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Repository Citation
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The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt with a Special Introduction and Explanatory Notes by President Roosevelt, compiled and collated by Samuel I. Rosenman. The MacMillan Company, 1941. Four volumes.

These public papers and addresses are at one and the same time the biography of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the history of the United States during one, if not the most critical, fast-moving and importantly determinative period of the nation. The collection is by virtue of the method of selection, the editorship, and the supervision, as well as the summaries in the introductions, more of an autobiography. In the introductions the interpretation of his own actions by the man himself is found. The story is pricked out by selected deeds. Actions give the picture. The series flashes before the eye and flows through the mind like a movie. The time is now. There is no perspective. There is no seasoning. The thousand bits have not fallen into place. Some of us when children have possessed or seen a crystal ball which, when violently moved, showed a multitude of particles in chaos but which later quietly settled into a beautifully tranquil and happy scene. The giant Roosevelt has shaken America politically, economically, socially, and has placed the country in a new place in the international firmament. What will be the situation when the settling-down process is complete—only a mystic might care to comment upon. Certainly these years of America are Roosevelt, one and inseparate, and the history of the era will of necessity be a chronicle of his life.

A proper review of these volumes should contain evaluations by a top-line scientist, psychologist, sociologist, economist, and what-have-you. The ordinary reviewer is aghast and remains so at the size, scope, and depth of this extraordinary collection. The set of four volumes, comprising in all some 2,721 pages, purports to cover the second presidential administration. In the 1937 volume, the sixth volume of the entire series and the first of the 1941 publication now under consideration, a topical table is found which is a valuable adjunct to the use of the books. By reference to this table, one topic may be pursued through the four volumes. Twenty-nine major heads are found in this topical table which is
followed by a more detailed suggestive word index. This table refers the reader to what are numbered as *items* of the compilation. A glance at this table alone astounds the examiner and brings the thought that only a super-man could have the intellectual and physical energy to give personal attention to as many and as varied problems. Furthermore, can even a genius keep perspective under such demands?

The first but lasting impression gained from this work is that conditions in America continue to engender more and more power in her President and that the popular concept of the President's *duties* develops accordingly. Certainly it has not been through fault but virtue and necessity that this is so; but in examining this compilation with any idea of observance of trends, the force of the comments of a generation of political scientists strikes anew. To those who best love the man Roosevelt come fears of his sometime successor, if the latter be either knave or weakling, and the wish that some plan of "division of labor" might be formulated and incorporated into the American plan, not to make of our President a figurehead, certainly not to make of our President a dictator, voluntary or otherwise, but to institute some system of relief from an inhuman and unintelligent burdening of the office.

As a matter even of conservation and humanitarianism, it seems that the popular desires of a democracy should not be permitted to so wear down the resources of a man, human after all, with what in some instances are matters which appear to be of little *comparative* importance. For example, item 14 (page 67 of the 1937 volume) is entitled "A Typical Appointment of a Board to Investigate Disputes Between Railroads and Employees Under the Railway Labor Act. Proclamation No. 2224. February 8, 1937," and item 16 (page 72 of the 1937 volume) is entitled "The President Urges the Congress to Adopt a Program for the Future of the Great Plains Area. February 10, 1937." In between these matters of major importance is item 15 (page 70 of the 1937 volume) entitled "The President Invites the Boy Scouts to a Jamboree in Washington. February 8, 1937." The President says, "Fellow Scouts:" et cetera, and the reader can feel the genial and beneficent force exerted to give these boys the treat of their lives by personally appearing and guiding future nation makers or breakers along a true American way. Conceding the fineness, the importance of the Boy Scout movement, should this type of thing be a necessary presidential duty, and can the chief executive do it day in and day out? Must he not have time and quiet to confer,
to think, to read, to meditate on plans, many of which are so far reaching that the whole course of civilization may be changed in their confection?

In some instances the check of the veto power seems to be necessarily used in matters which should not reach the President at all unless he is to be regarded as official "buck receiver!" Item 84 (page 409 of the 1938 volume) finds the President writing a detailed explanation of why he so wisely vetoed "An Act to authorize the coinage of 50-cent pieces in commemoration of the four-hundredth anniversary of the journey and explorations of Francisco de Coronado," a random illustration of the need of the President's intervention to stop Congress in this instance from having commemorative coins made for sponsoring organizations to sell at a profit. The striking of medals was suggested by the President as a substitute! Such illustrations might be multiplied even in this selected sampling documentation of presidential activity.

The President as a politician—the popular man, the President as pater—the democrat, the genial and clever man of the press conference, master of repartee and the American wise-crack—this picture is stamped on the compilation. The 1940 volume records the 710th Press Conference of the President. During one term only, the second, our President issued 6,420 Proclamations and Executive Orders (pages 557-619 of the 1937 volume).

All this and—too, the most comprehensive and far-reaching planning yet on record in regard to the economic and social problems of the nation plus by far the most critical international situation with which America has yet had to cope! Necessarily all of these issues cannot be discussed here. However, it is impossible to refrain from comment on the Rooseveltian era of human relations, characterized by the greatest revival of a practical doctrine of the brotherhood of man for almost two thousand years. Little of this doctrine has been crystallized into any permanent structure in comparison with its broad conception. Perhaps the war interrupted. Perhaps it is impossible to legislate the most important principles of such a philosophy. Perhaps the economic mould which holds much human misery cannot be broken by one stroke even of a genius but must be eroded by the waves of generations. Certainly tremendous gains were made, however. It seems strange that there could be those in a so-called Christian nation opposed on any ground to the plans of Roosevelt for the underprivileged.
Certainly, whatever may come from the pens of future commentators, they will write in praise of this one widespread effort to change the status of the forgotten men and women of America. Censure there has been, however, not only of means but even of end.

