Four Anti-Longites: A Tentative Assessment

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The many enemies of Huey and Earl Long were a diverse collection of overrated and underrated do-gooders, reformers, opportunists, racists, officeholders and office-seekers known to historians and journalists as the "anti-Longs." Anti-Longism first coalesced around John M. Parker and Cecil Morgan in the late nineteen-twenties as an expression of moral outrage and political impotence against the offensive behavior and institutional excesses of Huey Long. Long's dictatorship, which was painfully real, survived his murder in 1935 by only a few years. After the first wave of his underlings had gone to prison or committed suicide, Louisiana politics settled into a quarter-century of Democratic bifactional rivalry between Huey's more careful successors and the younger heirs of Parker and Morgan. This article will focus on the same quarter-century of active bifactionalism, from 1940 to 1964, emphasizing the contributions, difficulties and historical significance of four principal anti-Longites—Sam Jones, Jimmie Davis, Robert Kennon and DeLesseps Morrison—but first proposing some tentative conclusions which their experiences suggest about anti-Longism generally.

These tentative conclusions are (1) The possibilities of anti-Longism serving as a distinctly different and politically viable alternative to Longism were, and remained, almost hopeless from the beginning. Huey Long thoroughly indoctrinated the mass of Louisiana voters into defining "reform" as further *expanding* the delivery and patronage services of state government rather than reducing them. As a consequence, when anti-Longites defined "reform" to include such goals as conservative spending, efficient central purchasing, civil service, and enactment of codes of ethics for public officials and employees, voter reaction was only fleetingly receptive in favorable times and hostile at other times. It is one of the stunning ironies of Louisiana's political evolution that more quantitative examples of "reform" as defined by the anti-Longites were enacted during the first eight

years of the Edwin Edwards administration than during the combined sixteen years that Jones, Davis and Kennon served as "reform" governors of the state.[1]

(2) What most voters continued to want during the bifactional period were more schools and school lunches, pensions, jobs, charity hospitals, state contracts and subsidies. Cleveland Dear, the all-but-forgotten anti-Longite opponent of Richard Leche in 1936, was among the first of his breed to realize that if Huey's methods ought to be opposed, his "good works" could not. From then until the end of bifactional politics, anti-Longites adopted a "me-too" approach to continuing and expanding state government services to Louisiana's citizens. While parroting the Longite appeal was necessary to attract a mass following to anti-Longism, the result of both sides singing the same tune produces a second tentative assessment—that by choice and necessity the broader anti-Longite appeal soon became almost indistinguishable from that of Longism. Of the four anti-Longites, Jimmie Davis went so far in lavishing favors on popular and special interests during his first administration that he emerged as a Longite in reformer's clothing, and was so viewed by many voters for the rest of his political career. (Perhaps, indeed, a less visible but more substantial reason why Davis became governor a second time in 1960 instead of DeLesseps Morrison was because people well knew that, between the two of them, Davis was the *less* inclined to "reform" anything, including Louisiana's traditional racially segregated society, which was in jeopardy at the time.) By 1969, differences between what remained of the two factions had become so blurred in reality that a perceptive Baton Rouge attorney was moved to observe that "Reform in Louisiana consists of turning the fat hogs out and letting the lean hogs in."[2]

(3) Possessing a popularly unappealing agenda of objectives, which forced them to imitate their Longite opponents to attract a following, bifactional anti-Longites were, even beyond these formidable liabilities, their own worst enemies. To see anti-Longism as a disciplined, organized and continuous political movement requires the viewer to dismiss considerable evidence that such was not the case. Although better organized and more successful, especially during the 1940s, than previous Louisiana "reform" forces, anti-Longism was at all times a mood rather than a movement, and there never existed a continuous anti-Longite organization. While individuals might vote or work for more than one anti-Longite contender,

[1]Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana, Inc. (PAR), "Major Reforms Based on PAR Research," Fact Sheet (Baton Rouge, La., September 1977).

