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About The Black Book by Adlai III (from a speech at the Illinois Historical Association, Galena)

The Black Book records American history as my family knew it over five generations. It begins in Central Illinois with Abraham Lincoln and his sponsor, great great grandfather Jesse Fell and ends in modern China where I have been active since 1975.

Great grandfather Adlai I collected stories, aphorisms, humor, wise sayings - bits of wit and wisdom - on place cards, napkins, whatever was at hand and stuffed them in a binder which expanded over the generations. He may have been inspired by Lincoln's similar habit when speech animated life in America. This binder became known as the black book. As our universe expanded with America's and word of the black book spread, contributions came in from friends and supporters the world over.

The black book was organized from time to time for ready access. It was a source of material for our speeches. It did more for the speeches of Adlai I and II than for Adlai III. Mike Royko, of the Chicago Sun Times, said I had all the "oratorical fire of an algebra teacher"; my speeches "made the blood run tepid."

Undaunted, I have organized the black book for publication, supplementing it with other family archives and sources, my own experience in more than 80 countries since war torn London of 1945. The Black Book's perspective is from on the ground - no ivory tower. It is history as we experienced it over five generations and contrasts America then and now, drawing lessons from the past for the future. I closed The Black Book in early 2008; it was becoming an endless exercise.

Great grandfather Adlai I, then a student and later Vice President of the United States, records great, great grand father Jesse Fell propose to Senator Stephen A Douglas "joint discussions" of slavery in the territories, the transcendent issue of 1854, with a lawyer legislator named Abraham Lincoln. He records the derisive response and later the "cordial" conversation which led to the seven debates of three hours each. They drew people by the thousands on horseback, wagon and by foot to their politics. As Fell planned, they also drew Lincoln to the nation's attention. Fell then persuaded Lincoln to write an autobiographical sketch for his use in promoting Lincoln for President. Addressed to Fell in 1859, it begins, "There is not much of it, for the reason, I suppose, that there is not much of me. If anything is to be made out of it, I wish it to be modest and not go beyond the materials." Lincoln then describes his humble origins. This sublime document is recorded in The Black Book. Fell used it for its purpose.

The 1860 Illinois Republican Convention charged Fell and his young partner, David Davis, with organizing its delegation to the national convention for Lincoln. That convention at the hastily constructed Wigwam temporarily increased the population of Chicago by 40%. It was our first Republican Convention - and last. Lincoln and all the great presidents during the span of The Black Book were nominated by conventions of party leaders - men (and they were mostly men) with some knowledge of the issues, the demands of public office and the qualifications of the

candidates - and, yes, with some knowledge of the earthier mechanics of politics. But there might never have been Abraham Lincoln, the President without Jesse Fell, the citizen.

Harold Sinclair in *Years of Growth* describes Fell. A lawyer, he became wealthy speculating in land and gave all his wealth to his community. He founded towns, the first public university beyond the Appalachians (Illinois State University), orphanages, built parks and planted trees. He owned the *Bloomington Daily Pantagraph*, its name signifying something of first amendment obligations and there on the unbroken prairies of central Illinois, some knowledge of Greek classics. Every community had its newspaper, and every newspaper had its community. Today the *Pantagraph* is a small cog in the wheels of a large and troubled media empire. Newspapers are dying - and news.

In *The Black Book* service to country and community was the welcome obligation of all Americans. Private business was a public trust. The pursuit of wealth for its own sake was a matter of indifference. Before patriotism erupted on the lapels of politicians, it was “the tranquil, steady dedication of a lifetime.”

The founders were creatures of the enlightenment conditioned by centuries of religious and dynastic wars in Europe, the intolerance of Calvinism in New England. They had read their Locke, Montesquieu and Voltaire. At the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in 1787, they locked the doors, pledged one another to secrecy and established a representative, secular democracy with a limited franchise made universal over time. This democracy was reformed over the years, usually in the name of more democracy. Senators would be elected directly. Primary elections, the referendum and initiative followed.

A paradox develops in *The Black Book*. More democracy could make democracy less democratic, less accountable. The quality of American governance declined even as the complexities of governance mounted in a dynamic, interdependent, violent, nuclear world - where “peace was a condition of human survival.” In our time, America, great creditor and producer to the world became the great debtor and consumer to the world. Not so democratic China became the creditor and producer.

