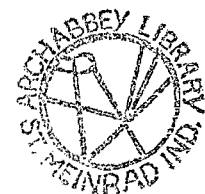


"The Hundred Days" of the New Deal
A Blend of the Tangible and the Spiritual

A Thesis
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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
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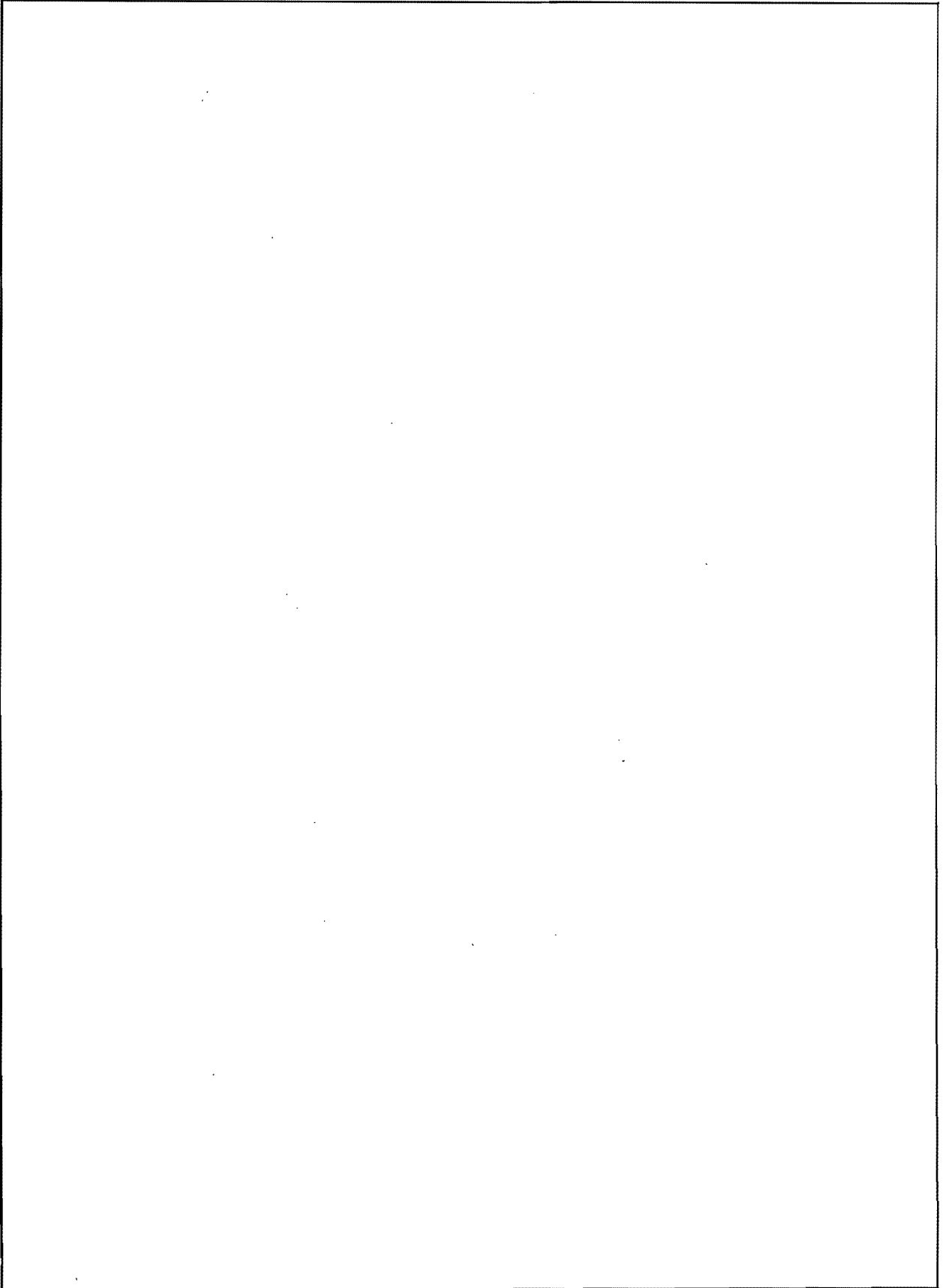


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INTRODUCTION: The State of the Nation, Presidential Year 1932.

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The presidential year 1932 arrived on a meager horizon. The Great Depression that had come crashing down on that October "Black Tuesday" in 1929 was still reigning. Industrial construction had plummeted from \$949,000,000 to an all time low of only \$74,000,000. Less capital investment necessitated employment cutbacks and so 13,000,000 people, one out of every four workingmen, were jobless.¹ The number of jobs remained half of its 1929 high with little sign of an upswing. Banks which had speculated found themselves short of liquid assets when depositors sought rapid withdrawals. Between 1930 and 1933, 5,504 banks folded. In cold cash this meant that \$3,432,000,000 disappeared from the paper economy. The gears of American free enterprise capitalism had slipped, starting a chain reaction in all domestic areas which was compounded by a similar international situation.

What did all this mean in terms of the American public? It meant that financial magnates who once basked in dividends could barely pawn their General Motors stock for \$10.00 a share. Crazy bankrupt investors were committing suicide by jumping off buildings so regularly that a sardonic joke arose about how unsafe Wall Street was for a stroll.² Can contemporary man begin to comprehend that nearly 2,000,000 individuals roamed the streets and highways of this "land of plenty" seeking a job but being content and fortunate to find a scrap to eat or a corner to sleep in? In New York City, for example, the make-shift shack "Hooverville" for transients stretched thirty-eight blocks from 72nd to 110th Streets.³ Jails were bulging, not with criminals, but with people who preferred the warmth of a cell block to a park bench.

When "Old-Timers" reminisce about "how hard we suffered" their grandchildren cannot comprehend and therefore doubt the reality of the hardships endured. The shocking truth, supported by documented fact, is that the richest nation in the world, "the land of the free," "the land of milk and honey," was scraping the bottom of the barrel. It was not uncommon to see once prominent businessmen peddling pencils or apples on street corners. Formerly successful bankers bowed to polish shoes for the nickel it might net from the few who could afford such luxuries.

A vicious circle had been triggered by the stock market crash. Overproduction clashed with underconsumption to create the gulf of unemployment, disappearance into smoke of liquid assets, thus causing the sales of fuel, foodstuffs, and other staples to nosedive. This maldistribution of wealth in simple terms meant that one-third of the country's personal income was nestled in the arms of 5% of the population, and even many of these had lost all through speculation.⁴

"Yes, we could smell the depression in the air," one writer remembered of "that historically cruel winter of 1932-3, which chilled so many of us like a world's end It was like a raw wind; the very houses we lived in seemed to be shrinking, hopeless of real comfort."⁵

This Depression led to disillusionment concerning the Republican Party because the party in power unfortunately is saddled with the blame, whether fairly or not, for the crisis of their time. In the sticky month of June the Democrats met in Chicago to nominate the man who would succeed Herbert Hoover.

As H.L. Mencken is supposed to have said, in 1932 a Chinaman running on a laundry ticket could have been elected against Hoover. The Democrats, however, did not run a Chinese but Franklin Delano Roosevelt of New York.⁶

On the evening of July 2nd a propeller-plane winged its way through the stormy sky from Albany, New York, to the convention center in Chicago. Aboard was the man of the hour, the man in the wheelchair who, only eight years before, had reentered the political arena by nominating Al Smith for President. Now his turn had arrived and, in an unprecedented gesture of commitment, he was flying to the "Windy City" to accept the nomination personally. When he approached the rostrum, braced from hip-to-heel, he smiled, cocked his head back in his soon-to-be famous pose of confidence and vowed:

"I pledge you, I pledge, myself, to a new deal for
the American people."

Who rallied to the bandwagon of this Hyde Park aristocrat? Who were the "New Deal" supporters? Rarely has such a contradictory blend of Americans banded together in support of one man. Roosevelt's following consisted of the liberal intellectuals and the businessmen on-the-make as well as the vast majority of the unemployed and persecuted minorities (Italians, Jews, Catholics, and Negroes). In his own party he rallied the solid conservative South to campaign side-by-side with the New York and Chicago machines. The bulk of America's labor force cautiously joined hands with the farmers and old line Progressives (epitomized by Republican Senators Norris and LaFollette) to canvas the nation in Roosevelt's behalf. Lastly, the all too forgotten women's vote mustered behind the "unconventional" Eleanor Roosevelt and the future Labor Secretary Frances Perkins.⁷ The election of November was not so much a Democratic mandate as an anti-Republican denunciation. Herbert Hoover's failure to curb the Depression was Roosevelt's chance ticket to the White House.