[2]Quoted in *Fortune*, August 1, 1969, 137.

each contender had his own organization, and there were as many different and competing anti-Longite organizations as there were anti-Longite contenders between 1940 and 1964. While Jimmie Davis, for example, inherited the Sam Jones organization in 1944, Jones had to start again from scratch four years later because Davis had permitted the Jones organization to dissolve. The pathetic Morrison had to create new statewide organizations for each of his three unsuccessful gubernatorial campaigns because most of his preceding supporters did not want to waste their time again supporting a "loser."

Within the anti-Longite camp, in addition, there was always considerably more intramural opposition and backstabbing than occurred among the Longites, in itself the most obvious evidence that a structured anti-Longite leadership and organization did not exist. Jones was never more than lukewarm toward Kennon after the latter opposed him in 1948, calling Jones a "machine politician." While initially "leaning toward Kennon" in the 1952 governor's race, Morrison instead backed New Orleans Congressman Hale Boggs in the first primary. After Boggs was eliminated, Morrison endorsed Kennon in the second primary. When it came time to return the favor in 1956, a resentful Kennon forsook the New Orleans mayor to support an automobile dealer instead.[3] Nor were Kennon and Morrison any friendlier when they finally opposed each other in 1963. Although Davis endeavored to remain on good terms with most of his fellow anti-Longites, who jealously recognized a winner when they saw one, Morrison absolutely detested Davis, who had the gall to oppose Morrison in 1960—and defeat him.

Members of the Longite opposition occasionally crossed the factional line to muddy further the anti-Longite pond. While he may have screamed earlier that Davis was a "thief and a liar and he has DIABETES!," and that "Jimmie Davis loves money like a hog loves slop," incumbent Governor Earl Long endorsed Davis in his second primary contest with Morrison, about whom "Uncle Earl" had a mixture of feelings ranging from contempt to pity. (Nor should we forget that the ill-used and possibly set-up Longite gubernatorial candidate of 1952, Judge Carlos Spaht, eventually defected to work for Morrison in 1960).

All of the foregoing leads to a third tentative assessment of anti-Longism, that its leaders too rashly and egotistically dissipated what meager cohesion and credibility they could have had by attacking and betraying each other as vigorously as they fought the Longites. When he was at his best and when

[3]Edward F. Haas, *DeLesseps S. Morrison and the Image of Reform: New Orleans Politics, 1946-1961* (Baton Rouge, 1974), p. 150.

times were propitious, the resourceful and decisive Earl Long did not have to arise too early in the morning to get a head start on the likes of Jones, Davis, Kennon and, especially, Morrison. Burdened throughout the period by voter indifference to their core program, and forced to masquerade as respectable "Country Club" Longites, Louisiana's bifactional anti-Longites permitted their own conflicting and conceited aspirations further to subvert and discredit the common cause.

Anti-Longism remains historically significant because of its frustrated and all-too-self-destructive inability to overcome a formidable challenge—imposing enough of the reforms that anti-Longism wanted on a state that did not really want anti-Longite reforms.

The initial coming to power of anti-Longite "reform" forces in 1940, behind the successful candidacy of Sam Jones, unquestionably would not have occurred when it did had Longism not obligingly committed temporary "hari-kari" in the notorious 1939 "scandals." Without them, a jovial "Dick" Leche would have likely shaken hands with a Longite successor on the 1940 inaugural platform. Even after the "scandals," Jones's victory was a difficult and narrow one as thousands of loyal Longites statewide showed their indifference to "good government" by supporting the future nemesis of "reformers" during the bifactional period, Earl K. Long.

