LILIENTHAL, DAVID
C. 1945 - 50
May 22, 1945

Dear Mr. Lilienthal:

Many thanks for letting me see the Australian letter. It is fine that my husband could help so many to new strength.

Very sincerely yours,
May 17, 1945

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

Your letter of May 11 means a good deal to me, and I prize and treasure it.

It is heart-warming to see how much clearer the people's idea of what the President had in mind in TVA is coming to be understood. Indeed, the interest and growing understanding of the entire South in other parts of the country is a heartening omen. The fact that the Southern Conference for Human Welfare (on whose Board I believe you sit) has a New York branch is a fragment of the evidence to that effect.

I am to be the guest of the Southern Conference in New York soon, and I find it encouraging to feel that there are enough people in New York City who feel a sense of responsibility to know about the South and to seek to be its good neighbor, to justify a New York chapter of such an organization.

I have just received a letter from Australia about the President and TVA that is quite moving and the reading of which I feel sure will please you. I am, therefore, enclosing a copy.

Very cordially yours,

[Signature]

David E. Lilienthal
Chairman

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt
Hyde Park
New York

DEL.jcg
To David E. Lilienthal  
Chairman, Tennessee Valley Authority  

Dear Mr. Lilienthal:

I am moved to write to you as a result of two outstanding occurrences, which have affected me deeply.

First. The reading of your book, 'Democracy On The March'.

Second, The passing of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

In order that you may more fully appreciate why I should write to you, I am forwarding a copy of 'American Trails', which describes a portion of my life spent as a hobo in your Country. While mostly a story of hardship, those years have been the means of acquiring a deep and lasting affection, not only for Americans, but for all mankind.

Long ago, I read Edward Bellam's 'Looking Backward' also 'Equality', and was greatly stirred. Through the depression I witnessed the unselfishness of people brought together through common suffering. I was privileged to watch Franklin Roosevelt, as step by step, he proved that man indeed may be fine.

He became my friend, and until this morning, sat with my wife and I, at our table. He accompanied us on our walks together, and worked with us in our garden, or just quietly remained in the background, shedding rays of sustaining strength, during my weaker moments.

He is gone, this friend, yet his spirit will remain with us, but this is a weak moment, and I am impelled to cry out asking; Will that spirit remain with the world as a potent force, in holding at bay, those evils which threaten the near future?

In the midst of such thoughts as these, I turned again to your book, and reading passages to my wife, gained a measure of comfort. Franklin Roosevelt, in truth would appear, as a representative of human potentialities for Good.
The work of the T.V.A. as you have described it, the motivating spirit, the methods, the results, confirm this. I am writing, because I feel that you may be heartened a little, to learn how vitally T.V.A. has affected me, one of the workers, far away.

Mr. Roosevelt stimulated in me an urge to Do something. To be active. To help. Your account of T.V.A. has further stimulated this urge, fast becoming a passion.

Some day, perhaps I shall visit your valley, or should I say, 'Our Valley'.

My deep felt good wishes go with you in the carrying on of this great work, which well may prove to be the foundation of a new world, such as The President envisiaged, when in 1943, he broad-cast this prayer.

"God of the free, we pledge our hearts and lives to the cause of all free mankind.

Our earth is but a small star, in a great universe, yet of it we can make, if we choose, a planet unvexed by war, untroubled by hunger or fear, and undivided by senseless distinctions of race color or theory.

Grant us that courage and fore-seeing to begin this task today, that our children, may be proud of the name of Man."

/S/ John B. Murray
MR. DAVID E. LILIENTHAL. Chairman of the Tennessee Valley Authority, author of "TVA DEMOCRACY ON THE MARCH," commenting on the pamphlet "PLAN ELECTRICITY FOR WALES," has said:

"I was particularly impressed with the fact that it is emphasized that 'in Wales too, electrical and economic problems are indivisible,' that the life of the Welsh people cannot be split up into compartments and that 'no venture' can be successful unless our people participate.

How good it is to read such statements from a far away country, and thus to realize once again how universal are the fundamentals of life and of human aspiration.

'TVA FOR WALES.' Obtainable through booksellers, or from the Welsh Party Offices, Caernarfon. Tel. 217. 6d. each; by Post 7d per dozen 4 s. 6d. post free.

Design Dewi Prys Thomas
FOREWORD

In "Plan Electricity for Wales" we tried to give our countrymen, of all political parties, facts which we believed they would recognise as having a vital bearing on the Wales we all desire. We acknowledge gratefully the generous response which came from men and women of all parties. Indeed, many were already thinking on parallel lines. Nor is this surprising for most of our evidence came from TVA, and, as its Chairman says in the newly issued Penguin "TVA Democracy on the March," the changes taking place in Tennessee are much the same as men all over the world are seeking. Technical problems are much the same too. TVA is recognised as a symbol of man's capacity to create.