Franklin D. Roosevelt is an amiable man with many philanthropic impulses, but he is not the dangerous enemy of anything. He is too eager to please. Franklin Roosevelt is no crusader. He is no tribune of the people. He is no enemy of entrenched privilege. He is a pleasant man, who, without any important qualifications for the office, would very much like to be president.⁸

With these words, Walt Lippman informed his readers in the New York Herald Tribune of a rather prevalent view of the President-elect. Other than his four moderately successful years as governor of New York, Franklin Roosevelt was known more as a political personality and for his comeback from polio, than for any brilliance in constructive leadership. Much less pointed but equally nebulous is the summary given by Anne O'Hare McCormack in an article published only two months prior to the election:

THE FIRST IMPRESSION produced by the Democratic candidate for the Presidency is that of the fortunate man who is doing what he most likes to do, a man who enjoys his present office, is eagerly on his way to one he will like better, and in all circumstances maintains a "smilin' through" philosophy and a singular zest for the adventure of life.⁹

Although Miss McCormack supported Roosevelt and Lippman suspected him, neither presented the nation with the image of a very competent man, only a more amiable personality than somber Mr. Hoover. Al Smith, an old Roosevelt ally turned sour, was not so tactful nor polite in his apprehensions:

And incidentally, let me say that it is not the first time in recorded history that a group of men have stolen the livery of the church to do the work of the devil.¹⁰

Despite the less than complimentary attitude expressed through the words of Moore, and various of these, and various other professionals, the electorate and a few avant-garde intellectuals held their breathe hopefully. John Maynard Keynes, the

controversial economist of deficit spending, rather passionately declared:

You have made yourself the trustee of those in every country who seek to mend the evils of our condition by reasoned experiment within the framework of the existing social system. If you fail, rational change will be gravely prejudiced throughout the world, leaving orthodoxy and revolution to fight it out.¹¹

During the Lame Duck period of November to March most of the population speculated about what Franklin Roosevelt's "New Deal" would be, or more importantly what it would do.

One common man turned professional, Will Rogers, became the spokesman par excellence of the "forgotten man." As Roosevelt took office and the first "Hundred Days" began, Rogers wrote from Santa Monica:

America hasn't been as happy in three years as they are today . . . they know they got a man in there who is wise to congress, wise to our big bankers, and wise to our so-called big men. The whole country is with him, even if what he does is wrong, they are with him. Just so he does something. If he burned down the capitol we would cheer and say, "Well, we at least got a fire started, anyhow." We have had years of "don't rock the boat." Go on and sink it if you want to we might just as well be swimming as like we are. Yours, Will Rogers¹²

One final article must be brought to light in any elaboration on the temperament of the nation in late 1932 and early 1933. The author was little known and his article has probably rarely been referred to in historical treatises. Yet, Wilson Follett, in "The Forgotten Man to His President," expressed in open letter form the sentiments of the people who elected F.D.R. to their service. His simple, straightforward, rather exaggerated declaration captures the mood of the times:

We have given you what you asked for--our votes.
 . . . If, having once really understood that we exist, . . . you can have any degree of support from us that you will ever require. . . .

What we felt, and all we felt, was hope: What we have given you is an opportunity to earn our confidence hereafter.¹³

Follett proceeded to warn Roosevelt against the flattery of his cronies and office seeking friends. In speaking of the vision the "forgotten man" had he said that the "naive fellow" has "no panacea to offer." In positing the ideal president for 1933 he stated:

There would have to be a good deal of the seer in him, something of saint and stoic, and possibly a touch of the martyr, all over and above the clever politician and good fellow.¹⁴

Quotes like "We are ready heart and ear, for a savior. Have we him?" aptly express the superhuman hope placed in Franklin Roosevelt with one mandate--action.¹⁵ In an almost total vow of support Follett concluded his letter with these words:

Work for us, and we will stand by you. Let us feel that you believe in us, and nothing can undo our belief in you. Remember the forgotten man, and he will make you a remembered President.¹⁶

With this blend of undying fidelity and the tempering of some skeptical critics Franklin Delano Roosevelt approached the rostrum at the capitol on March 4th, 1933, to take the oath of office and speak to the people. Months had gone into the preparation of this one speech. F.D.R. and his staff were fully aware of the despair and starvation rampant in the country. They were equally cognizant that the Democratic victory was a call for action, experimentation, anything except placidity. With the same self-confidence he had manifested in Chicago eight months prior, Roosevelt approached the rostrum and, with a more serious determination, said:

This is preeminently the time to speak the truth, the whole truth, frankly and boldly. Nor need we shrink from honestly facing conditions in our country today. This great Nation will endure as it has endured, will revive and prosper. So, first of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself-- . . .¹⁷

By relating an accurate picture of the financial state of the nation and by condemning, in Biblical terms, the "money-changers" of big business, he gained the confidence of his nation-wide audience. In the broadest terms he outlined the general thrusts of his "New Deal"--restoration of the "temple" called economy, resumption of banking and monetary stability, and recovery of employment based on interdependence and cooperation. The President-elect expressed his confidence that such sweeping programs could be executed within the framework of our "simple and practical" Constitution. He warned, however,:

. . . in the event that the Congress shall fail. . . and in the event that the national emergency is still critical, I shall not evade the clear course of duty that will then confront me. I shall ask the Congress for the one remaining instrument to meet the crisis-- broad Executive power to wage war against the emergency, as great as the power that would be given to me if we were in fact invaded by a foreign foe.¹⁸

With a concluding acceptance of the mandate for action and a call on the Almighty for guidance, Franklin Roosevelt concluded his first Inaugural.

The words spoken were hardly those of the "pleasant man . . . without any important qualifications for the office." Rhetorically the new man in the White House had instilled a sense of assurance into the blindly hopeful American people. Would F.D.R.'s "New Deal" stop here? Would it only be an oratorically flamboyant, but a concretely non-existent program? That is precisely the question to be probed in the next three chapters. As a prototype of the best, and the worst, of the New Deal, this paper will

concentrate on "The Hundred Days," the period of most immediate action which followed Roosevelt's March 4th Inaugural. The key areas of concentration are the events, the man himself, and his men, commonly known as "The Brain Trust." In summary of this introduction, there are two basic premises-- the American people had not only tasted but were actually drowning in the misery of a three year Depression; and Franklin Delano Roosevelt entered the White House with a clean record. No one was sure what to expect of him. Some were pessimistically contemplating the possibilities, while others hopefully awaited the first executive order. With this as background the question must be posed: What was "The Hundred Days"? What was the "New Deal"?

CHAPTER ONE: The Concrete Events of "The Hundred Days."

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The New Deal was fundamentally intended as a modern expression of ideals set forth one hundred and fifty years ago in the Preamble of the Constitution of the United States--"a more perfect union, justice, domestic tranquility, the common defense, the general welfare and the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity."¹⁹

These words, written by Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the introduction to his Public Papers, indicate the conservative tradition out of and in which F.D.R.'s policies were grounded. But a depression such as the economic crisis that crashed worldwide in the late 1920's defies tradition or at least challenges its methods. The founding fathers never conceived of the dilemmas surrounding Twentieth Century paper economy: weak banks, overdependence on consumer goods, overexpansion of industries, unequal cash distribution, and the foreclosure of overseas loans. The capitalistic pyramid was toppled and with it international long term capital was shattered. The introduction to this paper presented an accurate overview of what these economic problems meant in terms of human hardships.

