

March 4, 1937  
[Victory Dinner Address]

FDR Speech File

Speech 3/4/37 Victory Dinner  
Washington  
Circumstances. Rushing  
invitation by Sumner Chase who was going to  
send it in a letter to the Times that  
Tommy got him to give it to us.

conducting this dinner  
parts of the Nation,  
and that I am speaking  
not as the repre-

sentative of all Americans who have faith in political and  
economic democracy.

This occasion celebrates more than a party victory, more  
than mere electoral success. It marks the significance of the  
approval by an overwhelming majority of citizens of all parties  
of the high purpose and the unresisting efforts with which an  
administration directed by the Democratic party has met the  
unprecedented conditions of four crucial years.

Our party victory is all the more significant because  
it was truly a national and popular victory. It was not a  
sectional victory nor a victory which came from compromises and  
bargains. The approval came from forty-six out of forty-eight  
states.

It was a response to the humanity of a government that could



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From the Papers of  
SAMUEL I. ROSENTHAL

DRAFT #2

Although the Democratic party is conducting this dinner in Washington, and similar dinners in many parts of the Nation, to signalize last November's election, I feel that I am speaking tonight not only as the head of that party but as the representative of all Americans who have faith in political and economic democracy.

This occasion celebrates more than a party victory, more than mere electoral success. It marks the significance of the approval by an overwhelming majority of citizens of all parties of the high purpose and the unrelenting efforts with which an Administration directed by the Democratic party has met the unprecedented conditions of four crucial years.

Our party victory is all the more significant because it was truly a national and popular victory. It was not a sectional victory nor a victory which came from compromises and bargains. The approval came from forty-six out of forty-eight states.

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understand that the problems of the Nation are the problems of the average men and women who make up the Nation.

It was a response to the clear-sightedness of a government that could see the Nation as essentially one -- and the welfare of each section and each group of citizens as the concern and the welfare of every section and every group of citizens.

It was a response to the common sense of a government that could appreciate the importance of purchasing power in our inter-related economy -- that could see how the purchasing power of the city dweller fixed the market price of the farmer's produce -- how the purchasing power of the farmer fixed the wages of the industrial worker -- how the prosperity of all the rest of the population depended upon the prosperity of these two great producing groups.

And above all it was a response of faith on the part of millions who had never had faith, or who had lost faith, in the promises of political parties and in the effectiveness of the democratic process -- that at last a political leadership had been found which would keep



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its promises to those who believed that democracy could be made to work.

And as the sum of all these responses, the Democratic Party, once a minority party, is today the majority party by the greatest majority any party ever had.

It will remain the majority party only so long as it continues to justify those responses -- only so long as it continues to make democracy work.

You and I remember much of the propaganda and many of the epithets which were used last Summer and Autumn. For a few short months thereafter we breathed more freely because the extravagance of abuse seemed to have been tempered. Today, however, the tumult and the shouting have broken forth anew and they should reassure those who placed their confidence in us. Why? Because it is the best evidence that we have begun to keep our promises and remove the obstacles to the working of democracy.

A few days ago, a distinguished member of Congress came to see me to talk about national problems in general and about the



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the modern needs of humanity -- a Nation which has proved that the democratic form and methods of national government can work and will work."

"I have only three and a half short years left to do what I can do for this Nation. I want to get as much done as I can. But at any rate I do not want to leave this Nation to my successor in the condition in which Buchanan left it to Lincoln."

That ambition of mine for my successor, my friends, can well be the ambition of every citizen of the United States who wants the United States to be handed down intact to ~~his~~ his children and grandchildren.

I spoke to my friend in dead earnest and I speak to you tonight with equal earnestness. No one who sees as a whole the picture of this Nation and the world today can help but be in dead earnest. To the President of the United States there come every day thousands of messages of fact and thought, messages of appeal, of protest, of information, messages from



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rich and poor, from business man and farmer and factory employe and relief worker, messages from every nook and corner of our wide domain. And to the President of the United States come daily messages of the condition of affairs abroad.

America lies many thousand of miles away from scenes of turmoil on other Continents. But these messages tell me that on this hemisphere and within this Nation great human forces are at work



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**DRAFT #2**

in many of the ways in which those human forces have moved and are moving in other lands and that the machine age has given those forces wings.

The most striking feature of modern economics is the ever-accelerating speed with which these forces move.

Today, it is not transportation and communications and productive methods along which have speeded up. The needs of humanity along social and economic lines express themselves far more quickly -- the demand for them becomes crystallized far more quickly -- and the necessity for doing something about them is equally speeded up.

A century ago the movements of civilization were vastly slower. The issue of slavery, for example, took at least forty years -- two generations -- before it came to a head in the great Civil War between the States. In those days, all human surges in search of liberty and free government proceeded with equal slowness.

But today economic freedom for the wage earner and the



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farmer and the small business men cannot be delayed as long as  
personal freedom was for the slave.

It will not wait, like slavery, for forty years.



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*insert the bracketed part*

In the years that followed the World War in every civilized nation of the world the people themselves became conscious of the need for action to correct obvious abuses of society -- obvious failures to produce results by then existing governmental methods.

In some countries, the failure of the imperial or royalist form of government led to violent changes, overthrowing monarchy and replacing it with other methods. In other countries, the failure of the parliamentary form of government led to the establishment of open or disguised dictatorships. In still other nations, although the form of government remained unchanged, civil strife has flared up threats of upheaval persist.

There is a lesson to be learned from all this. All of these great changes have come from an insistent demand on the part of the people themselves that inaction, inefficiency, inability to bring economic and social order out of chaos be replaced by action and efficiency, even at the price of throwing the traditional form of government completely overboard.

Even democracy has failed in many lands. Why not admit it.



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But, in admitting it, let us say to ourselves with firmness and courage "Democracy has not failed in the United States -- more than that we do not purpose to let it fail." But in spite of that record and in spite of that purpose I cannot tell you with complete candor that in these past few years democracy in the United States has fully succeeded. Nor can I tell you what

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Because today no one knows what instruments its legal system will permit the American democracy to use to preserve itself.

many years before that. We think of that date as their beginning because it was the culmination of <sup>10-15</sup> years during which there had been no progressive improvement in our social and economic processes. Yet, during all those former years the demand and the need for social and economic reform, though not visible on the surface, were gathering power like a vast underground stream ready to burst forth and cover the land at the first opportunity.