Huey's younger brother in fact led Jones in the first Democratic primary, but was denied victory when a maverick Longite contender, James A. Noe, endorsed Jones in the second primary, producing a Jones victory instead by the slender margin of 51.8 percent of the total vote to Long's 48.2 percent. Political scientist Allan P. Sindler has argued that Noe's personal endorsement of Jones was meaningless, that Noe's followers would have voted for Jones anyway because they were angry at the Longites for betraying Huey in the "scandals" and were attracted to Jones because his "pappy" had "voted for Huey." Whether *we* believe that Noe's endorsement was vital to Jones is unimportant; what is significant is that *Jones* in 1940 believed he could not defeat Earl Long without it, and "bought" Noe as a necessary price to pay for bringing "good government" to power in Louisiana.

The fact is that Jones and Noe had made a deal in which Jones (or his managers) pledged to pay Noe's campaign expenses and divide state patronage equally with Noe's followers in return for Noe's endorsement. At the outset, therefore, anti-Longism's first opportunity to govern the state resulted from vices and divisions within the Longite opposition, and from

Jones's willingness to capitalize on the latter, and not because of any mass mandate in Louisiana for "reform."[4]

The Jones administration did give Louisiana several reforms, as did the Kennon administration more expansively a decade later, the only two "reform" administrations during the bifactional period that deserve the name. Jones did away with the Longite "deduct" racket which funneled public employee payroll deductions into the faction's slush fund. He also sponsored enactment of classified civil service, both for the state and for the city of New Orleans; supported repeal of the Longite dictatorial apparatus through which parish and municipal governments had become state dependencies; and was the first governor to attempt a reorganization and consolidation of state agencies in the interests of economy and efficiency. None of this legislation was easily obtainable—a large and well-led block of Longite legislators worked steadily to inhibit and dilute Jones's program.[5] (Civil service was an idea ahead of its time in Louisiana. Governor Long's administration repealed it in 1948, making it necessary for "reformer" Kennon to re-create civil service by constitutionalization four years later.)

Although some of Jones's top aides would later condescendingly refer to Louisiana's average citizens as the "little people" and to rural Louisianians especially as "peasants," Jones did not forget them during his administration.[6] Old-age pensions were increased, and more generous appropriations were provided for schools, highways and welfare. (The most "Longite" legacy of the Jones years was the virtually unassailable three-dollar annual auto license tag fee, to which the Jones forces gave constitutional protection.)

When Jones again sought the governorship in 1948, following the free-spending administration of "Singin' Jimmie" Davis, Louisiana voters had forgotten Jones's modest benefits for the "little people" and remembered only Jones the aloof and abstract "reformer," an impression Jones himself suicidally reinforced by delivering cost-accounting and moralistic lectures to

[4]Dave McGuire to Mayor Morrison, March 7, 1951, Scott Wilson Papers, Manuscripts Section, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University; Jerry Purvis Sanson, "Sam Jones, Jimmie Noe, and the Reform Alliance of 1940-1942," *Louisiana History*, XXVII (1986); Jerry P. Sanson, "A History of Louisiana, 1939-1945" (Ph. D. dissertation, Louisiana State University, 1984), pp. 34-95; Allan P. Sindler, *Huey Long's Louisiana: State Politics, 1920-1952* (Baltimore, 1956), pp. 140-153.

[5]Sanson, "History of Louisiana," pp. 96-186; Sindler, *Huey Long's Louisiana*, pp. 154-180.

[6]Dave McGuire to Mayor Morrison, December 11, 1947; Dave McGuire to Mrs. Sam H. Jones, December 16, 1947; Dave McGuire to Hodding Carter, December 4, 1947, in Scott Wilson Papers.

the masses. Earl Long, who promised "pie in the sky to all," took a commanding lead in the first primary. Jones's own staff saw the tidal wave approaching. "I do not advocate wild irresponsible promises," advised Jones's campaign manager, "but I do believe that a great many of the people who voted for Long were voting for *tangible things* which were offered them. What they got from us were *well phrased* but *general plans* for carrying on *good government*. . . ." (My emphases)[7]

