter expressed encouragement over the Supreme Court's interest in the case. Carter noted that "For far too long the voters of Lake County have endured a tainted election system and the Supreme Court has the ability to restore fairness and integrity to the voting process."¹¹³

Within a month of the Supreme Court of Indiana agreeing to hear the case, federal investigators joined the probe. According to *The Times*, "U.S. Justice Department investigators see Lake County's vote fraud scandal as a big game hunt."¹¹⁴ The addition of the federal resources offered additional hope as Democrat Lake County Prosecutor Bernard Carter and Republican Indiana Attorney General Steve Carter (no relation) announced their special task force. Arrayed against Pastrick, the representatives of three tiers of government (county, state,

¹¹² "Pabey mayoral bid alive," *The Times*, January 10, 2004. "East Chicago election flap winds up at top court," *The Indianapolis Star*, January 11, 2004.

¹¹³ "Supreme Court denies request in mayor's case," *The Times*, February 27, 2004.

¹¹⁴ "Feds stalk vote fraud ringleaders," *The Times*, January 21, 2004.

and federal) gained the resources of the Internal Revenue Service and Federal Bureau of Investigation.¹¹⁵

These federal authorities already convicted and issued indictments against a slew of Lake County Democrats in the previous months, such as Gary City Clerk Katie Hall and her daughter. Additionally, the investigators recently indicted Mayor Pastrick's son and the former Indiana Democratic Party Chairman Peter Manous on fraud and conspiracy charges concerning a land development case in adjacent Porter County.¹¹⁶ The Lake County Prosecutor claimed that "Contrary to what people may believe, the people of my county want honest elections."¹¹⁷

The conflict over the 2003 primary reached the Supreme Court of Indiana in *Pabey v. Pastrick* (2004). The Supreme Court case offered Pabey's legal team another opportunity to reiterate the extent of the conspiracy and push for a second opportunity at the mayor's office. During the trial, Pabey and his legal team pushed for the court to declare all absentee ballots invalid or that the court order a new election.¹¹⁸ Pabey and his legal team advocated for the Indiana Supreme Court to reverse the decision from a trial court to deny relief over the contentious election. The trial court judge decreed that "direct, competent, and convincing evidence that established the pervasive fraud, illegal conduct, and violations of elections law" proved the "voluminous, widespread and insidious nature of the misconduct."¹¹⁹ However, the judge doubted his authority to invalidate nearly two thousand absentee ballots or order a special election, especially because election law in Indiana did not directly specify the limits of his

¹¹⁵ "Federal investigators join voter fraud probe," *The Indianapolis Star*, January 23, 2004.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Pabey v. Pastrick* 816 N.E.2d 1138 (Ind. 2004)

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

authority. Judge King's decision to apply a recount, led Pabey's legal team, headed by Carmen Fernandez, to push for a ruling based on procedural issues.¹²⁰ Fernandez noted that the appeal would allow for a judicial push to either declare Pabey the primary winner, or order a special election, both options pundits claimed were outside of Judge King's authority in trial court.¹²¹ Additionally, Pabey's legal team reiterated that "These were not isolated incidents. It covered the city. It happened to a lot of different people. It was centrally directed fraud in which the poor, young and naïve were targeted."¹²² These procedural issues, primarily the legality of Judge King's authority to declare a special election, or Pabey as the winner, only allowed more time for evidence to accumulate.

Despite the lackluster ruling in trial court, the evidence included in the judgement proved extensive. The judgement ruled that Pastrick supporters utilized the absentee ballot in "a predatory pattern" against first-time voters, less-informed residents, the infirm, the poor, and those "with limited skills in the English language." When these vulnerable voters received their ballots, they then contacted a Pastrick supporter that would, despite no legal authority to do so, assist them in completing the ballot. The judge referenced numerous instances where Pastrick supporters solicited support through providing compensation or promising to do so in exchange for support. These promises included cash incentives for at least thirty-nine individuals. Other instances included much like *The Times* uncovered in their investigation into the 2002 precinct race, that some absentee ballots were registered to former residents, residences, or in the most audacious move: vacant lots. Pastrick supporters possessed unmarked absentee ballots, which

¹²⁰ "Pabey mayoral bid alive," *The Times*, January 10, 2004.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² "Fraud," *The Times*, January 21, 2004.

they delivered and collected from applicants, in some cases even having much the ballot completed before delivering them. Lastly, likely as a form of self-preservation, municipal employees that did not reside in East Chicago, cast absentee ballots, likely to support the boss of their patronage positions.¹²³