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But, in admitting it, let us say to ourselves with firmness and courage "Democracy has not failed in the United States -- more than that we do not purpose to let it fail." But in spite of that record and in spite of that purpose I cannot tell you with complete candor that in these past few years democracy in the United States has fully succeeded. Nor can I tell you, under present circumstances, just where American democracy is headed or what it can do to direct itself. I can hope, but I cannot assure. *As we can assume gov. present A*  
There lies the challenge which we must meet.

What you and I loosely call the principles of the New Deal did not begin on the fourth of March, 1933. Their roots go back many years before that. We think of that date as their beginning because it was the culmination of *1910's* many years during which there had been no progressive improvement in our social and economic processes. Yet, during all those former years the demand and the need for social and economic reform, though not visible on the surface, were gathering power like a vast underground stream ready to burst forth and cover the land at the first opportunity.



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Let us specify. Ever since the World War the farmer of America had been facing ever-mounting troubles. He was losing his home and his farm. The prices of the crops he raised were at bankruptcy levels-- at the mercy of speculators and of world conditions over which he had no control.

We fulfilled our 1932 pledges to the farmer. As a national government we gave him the Agricultural Adjustment Act. As a national government we undertook to work out an agricultural economic program over a period of years under which his debts could be refinanced at lower interest cost, under which he could save his farm, under which the prices of his crops would be raised to a point nearer to parity with the level of earnings of other population groups. We undertook, as a national government, to curb the piling up of vast surpluses and, at the same time, to encourage the production of wholly adequate food and fibre supplies for the entire Nation. We undertook, as a national government, to increase farm export markets and lessen the evils of speculation. We did all this in full faith and confidence that because the very



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mature of our major crops make these articles of commerce between the States, the Congress of the United States had full constitutional authority to solve the economic problems of the Nation's agriculture.

That faith and confidence was embodied in the original A.A.A. statute. You know what happened to that statute.

Then in 1936 the Democratic Party pledged itself once more to attack the problem. We said -- all of us Democrats -- in our platform: "We have taken the farmers off the road to ruin \* \* \* he has been returned to the road to freedom and prosperity. We will keep him on that road."

And in the campaign we said: "Of course we will continue our efforts in behalf of the farmers of America. With their continued cooperation we will do all in our power to end the piling up of huge surpluses which spelled ruinous prices for their crops. We will persist in successful action for better land use, for reforestation, \* \* \* for better marketing facilities for farm commodities, for a definite reduction of farm tenancy, for en-



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encouragement of farmer cooperatives, for crop insurance and a stable food supply. For all these things we have only just begun to fight."

It is now the responsibility of all of us in whose democratic promises the agricultural population believed to carry forward that fight and not turn from it until those things have been done. Neither individually nor as a party can we flee or postpone that fight on advice of defeatist lawyers. But who can read together the Constitution and the equally authoritative opinion invalidating the AAA and tell us what we can safely do for agriculture in this session of Congress?

Let us look at our second great problem -- the industrial scene. The farmers were not the only people in distress in 1932. There were millions of workers in industry and in commerce who had lost their jobs, millions of young people who had never been able to find a first job, and even more millions



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whose jobs did not return them enough to live on, according to the standards we have come to consider adequate for the American family. Millions of children were working for practically nothing who should not be working at all. And the inability of all these millions to find work at decent wages constantly tended, by a vicious circle, to increase still further the number out of work in the shop and on the farm.

The Democratic Party made pledges to industry and labor in 1933, just as it did to the farmers. We made the gallant effort of the N.R.A. to reach all these problems at once, to raise wages, to reduce hours, to abolish child labor. We pledged a job instead of the Cole for every employable.

And as an indispensable part of an intelligent approach to this problem of unemployment, we tried to establish machinery for regularizing the relations between the employer and the employee before there would come upon us the threat of industrial warfare which might nip in the bud our efforts



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for continued recovery.

And what happened?

The N.R.A. was outlawed as was the child labor statute twenty years ago. The judicial nullification did not stop with a condemnation of legislative and administrative methods. It extended to a sweeping denial to the Congress of the right to exercise powers repeatedly declared in previous opinions to reside in the national government. And soon thereafter the Nation was told that although the Federal Government was powerless to touch this problem of hours and wages, the States were equally helpless and that we had to go on pretending to live in a no-man's land.

Court action has also rendered practically futile as an instrument in the great disputes that are now raging in the industrial field the machinery which we devised to prevent this warfare from ever arising. We hope that these laws may yet escape condemnation. But, in effect, to date they have been useless as a practical instrument because the attitude which

*would have  
covered the  
grounds, but  
the bridge under*

*What stops the machinery?*



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The courts have taken on so many other laws has made their legality uncertain.

In 1936, in addition to our platform pledges, you and I and all other Democrats promised this to the working man. "Of course we will continue to seek to improve working conditions for the workers of America -- to reduce hours overlong, to increase wages that spell starvation, to end the labor of children, to wipe out sweatshops.

"Of course we will provide useful work for the needy unemployed. For all these we have only just begun to fight."

And here again we cannot afford, either personally or as a



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*the Tennessee*  
party, to ~~sum up~~ *defeat it* from that fight on a series of lawyers.

During the course of the past four years we have been faced by natural disasters of flood and drought of unprecedented intensity. There have been times when it has not been too much to say that our productive land was being either blown away or washed away at a rate that might spell disaster even to this generation. And in the meantime the loss of life and of property values has been beyond anything we have known in our history. If ever there was a policy to which sound reasons of national interest compel us, it is to do our utmost to save our land from ruin and our people from the recurrence of disasters which modern engineering knows how to prevent. We made a beginning of that kind of prevention on an intelligent regional basis with the Tennessee Valley Authority. With only two of its seven projected dams completed there was little flood damage in the valley of the Tennessee this Spring.

But how can we safely either complete that project or extend the idea to the Ohio and other valleys while the validity of such



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operations is in such doubt in the highest courts of the Nation that the lowest courts do not hesitate to forbid its operations by injunctions. The Ohio River is not conversant with the Interstate Commerce Clause. But we shall never be safe as a people in our lives, in our property or in the heritage of our soil until we have somehow made the Interstate Commerce Clause take cognizance of the habits of the Ohio River and the Dust Bowl. In our campaign you and I and all Democrats did take cognizance of the Ohio River. We said: "Of course we will continue our efforts . . . for drought and flood control . . .". For these things we have only just begun to fight." Here, too, we cannot afford, either individually or as a party, to run away from that fight on advice of lawyers. Let them give their advice to the men piling sandbags on the dikes at Cairo.