Not until neo-Longite Edwin Edwards buried incumbent Republican Governor David Treen in 1983 would a spokesman for "good government" suffer a greater public repudiation than Earl Long inflicted on Jones in the 1948 second primary. The magnitude of Long's victory, moreover, emphatically demonstrated the ongoing popularity of Longite "reform" while simultaneously proving the political vulnerability of "reform" as defined by Jones and his fellow anti-Longites. Steamrollered under a 66 percent landslide for his opponent, Jones never again ran for public office, although he chaired a couple of gubernatorial commissions in later years and took on the role of adviser and comforter to dejected anti-Longites in the future.

One of those who performed effective yeoman service in burying Sam Jones for good was another anti-Longite, Robert F. Kennon, whose 1948 candidacy cut heavily into Jones's potential vote in the first primary. It cannot be proven that Jones would have won without Kennon in the race, but certainly the "reform" forces would have done much better had Jones been the only major "reform" contender. A political "boy wonder" from North Louisiana's Webster Parish, the forty-six-year-old Kennon had played varsity football for LSU, and served as mayor of Minden, district attorney, World War II army colonel, judge of the state court of appeals and state supreme court justice. A convivial joiner and well-mannered gentleman, Kennon was not a quitter. After he too had suffered defeat in 1948, Kennon continued, as described by one of his opponents' wives, to work "night and day" building up his following "from the security of the bench" in preparation for the 1952 campaign.[8]

Professor Sindler concludes that Judge Kennon won second place in the 1952 first primary, and with it the endorsements of the also-rans, because Kennon was the "most liberal anti-Long not involved in the welter of campaign accusations" that flew thick and fast the first time around.

[7]Sindler, *Huey Long's Louisiana*, p. 200; Dave McGuire to Sam Jones, Roland Cocreham, G. T. Owen, January 23, 1948, in Scott Wilson Papers.

[8]Mrs. Hale (Lindy) Boggs to Chep (Morrison), July 25, 1951, in Scott Wilson Papers.

Kennon's opponent in the run-off was another judge, Baton Rougean Carlos G. Spaht, a complete unknown statewide, who reminds one of Lewis Morgan, a previous Longite candidate for governor in 1944, who did not possess the proper last name either. Kennon easily defeated Spaht as voters "rebuffed " Longism "by a large majority . . . for the first time since 1928." Or so it may have appeared.[9]

One of the 1952 losers was William J. "Bill" Dodd—"Big, bad Bill" as Earl described him—who finished fifth in the first primary with 11.9 percent of the vote. At the time, Dodd was lieutenant governor, Earl's 1948 running mate, and an apparently more logical Longite heir-apparent than the urbane, inexperienced, and politically untested Spaht. But Dodd, according to Sindler, had "failed to secure Earl's blessing . . . for reasons never divulged."[10] Several years ago, Dodd himself finally "divulged" Long's reasons for passing him over in 1952 to a conference of historians in Natchitoches.

Long had planned to become governor again in 1956, and did not want a "strong Longite" (that is, Bill Dodd) preceding him because comparisons of the two might be unfavorable to Earl, endangering both Long's election and even his control of the faction. Long had therefore concluded that his own best interests would be served in 1952 by electing an *opposition* governor (!) who would pose no factional rivalry to Earl and whose administration could be jeered at and pooh-poohed throughout his four years in office. This strategy required a sacrificial lamb rather than Bill Dodd as the 1952 Longite designee, and the unimpressive Spaht, a latter-day Lewis Morgan, filled the bill perfectly.

Those who would dismiss as fantastic this admittedly self-defensive account of Dodd's should remember that while Long did campaign energetically for Spaht, he also at the same time talked privately with friend and foe alike of "Kennon's great strength."[11] Spaht, moreover, played no prominent role in Long's 1955 campaign and had gone over to Morrison by 1960. Finally, it has been suggested more recently that Edwin Edwards connived behind the scenes in 1979 to elect David Treen, for motives similar to those ascribed by Dodd to Earl.[12]

[9]Sindler, *Huey Long's Louisiana*, pp. 238, 241.