These instances collectively violated numerous elements of the Indiana Code. The trial court judge emphasized that:

The East Chicago Democrat mayoral primary may be a “textbook” example of the chicanery that can attend the absentee vote cast by mail: examples of instances where the supervision and monitoring of voting by Pastrick supporters and the subsequent possession of ballots by those malefactors are common herein. Those illegalities came with a side order of predation in which the naïve, the neophytes, the infirm and the needy were subjected to the unscrupulous election tactics so extensively discussed.¹²⁴

Within King’s 104-page opinion about the case, he named numerous individuals into this conspiracy. The opinion named two former Pastrick allies in the case that provided context to how candidates conspire to inflate their political support during election season.

In a 3-2 decision, the Indiana Supreme Court reversed the trial court's decision and ordered a special election. John Rucker, an East Chicagoan that many said Pastrick supported as a nomination to the court, cast the deciding vote that sealed Pastrick’s fate. Brian Howey, an Indianapolis Publisher of *The Howey Political Report* claimed that the decision represented “the most catastrophic week in Pastrick’s legendary career.” Rucker, a practicing attorney in East Chicago, attained an Indiana Appeals Court seat in 1991 and an Indiana Supreme Court seat in

¹²³ These instances consisted Judge Steve King (LaPorte County, IN) points a-j in his judgement prior to the case arriving to the Supreme Court of Indiana.

¹²⁴ Judge King, judgement, pg. 84-85.

1999 due to Pastrick's influence voted against his benefactor.¹²⁵ Unlike many others that benefitted from Pastrick and the Democratic machine, including the Indiana Democratic Party, Rucker began to distance himself.

Sidewalk for Votes: A Federal and State Probe in East Chicago and Across the Region

However, the extent of corruption was not completely known during the 1999 primary. The Indiana State Supreme Court ruled for a special election in 2004, after inconsistencies in the following primary, a corruption probe unveiled a longer history of unethical practices. After the 2004 special election, a federal probe unveiled a deep-rooted network of backroom deals and unethical behavior. Indiana attorney general Steve Carter assisted in drafting a civil racketeering lawsuit against Pastrick, the Sidewalk Six, and several companies and members of Pastrick's administration affiliated with the scheme.

The probe, a combined effort of the federal and state government, began in 2002. Initial work investigated the contractors hired to provide the aesthetic work throughout the city. Before the end of the year, a federal jury indicted an East Chicago business for wire, tax, and bankruptcy fraud. The federal attorneys accused the owner of overbilling the city of East Chicago for \$302,388 for nonexistent trees. This same firm allegedly poured half a million dollars' worth of concrete to curry favor for Mayor Pastrick in the 1999 primary.¹²⁶

The probe revealed a startling conclusion of concrete votes in East Chicago. The scheme, labeled sidewalks-for-votes entailed public funds utilized to pay for concrete work on private

¹²⁵ "Five-pronged emasculation of the Lake County Democratic machine, Pastrick's catastrophic week," *The Howey Political Report* vol. 11, no. 1 (August 12, 2004), 1.

¹²⁶ "Contractor indicted in East Chicago scandal," *The Times*, December 10, 2002.

property. The work was not limited to sidewalks but included driveways, patios, basketball courts, pools, basements, and even some landscaping work. In total, six of the administration's highest ranked officials, the aforementioned Sidewalk Six, were involved. The resulting lawsuit, *State of Indiana v. Pastrick, et al* named twenty-six defendants including special advisors to the Pastrick administration and a few companies involved in the work. Mayor Pastrick continuously stressed that he had "no knowledge" of the affair.

In a full-page of coverage after Indiana Attorney General Steve Carter announced the civil lawsuit against Pastrick and his administration, the paper noted the varied responses by those involved and everyday citizens. A resident, Luis Santiago, received a driveway in 1999, which by 2004 was crumbling, despite claiming that he did not want it. He proclaimed that "The concrete's no (expletive) good." His neighbor, Frank Lumbreras claimed that the lawsuit was just an extension of the Republican State battling the Democratic city government, An unnamed resident pessimistically proclaimed that "It doesn't seem like there's going to be much change. But I wish something would change."¹²⁷ State Senator Earline Rogers, a Black woman and representative from Gary, expressed concerns over how Hammond, Gary, and East Chicago spent their city's casino money. Sen. Rogers claimed that "I've been disturbed about how the money has been spent ... and think that when more people are involved in the decision-making that better decisions get made."¹²⁸

Pastrick and members of the Democratic Party responded to the charges as an extension of the upcoming political campaign season. In his comments to *The Times*, Joe De La Cruz

¹²⁷ "Charges don't faze city residents, Some say political gain at heart of state's action," *The Times*, August 4, 2004.