The doubts created by decisions already rendered and the attitude of the courts in those decisions extend in some degree to almost everything else that we have promised to fight for -- help for the crippled, for the blind, for the mothers -- insurance



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... committee for the need -- protection of

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And as the American people understand performance of promises, we were pledged and in honor bound to carry on and win a fight for those things, the moment the election returns were complete - to begin that fight not sometime in the unpredictable future, but in the very next session of the Congress of the United States - and to finish that fight by January, 1941.



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I think they must mean to you, that the people themselves realize the increasing urgency that we get results. All over the world,



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for the unemployed -- security for the aged -- protection of the consumer against monopoly and speculation -- protection of the honest employer and business man against monopoly, unfair competition and dishonorable trade practices -- protection of the investor against unscrupulous promoters -- curbs on the over-redding power and the unholy practices of utility holding companies -- the wiping out of slums -- cheaper electricity in the homes and on the farms of America.

*part A*

For all these things we have promised and are in honor bound to begin and to win a fight.

In this fight, as the lawyers themselves say, time is of the essence. We have been arguing about these results as we have sought to attain them for nearly five years. Three elections have intervened during those five years, and in each of them, by increasing majority, the people have told us that they want us to attain these results. Those increasing majorities mean to me, and I think they must mean to you, that the people themselves realize the increasing urgency that we get results. All over the world,

events are moving with a rapidity we have never seen before. The risks of intervening events which may interfere with our economic plans are too great to take. We cannot afford to delay, and as your Chief Executive I am unwilling to take the responsibility of postponing the time when we can free from legal doubt those policies which have shown us the possibility of a permanently growing society on our old foundations, and which have successfully brought us through dangers, which other nations have not succeeded in avoiding.

We have found practical means to adapt the American way of life to the modern world. We must find a way to adapt the words of our law to that practical way of living. And we have got to do it now. Floods and droughts and strikes and agricultural surpluses cannot be handled forever on a temporary basis.

Here are all these farmers and workers looking to us for their promised relief. Now.

Here are farmers wondering whether next year's cotton, hog and wheat prices will meet their mortgage interest -- Now.



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Here are women laboring forty-eight hours a week in cotton mills for \$5 -- Now.

Here are children of school age working in mines and factories -- Now.

Here are <sup>greater strikes</sup> greater strikes than we have ever known, costing <sup>millions</sup> millions of dollars -- Now.

Here are Spring floods threatening to roll down our river valleys -- Now.

Here is the Dust Bowl beginning to blow again -- Now.

If we would keep faith with those who had faith in us, I think we must act -- Now.

I might also have said: "John, I have another ambition. It's not as great an ambition as that which I have for the country. But it's an ambition which as a life-long Democrat I do not believe unworthy. It's an ambition for the Democratic Party.

Today, it is the majority party enjoying national power, enjoying the enormous privilege of being allowed to lead in the



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solution of national problems. Over the greater part of its history, it has not been the majority party. It has found it hard to retain leadership by holding together very long the various sources of strength which made it at times the majority party. Some have said that it was inevitable that the Democratic Party follow this cycle of a short time in power and a long time out of power because it was made up of irreconcilable elements -- of one kind of agricultural population in the South, another kind in the West, the industrial workers of the great cities and liberals of all faiths. That an unnatural combination, the wise-ones have said. How can it expect to prevail against the solid phalanxes of the mundanely judicious reactionaries who so easily keep united about the simple platform of saying "no".

But to me that unnatural combination of the cynics has always seemed the most natural political combination in the world -- a combination whose essential unity of interests has been revealed a thousand times over to every component part of it during the years of this depression. For it expresses the essential unity



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The Democratic party is the logical leader in this struggle to keep this a Nation united through economic and political democracy. It has successfully carried on the experience of unity in spite of the diversity of its adherents. Under the liberal banner it has been able to rally those forces who believe that the enforcement of the human rights of the average man and woman is the proper solution of our major national problems. The job cannot be done by a party made up of one economic group dominated only by a desire never to change things as they are.

We must grasp the opportunity for leadership as a party with a full realization of how quickly these forces do work. There is not too much time to wait. If we meant the things we said in 1933, if we meant the things we said in 1936, if we intend to make good on them, there is need for haste.



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we gather here tonight to celebrate a victory which was not a victory over the pressing problems that pain perplex our generation, but only a victory whereby we won the opportunity to lead in the solution of those problems -- a victory for the American people only if we prove loyal to our trust - a victory only we prove able to lead the American people to a triumph over the evils and dangers that besound the present day and menace their welfare in the days to come.



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of the political interests of all the men and women of good will in the country whose sense of good neighborliness and fairness and patriotism make them willing to live and let live in the spirit of the common good of all men rather than be interested in the exploitation for their own economic supremacy of other people's money and other people's lives. This Democratic Party is, <sup>therefore</sup> a natural rallying point for all of those who truly believe in political and economic democracy.

The reason you and I can celebrate tonight is that all those believers in democracy felt a new enthusiasm and a new belief last November in the promises of the Democratic Party.

Whether we shall be celebrating in 1941, and in 1945, as we are celebrating tonight, will deservedly depend upon whether we have justified their belief in us by meeting their needs.



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From the Report of  
General I. Boardman

DRAFT #7

On this fourth of March, 1937 -- not only in this room, not only at many of these dinners in every part of the Nation, but also in millions of homes, the thoughts of American families are reverting to the March 4th of another year. Since early morning memory has carried me back to the events of that other fourth of March. That day is not one of which we can speak lightly because we know now that it represented the death of one era and the birth of another.

It is fitting that we revere what our forefathers did. It is fitting that we appreciate our heritage from those who settled our land and established our democracy. But a true reverence for the past must never blind us to the necessities of the present day and the problems of the future.

I am speaking tonight not only as the head of the Democratic Party but as the representative of all Americans who have faith in political and economic democracy.

This occasion is more significant than a celebration of success in maintaining office. It signifies the approval, by an overwhelming majority of citizens of all parties, of the high purpose and the unremitting efforts with which your



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Administration has met the most perplexing problems in our national history.

Because that approval was truly national and truly popular, our victory is all the more significant. It was not a sectional victory. It was not a victory which came from compromises and bargains. It came from twenty-seven million people -- and from every nook and corner of the land. It was an overwhelming response because the people had confidence in a government which had a heart as well as a head.

It was a response to the humanity of a government that made honest effort to understand the problems of average men and women.

It was a response to the clear-sightedness of a government that could see the Nation as essentially one -- that maintaining the prosperity of all depended on maintaining the purchasing power of all.