Adlai I said of Governor Richard Oglesby in the 1860's that he “stood in the front ranks of orators when slavery, rebellion, war and reconstruction were the issues, but when the once vital issues were relegated to history and succeeded by tariff, budgetary and other every day issues, he was greatly hampered. Othello's occupation was gone. Cold facts, statistics, figures running up into the millions, gave little opportunity for the play of his wonderful imagination.” In a speech, Oglesby charged, “These Democrats undertake to discuss the financial question. They oughtn't to do that. The Lord's truth is it is about all we Republicans can do to understand the question.”

In the new America, the big banks help them all understand it. The financial services industry spent \$3 ½ billion in 2009 to help Members of Congress understand it. Some 70 former Members make between one and three million dollars a year each helping them understand it. Former Congressional staffers multiply their incomes by leaving Congress to help Members understand it. The health care industry is not far behind. Even foreign governments lobby in the new politics. That was unthinkable in my time. *The Black Book* does not record former

Members lobbying. It records a revolving door between public and private sectors. Adlai II, like many other good citizens, moved back and forth between their professions and the government. Abuse of confidences and relationships gained in the government was rare outside it. Each side benefitted from the free flow of talent and ideas and experience. Now the revolving door is regulated in a vain attempt to prevent abuse.

The Black Book records a recurring social Darwinian, laissez faire economics of the rich industrial, creditor class in the north and the slave owning class in the south. It had no place for the social compact and Lincoln's union - government "for" as well as of and by the people. Lincoln was a Whig, a believer in a strong central government. Union required hope and opportunity for all. The Black Book records a life cycle of nations and empires. Late in the cycle they out source the production of tradeable goods and services, development of industries and real wealth to countries early in the cycle, while retaining the management of wealth which becomes separated from the ownership of wealth. The conflicts follow. This financialization of economies has been associated with militarism and attempt to secure wealth and empire by force.

The Black Book becomes a metaphor for a politics always idealized, but at times realized. It records bursts of political energy and idealism. The first gilded age was followed by muckrakers, Populists and Progressives. Democrats paraded under banners of a New Freedom, New Deal, Fair Deal, New Frontier and Great Society. America responded to challenge. That was the test of nations depicted in Arnold Toynbee's massive Study of History which I read during a long, cold winter in Korea when America's wars were still waged by the citizen soldier.

I was a 17 year old sergeant at arms at the 1948 Democratic Convention stationed beneath the rostrum and charged with maintaining order. (That was security in those days!) I remember a young unknown Mayor of Minneapolis and candidate for the U.S. Senate gain recognition and challenge that hot, smoke filled room full of sweaty politicians to do their duty - and adopt a strong civil rights plank. Conventions debated transcendent issues. Those delegates rose to Hubert Humphrey's challenge. They adopted a strong civil rights plank and drove a large part of the south out of the Democratic party. (Hubert Humphrey was my Senate seat mate and junior in 1971).

Harry Truman was nominated for President and cousin, Senator Alben Barkley, for Vice President. It was a hopeless year for the Democrats. They had been in power since 1933. Republicans were charging a "mess" in Washington. It was time for a change.

In Illinois, Democratic Party leaders gathered behind closed doors and slated a former New Deal bureaucrat, senior official in the Roosevelt and Truman Administrations during World War II and its aftermath, a diplomat and architect of the United Nations for Governor in isolationist mid America. For the U.S. Senate they slated an eminent professor of economics at the University of Chicago, a reform Chicago alderman (an oxymoron). Adlai Stevenson and Paul Douglas were candidates of the regular Democratic organization. Their nominations cost them nothing. Primary elections were formalities in Illinois well into my time. Party organization and loyalties were strong.

Each headed a caravan. I was the driver for my father. They barnstormed from factory gate to factory gate, from county square to county fair, pressing the flesh and flailing away at the corrupt administration of Republican Governor Dwight Green in Springfield, the “do nothing” Republican Congress in Washington and “the flesh, the devil and all the other enemies of the Democratic Party.” (Quoting the Reverend Peter Cartwright at the Illinois Democratic convention of 1860.) At night in Chicago ward meetings they exhorted the precinct captains to get everyone registered and out to vote the straight Democratic ticket. And that’s the way it was - the straight Democratic ticket - well into my time.

In *The Black Book*, a little boy’s prayer in an Irish ward began, “Our father who art in heaven, O’Halloran be thy name.” O’Halloran was the ward committeeman and probably on a public payroll. Immigrants to the big cities found refuge in the settlement house, the church and the regular Democratic organization.