Economists proposed two equally sound yet contradictory approaches to solving the financial situation: Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau advocated limiting production. The "law of supply and demand" indicates that consumer buying would thus stabilize with production and a greater equilibrium might be regained. The second approach, which raised the hair of traditional economists, was set forth by the British financial wizard John Maynard Keynes. This tactic castes balanced budgeting to the wind and advocates government deficit spending. When private enterprise slacks, government spends to make up the loss.²⁰

The New Deal, as exemplified in "The Hundred Days," reflected neither approach . . . it was an overlapping, often contradictory blend of both. Obviously the purists on either side of the teeter-totter were aghast, but Roosevelt and his faithful Brain Trusts attempted to weave together the concepts of a balanced economy with an increasingly bloated one primed by the pump handle of deficit spending. One might validly ask why the New Dealers refused to take one stance and stick to it. Certainly the anti-Roosevelt factions would cry, "because they wanted to please everybody, while helping nobody." Al Smith sarcastically reflected this sentiment when he said, "Nobody wants to shoot Santa Claus." Yet, would any one economic theory, born out of the very financial system that had toppled, provide the long range solution to the problems of homeless masses, no jobs, and worthless paper? This is a value question for which no black on white answer can be given. "With people on the brink of starvation, there was no time to work out a plan that might have avoided many of the mistakes that were by-products of haste."²¹ This is not to excuse for errors, but a statement of the reality of the moment. The United States had never faced a domestic crisis of such magnitude. The "how" of recovery was as much a matter of hit-and-miss as of carefully calculated moves on the financial chessboard. The tangible goal of "The Hundred Days," and of the entire New Deal, is found in F.D.R.'s Commonwealth Club Address, given in San Francisco during the Campaign of '32:

Our task is not discovery or exploration of natural resources, or necessarily producing more goods. It is the soberer, less dramatic business of administering resources and plants already in hand, of seeking to reestablish foreign markets for our surplus production, of meeting the problem of underconsumption, of adjusting production to consumption, of distributing wealth and products more equitably, of adapting existing economic organizations to the service of the people. . . .²²

To accomplish these goals, which were further elaborated in his Inaugural Address, Franklin D. Roosevelt, with the aid of his midwives the Brain Trusters, gave birth to "The Hundred Days" of the New Deal.

The concrete giants to be tackled were four in number, each a formidable foe in itself for any administration. Banking and financial stability heads this list of crises. Until the paper economy of Wall Street and the banking houses were recreated or totally abolished the flow of the capitalistic machine could not gain new momentum. Secondly, immediate band-aid relief was necessary for the millions of homeless, starving, jobless American families. Third among the foes was the necessity of recovery for the core units of the economy--industry, labor, and the farmer. The final giant, given only slight conscious attention during "The Hundred Days," was the long range efforts at reform in the free enterprise system, government, and the United States as a whole.

"Immediate" and "rapid-fire" are the adjectives which best describe the Administration's efforts to meet the banking crisis. By Executive Order #2038, March 5, 1933, Franklin Roosevelt called into existence the historic 73rd Congress, Special Session. That same evening he declared a national "Bank Holiday" to save the extent banks from the devastating "runs" which had collapsed five thousand banks wiping out nine million savings accounts.²³

Between March 5th and March 9th (when Congress convened) much paper and leg work had to be done. Roosevelt himself sought a broad base of support for his impending legislation. On the 5th he asked all Veterans to unite behind him and on the 6th he secured a pledge of support from the Governors convening in a White House Conference. That same day was marked by a united non-partisan plea in the form of an open letter to the governors:

We the undersigned have caste aside politics and group and sectional interest in a spirit of cooperation with the President, and we believe that this same spirit animates our whole people.²⁴

Some of the eminent cosigners were Al Smith, Cardinal Mundelein, Rabbi Stephen Wise, Walt Lippman, and the presidents of the A.F. of L., the Grange, and the Chamber of Commerce.

At 1:00 P.M., March 9, 1933, President Roosevelt sent his banking message to Congress. The proposed legislation had undergone its final revision only a half hour earlier. In a tremendous vote of confidence the House passed the Emergency Banking Act sight unseen after only thirty-eight minutes of debate. It passed the Senate 73-7 that same evening and was signed into law at 8:36 P.M. The Law empowered the President, in conjunction with a financial board, to:

- 1) control the movement of gold, 2) give federal aid to private banks,
- 3) penalize hoarding, 4) reopen those banks with liquid currency, 5) reorganize or liquidate the remaining unsound money institutions, and 6) order the printing of new or more federal reserve notes.

Nor did the emergency measures stop there. March 10-11 saw the passage of the controversial Emergency Economy Bill. Losing ninety Democratic votes, but gaining sixty-nine Republican "ayes," F.D.R. signed into law a bill which cut \$400,000,000 from Veteran pensions and \$100,000,000 from Federal employees' salaries. This obviously unpopular measure was passed in an attempt "to avoid adding another billion to a nearly \$4,134,000,000 deficit as of 1932."²⁵ The details were left to a presidential committee, who, based on a six month cost of living index since 1929, tried to scale down benefits as equitably as pension and salary cuts could be under such circumstances. An attempt at budget balancing was made at the expense of much veteran resentment.

These same two days were marked by stipulations for the reopening of banks and gold embargo regulations being established. On Sunday evening,, March 12th, Franklin D. Roosevelt addressed the nation in the first of his famous radio "Fireside Chats."

I want to talk for a few minutes with the people of the United States about banking--with the comparatively few who understand the mechanics of banking but more particularly with the overwhelming majority who use banks for the making of deposits and the drawing of checks . . .

I know that when you understand what we in Washington have been about I shall continue to have your cooperation as fully as I have had your sympathy and help during the past week . . .

First of all, let me state the simple fact that when you deposit money in a bank the bank does not put the money into a safe deposit vault . . . In other words, the bank puts your money to work to keep the wheels of industry and agriculture turning around . . .

It needs no prophet to tell you that when the people find that they can get their money--that they can get it when they want it for all legitimate purposes--the phantom of fear will soon be laid . . .

We have a banking situation. Some of our bankers had shown themselves either incompetent or dishonest in their handling of the people's funds . . . This was, of course, not true in the vast majority of our banks. . . . It was the Government's job to straighten out this situation and do it as quickly as possible. . .

It has been wonderful for me to catch the note of confidence from all over the country . . . It is your problem no less than it is mine. Together we cannot fail.²⁶

Excerpt from First Fireside Chat

Through the use of this paternalistic folksy medium the President spoke to his people "frankly and boldly" of the banking situation in language the common man could relate to. On March 13,14,15, 1933, 4,507 National Banks reopened their doors to the public with federal guarantee of stability.

This represented 76% of the Federal Reserve System Banks. On April 12, 1933, 7,400 non-Federal Reserve banks were back in operation, or 72% of these institutions.

To prove the public confidence for the new administration one need only look at the deposit slips: \$1,000,000,000 deposited between March 13th and mid-April, while another \$1,000,000,000 followed before the end of June.²⁷ However, there were those people who lost all or part of their life's savings in one of the folded banks. By June, the New Dealers had succeeded in repaying nearly \$2,000,000,000 of the \$4,000,000,000 still tied up in unsound companies. Many lost all, some regained little, but the vast majority of Americans were far more secure due to the March banking legislation of F.D.R. and his 73rd Congress.

Further financial legislation followed throughout "The Hundred Days." The Stock Exchange reopened March 15, and two weeks later the Securities Exchange Commission was created as a watchdog against overspeculation and inflated stocks/bonds. On April 5th and 20th Roosevelt concentrated on gold and the international market. By pleading with hoarders to return gold, then removing the United States from the gold standard temporarily, and meeting individually with the British, Canadian, and French Prime Ministers (April 22-28) the Administration hoped to stem the tide of dollar devaluation.

The final and most lasting piece of financial legislation of "The Hundred Days" was the Glass-Steagall Banking Act passed on June 16th, the day Congress adjourned. This law provided for: 1) separated investment from commercial banking, 2) reform of the Federal Reserve System, 3) creation of the still-operative Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) to insure a man's life savings.

These are only the major steps taken by the New Dealers to meet the banking crisis. Obviously, countless private conversations, executive orders, "under-the-table arm-twisting," and bargaining took place that few records tell of. It is fair to say that the financial legislation, coupled with the public trust in Franklin Roosevelt, led to an effective reorganization of the banking system and an alteration in international currency (later to fail) amenable to all involved. Real life "Monopoly" games, however, were only a start. Men were still homeless, jobless, and hungry.