[10]*Ibid.*, p. 234.

[11]Mrs. Hale (Lindy) Boggs to Chep (Morrison), July 25, 1951, in Scott Wilson Papers.

[12]John Maginnis, *The Last Hayride* (Baton Rouge, 1984), pp. 40-41.

Whether, like Jones before him, Kennon became governor largely because many voters were again temporarily averse to Longism, or because he was the innocent beneficiary of Long's covert deceptions, the Minden judge gave Louisiana its strongest, and last, "reform" administration during the bifactional period. Heading the list of Kennon's' accomplishments were the reenactment and constitutionalization of civil service, vigorous prosecution of gamblers and slot machine operators (a more popular crusade in northern than in southern parishes), installation of voting machines in all state precincts, amending the constitution to require a two-thirds vote in the legislature for enactment of new taxes or increases in existing levies, and a comprehensive reform of the state prison system, by 1952 the nation's worst in the opinion of experts. In the footsteps of his "reform" predecessor and 1948 rival, Sam Jones, Kennon also backed extensive additions to the highway system (including the Lake Pontchartrain causeway) and was even more generous to education and welfare interests.

But Kennon, again like Jones, was too good a "reformer" for his own political good down the road. While Jones subsequently self-destructed by talking above the heads of the "little people," Kennon ensured his downfall by failing to place enough "little people," including his own, on the public payroll. Kennon believed, as had Governor John M. Parker, that businessmen and experts rather than professional politicians should run government. The Minden governor created several "blue ribbon" boards to administer the major areas of state spending, and staffed them with "independent" and able appointees. This was "good government" at its best, but conventional Louisiana politics at its worst—not only were opposition Longites denied any access to the trough, but many of Kennon's own ambitious supporters remained grumbling on the sidelines while non-political "goo-goos" undeservedly occupied the seats of authority. By 1955, Kennon's organization, for what it was worth, was terminally ill. Down in New Orleans, Mayor DeLesseps Morrison began receiving dozens of letters from angry Kennonites and even patronage-starved Longites, all angling for some favorable commitment from Morrison if he should become governor. (Quite possibly, these letters may have been a major reason why Morrison chose to seek the office—he thought they represented a solid constituency for him beyond the Crescent City.) As it developed, Fred Preaus, Kennon's protégé in the 1955 race, ran a poor third (behind Long and Morrison). It took Kennon eight years to reassemble a competitive statewide following, but even then it was not sufficient. In what became the last of Louisiana's legitimate bifactional elections, the most successful of the state's "reform" anti-Longite governors ran a weak fourth in a field of five contenders in 1963. By then, however, changing times, new issues, and emerging personalities had overtaken "Bob" Kennon and his solid record of anti-

Longite reform. For many years thereafter, Kennon practiced law in Baton Rouge with distinction and quiet dignity, remaining able to ascend the stairs in his law office two-at-a-time long after he reached age 70.

On October 7, 1955, gubernatorial candidate DeLesseps Morrison wrote to his fellow anti-Longite, former Governor Jimmie Davis. Because Davis had publicly announced that he would not be a candidate that year, Morrison took the occasion to solicit Davis's support. "Jimmie, I don't have to tell you," Morrison unctuously began, how "you could do us a lot of good and give us a terrific boost if you could see your way clear to give us your backing and support." "And," Morrison effusively continued, "I want you to know that . . . I would insist on reciprocating when our turn would come to do something for you." Four years later, Davis did seek the governorship, but so again did Morrison, in the second of his three futile efforts. This time, Morrison wrote a petulant letter to Sam Jones, by then anti-Longism's senior sage and principal arbiter.

