

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

tions—notably Democrat John F. Kennedy's defeat of Richard M. Nixon in 1960. The market's positive response to JFK's win, the authors reckon, was "a sigh of relief." Indeed, the placid economy of the Eisenhower years was subsequently perked up by Kennedy-proposed tax cuts.

Only once, 41 years ago, were investors (like other Americans) surprised by a widely unexpected result. "I felt like the moon, the stars and all the planets had fallen on me," said Democrat Harry S. Truman after he defeated Thomas Dewey in 1948. That stock prices fell too, the authors say, is "ringing confirmation" of their theory.

Mayor Power

"Reconstituting the Democratic Experiment: The Mayoralty and the New Democracy" by Russell D. Murphy, in *Urban Affairs Quarterly* (Sept. 1986), Center for Metropolitan Studies, Univ. of Mo., 8001 Natural Bridge Rd., St. Louis, Mo. 63121.

Democracy's institutions are often shaped by people "sure of their own rightness" but doubtful about "that of the folks next door."

So argues Murphy, a professor of government at Wesleyan University. His example is the American mayoralty, a product of the progressive hopes and conservative fears of 19th-century urban, middle-class reformers. These civic-minded members of Good Government Clubs formed the National Municipal League in 1894. They hoped to end the system of party-based "boss rule" and rigged, ward-based elections, which seemed to flourish in the absence of strong executive authority.

The League developed a "strong mayor" plan to replace the existing system, under which mayors were city council appointees. An *elected* mayor (preferably League-endorsed), the argument went, would seed "honesty, efficiency, and economy" where only corruption had grown.

Despite the reformers' fear that the cities' immigrants—"illiterate peasants freshly raked from Irish bogs, or Bohemian mines, or Italian robber nests," said Cornell University president Andrew White—might not appreciate "moral uplift," several League candidates gained office. And the first immigrant mayors (New York's William Grace, 1880–81, 1884–85; Boston's Hugh O'Brien, 1885–88) won the League's trust.

But by 1915, "strong mayor" zeal was waning. Too many reform-minded executives had been "pushed out of office," League members complained, "just as they were becoming a real force." Other mayors (e.g., Detroit's Hazen Pingree, 1890–97; Toledo's Samuel "Golden Rule" Jones, 1897–1905) had used their office chiefly to expand City Hall powers.

Today, Murphy observes, mayors occupy "an uncertain place." Although hizzoners are highly visible in major cities, their powers are limited by state governments (which typically control education, welfare, transportation, hospitals, and public housing) and by city charters which give other executive officers—some appointed, some elected—authority over finance, personnel, tax assessments, and other functions.

Thus the 19th-century city reformers' legacy—"an underlying ambivalence about democratic politics"—persists.