The same morning that the banks started to reopen, March 13th, a brief, seventy-two word message passed from the White House to the Halls of Congress-- Repeal the Volstead Act. The "wets" had come a long way since the dry issue of Prohibition had helped to defeat Al Smith in 1928. To cap off the whirlwind first week such an executive request was greeted nationally as a sign of more action to come. Songs like "Happy Days Are Here Again" and "Whose Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?" soon came to replace the more sobering pessimism of the Hoover years. Franklin Roosevelt, however, was not so starry-eyed. His attitude is exemplified in this excerpt from a letter he wrote to Colonel House:

While things look superficially rosy, I realize that thus far we have actually given more of deflation than of inflation-- . . . It is simply inevitable that we must inflate 28

On March 21st, the inflationary legislation of relief began. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration was created in the following three weeks, which was entrusted with a half-billion dollars to channel to the people through government agencies. At the helm of this monumental undertaking was Harold Hopkins. "He had the purity of St. Francis of Assisi combined with the sharp shrewdness of a race track tout."²⁹ Believing that a direct

dole would do as much harm as good to a man's self-respect, Hopkins set about forming the Civil Works Administration, whereby an honest day's work merited for a hungry man an honest day's minimum wage. One such project was the Civil Conservation Corp(CCC), which organized men into non-military armies to fight soil erosion, floods, forest fires, and similar enemies of natural resources. Eleanor Roosevelt wrote in her autobiography:

As I look back over the actual measures which were undertaken in this first year, I realize that the one which my husband took greatest pleasure in was the establishment on April 5, 1933, of the Civil Conservation Corp Camps.³⁰

In his own request to Congress F.D.R. stated that "it is not a panacea for all the unemployment, but it is an essential step in this emergency."

By January of the following year the C.W.A. employed 4,230,000 persons. Its list of accomplishments included 500,000 miles of new or improved roads, 40,000 schools, over 3,500 playgrounds and athletic fields, and 1,000 airports.³¹ Besides these material achievements, 50,000 teachers were employed for rural schools, while 3,000 artists, archeologists, and other professionals were employed in projects in their own fields. A little brother to the C.W.A. was the Public Works Administration(PWA). Its most notable contributions were to artists, writers, craftsmen, actors, and theatrical workers. Public buildings received the artist's brush, city and rural audiences were treated to performances ranging from Shakespeare to the Grand Ole Opry, and, most of all, talented people were allowed to be creative. The national morale needed their spirit of new hope and the artists themselves had families to feed and clothe.

The alphabet soup of the FERA--CWA, PWA, CCC, and all their subdivisions--came under great criticism from business as well as a public which sighted instances of graft, favoritism, and loafing. In an endeavor to put Keynes'

economic-philosophy of pump priming into effect, Roosevelt succeeded in splitting his supporters into factions.

More lasting among "The Hundred Days" relief measures was the Home Owners Loan Corporation which was created by law on June 13th. In an endeavor to freeze foreclosures on homeowners' mortgages, the federal government absorbed one-sixth of urban mortgage debts while urging lenders nation-wide not to foreclose. The HOLC bloomed as an agency which offered easy terms, extended loans to families who because of the Depression would otherwise be homeless.

In retrospect, "The Hundred Days" relief measures were tremendous spirit-boosters, while they provided less degrading means of cash dispersement. While mass public works projects did little to stimulate the economy as a whole, they were a grandiose experiment in deficit spending which did save countless families from starvation, and at the same time beautified public buildings, parks, and forests and constructed numerous public facilities. As far as any mass relief program can be rated successful, this phase of the New Deal was a valiant effort with limited lasting merit . . . a band-aid on a gaping wound. In commenting on his own Public Papers, F.D.R. stated:

Later experience has shown that a proper recovery and relief policy should avoid great reliance on self-liquidating projects and schemes, because these add little to the total volume of spending, and do not create large-scale purchasing power.³²

~~The third giant to be met was the core units of the economy--industry,~~ labor and agriculture. In the area of industry the National Industrial Recovery Act stands out as the crowning accomplishment. Passed on the last day of the Special Session, June 16th, this law was conceived as the balance

between governmental control and voluntary business cooperation. The famous "blue eagle" symbol became synonymous with General Hugh Johnson and the N.R.A. If one measures the N.R.A.'s success in terms of "The Hundred Days," then "hopeful" is the word. Between March and July factory production had nearly doubled from an index of 56 up to 101, while industrial stocks rose forty-six points.³³ If, however, one looks at the aftermath of "The Hundred Days," it is evident that voluntary wage and price controls were absurd and that Johnson's agency had no teeth to enforce cooperation. When corporations like Ford just laughed at the request for self-imposed codes and countless others joined in name only, the N.R.A. experiment was doomed. When the guillotine fell on May 27, 1935, as the Supreme Court declared the N.R.A. unconstitutional, only a coroner's tag needed to be added to the already defunct endeavor.

The Railroad Coordination Act, passed also during the last day's proceedings, was far more lasting in the area of government coordination of transportation. Following a series of executive conferences and requests and the Interstate Commerce Recommendation of March 29th, this measure was a stabilizing control for railroad employees as well as farmers and industry who relied on the railroad for product transport.

Three legislative measures were passed which directly aided the farmers. The Agricultural Adjustment Act(AAA) of May 12th was "The Hundred Days" overriding gift to agriculture. While not fully solving the complex problem of marketing surplus grain, the A.A.A. did provide alternative systems of subsidizing farm staples, federal price supports, and(via the Thomas amendment) the hope of more paper money in circulation. The simultaneous passage of the Emergency Farm Mortgage Act helped soothe any ruffled feathers by

offering special assistance to farmers in saving heavily mortgaged lands and homes during this time of low income. Lastly, the Farm Credit Act, passed at the tail end of the 73rd Congress, strengthened the earlier E.F.M.A. to keep sheriffs with foreclosure notices one step farther away.

The New Deal endeavors on behalf of industry, labor, and the farmer were decisive and yet heavily laden with the political results of log-rolling. With the exception of the N.R.A. and its knotty dilemma of voluntary verses imposed control(which still plagues government totday) the recovery measures of "The Hundred Days" were valid evolutionary steps in the chain of legislative compromise. Everybody gained some, no one gained everything.

The final ogre to be faced was that of permanent reform in the American system. Legislatively the Tennessee Valley Authority(TVA), proposed by Senator Norris of Nebraska, was and is the most far-sighted endeavor at federally-sponsored free enterprise of the entire New Deal. Passed by Congress on May 18th, the TVA transformed the seven state area surrounding Muscle Shoals, Alabama, into an industrial, agricultural, and recreational paradise. Electrical power, flood control, and irrigation were tangible results, with education, new mores, and new modes of life being the intangibles realized by the people.

The second tangible reform of "The Hundred Days" was in the Office of the President itself. A job which for so long had been overpowering to any one occupant was expanded to include not only the cabinet but also countless advisors, assistants, secretaries, field contacts, and press agencies. Credit for this move goes largely to Franklin Roosevelt himself. Limited by his paralysis he was forced to rely on others to do his leg work. From his earliest days in New York politics he had learned the value of competent advisors. Men such as Louis Howe and James Farley were the early forerunners of the

full-blown Brain Trust of 1933. The vast network which was and is the Presidential Office demanded communication. Biweekly cabinet meetings and press conferences were innovative enough means to keep staff and the public aware of what their president was doing.

Not least among the reform measures of F.D.R.'s first hundred days was the effective use made of the communications medium, the radio. The two Fireside Chats of March 12th and May 7th were the beginning of a President-People friend relationship that had been lost in the colorless administrations of Coolidge and Hoover. F.D.R., through effective use of his personality, once again aroused public interest in the presidency. He set the precedent for his successors to imitate of periodically speaking directly to the American people through the use of mass communications media.

On June 16, 1933, just one hundred and three days after Inauguration Day, the Special Session of the 73rd Congress adjourned. Fifteen executive messages to Congress had been followed promptly by fifteen laws, not altogether in agreement with Roosevelt's original requests. John Maynard Keynes best summed up the mood of that day:

You have made yourself the trustee of those in every country who seek to mend the evils of our condition by reasoned experiment within the framework of the existing social system.³⁴

"The Hundred Days" concluded with this brief message from Franklin D. Roosevelt--

"To each and every one of you I send my best wishes for a well-deserved and happy holiday during the coming months."

CHAPTER TWO: Franklin Delano Roosevelt, A Measure of Greatness.

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History is an attempt to recapture, recreate, and ultimately to interpret the past. Dates, executive orders, and Congressional voting records adequately represent the tangible successes and failures of "The Hundred Days." But how does one analyze charisma? How does one enter into the soul of a man and narrate such intangibles as motivation, intelligence, the warmth behind a toothy grin, and the confident "my friends?" These are the spiritual elements of greatness, the charism of one man, Franklin Roosevelt.