"You know, Sam," an angry and frustrated Morrison began,

> I've had the feeling that you were quietly favoring Jimmie Davis (and he, of course, has used this in contacting Jones people). And yet, I cannot see why you, down in your heart, could favor a man like Davis. You know he has no ability, no courage, and was really and truly 'a joke' when it came to hard energetic work in behalf of the State. Jimmie has also never pitched in to help the cause of good government in the State, as you and I have done repeatedly. He's never fought the Longs, and frankly, in the 12 years he's been an ex-governor he's only been interested in Davis. . . .[13]

Late in Sam Jones's term, several prominent anti-Longites, including Jones himself, had approached Public Service Commission member Jimmie Davis with the suggestion that Davis should be the "reform" candidate for governor in 1944. By choosing Davis, rather than one of themselves, to head the reform ticket, these gentlemen confessed to "reform" anti-Longism's most sustained inner weakness, particularly in 1944—the reality that they themselves and what they really represented were dangerously unpopular in Louisiana, and needed what our generation would define as a "charismatic figure" to save them from Longism at the ballot box. For

[13]DeLesseps Morrison to Jimmie H. Davis, October 7, 1955; DeLesseps Morrison to Sam H. Jones, May 25, 1959, in DeLesseps Morrison Gubernatorial Papers, Manuscripts Section, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University.

that purpose Davis was admirably well suited. With just enough political experience on his record to be accepted as more than he really was, a professional entertainer, Davis was a handsome, even-tempered, mellow-voiced singer and composer of country and gospel music, a certain "winner" among Louisiana's mass electorate, most of whom were rural dwellers or recent rural dwellers. If the Prince of Darkness, Earl Long, was a Protestant North Louisianian, so was Davis. If Earl attracted and entertained voters by crude, accusatory whoopings-and-hollerings, Davis could attract, soothe, and seduce them with his wonderful singing.

And so he did, in 1944 and again in 1959-60, winning each time. During Davis's first term as governor, wartime prosperity continued to produce embarrassing revenue surpluses, which the legislature generously passed on to clamoring popular and special interests. Indeed, by 1948, Davis had presided, if somewhat loosely and sheepishly, over the greatest orgy of public spending in the state's history. And, while Davis preserved intact the reform statutes of the Jones administration, as he was supposed to do, he did not enact any real reforms of his own. Professor Sindler accurately notes that "bifactionalism became fuzzier, not sharper" while Davis was governor.[14] Bifactionalism remained fuzzy whenever Davis was politically active for the obvious reason that Davis was really a Longite in "reformer's" clothing, and voters knew it. If Davis was in fact the only "reformer" to serve two terms, it was because he was the only one of the three who was never burdened with either a reputation for advocating reform legislation or a record of having enacted any. Davis was everyone's second choice, but for entirely different reasons. For "reform" leaders and voters, he was always an acceptable alternative—singing, spending and all—to any Longite administration. For Longite voters and some Longite leaders (including Earl himself in 1960), Davis was the next-best governor if Earl was unavailable. During the bifactional period, Davis could not, and did not, lose. Morrison, his rival and antithesis, could not, and did not, win during the same years. The mayor's anger in his 1959 letter to Jones is understandable, for Morrison must have sensed, down in *his* heart, that he, too, was headed for defeat at the hands of "Singin' Jimmie."

Today, Davis is the only one of the four who survives. From time to time he comes to chat, poke gentle fun at current political leaders, and sing "You Are My Sunshine" before joint sessions of the legislature, most of whose members were not yet born when Davis first took the gubernatorial oath in 1944. "Singin' Jimmie" is invariably a hit, and leaves the house chamber to standing ovations delivered by people who have not the vaguest

[14]Sindler, *Huey Long's Louisiana*, p. 198.

idea of what Davis really stood for as a gubernatorial candidate, and could not care less. But then, neither did many people who had voted for him.