¹²⁸ "Senator Questions Use of Casino Cash," *The Times*, July 16 2002.

claimed that “To me, it’s all politically motivated to keep the Lake County Democrats down. Being a Republican, it’s good ink for him downstate.”¹²⁹ Joe Valdez’s attorney questioned why the lawsuit was not filed in neighboring Hammond instead of South Bend. However, many of the twenty-six defendants listed, as well as political officials not listed, did not want to comment as they had not seen the lawsuit. The newspaper noted that their responses were typical for everyone reached in the two days since the announcement.¹³⁰

However, Pastrick and his surrogates began an early defense against these charges. Before the state filed the charges, the city worked to set up a legal defense for its civil servants. In 2002, months before Pastrick formally announced his intention to run for re-election, the city council passed an ordinance requiring the city to defend public servants in civil and criminal cases where officials “believed they were acting legally and in the best interests of the city.”¹³¹ Activist Colleen Aguirre surmised it best when she questioned “What are they doing, getting ready for indictments. Only in East Chicago. Not only do they break the law, but our tax dollars have to pay for their defense.”¹³²

Ever critical of the Pastrick administration, *The Times* issued an editorial about the municipal ordinance, likening East Chicago to Dodge City. The editorial claimed that “Like the lawless town of the Old West, East Chicago is one of the last frontiers of old-time politics, struggling to legitimize itself and catch up to the rest of the civilized world. Now the leaders of

¹²⁹ “E.C. mayor says state’s lawsuit is a political ploy, Other defendants agree, question lawsuit’s timing so close to the fall election,” *The Times*, August 4, 2004.

¹³⁰ “E.C. mayor says state’s lawsuit is political ploy,” *The Times*, August 4, 2004.

¹³¹ “Town looks to protect officials in ordinance,” *The Times*, June 26, 2002.

¹³² “Officials,” *The Times*, June 26, 2002.

this new Dodge are attempting to dodge the possible consequences of recent past actions.”¹³³ The deliberate play on “dodge” for the editorial staff reflected a clear sign of Pastrick and his administration’s nerves over the impending probe.

As members of his administration faced indictment and charges, Pastrick issued a pledge for fair and ethical practices across all levels of government. In an editorial by *The Times*, entitled “East Chicago enters its ethical phase,” the paper proclaimed that “In his waning years as mayor of East Chicago, Robert Pastrick has finally found the religion of ethics.”¹³⁴ The editorial noted Pastrick’s call for a new position of an independent inspector general and the irony of the pledge stating that “So now, late in the game, Pastrick is calling for ethics in his city. Better late than never.”¹³⁵ The columns within the paper even extended to biting commentary against the Sidewalk Six and the citizens of East Chicago. Columnist Mark Kiesling proclaimed simply that “Pastrick won at the expense of the city treasury.” When discussing Porras serving as a witness against some of his colleagues, Kiesling noted “Porras (pronounced “pour us,” as in “pour us a driveway, please.”¹³⁶ However, perhaps the most damning bit of the column was Kiesling’s conclusion that “Many of the people who were having their driveways, patios and the rest poured at city expense knew exactly what was happening, and winked at it. The trial of the Sidewalk Six sends this message to them – your councilmen keep getting indicted because you keep taking their illegal largesse.”¹³⁷

¹³³ “The Dodge City of the region,” *The Times*, June 28, 2002.

¹³⁴ “East Chicago enters its ethical phase,” *The Times*, March 19, 2004.

¹³⁵ “East Chicago enters its ethical phase,” *The Times*, March 19, 2004.

¹³⁶ “You get what you’re bribed for,” *The Times*, October 8, 2004.

¹³⁷ “You get what you’re bribed for,” *The Times*, October 8, 2004.