It was a response from those in other parties who found that they could make the best practical progress toward their ideals by working with and not against a liberal Democratic Party.

And above all it was a response of faith on the part of



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millions who had almost lost faith in the promises of political parties and in the effectiveness of the democratic method.

As the sum of all these responses, the Democratic Party, once a minority party, is today the majority party by the greatest majority any party ever had.

It will remain the majority party so long as it continues to justify those responses -- so long as it continues to make modern democracy work -- so long and no longer. And if I have aught to say it will continue on its course.

Following November 3, 1936, there was uneasy concern of some of our supporters that we were going to find excuses to evade our obligations. They were worried, as at an evil symptom, because the propoganda and the epithets of last Summer and Fall had died down. Today, however, those who placed their confidence in us are reassured. For the tumult and the shouting have broken forth anew -- and from substantially the same elements of opposition. We told them that we had only just begun to fight. Did they think we did not mean it? This new roar is the best evidence in the world that we have begun to keep our promises, that we have begun to move against conditions under which one-third of this Nation is ill-nourished,



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ill-clad, ill-housed.

A few days ago, a distinguished member of Congress came to see me to talk about national problems in general and about the problem of the Judiciary in particular.

I said to him:

"John, I want to tell you something that is very personal to me -- something that you have a right to hear from my own lips. I have a great ambition in life."

My friend pricked up his ears.

I went on: "I am by no means satisfied with having twice been elected President of the United States by very large majorities. I have an even greater ambition."

By this time, my friend was sitting on the edge of his chair.

I continued: "John, my ambition relates to January 20, 1941." I could feel just what horrid thoughts my friend was thinking. So in order to relieve his anxiety, I went on to say:

"John, my great ambition on January 20, 1941, is to turn over this desk and chair in the White House to my successor, whoever he may be, with the assurance that I am at the same time turning over to him, as President, a Nation intact, a



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Nation at peace, a Nation prosperous, a Nation clear in its knowledge of what powers it has to serve its own citizens, a Nation that is in a position to use those powers to the full, to move forward steadily to meet the modern needs of humanity -- a Nation which has thus proved that the democratic form and methods of national government can and will succeed."

"In these coming years I want to provide such assurance. I want to get us far along the road of progress as I can. I do not want to leave our country to my successor in the condition in which Buchanan left it to Lincoln."

That ambition of mine for my successor, my friends, can well be the serious ambition of every citizen of the United States who wants the United States to be handed down intact to his children and grandchildren.

My friend and I spoke in the dead earnestness of anxiety. I speak to you tonight in the same earnestness. For no one who sees as a whole the picture of this Nation and the world today can help but be concerned for the days that lie ahead.

To the President of the United States there come every day thousands of messages of fact and thought, messages of appeal,



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of protest, of information, messages from rich and poor, from  
business man and farmer and factory employee and relief worker,  
messages from every nook and corner of our wide domain.

Rider

... fifty years ago, even twenty-five years

RIDER PAGE 6

The most striking feature of the life of this genera-  
tion -- and the feature which men who still live in another  
generation can least understand -- is the ever-accelerating  
speed at which human movements gather way.  
Age and the depression have given them wings. They ~~will~~  
rush upon us.

Today economic freedom for the wage earner and the farmer  
and the small business man cannot be delayed as was personal  
freedom for the slave a century ago.

It will not wait, like emancipation, for forty years. It  
will not wait for four years. It will not wait at all.

After the World War, you and I know that throughout the  
world, including this Hemisphere and this Nation, there ~~are~~  
~~are~~ insistent demands upon government that human needs be  
met -- demands which cannot be long thwarted. The unthinking,



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of protest, of information, messages from rich and poor, from business man and farmer and factory employee and relief worker, messages from every nook and corner of our wide domain.

*Rider*

A century ago, fifty years ago, even twenty-five years ago, the movements of civilization were far slower. The issue of slavery, for example, took at least forty years -- two generations of argument, discussion and futile compromise -- before it came to a head in the tragic War Between the States.

In those days, all human surges toward liberty and free government crept along at the same slow pace. The machine age and the depression have given them wings. Today they rush upon us.

Today economic freedom for the wage earner and the farmer and the small business man cannot be delayed as was personal freedom for the slave a century ago.

It will not wait, like emancipation, for forty years. It will not wait for four years. It will not wait at all.

After the World War, you and I know that throughout the world, including this Hemisphere and this Nation, there ~~rose~~ arose ~~grievous~~ insistent demands upon government that human needs be met -- demands which cannot be long thwarted. The unthinking,



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those who dwell in the past, tried to block them; the wisdom of those who lived in the present recognized the innate justice of these demands and sought to guide them.

In some countries, the royalist form of government failed to meet these demands -- and fell. In other countries, the parliamentary form of government failed to meet these demands -- and fell. In still other nations, civil strife has flared or threats of upheaval persist.

There is a lesson in all this for the United States. People were so fed up with futile debate and party bickerings over methods that they were willing to surrender free elections and democratic processes in order to get things done.

Democracy in many lands has failed to meet human needs. Let us admit it. Admitting it, we still assert/<sup>that</sup> in the United States that democracy has not yet failed and does not need to fail. We do not purpose to let it fail.

But, I cannot tell you with complete candor that in these past few years democracy in the United States has fully succeeded. Nor can I tell you, under present circumstances, just where American democracy is headed nor just what it can do to direct itself. I can hope, but I cannot assure. No



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one can assure you today.

Because today you and I have not yet received definite assurance that the three horse team of the American system of government will continue to pull together. If three well-matched horses are put to the task of ploughing up a field where the going is heavy, that field will be ploughed only if the team of three pull as one. If one horse lies down in the traces, or plunges in another direction, that field will not be ploughed.

That you and I call the principles of the New Deal did not originate on the fourth of March, 1933. We think of that date as their beginning, because it was not until then that they broke through the inertia of twelve years of little or no improvement in our social and economic processes. Yet, during all those twelve years the demand and the need for social and economic ~~improvement~~ reform were gathering force.

What were those demands and needs? What did we do about them? How far did we succeed in meeting them? Where are they now?

Ever since the World War the farmers of America had been beating off ever-mounting disaster. The prices of farmers' crops had fallen to bankruptcy levels -- at the mercy of



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speculators and of world conditions over which the farmers had no control. The mortgagee reached for their homes and their farms.

This Administration set to work to help the farmer where no Administration had dared to take that risk before.

As a National Government, we gave the farmers the Agricultural Adjustment Act.