Of the making of controversies about Franklin Delano Roosevelt there is no end. In his lifetime, he was literally worshiped by many Americans. One Congressman compared him to Jesus Christ and in a poll of New York schoolchildren God ran him a poor second. Yet he was just as strongly detested by others who, as one historian has noted, depicted him "as a liar, a thief, a madman, a syphilitic, and a communist." Since his death, scholars have kept the coals of disputation live.³⁵

The measure of historical greatness is largely dependent on the times, the crises to be met. Yet, to place Rutherford B. Hayse in the White House in 1916 or to lift Calvin Coolidge out of the 1920's and drop him into the Depression-ridden 1930's would not necessarily elevate these two "lack-luster" leaders to the level of presidential greatness.

There are two sorts of greatness--the foursquare, all-of-a-piece, unitary, monolithic kind, possessed by Washington, Jackson, Winston Churchill; and the glittering, elusive, pluralistic, impalpable kind, possessed by Jefferson, Henry Clay, Lloyd George, where levels of personality peel off with the delusive transparency of the skins of an onion, always frustrating the search for a hard core of personality underneath. The greatest statesman may perhaps, like Lincoln, combine both kinds; in the phrase of Archilochus, he is both hedgehog and fox.³⁶

True to this interpretation, seventy-five experts, polled by historian Schlesinger, Sr. in 1962, rated Lincoln as the greatest of the U.S. presidents. George Washington, even stripped of his legendary myths, came second. His sense of duty, dignity, and "foursquare greatness" merit for him historical honors. Less balanced between hedgehog and fox, hardly of the solid Washington metal, was the third choice among the slates of thirty-four. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the subject of extreme devotion and intense hatred, was given a place in the hall of fame following two unquestionable greats. Roosevelt, the man whom ninety-two year old Oliver Wendell Holmes referred to as "a second-class intellect! But a first-class temperament!"³⁷, seems like a dim match for his two predecessors. The true greatness of Franklin Roosevelt is of the second variety mentioned above, "the glittering, elusive, pluralistic, impalpable kind." The analogy of the onion with numerous layers of skin aptly applies to F.D.R.'s magnetic yet "extraordinarily difficult to describe" personality.³⁸ Such tenuous historical data as a man's personality, especially one so elusive, makes Roosevelt into the controversial figure he was and has remained in subsequent historical studies.

Too often greatness is equated with intellectual prowess and the ability to creatively solve all crises. Too often historians try to squeeze the vibrance, enthusiasm, and optimism of Roosevelt into the mold of some pragmatic genius. Nothing could be more false nor more detrimental to the true nature of F.D.R.'s contributions to "The Hundred Days," the New Deal, or World War II. His background of average achievement in school, frequent failures in business ventures, and lack of shining accomplishments as

reform governor of New York, all indicate a mind of less than monumental brilliance.

Roosevelt lived in the comforting perspective of an undoubted God and in the easy, almost lazy assurance of the Church Here, surely, rested much of his optimism, his sense of destiny and purpose God, country, college, estate, family, party, team--all were revered. Honor, loyalty, dutiful service were proffered to each He simply never had the type of intellectual discrimination to understand fundamental but subtle philosophical differences.³⁹

The aristocratic New York squire, raised amidst turn-of-the-century ease, was an optimistic human being, not an insightful nor reflective man. As Rexford Tugwell later analyzed Roosevelt's role in the New Deal:

I grant magnificence, because that implies style, plans, assurance, all that sort of thing. I do not grant now, and I did not then, that this implies adequacy, prescience, all that sort of thing.⁴⁰

Nor does Tugwell, a member of the famous Brain Trust, steal credit for himself or his Columbia colleagues. Some historians have alluded to the fact that Roosevelt's act of gathering a kitchen cabinet of university professors was a sign of his awareness of his own self-limitations and therefore a mark of the truly great man. In no way can the Brain Trust be conceived of as the "power behind the throne." "Roosevelt's mind was an eminently operative one, quick, keen, fast, flexible." It showed in his intellectual habits."⁴¹ Chapter three will elaborate on the relationship between Roosevelt and his Brain Trust. At this point, it is sufficient to say that the President held the reins, the ultimate decisions were his alone. As James MacGregor Burns succinctly analyzed his intellectual ability: "Roosevelt was less a great creative leader than a skillful manipulator and a brilliant interpreter He was always a superb tactician."⁴²

It seems that the core of Roosevelt's contribution rests in that spiritual realm that Justice Holmes labeled "temperament." In September of election year 1932, columnist Anne O'Hare McCormack of the New York Times spent a day in the Roosevelt camp at the Albany mansion. After observing the candidate as he wheeled his way from topic to topic and discussion to conference, she summarized:

When all is said, the Lochinvar who rides out of the East will ride on his personality, on his zest and gusto and confidence, on his eighteen-carat American background, on the blind desire to punish and to change, which is the mood of crisis.⁴³

The key to Roosevelt's popularity, the hinge on which his public support rested was that nebulous reality that is called "charisma." Hoover and Roosevelt both attacked fear and promised prosperity "just around the corner." Hoover lacked, however, that edge of personal appeal, that genuine communion with the public. This trait of inordinate sociability, so prominent in the Roosevelt personality, leads professionals to speculate--sincere empathy or a phony politician's mask? The seeming ease with which he addressed millions as "my firends" is contrasted with the lack of intimacy with any of his close associates. Everyone rated the same slap-on-the-back warmth, casual acquaintance or closest confidante. Harold Ickes once said, "No, you never get too hard but you won't talk frankly even with people who are loyal to you and of whose loyalty you are fully convinced. You keep your cards close up against your belly."⁴⁴ Paul K. Conkin, in his book simply titled The New Deal, proposes that this very lack of intimacy contributed to his ability to develop comradeship with multitudes. "With consummate art, he played for his audience and won their plaudits."⁴⁵

The stage on which Roosevelt met his audience ranged from the platform of a railroad car on the campaign trail to the comfort of a coast-to-coast "fireside chat" via the radio. The content and phrasing of his rhetoric, even after Brain Trust polish, is hardly of the caliber of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address or Washington's Final Farewell. More intimately woven into the Roosevelt personality and the crux of his speaking magnetism was the manner of delivery. The common man had been lost in the technical vocabulary and dull oratory of Hoover. Frances Perkins, then Secretary of Labor, remembered Roosevelt sitting in his White House office delivering a Fireside Chat to millions. Her description is a priceless example of the F.D.R. charisma:

When he talked on the radio, he saw them gathered in the little parlor, listening with their neighbors. He was conscious of their faces and hands, their clothes and homes His face would smile and light up as though he were actually sitting on the front porch or in the parlor with them. People felt this; and it bound them to him in affection.⁴⁶

Photos of F.D.R. mirror a strong man with a muscular torso. The famous pince-nez glasses, cigarette holder, military cape, floppy "Durante-esque" hat, and even the wheel chair all added a certain air of confident flamboyance. Lest a reader write off Roosevelt as merely a master showman, he must take note of the element too often glossed over in these photographs, the spindly legs of a man crippled by polio. Even with his hip-to-heel steel braces and the aid of crutches, Roosevelt never really regained the ability to walk after his 1921 ordeal at Campobello. He was able, with extreme stamina, to maneuver himself with his hips. He had no balance nor power in his legs. The inspiration of his self-determination not to be a Hyde Park invalid instilled a similar courage into the paralyzed people of the nation.