The lawsuits concerning the Sidewalk Six and following legal cases reveal the stark racial discrepancies in combating corruption. In September 2005, Pedro Porras was the last of the Sidewalk Six to be sentenced. U.S. District Court Judge Robert Miller sentenced Porras to twenty-seven months in federal prison, the low end of sentencing for the five members that faced jail time. Porras, along with Valdez and Santos worked with federal investigators to convict Kollintzas, De La Cruz and Maldonado for shorter sentences.¹³⁸ Kollintzas fled to Greece before his sentencing, where he presumably remains. The six were ordered to collectively repay \$25 million from the scandal.¹³⁹ Porras plead guilty in the case's first week, which began October 2, 2004. As "the first crack" in the concrete case, Porras likely guaranteed this low-end sentencing at the offset of the case. According to coverage, "Sources close to the investigation said Porras' decision to plead guilty was a surprise to his co-defendants. They said the shock of his defection may set one or more of them scrambling to work out their own best deals before the trial begins and heavier penalties set in."¹⁴⁰ Santos and Valdez, who also cooperate with the federal government received thirty-three months. De La Cruz and Maldonado received heavier sentences, six years and 130 months respectively. Maldonado received the heaviest sentence of all members of the scandal, likely for the second conviction in July 2006 for using public money to pay for the defense attorneys of the Sidewalk Six.

Promising Reform from within the Machine

The intertwined legal battles influenced the political atmosphere for the special election. The Sidewalk Six case removed many of Pastrick's chief supporters and surrogates from the

¹³⁸ "The end of the Sidewalk Six," *The Times*, September 23, 2005.

¹³⁹ "The end of the Sidewalk Six," *The Times*, September 23, 2005.

¹⁴⁰ "Guilty plea breaks up Sidewalk Six," *The Times*, October 5, 2004.

playing field as in-fighting among them broke the harmony of Pastrick's machine. Pastrick's association with these individuals, as well as the publicized facts about how other smaller-scale supporters subverted the integrity of absentee voting in their boss's favor, Pastrick directly and indirectly became associated with the antics of his surrogates and supporters. Although Pastrick's legal team repeatedly denied that he had knowledge of the antics carried out during his re-election bid, the guilt by association fueled momentum in the special election.

After winning the special election, and before ever setting foot into the office, Pabey faced two looming problems. Transitioning into the mayor's office, Pabey faced the public's hopes for a change to the city's now nefarious status quo. Framing himself as a progressive and non-machine candidate since his councilman election, Mayor Pabey now had to make good on his campaign slogans. This proved instrumental as East Chicago, the Sidewalk Six, and Lake County Democrats continued to make headlines as a part of the federal probe. Additionally, Pabey inherited an estimated five million budget shortfall from his predecessor. As a part of his transition team into the mayor's office, Pabey appointed longtime East Chicagoan, Charles Pacurar to City Controller and James Bennett as a financial consultant. Pressured to adhere to his campaign promises by the residents that elected him for change, as well as the looming financial threat, Pabey's promises for reform would encounter significant problems.

Faced with the fiscal crisis in the City of East Chicago, particularly in the wake of legal fees from the federal probe, Pabey turned to a cherished piece of the political machine: patronage. After analyzing past city budgets, Bennett recommended that the city reduce municipal employment as, historically, payroll proved the city's largest expenditure. Pacurar oversaw and implemented the layoffs with Department Heads reviewing where they could make cuts to their personnel.

In one case, these terminations instigated a legal challenge that highlighted some understanding to the transition between the two mayors. Manuel Montalvo, recently appointed the head for the Information Technology Department, terminated workers in favor of cheaper contractors when the need arose. A Senior Programmer in IT claimed that Montalvo, a Pabey supporter in the election, chose to terminate him because he supported Pastrick. Additionally, the Plaintiff claimed that his race, as an ethnic European, influenced the city's decision to terminate his employment.¹⁴¹ The Plaintiff noted that the city replaced his position with a Hispanic contractor. Although the District Court ruled that the Plaintiff failed to provide sufficient evidence that Pabey and his administration violated his First Amendment right and his termination was racially motivated, the case highlighted (for some) a moment of continuity between Pastrick and Pabey's administration.

Conclusion

Although the calls to end the city's corruption rallied avid supporters from the community, East Chicagoans encountered an unfortunate reality when little changed under Pabey's tenure. Notably, in February of 2010, the federal government indicted Pabey for the misuse of public funds, which a federal court jury convicted him of in September that same year.¹⁴² Pabey's rise to the mayor's office, and swift fall from grace, highlight the institutionalized problems of corruption in the political system. Echoing previous generations that claimed it was their turn to reap the benefits, Pabey's brief machine proved no different than

¹⁴¹ *Skrundz v. Pabey* (2009) United States District Court of Northern Indiana (Hammond). June 17, 2009.