We did this in full faith and confidence that the very nature of our major crops makes them articles of commerce between the States. I learned many years ago that the price of New York State wheat is fixed by the size of the Kansas wheat crop. I learned many years ago that the price of Georgia cotton is fixed by the size of the Texas crop. Can it be really true that the raising of wheat and the raising of cotton are matters which concern only the many separate States in which they grow?

The A.A.A. testified also to our full faith and confidence that the preservation of sound agriculture is essential to the general welfare -- that the Congress of the United States had full constitutional authority to solve the national economic problems of the Nation's agriculture. The Congress, by overwhelming votes thought so too!



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You know who vetoed that program.

In 1936 the Democratic Party pledged itself once more to attack the problem. I said: "Of course we will continue our efforts in behalf of the farmers of America. With their continued cooperation we will do all in our power to end the piling up of huge surpluses which spelled ruinous prices for their crops. We will persist in successful action for better land use, for reforestation, \* \* \* for better marketing facilities for farm commodities, for a definite reduction of farm tenancy, for encouragement of farmer cooperatives, for crop insurance and a stable food supply. For all these things we have only just begun to fight."

It is now the responsibility of all of us whose promises the farmers believed, to carry forward that fight and not turn from it until those things have been won. Neither individually nor as a party can we flee or postpone that fight on advice of defeatist lawyers. I defy anyone to read the majority opinion invalidating the A.A.A. and tell us what we can do for agriculture in this session of the Congress with even reasonable certainty that what we do <sup>will</sup> <sub>A</sub> be nullified as unconstitutional!



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From the Papers of  
 Samuel I. Rosenman

DRAFT #7

But the farmers were not the only people in distress in 1932. There were millions of workers in industry and in commerce who had lost their jobs, millions of young people who had never been able to find their first job, and even more millions whose jobs did not return them and their families enough to live on decently.

The Democratic Party made pledges to industry and labor in 1932. It tried hard to keep them. We made a gallant, sincere effort to reach these problems, to raise wages, to reduce hours, to abolish child labor.

We tried to establish machinery to adjust the relations between the employer and employee. We hoped that it would be operating smoothly before industrial warfare would overwhelm our efforts for industrial recovery.

And what happened?

The N.R.A. was outlawed as the Child Labor Statute had been outlawed twenty years before. The judicial nullification did not stop with a condemnation of legislative and administrative methods. If it had, a simple statute could have provided the necessary changes in method. But the Court went



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DRAFT #7

much further. It went far beyond the necessities of the decision, to use language which has cast doubt upon any future attempt by us as a national government to provide employment and decent standards of living for American workers and to furnish protection against dishonorable trade practices for American business.

Soon thereafter the Nation was told by a judicial pronouncement that although the Federal Government has thus been rendered powerless to touch the problem of hours and wages, the States were equally helpless, and that we had to live in a Nation where there was no legal power anywhere to deal with its most difficult practical problems — a No Man's Land of final futility.

Furthermore, the machinery which we devised to settle the great disputes that are now raging in the industrial field — and, indeed, to prevent such warfare from ever rising — has been rendered futile by court injunctions. We hope that laws creating this machinery may yet escape final condemnation in the highest court. But, in effect, to date they have been rendered useless as a practical instrument because the attitude and language which the courts have adopted in relation to many other laws have been the legality of these laws also uncertain and have encouraged men to defy rather than to obey them.



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DRAFT #14

Complete -

On this fourth of March, 1937 -- not only in this room, not only at many of these dinners in every part of the Nation, but also in millions of homes, the thoughts of American families are reverting to the March 4th of another year. Since early morning memory has carried us back to the events of that other fourth of March.

That day represented the death of one era and the birth of another. It is fitting that we appreciate our heritage from those who settled our land and established our democracy. But a true reverence for the past must never blind us to the necessities of the present day and the problems of the future.

I speak tonight not only as the head of the Democratic Party but as the representative of all Americans who have faith in political and economic democracy.

This occasion is more than a celebration of success in maintaining office. It signals the approval, by an overwhelming majority of citizens of all parties, of the high purpose and the unremitting efforts with which your Administration has met the most perplexing problems in our national history.



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DRAFT #14

Our victory was not sectional. It did not come from compromises and bargains. It was the voice of twenty-seven million people -- from every part of the land.

It was a response to the humanity of a government that made honest effort to understand the problems of average men and women.

It was a response to the clear-sightedness of a government that could see the Nation as essentially one -- could see that ~~maintaining~~ <sup>permanence</sup> the prosperity of all depended on ~~maintaining~~ <sup>s</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>creating</sup> purchasing power <sup>for all</sup> of all.

It was a response from those in other parties who found that they could make the most practical progress toward their ideals by working with and not against a liberal Democratic Party.

And above all it was a response of faith on the part of millions, who had almost lost faith in the <sup>carrying out of</sup> ~~the~~ ~~promises~~ of political parties ~~and in the effectiveness of the democratic method.~~

As the sum of all these responses, the Democratic Party, once a minority party, is today the majority party by the greatest majority any party ever had.



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It will remain the majority party so long as it continues to justify those responses -- so long as it continues to make modern democracy work -- so long and no longer. We are celebrating <sup>the 1936</sup> a victory which was not a victory over the pressing problems that perplex our generation, but only a victory whereby the party won the opportunity to lead in the solution of those problems. Whether we shall be celebrating in 1938, 1942, and in 1944, as we are celebrating tonight, will deservedly depend upon whether the party continue on its course and solve those problems. And if I have sought to say it will continue on its course and solve those problems.

After election day in 1936, some of our supporters were ~~unwillingly~~ <sup>unwillingly</sup> concerned that we might find the excuse of a false era of good feeling to evade our obligations. They were worried by the evil symptom that the propaganda and the epithets of last summer and fall had died down. Today, however, those who placed their confidence in us are reassured. For the tumult and the shouting have broken forth anew -- and from substantially the same elements of opposition. This new roar is the best evidence in the world that we have begun to keep our promises, and that we have begun to move against conditions under which one-third of this Nation is ill-nourished, ill-clothed, ill-housed.



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We gave warning that we had only just begun to fight. Did  
*Some back then really*  
 anyone think we did not mean it? *Well I meant it & you meant it.*

A few days ago, a distinguished member of <sup>the</sup> Congress came to see me to talk about national problems in general and about the problem of the Judiciary in particular.

I said to him:

"John, I want to tell you something that is very personal to me -- something that you have a right to hear from my own lips. I have a great ambition in life."