Adlai II won by the largest plurality in the history of Illinois and with Douglas helped carry Harry Truman to a narrow victory in the country. If it had not been for the straight Democratic ticket, Thomas Dewey might have been elected President of the United States. Adlai II’s campaign cost \$157,000.

The Governor elect recruited highly qualified professionals to serve in his administration. They did not bring the endorsements of campaign contributors or party leaders. They did not “pay to play”, they sacrificed to serve. Richard J. Daley may have been something of an exception, bearing the endorsement of the Cook County Democratic Chairman. He served capably as Director of the Department of Revenue and went on to become the legendary Mayor and “boss” of Chicago. Most of the others went on to serve with distinction in the New Frontier of John F. Kennedy and the Great Society of Lyndon Johnson. Not one went on to become a lobbyist - or a convict. Since then three Illinois governors have gone to jail - already.

Adlai II reformed Illinois state government. Blocked in the legislature he appealed to the people in weekly radio broadcasts, explaining once that “cleanliness is next to godliness, except in the Illinois legislature where it is next to impossible.” Of course, it helped to be able to replace 30,000 Republicans with good Democrats on the state payroll. One assured him he had been a life long Democrat ever since he got his state job.

30,000 replacements was something of a come down in my family. As First Assistant Postmaster General in Grover Cleveland’s first administration, Adlai I replaced 40,000 Republican postmasters with good Democrats, a public service for which he was rewarded by his grateful party with its nomination for Vice President of the United States, an office to which he was elected in 1892. He ran for Vice President with William Jennings Bryan in 1900. The banners from that campaign depict a fight against the trusts and the tariff , “For The Republic, Not The Empire”. Trust and empire won - and war. McKinley prayed on his knees in the White House for guidance - what to do with the Philippines after the Spanish American war had been won. God inspired him to christianize the little brown brothers. Evidently neither God nor the President knew that most Philipinos were Roman Catholics.

Democracy is fragile. From Ancient Athens it has traveled a well worn path to autocracy and conflict. The 1st French Republic dissolved into war and Empire. Germany's Weimar Republic led to Adolph Hitler and the National Socialists. Alexander Hamilton warned of war fevers in the human breast. It took little more than a fictitious attack in the harbor of Havana, a fictitious attack in the Bay of Tonkin or fictitious weapons of mass destruction in Iraq to stir the fevers. Rare is the Congressman Abraham Lincoln who demands evidence of the *cassus belli*. In *The Black Book* war, usually cloaked in a noble cause, is easy. Peace is hard. In *The Black Book*, peace and the prevention of terrorism was fatal to the peacemaker.

After an eloquent welcoming address to the 1952 Democratic Convention in Chicago, Adlai II was nominated for President. He did not seek the nomination. He entered no primaries. He started the campaign for President at the Convention with no money, no program and no staff. Volunteers gathered at the Elks Club in Springfield to help draft the program and the speeches. Volunteers walked door to door across the country raising "dollars for Stevenson" and his half hour eloquent, substantive speeches to cheering partisans. They were the first of the television era.

In his 1952 and 1956 Presidential campaigns and during the Eisenhower interregnum, Adlai II, the presidential candidate and "titular leader" of the Democratic Party, began the strategic arms control process. His *New America* laid the programmatic foundation for the New Frontier of John F. Kennedy and the Great Society of Lyndon Johnson. The late Arthur Schlesinger Jr. once dubbed Kennedy the "executor of the Stevenson Revolution." Eisenhower campaigned on a promise of "change," but it was the defeated Stevenson who delivered it.

In *The Black Book*, the opposition did more than oppose. Democracy was not a system for acquiring power which, once acquired, was then used to retain it. It was a process for informing the people. Trust the people with the truth, Adlai II said, all the truth. What wins is more important than who wins.

The United States Senate I entered in 1970 bears little resemblance to the Senate today. The center was broad and firm. I remember no partisanship. Senator Douglas told me he sent a \$50 campaign contribution to his Republican colleague, George Aiken of Vermont, and received a note thanking him for the contribution and returning \$25, explaining that with the \$500 then raised, he had more than enough money to assure his re election. I served with George Aiken - and other great men. Reason still reigned in the United States Senate.