Perhaps the experience, above all others, which shaped my husband's character along more definite lines and gave him strength and depth that he did not have as a young man was the long struggle with infantile paralysis. As he came to gradually realize that he was not going to get any better, he faced great bitterness, I am sure, though he never mentioned it He soon discovered that the way to lighten all burdens is to take them cheerfully when he said: "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself," they knew he held that conviction.⁴⁷

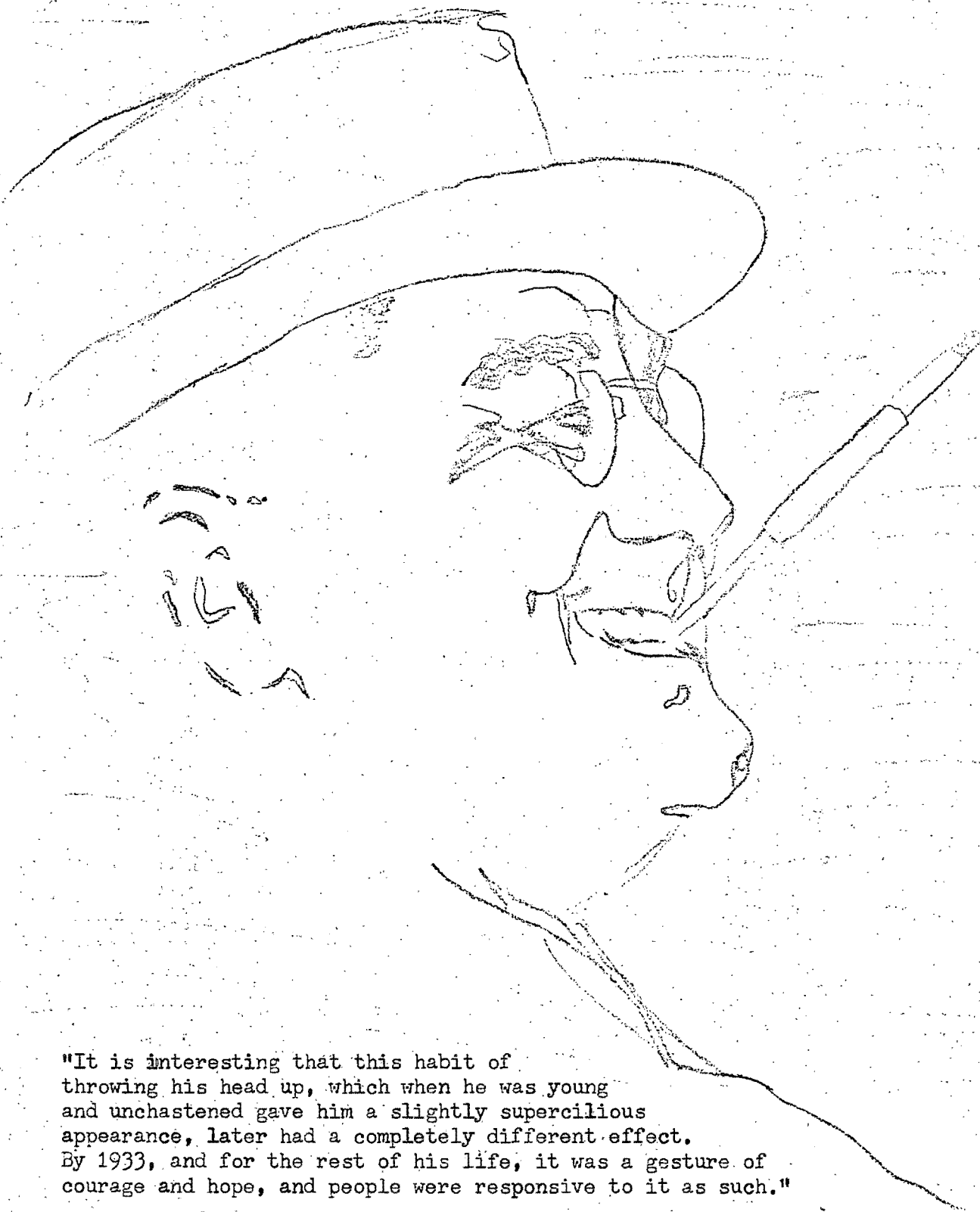
Although Roosevelt lacked the depth of statesman-like genius and might well be labeled the politician par excellence, he must validly be credited with courage as exemplified in his own life's struggle. Embodied in his physical bout, the Hyde Park aristocrat became a symbol of the spiritual fight the people were engaged in with apathy, resignation, defeat, and despair. Roosevelt's most important contribution to "The Hundred Days," indeed to his entire term in office, lay in his "ability to imbue Americans, and to some extent even citizens of other lands, with a new spiritual strength."⁴⁸

From that zone of gloom, that numbed consciousness of frustration and failure, Roosevelt lifted Americans on the wings of his great adventure-- the alphabetical adventures of the AAA, the NRA, the TVA; above all, on the wings of the greatest adventure in our history, the effort to rescue democracy from totalitarianism, and to organize the world to safeguard freedom.⁴⁹

Does that sound saccharine and melodramatic? These are the intangibles, the non-legislative achievements of "The Hundred Days." The fact remains that the United States, the seemingly wealthiest nation on earth, was in the depths of economic and spiritual Depression. Free enterprise capitalism rested in the breach. Perhaps the overriding contribution of any executive taking office in 1933 was to infuse the people with a sense of hope, action, advance, confidence, and renewed self-respect. All the brilliant plans minus the charismatic renewal of the electorate would be for naught.

Herein lies the true greatness of Franklin Roosevelt. In this historical reality is the purpose for the existence of this chapter. Chapter One recounted the black-on-white deeds of the 73rd Congress under the direction of Roosevelt and his Brain Trust. This chapter has been a tribute to the source of the legislation, the cause of the public confidence, the center of popular hope. "No personality has ever expressed the American popular temper so articulately or with such exclusiveness."⁵⁰ The greatness of Franklin Roosevelt does not stand on the merit of a brilliant and inspiring statesman such as Lincoln, nor on the heartfelt dignity and integrity of Washington. Roosevelt knew the ropes of political bossism, of twisting arms, and of logrolling. What he lacked in intellectual brilliance he compensated for (to some extent) by the use of his Brain Trust. What he lacked in integrity he matched with political skill as a tactician, a master of the right move at the right time. Never outstep the public opinion, but always avoid dragging feet.

Holmes had been right--a second-rate intellectual but a first rate temperament. To examine closely single aspects of Roosevelt's character--as thinker, as organizer, as manipulator, as strategist--is to see failings and deficiencies closely interwoven with the huge capacities. But to stand back and look at the man as a whole, against the backdrop of his people and his times, is to see the lineaments of greatness--courage, joyousness, responsiveness, vitality, faith, and, above all, concern for his fellow man. A democrat in manner and conviction, he was yet a member of that aristocracy once described by E.M. Forster--sensitive but not weak, considerate but not fussy, plucky in his power to endure, capable of laughing and taking a joke. He was the true happy warrior.⁵¹



"It is interesting that this habit of throwing his head up, which when he was young and unchastened gave him a slightly supercilious appearance, later had a completely different effect. By 1933, and for the rest of his life, it was a gesture of courage and hope, and people were responsive to it as such."

Raymond Moley in The Roosevelt I Knew

CHAPTER THREE: "The Brain Trust," The Power Behind the Throne?

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During the campaign of 1932, the "Lame Duck" period from November to March, and "The Hundred Days" of his first administration, Franklin Roosevelt relied heavily on his experts to formulate his platform and course of action. F.D.R.'s old comrade Louis McHenry Howe, "shrewish and sardonic, his clothes more rumpled than ever, was chief secretary."⁵² James Farley, Basil O'Connor, (Roosevelt's law partner), and Bronx boss Edward J. Flynn joined Howe to form a privy council of political strategists, aware of the public temperament and ready to act accordingly. Men of the caliber of William Woodin, appointed Secretary of the Treasury; Dean Acheson, the statesman; Henry Morgenthau, Jr., the financial wizard; as well as lesser known experts like Harold Ickes, Felix Frankfurter, and Harold Hopkins; all flocked to the cortege of F.D.R. Even Eleanor Roosevelt, who since 1921 had served as her husband's fact-finder, was a valuable part of the New Deal team. Nor did F.D.R. forget old confidantes like Colonel House, James Cox, and Senators Garner, Rayburn, and Connally. The list of visitors to Albany and Warm Springs prior to March 4th, and the stream of loyal subjects who were summoned to the White House after the inauguration could fill chapters. But these varied personalities and individuals do not comprise the substance of the "Brain Trust." Coined by James Kieran in a September, 1932, New York Times, article, the label "Brains Trust" (later the "s" was dropped) referred to a specific advisory coalition. "Not politicians; . . . not financiers; not business men; but college professors have been constantly in attendance during the formative interval between election and inauguration."⁵³

Unlike the "kitchen cabinets" and "privy councils" of his predecessors, F.D.R. called together not merely a group of old cronies but rather a triumverate of professors, men knowledgeable in the fields of finance and law. Columbia University provided the well spring from which Raymond Moley, Adolf A. Berle, Jr., and Rexford G. Tugwell emerged. Three distinct personalities, three similar economic theorists, they formed a Brain Trust with the specific task of winning the election and charting the legislative course of the soon to be dubbed "New Deal."