¹⁴² "Feds: E.C. Mayor used city money for home improvements," *The Times*, February 4, 2010 and "Pabey found guilty of conspiracy, theft," *The Times*, September 25, 2010.

his counterparts, albeit appearing more prone to appoint Latinos across as many positions of power in the city.

For decades, ethnic Mexicans and Puerto Ricans advocated and organized within the machine and outside to secure elected representation, culminating in the election of Pabey. Although a component of the ethnic European machine that ran the city for over sixty years, many supporters of Pabey voted for him as an opportunity for change, especially after the attention given to the sidewalk scandal and voting improprieties in the 2003 Democratic Primary.

Conclusion: “Welcome to the Midwest, where everything rots”¹: East Chicago, Corruption, and
its Enduring Legacy

After six hours of testimony, all Pabey could do now was wait. Pabey, who won reelection in 2007 was indicted in 2010 on federal corruption charges. Within three hours of deliberation, Pabey, who rose from a cog in the Pastrick-led machine to lead the city as mayor from 2004 until 2010, was convicted of conspiracy and theft of government funds.² Alicia Rodriguez, a Pabey campaign member in 2003 who ran against him in 2007 put it succinctly “We were so disappointed by George. Nobody really believes anyone anymore.”³ *NBC Chicago* proved even more pessimistic in signing off: “Dishonest politicians? Next you’re going to tell us that Chicago winters are cold.”⁴ Rodriguez’s comment echoed the optimism of Pabey’s candidacy and the failure of his administration to be any different than the corruption it struggled against in the 2000s. While Rodriguez and hundreds of others of Pabey’s supporters hoped for change, *NBC Chicago* did not feign surprise at the verdict.

Unfortunately, the unceremonious end of George Pabey’s administration did not signal the end of the bygone era of the political machine. The Latino political machine that seemed ever on the horizon proved a brief blip on the radar in the city’s history. And while many of Pabey’s predecessors vied for political power and navigated the political machine to varying degrees of success, none achieved Pabey’s success. However, his success did not offer a moment of change but continuity in the city’s history. As Rodriguez described, the dwindling population of the

¹ “Feds Indict East Chicago Mayor,” *NBC Chicago*, February 4, 2010.

² “East Chicago, Ind., mayor found guilty of corruption,” *Chicago Tribune*, September 24, 2010.

³ “Ex-mayor upholds East Chicago tradition: corruption,” *Chicago Tribune*, May 5, 2011.

⁴ “Feds Indict East Chicago Mayor,” *NBC Chicago*, February 4, 2010.

industrial city became suspicious of promises for reform and a new East Chicago --- rightfully so. Pabey became the eleventh elected official from the city convicted on corruption charges. In his election campaign, as discussed in the sixth chapter, Pabey lamented the corrupt practices of the Pastrick machine that led to the city's financial ruin. In his 2007 re-election bid, Pabey told reporter Michael Puente, "We're all working together. Nobody is out here trying to get rich. We just care about one thing that's taking care of our community and the people in our community."⁵ In placing himself as the selfless leader during the city's troubling times, Pabey wanted to emphasize unity and a vision of progress.

Although Pabey deflected his critics claims in time for the 2007 primary, the revelation and legacy of his brief time as mayor reflect more continuity than change. The continuation between Pastrick's machine and Pabey's included the unceremonious legacy of their tenure as mayor. On September 24, 2010, the District Court convicted Pabey and Jose Camacho, the Department Head of the Engineering Department in the embezzlement of government funds and municipal employees to renovate a house in the Miller neighborhood of Gary, Indiana.⁶ That same year, Senior Judge James Moody called for Pastrick, former aide James Fife III, and Frank Kollintzas to pay the city \$108,007,584.33 in damages for the racketeering scheme. Pastrick, then 82, was not present for the judgement, the first time a city government been adjudged a corrupt organization under federal racketeering laws. Pastrick's attorney, Mike Bosh deemed the judgement "uncollectable" and said that the former mayor was in Mexico, vacationing at his

⁵ "Politics Heating Up In East Chicago," WBEZ, American Archive of Public Broadcasting (GBH and the Library of Congress), Boston, MA and Washington, DC accessed March 10, 2022. <http://americanarchive.org/catalog/cpb-aacip-50-61rfig4k>.