My friend pricked up his ears.

I went on: "I am by no means satisfied with having twice been elected President of the United States by very large majorities. I have an even greater ambition."

By this time, my friend was sitting on the edge of his chair.

I continued: "John, my ambition relates to January 20, 1941." I could feel just what horrid thoughts my friend was thinking. So in order to relieve his anxiety, I went on to say:

"John, my great ambition on January 20, 1941, is to turn over this desk and chair in the White House to my successor, whoever he may be, with the assurance that I am at the same



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time turning over to him, as President, a Nation intact, a Nation at peace, a Nation prosperous, a Nation clear in its knowledge of what powers it has to serve its own citizens, a Nation that is in a position to use those powers to the full, in order to move forward steadily to meet the modern needs of humanity — a Nation which has thus proved that the democratic form and methods of national government can and will succeed.

In these coming years I want to provide such assurance. I want to get the Nation as far along the road of progress as I can. I do not want to leave it to my successor in the condition in which Buchanan left it to Lincoln.\*

That ambition of mine for my successor, my friends, can well be the serious ambition of every citizen of the United States who wants the United States to be handed down intact to his children and grandchildren.

~~My statement~~ I spoke in the dead earnestness of anxiety. I speak to you tonight in the same earnestness. For no one who sees as a whole the picture of this Nation and the world today can help but be concerned for the days that lie ahead.

To the President of the United States there come every day thousands of messages of fact and thought, messages of appeal,



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DRAFT #14

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of protest, of information <sup>with liberty</sup> messages from rich and poor, from business man and farmer and factory employe and relief worker, messages from every corner of our wide domain.

These messages reflect the most striking feature of the life of this generation -- the feature which men who ~~still~~ <sup>live</sup> live in another generation can least understand -- the ever-  
accelerating speed <sup>with</sup> of which ~~human~~ <sup>social</sup> movements now gather way.

A century ago, fifty years ago, even twenty-five years ago, the movements of civilization were far slower. The issue of slavery, for example, took at least forty years -- two generations of argument, discussion and futile compromise -- before it came to a head in the tragif War Between the States.

All human surges toward liberty and free government ~~come~~ <sup>at times</sup> ~~along~~ at that same slow pace. <sup>But</sup> the machine age and the depression have given them wings <sup>But</sup> and today they rush upon us.

Economic freedom for the wage earner and the farmer and the small business man cannot be delayed today as was personal freedom for the slave a century ago. It will not wait, like emancipation, for forty years. It will not ~~wait~~ wait for four years. It will not wait at all.



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DRAFT #14

-7-

After the World War, there arose <sup>everywhere</sup> throughout the world-  
insistent demands upon government that human needs be met. --  
Those demands could not long be thwarted. The unthinking, who  
dwell in the past, have tried to block them. The wise who live  
in the present have recognized their innate justice and have  
sought to guide them.

In some countries, a royalist form of government failed  
to meet these demands -- and fell. In other countries, a  
parliamentary form of government failed to meet these demands --  
and fell. In still other countries, governments have managed  
to hold on, but civil strife has flared or threats of upheaval  
persist.

Democracy in many lands has failed to meet human needs.  
People have become so fed up with futile debate and party  
bickerings over methods that they have been willing to surrender  
democratic processes <sup>and the people</sup> in order to get things done.

Let us admit it. Admitting it, we still assert that in  
the United States democracy has not yet failed and does not  
need to fail. And we <sup>purpose</sup> purpose not to let it fail!



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Nevertheless, I cannot tell you with complete candor that in these past few years democracy in the United States has fully succeeded. Nor can I tell you, under present circumstances, just where American democracy is headed nor just what it <sup>is permitted to</sup> ~~can~~ do <sup>to</sup> direct itself, in order to insure its continued success and survival. I can <sup>only</sup> hope, but I cannot assure. No one can today assure.

Because as yet there is no definite assurance that the three horse team of the American system of government will continue to pull together. If three well-matched horses are put to the task of ploughing up a field where the going is heavy, and the team of three pull as one, the field will be ploughed. If one horse lies down in the traces or plunges off in another direction, the field will not be ploughed.

What you and I call the principles of the New Deal did not originate on the fourth of March, 1933. We think of that date as their beginning, because it was not until then that the social demands they represented broke through the inertia of <sup>the many</sup> ~~twelve~~ years of failure to improve our <sup>social</sup> ~~social~~ and economic processes.

What were those demands and needs? How far did we succeed in meeting them? What about them today?



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Ever since the World War the farmers of America had been beating off ever-mounting disasters.

This Administration <sup>definitely</sup> really tried to help them where no other Administration had dared to take that risk, ~~before~~. That help was built around the Agricultural Adjustment Act.

The A.A.A. testified to our full faith and confidence that the very nature of our major crops makes them articles of commerce between the States. Many years ago I learned that the price of New York State wheat is fixed by the size of the Kansas crop -- that the price of Georgia cotton is fixed by the size of the Texas crop. <sup>truthfully said</sup> Can it be really true that the raising of wheat and the raising of cotton concern <sup>only</sup> the many separate States in which they grow?

The A.A.A. testified also to our full faith and confidence that the preservation of sound agriculture is essential to the general welfare -- that the Congress of the United States had full constitutional authority to solve the national economic problems of the Nation's agriculture. By overwhelming votes, the Congress thought so too!

We did our best to help the farmers of the Nation. But the elected representatives of the people, the instruments of the people's will, found themselves vetoed by a few men not



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elect~~ed~~ by the people.

You know who assumed the power <sup>to abdicate</sup> of veto over that program.

Once more, in 1936, the Democratic Party pledged itself to attack the farmers' problem. I said: "Of course we will continue our efforts in behalf of the farmers of America. With their continued cooperation we will do all in our power to end the piling up of huge surpluses which spelled ruinous prices for their crops. We will persist in successful action for better land use, for reforestation, \*\* for better marketing facilities for farm commodities, for a definite reduction of farm tenancy, for encouragement of farmer cooperatives, for crop insurance and a stable food supply. For all these things we have only just begun to fight."

Now it is the responsibility of all <sup>of</sup> whose promises the farmers believed, to carry forward that fight until those things have been won. Neither individually nor as a party can we postpone and run from that fight on advice of defeatist lawyers. But I defy anyone to read the majority opinion invalidating the A.A.A. and tell us what we can do for agriculture in this session of the Congress with <sup>any</sup> reasonable certainty that what we do will not be nullified as unconstitutional.