In convening such a group of scholars Roosevelt must not be written away as devoid of his own ideas about recovery. As Tugwell wrote, "The governor's mind may have been a tabula rasa, but the tabula had clearly labeled pages to be written on."⁵⁴ This is just one cited example from one of the various presidential advisors who attest to the fact that Roosevelt, in his favorite role as captain of the team, set the themes and tone, while his teammates filled in the gaps and created the plays. According to Burns there were five basic premises of the President that the Brain Trust used as underpinnings:

- 1) Most of the time government is to be a means to human betterment.
- 2) Government should strive to be efficient and honest.
- 3) The underdog should be raised up, but not necessarily at the expense of the fortunate topdog.
- 4) Private interests must be subordinated to the common good.
- 5) Conservation of natural resources and preservation of moral values are fundamental to American freedom.⁵⁵

Hardly and airtight program, these general principles constituted the rather shallow but solid foundation for "The Hundred Days" and at least the first New Deal. The purpose of this chapter is to introduce each of the three

Brain Trusters and to establish the degree of their real collective influence on the shape of the New Deal and on the man Franklin Roosevelt.

The first of the Columbia triumverate to join Roosevelt (and also the first to leave) was Raymond Moley. Raised in a middle class Ohio environment, and after unsuccessfully dabbling in local politics, he decided on a teaching career in higher education. His decade of in-depth post graduate research into politics and criminal justice once again brought him back into touch with the political arena as an advisory expert during the 1931 Seabury Investigations of Tammany graft. It was at Moley's request and advice that his two Columbia colleagues were later invited to join the Albany F.D.R. forces. At forty-six, Moley was the oldest of the three and also probably the most conservative. Although grounded in Hamiltonian realism, as manifested in his remark "better government if fewer people voted," Moley still had faith in a benevolent partnership between free enterprise capitalism and efficient federal planning.⁵⁶

Moley's function in the group was more that of a catalyst and organizer than originator of economic policies. His special ability was to keep the discussion of the group relevant to the current political situation, and his knowledge of government was invaluable to the others.⁵⁷

Almost from the beginning a certain sense of self-importance crept over Moley that created friction within the inner circle. As Roosevelt shifted to the left in his economic approach in 1935-36, Moley resigned his right-hand seat to the more liberal Tugwell. However, in the planning stages prior to March 4, 1933, and in the succeeding "Hundred Days," Raymond Moley held the number one position and a slight edge in access to Roosevelt's ear.

Adolf A. Berle, Jr., was a celebrated economist even prior to joining the Brain Trust.

A child prodigy who, his enemies said, had continued to be a child long after he had ceased being a prodigy, Berle was still a brash young man of thirty-seven, who could overwhelm banker and bureaucrat alike with his biting tongue and his vast information on financial practices.⁵⁸

At eighteen he was a Harvard graduate, at twenty-one a lawyer, and in the summer of '32 he and Gardner C. Means gained international recognition for their book The Modern Corporation and Private Property. Berle was an impudent young rebel whom financiers feared because he "knew the ropes" of their dealings and was bold enough to expose them. For instance, in their book, he and Means proved that 38% of all American business wealth was concentrated in the hands of two hundred gigantic corporations. As a Columbia professor of Corporation Law since 1927 as well as retaining his own law practice, Berle refused to accept a federal position under Roosevelt. It might have been beneficial, however, if he had because half of every week during "The Hundred Days" found him at the White House. Realizing how much business ethics hinged on the profit motive, Professor Berle envisioned the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, through a series of codes and price-fixing, as the pivotal organization in creating a new moral climate for business. Agreeing with Moley that free enterprise was basically sound, "he differed . . . however, in arguing that it was necessary to fasten upon businessmen responsibilities which they could be made to fulfill."⁵⁹ This conviction, coupled with his legal background in corporation law, created for Adolf A. Berle, Jr. the post of unofficial legislation drafter. It is his influence that is manifest in much of the alphabet soup of "The Hundred Days"--NRA, SEC, etc.

"Rexford Tugwell, a curly haired, good-looking Columbia professor" rounded out the Brain Trust core.⁶⁰ In his two economic works, The Industrial Discipline and the Governmental Arts and Industry's Coming of Age, Tugwell created for himself a reputation as a liberal, possibly even a radical. It is some of Tugwell's basic theories about industry that provided the substance for Roosevelt's Commonwealth Address, which is rated as his most concrete statement of New Deal philosophy. In the March, 1933, issue of The New Outlook Forrest Davis dissected Tugwell's bluntly phrased "Discourse in Depression." Although he concluded with pessimistic fear that Tugwell might lead F.D.R. and the nation into "socialized state capitalism," it is doubtful whether Tugwell can really be interpreted as the champion of left wing radicalism. Tugwell, in his book Industry's Coming of Age, stated his own philosophy in terms similar to the mildly unconventional Berle and Moley.

Government controls ought to be brought to bear where voluntary ones break down, where, in fact, the interests of the public conflict with those of a super-coordinated industry.⁶¹

To industry and business tycoons this might smack of communism, but to most Americans under the plague of Depression it seemed more like an attempt to place the common good above private interests.

In reality Tugwell's rhetoric bespoke more radicalism than he could ever have been able to implement in practice. As speech writer and agricultural trouble-shooter, he was often unhappily tempered by Roosevelt, Moley, Berle, or one of the Democratic politicians who constantly measured the public pulse. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. summarized the Brain Trusters' roles in The Coming of the New Deal:

Where Moley was ready to trust business leaders as they were, Berle could trust them only as they might be-- . . . To Tugwell, even Berle's vision of a regenerated business community seemed utopian.

But, whatever the differences--and they were already growing--Moley, Berle, and Tugwell shared the passionate belief that the economic order had to be conceived as an organism⁶² and not as a battlefield.

While these three men comprised the core of the Brain Trust, it would be inaccurate to say that Roosevelt relied on no other professionals. Conservative Professors H. Parker Willis and James Harvey Rogers as well as the unorthodox educators Irving Fisher and George Warren attended Albany planning sessions in the spring of 1932. Likewise, Roosevelt invited utility expert James Bonbright, public administration student Schuyler Wallace, and noted monetary genius John Maynard Keynes to have personal interviews with him concerning their areas of specialty. Tugwell described one such meeting:

By midnight, when the time came to dash for the train to New York; Sam, "Doc"(O'Connor), and I would be done in; the visitor(who would not realize for some days, in most cases, that he had been squeezed dry) would look a trifle wilted; and the Governor, scorning further questions, would be making pronouncements on the subject we had been discussing, waving his cigarette holder to emphasize his points.⁶³

One man deserves special mention in any study of the Brain Trust and he is Samuel I. Rosenman, the man with the envelopes of facts. Having first joined F.D.R. aboard the Hoboken ferry during the gubernatorial race of 1928, Rosenman remained a close advisor, confidante, and chief speech writer throughout the early days of Roosevelt's presidency. Yet, Rosenman

credits his boss, Roosevelt himself, as his teacher:

He showed Rosenman the art of converting a dull sheaf of facts into a political speech--how to make a speech sparkle with wit and irony, how to turn statistics into a broadside without seeming to use statistics, how to gird details around a central dramatic theme.⁶⁴

Since medium often set the tone for the content of the message, Rosenman deserves a place as first man on the Brain Trust second squad. Moley, Berle, and Tugwell provided the facts which Rosenman (often assisted by Tugwell) wove into rhetorically convincing speeches and radio messages.