⁶ *United States v. Pabey* (2011) 664 F.3d 1084 United States Court of Appeals, Seventh Circuit.

second home. Pastrick would serve no jail time.⁷ A year after Judge Moody ordered Pastrick and two of his allies to collectively repay \$108 million, the judge sentenced East Chicago Mayor Pabey to five years in jail and a \$60,000 fine for using city funds and employees to rehab a Gary beachfront home, to the tune of \$14,500. This sentencing also included \$14,000 in restitution and three years of supervised release.⁸

Pabey even attempted a similar defense to Pastrick, professing his lack of knowledge to the details of the scandal. Whereas Pastrick claimed that he was unaware of how some of his political surrogates drummed up support, Pabey expressed not knowing that the rehabilitators were city employees, working on city time.⁹ However, unlike Pastrick, the district court provided the jury a conscious avoidance instruction. This instruction informed the jury that “Pabey’s knowledge of the scheme can be inferred if they find that he deliberately avoided the knowledge necessary for his conviction.”¹⁰ The absence of this instruction in Pastrick’s trial allowed his defense of pleading ignorance of the scheme to remain a viable strategy. However, these sentencings also highlight the racial discrepancy in tackling corruption in the courts. Even the conscious avoidance instruction issued to the jury in Pabey’s appeal, note the different treatment offered to Pabey over Pastrick in their legal troubles. While the jury could not infer what Pastrick did and did not know, they were allowed to infer Pabey’s knowledge of his real estate scheme.

The drastic differences in the sentencing and scale of the two mayoral scandals offer vital insights into how the courts tackled corruption. The harsher sentencing for Pabey’s relatively

⁷ “Judge orders Pastrick, allies to pay \$108M,” *The Times*, March 12, 2010.

⁸ *United States v. Pabey* (2011) 664 F.3d 1084 United States Court of Appeals, Seventh Circuit.

⁹ *United States v. Pabey* (2011) 664 F.3d 1084 United States Court of Appeals, Seventh Circuit.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

minor embezzlement continued the court's tradition of severely punishing the Latino and Black elected officials compared with white officials. In some cases, Judge Moody was the one providing these harsher sentences. For instance, when Antonio Barreda utilized his role as Human Resources Director for East Chicago to establish a ghost payroll scheme, Judge Moody sentenced Barreda to a year in federal prison in 1985.¹¹ Judge Moody also sentenced N. Atterson Spann, former Lake County Commissioner, who took bribes while in office and was a part of a scheme to have the East Chicago Rehabilitation Center bought at an inflated price to enrich supporters.¹² Spann served eleven years of a twenty-year sentence. After his release, Mayor Pastrick hired him as a co-chair for his infamous 1999 re-election campaign and hired him as Director of Community Services in the city.

Reflecting on East Chicago's sordid political history, scholars and pundits concluded that the city was a site of extraordinary corruption. The social scientist duo declared that East Chicago represented a "cornucopia of corruption" in Indiana.¹³ *The Chicago Tribune* exclaimed that "Northwest Indiana corruption thrives in Chicago's shadow" as per capita, Lake County possessed more indictments and convictions than its neighboring Cook County.¹⁴ These claims extend back decades, as Attorney General Robert Kennedy allegedly claimed, in 1962, that Lake County was "the most corrupt county in America." Although never verified, the claim is often repeated in the region and in political circles. For decades, East Chicago and to an extent the

¹¹ "Former councilman gets 1 year for theft," *The Times*, October 13, 1985.

¹² "Spann, Morris want new trial," *The Times*, November 1, 1989.

¹³ Tina Ebenger and Tracey McCabe, "East Chicago Politics: A Cornucopia of Corruption," *Midwest Social Sciences Journal* vol. 22 no. 1 (2019).

¹⁴ "Northwest Indiana corruption thrives in Chicago's shadow," *Chicago Tribune*, August 25, 2010.

region, have been viewed as an exceptional site of corruption, where an old-style politics of bosses and machines thrived well into the twenty-first century.

Despite the plethora of instances within this dissertation, East Chicago is not exceptional. In a Facebook live for their campaign, Scott Costello, candidate for House of Representatives (Indiana First District) and Eric Sera, candidate for Lake County Recorder, the two individuals noted that in Lake County “we’ve rearranged the furniture, moving it to new spots, but what we need is new furniture.”¹⁵ Today, as they discussed, many of the political officials came of age and rose through the party in this old style of politics rooted in patronage and the political machine. Maturing in this system led many to retain the characteristics of the political machine. Costello extended this to a national scope and the discontent with democracy felt elsewhere that facilitated the rise of Progressive Democrats in several congressional districts. The political world, that favored incumbents, the influence of money, and non-transparent procedures. This corrupting influence in politics, which individuals like Costello and Progressive Democrats felt alienated and ignored the working-class, continues to gain national attention across many communities that decry representative government as out of touch.