DeLesseps Morrison began his public career as an anti-Longite "reform" legislator under Sam Jones, and retained a genuine, if superficial commitment to "good government" for the remainder of his life. He hated Longism generally and Earl Long personally; the first because Morrison was really an uptown, silk-stocking conservative rather than a "liberal" in the Longite tax-and-spend meaning of the term. He hated Earl because he and Huey's brother were simply galaxies apart, culturally, mentally and philosophically. It has been said that Morrison's three consecutive gubernatorial campaigns paved the way for the eventual success of a Morrison "look-alike," urbane, Cajun Edwin Edwards, who, as was Morrison, is at least a nominal Roman Catholic. Edwards was in fact a Morrison district campaign director in 1959-60. But there the similarity ends, because Edwards apparently had the political wisdom to rise in state politics as a neo-Longite rather than as a "reformer," probably for the pragmatic reason that "reformer" Morrison never won, which may have convinced Edwards to switch sides.

It is generally known that Morrison's greatest liabilities as a gubernatorial candidate were his religion, his connection with New Orleans, his egotistical ingratitude toward key aides, and his inability to convince enough voters that he was actually a racial segregationist at a time when being, or seeming to be, a segregationist was a requirement for election to the governorship.[15] These handicaps were devastating, but were by no means the only components of Morrison's greater credibility problem with the state's voters. He was additionally perceived as a "loser" even before his name appeared on the ballot; average citizens found his campaign promises heavy on promotionalism and light on specifics (in this respect Morrison too closely followed the unwise 1948 example of his mentor, Sam Jones); and he could not hold an organization together outside New Orleans. In later years, Sam Jones described Davis in 1944 as a "good campaigner" if "not a good candidate."[16] As a gubernatorial contender, Morrison was neither a good candidate nor a good enough campaigner. His sad role in Louisiana bifactional politics was to serve as a useful whipping boy and second banana to three more appealing rivals who ascended to the governorship over Morrison's bleeding remains—Earl Long and Jimmie Davis, the greatest

[15]Glen Jeansonne, "DeLesseps Morrison: Why He Couldn't Become Governor of Louisiana," *Louisiana History*, XIV (1973); Haas, *Morrison*,pp. 244, 283.

[16]Sanson, "History of Louisiana," p. 188.

vote-getters of the era, and John McKeithen, who began a new era in Louisiana politics in the process of finishing Morrison off.

The first of Morrison's many shocks and disappointments in seeking the governorship may have hit him in late July of 1955, when a letter arrived from Governor Kennon, whose support Morrison had recently requested for that year's contest. Kennon was brief and to the point: "Despite the warm friendship many people over the state have for you, the feeling is ten to one that you are personally not the man to make the race." Morrison's response was swift and lengthy, arguing that a recent poll showed the mayor in a competitive position among all contenders.[17] (Morrison was a sucker for polls throughout his quests for the governorship, and believed those in his favor entirely too eagerly.) Kennon backed someone else, Morrison ran nonetheless, and lost to Earl Long in the first primary. Four years later, Morrison approached Norman Bauer, a 14-carat "reform" anti-Longite who had been house speaker under Governor Jones. Morrison may have assumed that he could surely count on the support and encouragement of Bauer, a fellow true-believer. Bauer's reply was friendly, but chillingly frank:

> I was in Baton Rouge Wednesday and ran into a former state senator who strongly supported you four years ago. He is now talking 'Jimmy Davis' solely on the theory that Davis would have a better chance of winning than you would . . . Your outstanding attributes are readily admitted; it is simply a matter of not wanting to be associated with a loser.[18]

If some of Jones's advisers had spoken of Louisiana's average citizens as "little people" and "peasants," the favorite expression for ordinary voters among Morrison's followers was "the gimmes" (as in "gimme this" or "gimme that"). A Morrison fan from Lafourche Parish advised the mayor in 1959,

> In your speeches you should emphasize more the gimme stuff. Talk about helping the aged, poor, etc. There is too much of a tendency to associate you with business, progress, etc.; and the poor man may feel that he is not going to get his ton of flesh.