The President succinctly states his distinction between the nature of a dole and a W.P.A. program in his 470th Press Conference: "... the object of work relief as distinguished from the dole is to give wages for work instead of just enough money to keep body and soul together without work."2 Stories, like cartoons of an era, depict graphically much of the underlying temper and philosophy of a people. One of the hundreds of the Rooseveltian period tells of two Southern negroes discussing the question of who was the greatest man. The first stated that it was undoubtedly Jesus because He said "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest." The second responded that it was Franklin D. Roosevelt because he said "Set where you is and I will bring you de rest."

An interesting and significant factor of the work under review is the entitlement of the volumes—the keynote struck by those responsible for the study. The first volume is labelled The Constitution Prevails. Obviously the Supreme Court fight is inferred, which is made doubly clear in the President's introduction to this volume which he devotes almost exclusively to the Court issue. He speaks of his efforts in this matter and their results as "among the most important domestic achievements of my first two terms of office." Mr. Laski considers the Court fight one of the two major Rooseveltian mistakes.4 Perhaps the President protests too much regarding the matter to convince his most ardent admirers that he was entirely happy about this most controversial chapter of his administration. A note of what might be termed bitterness appears in this introduction. A slight temperature of battle heat is felt. The President speaks of the "dead hand"—the torturing rather than the interpreting of the Constitution—of the fact that "one man—not elected by the people—who by a nod of the head could apparently nullify or uphold the will of the overwhelming majority of a nation of 130,000,000 people."

The President is fair. While the title of the volume smacks a

2. 1938 vol., p. 405.
3. 1937 vol., p. lxvii.
5. 1937 vol., p. lxvii.
bit of truth by the affirmation process, the introduction contains this paragraph:

"Whether this change came as a result of the election returns of 1936, whether it came as a result of my message, whether it came as a result of public discussion during the course of the fight, or a combination of all these—those are important questions for the later historians of the period. These need not be discussed here."

The second or 1938 volume is entitled *The Continuing Struggle for Liberalism* and the President's introduction fearlessly defends the congressional and party fight which he took to the people. His own conviction is heartening to the reader. He believed he was right in what Mr. Laski considers his second big mistake and he went ahead. He scores those souls who said they believed in the objective but stuck at the means and yet offered no better method. A worthy blow at many good lawyer-democrats among those "yes, but—fellows" as the President terms them! Mr. Roosevelt says: "My participation in these primary campaigns was slurringly referred to, by those who were opposed to liberalism, as a 'purge,'"—Mr. Laski's word, incidentally, in his review of these volumes in the April, 1942, issue of the University of Chicago Law Review.

The third and fourth volumes are entitled respectively *War—and Neutrality* and *War—and Aid to Democracies*, and the introductions are devoted to a summary of events leading to war with a marked increase of condemnation in the paper dated July 10, 1941, of the actions of the leaders of the nations with which we are now openly and actively engaged in combat. To comment at this date upon the Roosevelt foreign policy would be shortsightedly stupid as well as in bad taste because the wisdom, justice, or intelligence of actions during 1939-1940-early 1941 will have to be evaluated and adjudged by another generation. There are those who conscientiously believed without in any way impugning their leaders' motives that our foreign policy led us toward war which might have been averted in an honorable and intelligent course. There are those who conscientiously believed that their leaders were stupidly slow in not sooner precipitating a struggle that was inevitable. Doubtless these points of view will also split

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6. 1937 vol., p. lxvi.
7. Supra note 4.
8. 1938 vol., p. xxi.
9. Supra note 4.
the ranks of future commentators. At this time it ill becomes
anyone to be egotistical enough to attempt to be so omniscient as
to point out which, if either, course of action was the right or
unpatriotic, or cowardly enough to quibble over what might have
been when Americans are all together, one for all and all for one,
in what is.

It is noteworthy that the President did not discuss the third
term matter in his introduction to the 1940 volume though his
message to Senator Barkley, the Permanent Chairman of the
Democratic Convention in Chicago on July 19, 1940, was included
in the selections for the 1940 volume, as were the labelled cam-
paign addresses and thanks for congratulatory messages upon re-
election. Certainly the election for the third term of a President
of the United States is one of the most important, near structural-
changing events of the era. The debates on this controversy, en-
tirely aside and apart from the man and the times, will doubtless
reverberate down the pages of American government and politics
because the event was indeed a marker. In such a series, of
course, an expression of the innermost thoughts of the President
could not be included and is missed, leaving the reader curious
about the epochmaker’s own feelings as a number one student of
American government.

President Roosevelt is his own advocate in the introductions
to these volumes and in his approval of the selections of the in-
clusions. The work is said to be more for the service of posterity
than for use by contemporaries. Whether his advocacy will help
or hurt him in the evaluations by future historians or whether he
will be adjudged great or near-great or not great is a matter of
very little interest now to the overwhelming numbers of his sin-
cere devotees who rely upon him alone to lead them to green
pastures beside the still waters of a victorious peace.

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Pp. vii, 64.

In this little volume, containing a series of lectures delivered
before the three Associated Colleges of Claremont, Mr. Shepard-