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MAPS

Area administered by the Tennessee Valley Authority and Wales
(drawn to same scale)
TVA FOR WALES

THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

"You of the Tennessee Valley are living today as you will not be living 25 years hence. Your lives are going to be changed, first of all by electricity. Then you are going to be changed by the responsibilities of operating this electricity. This will make your co-operative, forward-looking, and hopeful of the future where now your only hope lies in the beyond."

So wrote E. A. Woods in 1935, two years after U.S. Congress created TVA. But only 8 years later, in 1943, a Tennessee editor could say:

"we can write of great dams ... of the building of home grown industry, and of electricity at last coming to the farms and the Valley. Yet the significant advance has been made in the thinking of the people. They are no longer afraid. They can stand now ... and say if industry doesn't come into the Valley, then we'll build our own industry. This they are doing today."

Tennessee of 1933 was a depressed region: rich enough in natural resources, but impoverished by wasteful exploitation and lack of foresight. Copper, for instance, was mined and refined in a way which ruined large tracts of agricultural land. Coal and iron industries, among the most important developments of the region, were stagnant. Timber was destroyed. Farms were becoming derelict. And accompanying and aggravating the agricultural and industrial collapse came soil erosion and flood.

ENTER THE TVA

Even before spectacular flooding of the Valley drew attention to its deterioration, the U.S.A. Congress had, as far back as 1899, considered a combined scheme of a canal and power station. "That the receipts from power should be made to cover the costs of the improvements so far as practicable, was stated in clear terms."

This, and several later schemes, failed to materialise, and it was the need for finding a use for two war-time nitrate plants which brought the matter to a head.

After several unsuccessful attempts it was realised that a satisfactory solution meant co-ordinating power, water control, and activities for stimulating trade and agriculture in one general programme, and, in 1933, President Roosevelt emphasised this as a necessity for a better distribution and diversification of industry, and for a revitalised agriculture.

*Report of Joint Committee Investigating TVA, 1939.
Dear Mr. Lilienthal:

I deeply appreciate your letter and all you say about my husband.

The TVA was always very important to my husband and to me and what it has accomplished and what it will accomplish, will be a lasting monument to my husband and to you and the others who carried out his ideas so efficiently.

If ever you are near here, do come and see me, or if you are to be in New York City, I would be glad to come in town to meet you.

With many thanks and every good wish, I am,

Very cordially yours,

Mr. David E. Lilienthal
TVA
Knoxville, Tennessee
Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

Many times in the past three weeks I have tried to write you some adequate expression of what the death of the President meant to me. Now I have come to realize that I shall not be able to put it into words. For into TVA, and what it could mean to men, he had embodied all of himself—all the dreams and vision and force of character and love of his fellow man that made Franklin Roosevelt a unique and never-to-be-forgotten leader. And it is that flash of insight known as TVA that it has been my great good fortune to try to transform into reality in men's lives in this Valley. No wonder I feel his going so deeply that the pain is still as sharp and immediate as it was on that terrible afternoon in April.

The test of his leadership, so far as TVA is concerned, came with the war. For the war meant that he no longer should be asked to devote the time or energy he gave to TVA in the earlier years. The idea itself, and the steps toward making it real had to stand or fall on its merits. The last time I went to the President with a TVA problem was in June of 1940, when the fall of France made it clear that TVA must be converted to war. It was a great deprivation to do so, but from that time on I took care not to increase his burdens by carrying troubles to him that we could somehow work out ourselves. He had started something so true, so strong, that despite the fact that we could not have a share of his genius, as we had earlier; to guide us, the work went on and developed.

That thought helps me to keep up my spirits as I view a future in which never again will I be able to sit at his desk and get renewed strength and understanding from his counsel and warm friendliness. We must go it alone. And we will; he built a good foundation, and the Valley will remember and carry on.

President Truman recognizes all this, I believe, and has every intention of helping us to carry forward Franklin Roosevelt's purposes in respect to TVA. My talk with him the other day reassured me.

I appreciate very much what you said in "My Day" about my reappointment by President Truman. I assure you I shall try hard to continue to merit your trust, and that of
the amazingly large number of people who write me, who realize how important an issue TVA represents.

You can imagine how it warmed my heart to read a letter the President wrote not long before his death to Congressman Kefauver concerning TVA and my part in it. The Congressman has just released it; this I am enclosing. That President Roosevelt took pride in my part in this work is a great comfort now.

TVA has gone a long way, in the development of new applications of democracy. It would mean a good deal to me to have a chance to talk to you about this, sometime when you have the time. Also, you would be fascinated to hear of the worldwide interest in TVA; (a booklet "TVA for Wales" has just come in the mail); in the fact that my book has been or is in process of being translated into 20 languages; that visitors are coming from all over the world (a group of Iranians were just here in my office, a group of Yugoslavs arrive in a day or two—and so it goes).

The influence of the President’s great flash of insight and understanding of human affairs and of nature is being felt, in TVA as in so many other things, wherever men aspire for a better life. I feel a personal obligation, of the highest order, not to fail the great man and warm friend who reposed such trust in me, and who gave me the priceless opportunity of working for my country.

Faithfully,

David E. Lilienthal
Chairman

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Enclosure

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt
Hyde Park
New York