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The farmers were not the only people in distress in 1932. There were millions of workers in industry and in commerce who had lost their jobs, millions of young people who had never been able to find their first job, and even more millions whose jobs did not return them and their families enough to live on decently.

The Democratic Party made pledges to labor and industry in 1932. It tried hard to keep them. We made a gallant, sincere effort to raise wages, to reduce hours, to abolish child labor, to eliminate unfair trade practices.

We tried to establish machinery to adjust the relations between the employer and employee. We hoped that it would be operating smoothly before industrial warfare would overwhelm our efforts for industrial recovery.

And what happened?

We did our best to help the workers of the Nation. But the elected representatives of the people, the instruments of the people's will, found themselves vetoed by a few men not elected by the people. You know who assumed the power of veto <sup>and did into</sup> ~~of veto power~~ that program.

The F.R.A., the Railroad Retirement Act, the Guffey Coal Act were outlawed as the Child Labor Statute had been outlawed twenty years before.



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From the Papers of  
Samuel I. Hays

Soon thereafter the Nation was told by a judicial pronouncement that although the Federal Government has thus been rendered powerless to touch the problem of hours and wages, the States were equally helpless, and that it pleased the economic predictions of the Court that we live in a Nation where there <sup>is a</sup> ~~was~~ no legal power anywhere to deal with its most difficult practical problems -- a No Man's Land of final futility.

Furthermore, the machinery which we devised to settle the great disputes that are now ~~raging~~ raging in the industrial field -- and, indeed, to prevent such warfare from ever rising -- has been rendered futile by court injunctions. We hope that laws creating this machinery may yet escape final condemnation in the highest court. But, in effect, to date they have been rendered useless as a practical instrument because the attitude and language which the courts have adopted in relation to many other laws have made the legality of these laws also uncertain and have encouraged men to defy rather than to obey them.



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From the Papers of  
Samuel I. Hodgson

DRAFT #7

In the campaign of 1936, in addition to our platform pledges, you and I promised this to the working man *and women.*

"Of course we will continue to seek to improve working conditions for the workers of America -- to reduce hours over-long, to increase wages that spell starvation, to end the labor of children, to wipe out sweatshops. "Of course we will provide useful work for the needy unemployed. For all these we have only just begun to fight."

And here again we cannot afford, either individually or as a party, to ~~lose~~ <sup>run from</sup> postpone that fight on advice of defeatist lawyers. But I defy anyone to read the opinions concerning N.R.A., A.A.A., the Railroad Retirement Act and the Guffey Coal Act and the New York Minimum Wage Law, and tell us exactly what, if anything, we can do for the industrial worker, in this session of the Congress with <sup>any</sup> reasonable certainty that what we do will not be nullified as unconstitutional.

We have the same difficulty with our next great problem -- the preservation of our natural resources.

During the course of the past four years we have been overwhelmed by great natural disasters of flood and drought. At times our productive land has been blown away or washed away at



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From the Papers of

Franklin D. Roosevelt

DRAFT #7

a rate that ~~will~~ <sup>has and our children</sup> spell ruin ~~even to this present generation.~~  
 And in the meantime the loss of property values has been beyond  
 anything we have known in our history.

If ever there was a policy to which sound reasons of national interest compel us, it is to do our utmost as a National Government to protect our land and our people from the recurrence of such catastrophes. Modern engineering knows how to give that protection -- and knows how to produce as a by-product the blessing of cheaper electric power.

With the Tennessee Valley Authority we made a beginning of that kind of protection on an intelligent regional basis. With only two of its ~~seven~~ <sup>two</sup> projected dams completed there was no flood damage in the valley of the Tennessee this winter.

But how can we ~~safely either~~ <sup>completely</sup> complete that Tennessee project or extend the idea to the Ohio and to many other valleys while the validity of such operations has been placed in such doubt by the language of the highest courts of the Nation that the lowest courts have not hesitated to paralyze its operations by sweeping injunctions.

The Ohio River and the Dust Bowl are not conversant with the ~~shocking~~ habits of the Interstate Commerce Clause. But we



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DRAFT #7

shall never be safe in our lives, in our property or in the heritage of our soil until we have somehow made the Interstate Commerce Clause conversant with the habits of the Ohio River and the Dust Bowl.

In the campaign of 1936, you and I and all who supported us did take cognizance of the Ohio River and the Dust Bowl; We said: "Of course we will continue our efforts \*\*\* for drought and flood control \*\*\*. For these things we have only just begun to fight." Here, too, we cannot afford, either individually or as a party, to run away from that fight on advice of defeatist lawyers. Let them try ~~xxxxxx~~ that advice on sweating men piling sandbags on the dikes at Cairo. But I defy anyone to read the opinions in the T.W.A. case, the Duke Power Case, the A.A.A. Case and tell us exactly what we can do <sup>and I create cheap power</sup> as a National Government to control flood and drought in this session of the Congress with <sup>any</sup> ~~even~~ reasonable certainty that what we do will not be nullified as unconstitutional.

The language of the decisions already rendered, the widespread refusal to obey law incited by the attitude of the courts, create doubts and difficulties for almost everything else for which we have promised to fight -- help for the crippled, for the blind, for the mothers -- insurance for the unemployed--



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From the Papers of  
Samuel I. Rosenbaum

DRAFT #7

security for the aged -- protection of the consumer against monopoly and speculation -- protection of the investor against unscrupulous promoters -- curbs on the over-reaching power and the unholy practices of utility holding companies -- the wiping out of slums -- cheaper electricity in the homes and on the farms of America. You and I owe it to ourselves individually, as a party, and as a nation to remove those doubts and difficulties.

That obligation started on the morning of November 4, 1936, four months ago. That obligation was to begin that fight not sometime in the unpredictable future, but in the very next session of the Congress of the United States -- and to carry it on to a successful finish as soon as humanly possible.

In this fight, as the lawyers themselves say, time is of the essence. In three elections during the past five years great majorities have approved what we are trying to do. To me, and I am sure to you, those majorities seem that the people themselves realize the increasing urgency that we meet their needs soon. Every month of delay creates risks of intervening events which may make more and more difficult an intelligent, speedy and democratic solution of our difficulties.



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From the Papers of  
Samuel I. Rosenman

DRAFT #7

We cannot wait to build a new waterworks before we start to put out present fires -- particularly when we can't hope to start to build a new waterworks until we have fought to the death over what kind of waterworks we shall build.

As Chief Executive and as the head of the Democratic Party, I am unwilling to take those risks -- to the country and to the party -- of postponing one moment beyond absolute necessity the time when we can free from legal doubt those policies which offer a progressive solution of our problems.