No Stevenson with roots in the first Gilded Age and Illinois is unaware of the political underside. But the patronage and corruption today are of a scale and audacity unknown in *The Black Book* - and at all levels of government. The viability of candidates for public office is matter of factly measured by their money. Presidents attend fund raisers. All branches are threatened. A seat on the Illinois Supreme Court fetches as much as \$4 million. The United States Supreme Court disregarded precedent, effectively disenfranchised the people of Florida and elected George W. Bush President of the United States who had been rejected by a substantial majority of the American people. More recently, this Supreme Court has declared the unalienable right of oil companies, banks, defense contractors and other corporations to invest

unlimited amounts of money in candidates for public office. Oliver Wendell Holmes said the Constitution was not a "suicide pact". He might have second thoughts today.

The 1970's was a transitional decade. The electronic media and its trivialization of the democratic dialogue and news, money, the breakdown of Party organization, the black arts of the consultants, pollsters, money raisers and marketers, the cynicism which followed Vietnam and Watergate, converged.

As ideologues departed China, ideologues arrived in Washington in the early 80's. Our efforts to develop a competitive post industrial economy with support for technology innovation, utilization and commercialization, export trading companies, alternative sources of energy and measures to promote energy conservation, including fuel efficiency standards - all and more - were cut back or cut off, funding shifted to the military. Taxes would be cut, spending increased and the budget balanced in this familiar trickle down ideology. The old social darwinian laissez faire ideology had returned - and militarism, including a national missile defense system.

The first Democratic President of the new era, the era of the deal, was Bill Clinton. He restored a measure of fiscal prudence, but little changed. The New Deal wall between commercial and investment banking was repealed under Clinton - the regulation of derivatives definitively rejected. Children and dependent mothers were dumped from welfare roles in the name of welfare reform reducing mothers to dependence on food stamps - and then to jobs that did not exist. By 2008, the presidential election cycle would run up \$1.8 billion in campaign expenditures.

The State government I returned to as the Democratic candidate for Governor in 1982 bore little resemblance to the state government I left as its State Treasurer in 1970. It was over run by interest groups and their representatives, lobbyists and "power brokers". The Black Book records how that tied election was lost by one vote in the Illinois Supreme Court, a prelude to the presidential election of 2000, hanging chads included. Efforts to prevent terrorism and support peace in the middle east went unnoticed by the media and public - but not unpunished.

Our politics lost its balance. Some of the political reforms were sound. We adopted a comprehensive code of ethics in the Senate, including financial disclosure, and trusted its enforcement to an Ethics Committee which I chaired. We took its unpleasant duties seriously - but there were few credible complaints of abuse. Campaign contributions were limited and made public. The Senate was reorganized to align its committee jurisdictions with contemporaneous issues, including the environment and energy. Responsibility was apportioned more equally among senators. The reorganization was led by a Special Committee which I chaired for additional penance. But some of our reforms had unexpected consequences. Senators had closed the doors when it came down to actually writing legislation to reflect the will of the Senate and the public interest. We opened the doors to let in the sunshine and let in the lobbyists and interest groups which proliferated to take advantage of the new access to the political process. Rarely did the new American press attend - though the trial of a Senator by the Ethics Committee would pack the house.

I am not suggesting a return to the smoke filled room though it is smelling better. The list of reforms is long. Campaigns could be made shorter, presidential candidates forced to appeal to a national audience by holding primary elections on one of three dates starting in June. Ballots could be shortened to focus public attention. Judges do not have to be elected uniquely in the world - outside the new radical government of Bolivia. But in the end, wisdom and courage are not legislated. Ethics is not legislated. It is a product of culture - and inspiration. More than half a century of trying has taught me that much. How in the information age can people be informed? Other democracies do better. The new Adlai Stevenson Center on Democracy has identified that as a central issue - and proposes to bring practitioners together from the world over to share information and ideas, produce practical answers. Most developed countries have subsidized media. Some countries now have English language television news programming in an effort to bring information to the American people. Al Jazeera covers the world from within the world, its reporters trained by BBC, but access in the U.S. is limited. Our collective vision of the world is through the prism of a shrinking west. The US Federal Communications Commission no longer enforces the Federal Communications Act which requires licensees of the public's airwaves to use them for the public's benefit - not the public's exploitation. But, it too, has been corrupted, by the standards of The Black Book.

America's future requires a restoration of values which created its rich past. To restore America's values, we must recall them. To see the future, you must see the past - according to The Black Book (Confucius and Churchill). That is the purpose of The Black Book - to recall America for Americans and its lessons for the future.