Despite our elected government becoming more representative of the communities that they oversee; this inclusion has not solved the gripes and complaints of previous generations. Recalling back David Montejano’s pivotal piece “On the Question of Inclusion,” which served as the introduction to *Chicano Politics and Society in the Late Twentieth Century*, the changing demographics of the United States offered insights into what Montejano claimed as “the

¹⁵ Facebook since removed. However, the theme is reprised in their joint town hall. See “Town Hall with Scott Costello & Eric Sera,” May 7, 2020. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E3MZ6eaJn2A&feature=youtu.be>

contradictions of inclusion.”¹⁶ Despite Latinas and Latinos securing elected office, they did not always represent an opportunity for progressive change. As East Chicagoans discovered, gaining a department head, or a council seat, or city controller, only tied their community to the existing structure of power. These ties are compromises made are only exacerbated as the scope of government is dialed back and enlarged to state-wide and federal branches.

Today, many Latinas and Latinos remain in public office in Lake County. Many of these elected officials are family relations to people within this project, or individuals that became more prominent since their introduction to the political arena. The nephew of the same name as Sidewalk Six and chief Pastrick surrogate, Adrian Santos, rose to City Clerk in East Chicago before being appointed by Democratic Precinct Committee to serve as the head of the North Township Board. Richard Medina, a dissenter alongside Pabey recently reentered politics, becoming the City Clerk in East Chicago. Mara Candelaria-Reardon, daughter of the city’s first Puerto Rican councilman, served as a Indiana State Representative for the 12th District. Whereas in the 1950s, aspiring politicians with Spanish surnames were found almost exclusively in the sixth district, these surnames are found across the ballot in Lake County today.

Once an outspoken critic of the Pastrick machine, now Mayor Anthony Copeland finds himself criticized for tactics that resemble the very intimidation and retaliation of his predecessor. When the East Chicago Professional Firefighter’s Local 365 endorsed John Aguilera over Copeland, in 2019, the newly reelected mayor pushed for changes to shift hours for firefighters. This change to swing shifts led the Firefighters union to express concern for the

¹⁶ David Montejano, “On the Question of Inclusion,” in *Chicano Politics and Society in the Late Twentieth Century*. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999),xxiv.

safety and health of the city's firefighters. When the city council sided with ECFD, Copeland's office sued, prompting a prolonged legal battle that concluded in March 2022.¹⁷ Residents and the firefighters framed this protracted conflict as retaliatory and criticized Copeland, a former firefighter, for the attack on the department for their endorsement of his candidate. The action represented a blatant parallel to the politics of Copeland's predecessors, who issued pink slips and terminated employment of those that opposed them. Given Copeland's work as an activist against these tactics, particularly through his organization Citizens in Action, the episode offers a bleak instance of the cyclical and corrupting nature of regional politics.

The system is not only flawed in East Chicago and Lake County. As much as officials, whether Democratic, Republican, Libertarian, or Independent, would like to isolate this as an issue unique to the region, this is not the case. According to a 2015 Gallup poll, 75% of those surveyed viewed corruption as widespread across the United States.¹⁸ Although, as regional pundits note, Lake County and East Chicago outpace Cook County for convicted politicians for corruption by a 3.5 to 1 ratio on a per capita basis, the issue of corruption resonates across the country as a fundamental issue.¹⁹ From the calls in the 2016 election season to "drain the swamp" and the allegations by both parties of corruption, residents across the country are increasingly viewing the issue as a problem.

¹⁷ "Mayor accused of retaliating against firefighters; Copeland says shift change will save money," *The Times*, December 9, 2019; "State probing East Chicago firefighter safety concerns," *The Times*, July 6, 2021; "East Chicago mayor, firefighters declare a truce in fight over work schedules," *The Times*, November 25, 2021; and International Association of Fire Fighter Local 365 et al v. City of East Chicago, Indiana et al, No. 2:2021cv00154 (N.D. Ind. 2022).

¹⁸ "75% in U.S. See Widespread Government Corruption," *Gallup*, September 19, 2015.

¹⁹ "Political corruption not limited to Chicago or Illinois," *The Times*, May 16, 2011.