A thin thread of continuity has run through these pages and that is contained in the meaning of the term "advisor." The most important member of the Brain Trust was Roosevelt himself. As Rosenman so succinctly summarized it:

The President would listen and he would argue. When the reasons had all been given, and he had heard all our own arguments, it was he who would make the final decision.⁶⁵

If the Brain Trust was not given free reign in the intellectual realm, then the theory of a conglomerate intelligence behind the throne is weakened. F.D.R. used his advisors extensively, but what degree of influence did they have in the final analysis? Were they political cronies or sidekicks? Obviously not! Were they competent, thinking economists and lawyers? Unquestionably yes! Were they merely "yes men"? All evidence seems to indicate "no." In the end Moley bolted, Tugwell wrote (After Seven Years) of being thwarted in liberal endeavors, and Berle's R.F.C. dream never materialized. Human tensions and ideological disagreements arose among this inner circle and multiplied as the ring widened. Moley and Rosenman both

agreed that Roosevelt selected professors with points of view akin to his own to comprise his inner circle.⁶⁶ This only seems to be good common sense. A leader weak in economics, or any field, would undoubtedly choose professionals to advise him whose basic beliefs were in line with his own individual morals and ideals. The genius of the Brain Trust is not so much in their similarities, but in their conflicting interests and personalities. Roosevelt was a master at playing opposing sides off against each other. Through this practice and brainstorming sessions described earlier, he gained brief, general overviews and insights into the options open to him. The White House staff, the Brain Trusters, in particular, all proposed ideas to the President, but the buck stopped at F.D.R.'s desk. No one can doubt that he listened, learned, and weighed their thoughts carefully. However, Franklin Delano Roosevelt was the president and the people had elected him to make their decisions. As Tugwell stated it:

If after their service the members of the Brains Trust of 1932 had been inclined to overmagnify their contributions to the New Deal (as I think I may say they were not), ample evidence that they were merely helpers⁶⁷ existed in Franklin's already formulated program.

CONCLUSION: "History" Scrutinizes the Tangible and the Spiritual.

Conclusion: "History" Scrutinizes the Tangible and the Spiritual.

The "coals of disputation" surrounding the fire of "The Hundred Days" have been kept live by historians. Nor does this thesis douse them with the liquid of certitude. If history were merely the recounting of dates and facts, then surely conclusions can be gleaned from the concise narration of "Hundred Days" legislation in Chapter One. It is precisely because of the less tangible elements set forth in Chapter Two that the March 4th to June 16th, 1933, period remains so controversial.

Why study that isolated 105 day period? What makes this four month span of Roosevelt's twelve year administration so historically important? Here, packed within the dynamism and legislative whirlwind of four months is the prototype of the five years which followed. In miniature "The Hundred Days" was the New Deal. Within its borders were all the elements, both tangible and spiritual, which made the first Age of Roosevelt such a controversial period in American History. The rapid-fire, often contradictory battery of legislation; the almost daily memos, executive orders, and speeches from the White House; the optimistic charism of F.D.R. himself, buoyed up by the competent expertise of the Brain Trust; all these churned together produced a resurrection of the American spirit, new hope, new dignity, Historian Henry Steele Commager, in conjunction with R. B. Morris, captures the meaning of these "Hundred Days," of the New Deal as a whole, and in particular of this thesis in his own flamboyant style:

It is the stuff of good history, this--a leadership that was buoyant and dynamic; a large program designed to enable the government to catch up with a generation of lag and solve the problems that crowded upon it; a people quickened into resolution and self-confidence; a nation brought to realize its responsibilities and its potentialities. How it lends itself to drama! The sun rises on a stricken field; the new leader raises the banner and waves it defiantly at the foe; his followers crowd about him, armies of recruits emerge from the shadows and throng into the ranks; the bands play, the flags wave, the army moves forward, and soon the sound of battle and the shouts of victory are heard in the distance.

In perspective we can see that it was not quite like that, but that was the way it seemed at the time.⁶⁸

FOOTNOTES

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²Wallace E. Davies, The New Deal Interpretations (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1964), p. 3.

³Leuchtenburg, Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, p. 2.

⁴Davies, The New Deal Interpretations, p. 5.

⁵Leuchtenburg, Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, p. 18: a quote taken from Harold Clurman's Fervent Years (New York, 1957), pp. 107, 112.

⁶Davies, The New Deal Interpretations, p. 21: a quote from H. L. Mencken.

⁷Ibid., p. 61.

⁸Ibid., p. 22: a quote from Walt Lippman in The New York Herald Tribune.

⁹Anne O'Hare McCormack, "Roosevelt's View of the Big Job," The New Deal, edited by Carl Degler (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970), p. 55.

¹⁰Gerald D. Nash, ed., Great Lives Observed: Franklin Delano Roosevelt (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967), p. 103: a quote from Al Smith.

¹¹Carl Degler, ed., The New Deal, p. 24: a quote from John M. Keynes.

¹²Will Rogers, "Will Rogers Says," The South Bend Tribune, March 6, 1933, p. 1.

¹³Wilson Follett, "The Forgotten Man to His President," The Atlantic Monthly (151, March, 1933), pp. 256, 259, 260.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 262.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 263.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 266.

¹⁷The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, compiled by Samuel I. Rosenman (New York: Random House, 1938), p. 11.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 5.

²⁰Davies, The New Deal Interpretations, p. 44.

- ²¹Ibid., p. 41.
- ²²Richard Hofstadter, The American Political Tradition (New York: "Vintage Books," Random House, Inc., 1948), p. 330: a quote from F.D.R.'s "Commonwealth Speech."
- ²³Leuchtenburg, Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, p. 18.
- ²⁴The Public Papers . . . , p. 22.
- ²⁵Ibid., p. 49.
- ²⁶Ibid., pp. 61-65.
- ²⁷Ibid., p. 66.
- ²⁸Elliott Roosevelt, compiler, F.D.R., His Personal Letters, 1928-1945 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1950), vo. I, p. 342.
- ²⁹Leuchtenburg, Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, p. 120: a quote from Joseph E. Davies.
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- ³¹Leuchtenburg, Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, p. 121.
- ³²The Public Papers, p. 83.
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- ³⁴Carl N. Degler, editor, The New Deal (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970), p. 24: a quote from John Maynard Keynes.
- ³⁵William E. Leuchtenburg, editor, Franklin D. Roosevelt, A Profile (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), p. ix of Introduction.
- ³⁶Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., The Age of Roosevelt, The Coming of the New Deal (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1958), pp. 584-585.
- ³⁷James MacGregor Burns, Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox (New York: "Harvest Books" of Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1956), p. 157: a quote from Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes.
- ³⁸Leuchtenburg, Franklin D. Roosevelt, A Profile, p. 15: a quote from Henry Morgenthau.
- ³⁹Paul Keith Conkin, The New Deal (New York: Crowell Company, 1968), pp. 10-11.

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⁴¹Burns, Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox, p. 334.

⁴²Ibid., pp. 403-404.

⁴³McCormack, "Roosevelt's View of the Big Job," p. 63.

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⁴⁷Nash, Great Lives Observed, p. 85: a quote from Eleanor Roosevelt in F.D.R.: Personal Letters, 1905-1928, pp. 523-525.

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⁵²Schlesinger, Jr., The Age of Roosevelt: The Coming of the New Deal, p. 15.

⁵³Forrest Davis, "Behind the New Deal," The New Outlook(191, March, 1933), p. 13.

⁵⁴Rexford G. Tugwell, The Democratic Roosevelt(Baltimore: Penguin Books, Inc., 1957), p. 150.

⁵⁵Burns, Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox, p. 155.

⁵⁶Davis, "Behind the New Deal," p. 15.

⁵⁷Daniel R. Fusfeld, The Economic Thought of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Origins of the New Deal(New York: Columbia University Press, 1954), p. 216.

⁵⁸Burns, Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox, p. 154.

⁵⁹Schlesinger, Jr., The Age of Roosevelt: The Coming of the New Deal, p. 182.

⁶⁰Burns, Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox, p. 153.

⁶¹Fusfeld, The Economic Thought of Franklin D. Roosevelt, p. 214:
a quote from Rexford G. Tugwell in Industry's Coming of Age, p. 224.

⁶²Schlesinger, Jr., The Age of Roosevelt: The Coming of the New Deal,
p. 184.

⁶³Fusfeld, The Economic Thought of Franklin D. Roosevelt, p. 218:
a quote from Rexford G. Tugwell in After Seven Years, pp. 20-21.

⁶⁴Burns, Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox, p. 103.

⁶⁵Fusfeld, The Economic Thought of Franklin D. Roosevelt, p. 209:
a quote from Samuel I. Rosenman in Working With Roosevelt, p. 9.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Rexford G. Tugwell, The Democratic Roosevelt, p. 150.

⁶⁸Leuchtenburg, Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, p. x of the
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