[17]Robert F. Kennon to the Honorable DeLesseps S. Morrison, July 19, 1955; Morrison to Kennon, July 22, 1955, in Morrison Gubernatorial Papers.

[18]Norman Bauer to DeLesseps S. Morrison, January 17, 1959, Morrison Gubernatorial Papers.

During the same campaign a personal friend from New Orleans reminded Morrison that perhaps too many Louisianians were "'gimmes'—but they vote." Successful anti-Longites—Jones, Kennon and, of course, Davis—knew they had to cater to the "gimme" vote in order to win, and did so to one degree or another. Morrison detested making specific promises to "gimmes" because he would rather emphasize his own best talents, promotionalism and salesmanship, and because "gimmeism" lowered him to the level of the two rivals he most disliked, Earl Long and Jimmie Davis. As a consequence, his advisers had to hound the mayor repeatedly to include specifics in his campaign addresses. "Stress sound fiscal management," urged his 1959 chief of staff, "along with pensions, teachers' pay, hot lunch programs, [and] interest in education." Despite all this coaching, Morrison seemed continually to choke whenever he promised benefits to common citizens. Many voters noticed this, and concluded that the mayor was not their man. A Lake Charles supporter of one of Morrison's 1959 opponents received a Morrison solicitation and returned it with a note at the bottom declaring, "I don't care who is the best man . . . I don't care what he will do for the state. I want to know what he will do for me." The man was a supporter of—Jimmie Davis.[19]

More than any other anti-Longite, Morrison suffered constant organizational problems. As he continued to lose, followers continued to desert him—often for Davis, which infuriated the mayor. Those who remained loyal, or who came aboard as idealistic rookies with each successive campaign, were sometimes incompetent. They botched schedules, placing Morrison in several places at the same time; they performed inadequate legwork, failing to mail enough literature or solicit over the telephone; or they arranged dinner appearances for Morrison, only to have no one else show up. Morrison himself was sometimes a sloppy and indifferent campaigner—while visiting North Louisiana in 1963, for example, he told an audience in Ruston how nice it was to be back in Minden.[20] After a crucial organization meeting in Shreveport turned into a painful fiasco, Morrison's public relations firm quit on him, informing the mayor by letter that "as far as we can determine, it appears as though this campaign is going to be a duplicate of your campaigns of 1956 and 1960, neither of which [has] yet appeared in any standard text on political

[19]Memo from Major Roland B. Howell, undated 1959; Jackie to Chep (Morrison), undated 1959; Dave McGuire to Mayor Morrison, December 15, 1959; Morrison to L. W. Farrar (and returned), December 29, 1959, Morrison Gubernatorial Papers.

[20]Confidential communication.

science."[21] Just as William Jennings Bryan should have stayed in Nebraska, DeLesseps Morrison should have remained in New Orleans. Running for the governorship of Louisiana was for Morrison on the same level as selling two cars at the same time may have been for Fred Preaus—"too big a deal for him to handle," as Earl Long described the latter prospect.

Between 1940 and 1964 Governors Jones and Kennon were the most successful anti-Longite "reformers" but were less successful candidates once their records as "reformers" had been established. Governor Davis was the most successful anti-Longite candidate during the bifactional period because he sang well and appealed to enough "gimmes" among the Longite majority to maintain his own personal winning coalition. Mayor Morrison was perhaps the most dedicated anti-Longite of the four, but that fact, combined with his religion, New Orleans residence, being tarred as an integrationist, and organizational problems, brought about his undoing. Finally, anti-Longite "reform" overall could enact only a limited and fragmented program because consistent "reform" voters remained in the minority statewide.

[21] Fetty/Hundermer/Morgan, Inc. to DeLesseps S. Morrison, June 14, 1963, Morrison Gubernatorial Papers.