Why does exploring a history of corruption matter? As evident in Lake County and across the world, the legacy and presence of corruption has a detrimental impact on voting. The region is no longer even the reliable blue stronghold of the past. In 2020, President Donald Trump secured the most votes of any Republican candidate since 1972, the last year a Republican won the county.²⁰ At 41.72%, Trump became the first Republican since George Bush in 1988 to break the threshold of forty. Trump even outperformed himself in Lake County, where he gained 37.59% of the vote in 2016. However, the Indiana Democratic Party should not be concerned with losing voters to the Republican candidate. Instead, party organizers should worry about losing potential voters to the couch. Recent studies in political science argued that corruption, or the perception of it, influences voter turnout by dissuading individuals from voting. Ray Fisman and Miriam A. Golden claimed that “Knowing that politicians are corrupt does not mobilize voters against dishonest officials: instead the study suggests that it may discourage them from taking part in politics entirely.”²¹ When forced to question why corruption endures, whether, in East Chicago, Lake County, or the nation, we must pay attention to the people who abandoned the political system.

When Joseph Maravilla and his fellow ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican veterans returned to the United States from World War II, they organized to stress their political power and partake in the city’s political arena. Whereas many in their parent’s generation did not

²⁰ “Presidential General Election Map Comparison, Indiana,” *Dave Leip’s Atlas of U.S. Elections*.

<https://uselectionatlas.org/RESULTS/comparemaps.php?year=2008&fips=18&f=1&off=0&elect=0>

²¹ Ray Fisman and Miriam A. Golden, *Corruption: What Everyone Needs to Know* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 99-101; C. J. Anderson and Y. V. Tverdova, “Corruption, Political Allegiances, and Attitudes toward Government in Contemporary Democracies,” *American Journal of Political Science* 47 (1) (2003): 93-109; and A. Chong, A. L. De La O, D. Karlan, and L. Wantchekon, “Does Corruption Information Inspire the Fight or Quash the Hope? A Field Experiment in Mexico on Voter Turnout, Choice and Participation,” *Journal of Politics* 77(1) (2015): 55-71.

participate, Maravilla and the returning veterans viewed politics as an avenue to advance and gain inclusion into the community. Within the structure of machine politics, they could not attain portions of that power and its benefits without proving that the community could contribute and become cogs to the city's Democratic machine. Through voting, the ethnic Mexican and Puerto Rican community simultaneously expressed their place within the city and showed that they could facilitate change, such as their overwhelming support for Nicosia over Jeorse, in 1963, after Jeorse targeted their neighborhood in an urban renewal project and removed Maravilla from the school board. For decades, Latinas and Latinos navigated their often-tenuous relationship with the political machine, both as staunch critics of it and defenders of it as a means to gain further benefits.

Whether or not the Latin American Veterans and their generation would support Pabey, he was a byproduct of decades of political maneuvering that preceded his election. The particular politics that Pabey, and generations of ethnic Mexicans and Puerto Ricans, immersed themselves in established a formative experience for their assimilation. As relative newcomers, these groups recognized that playing the game of machine politics would grant them access; however, this limited power came only if they brought with them people to vote and participate within the machine as loyal supporters. Appeals for good government gave way to community members arguing for ever increasing stakes in the patronage system, particularly as the manufacturing economy declined and municipal employment offered an opportunity to retain a livelihood. Although many residents still argued for accountability and transparency, a growing contingent argued for a Latino mayor, both as a change from the political machine and as some wanted, their own machine.

Building a Latino Machine reveals the decades-long pursuit of political power by ethnic Mexicans and Puerto Ricans in a city managed by a Democratic political machine. From the early experiences to politics within the steelworker's union, World War Two veterans advocated for good government as reformers. However, the community quickly realized that their advancement relied on a more willing navigation of the political machine and its corrupt tactics. This adoption of these tactics granted Latinas and Latinos access to patronage and municipal services. Although, as corruption became more visible amid deindustrialization, residents once again targeted the corrupt, political machine. The long-awaited reform from within proved illusory. In playing this game, East Chicagoans uplifted and supported the very forces that cheated the city and, at times, their community. The hope for change that a Latino mayor could bring proved misplaced. Pabey, a former insider that never completed removed himself from the political machine, offered much of the same for East Chicago. As a byproduct, the Latino machine that replaced the ethnic European one, proved only different in its racial composition. And the only ones that truly lost the political battle were the residents of East Chicago.

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