We must now find a way to adapt the wholly reasonable interpretations of our law to <sup>A</sup> ~~that~~ <sup>the</sup> practical way <sup>of</sup> living. And we must do it now. Floods and droughts and agricultural surpluses, strikes and industrial confusion, incompetence and disorder, cannot be handled forever on a catch-as-catch-can basis.

~~I might well have finished my conversation with my visitor from the Congress in this way: "John, I have another ambition - not so great an ambition as that which I have for the country, but an ambition which a life-long Democrat need not believe unworthy. It is an ambition for the Democratic Party.~~



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From the Papers of  
Samuel I. Rodmans

DRAFT #1

*make* *John*

Over the greater part of its history, our party has not been the majority party. Some have felt it inevitable that the party follow this cycle of a short time in power and a long time out of power. They have pointed out it was made up of elements that on the surface seem diverse in interest. An unnatural combination, the wise-ones have said. How can it expect to prevail against the solid phalanxes of the reactionaries who so easily keep united on the simple platform of saying "NO" to everything.

*W* *John* *to make a case*

The Democratic Party has always been the ward-heir party of the common man. Set in the depression *the cynic* used to call an unnatural combination *of diverse elements that the depression will* *make us* *solid* a community of economic interest in the modern world that makes them the most natural unit in our political history. For the common men of the farms and mines and factories and offices of the Nation now know that each is the other's customer *and* ally in a common national prosperity.

The Democratic Party, and its associates, have had the imagination to perceive essential unity below the surface of apparent diversity. *are long known* We have become a natural rallying point for the cooperative effort of all of those who truly believe in political and economic democracy.



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 48th Floor, S. E.

From the Papers of  
 Samuel I. Rosenman

DRAFT #7

It will take courage to let our minds be bold and find the ways to meet the needs of the Nation. But for us, now as always, the counsel of courage is the counsel of wisdom.

~~Let us~~ We come to national responsibility by conquering the fears of others. I hope we will not have to see that responsibility pass from us because we have succumbed to fear ourselves. <sup>Let the citizens to</sup> For if we do not lead the American people where they want to go, someone else will.

Here is one-third of a Nation ill-nourished, ill-clothed, ill-housed -- NOW!

Here are thousands upon thousands of farmers wondering whether next year's prices will meet their mortgage interest -- NOW!

Here are thousands upon thousands of men and women laboring for long hours in factories for inadequate pay -- NOW!

Here are thousands upon thousands of children who should be at school, <sup>with</sup> working in mines and factories -- NOW!

Here are strikes more far-reaching than we have ever known, costing millions of dollars -- NOW!

Here are spring floods threatening to roll again down our river valleys -- NOW!



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From the Papers of  
Samuel I. Rosenman

DRAFT #7

Here is the Dust Bowl beginning to blow again -- NOW!

If we would keep faith with those who had faith in us,

if we would have the courage of ~~self-preservation~~, I say we

must act -- NOW!

\*\*\*\*\*



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From the Papers of  
Samuel I. Rosenman

On this fourth of March, 1937, in millions of homes, the thoughts of American families are reverting to the March 4th of another year.

That day in 1933 represented the death of one era and the birth of another. It is fitting that we appreciate our heritage from those who settled our land and established our democracy. But a true reverence for the past must never blind us to the necessities of the present and the problems of the future.

I speak tonight not only as the head of the Democratic Party but as the representative of all Americans who have faith in political and economic democracy.

This occasion is more than a celebration of success in maintaining office. It signals the approval, by an overwhelming majority of citizens of all parties, of the high purpose and the unremitting efforts with which your Administration and your Congress have met the most perplexing problems in our national history.



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From the Papers of  
Samuel I. Rosenman

Our victory was not sectional. It did not come from compromises and bargains. It was the voice of twenty-seven million people -- from every part of the land.

It was a response to the humanity of a government that made honest effort to understand the problems of average men and women.

It was a response to the clear-sightedness of a government that could see the Nation as essentially one -- could see that permanent prosperity of all depends on creating purchasing power to all.

It was a response from those in other parties who found that they could make the most practical progress toward their ideals by working with and not against a liberal Democratic Party.

And above all it was a response of faith on the part of millions who had almost lost faith in the carrying out of promises by political parties.

As the sum of all these responses, the Democratic Party, once minority party, is today the majority party by the greatest majority any party ever had.



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It will remain the majority party so long as it continues to justify those responses -- so long as it continues to make modern democracy work -- so long and no longer. We are celebrating the 1936 victory. That was not a victory over the pressing problems that perplex our generation. It was only a victory whereby our party won the opportunity to lead in the solution of those problems. Whether we shall celebrate in 1938, 1940, and in 1944, as we celebrate tonight, will deservedly depend upon whether the party continues on its course and solves those problems.

And if I haveught to say it will continue on its course and it will solve those problems.

After election day in 1936, some of our supporters were uneasy lest we grasp the excuse of a false era of good feeling to evade our obligations. They were worried by the evil omen that the propaganda and the epithets of last Summer and Fall had died down.

Today, however, those who placed their confidence in us are reassured. For the tumult and the shouting have broken forth anew -- and from substantially the same elements of opposition. This new roar is the best evidence in the world that we



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begun to keep our promises, that we have begun to move against conditions under which one-third of this Nation is still ill-nourished, ill-cled, ill-housed.

We gave warning last November that we had only just begun to fight. Did some people really believe we did not mean it? Well -- I meant it, and you meant it.

A few days ago, a distinguished member of the Congress came to see me to talk about national problems in general and about the problem of the Judiciary in particular.

I said to him:

"John, I want to tell you something that is very personal to me -- something that you have a right to hear from my own lips. I have a great ambition in life."

My friend pricked up his ears.

I went on: "I am by no means satisfied with having twice been elected President of the United States by very large majorities. I have an even greater ambition."

By this time, my friend was sitting on the edge of his chair.

I continued: "John, my ambition relates to January 9, 1941." I could feel just what horrid thoughts my friend was thinking. So in order to relieve his anxiety, I went on to



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From the Papers of  
Gerald R. Ford

DRAFT #21

-44-

SAY:

"John, my great ambition on January 20, 1941, is to turn over this desk and chair in the White House to my successor, whoever he may be, with the assurance that I am at the same



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1941-1945, 10-11

From the Papers of

Samuel I. Rosenman

time ~~has~~ turning over to him, as President, a Nation intact, a Nation at peace, a Nation prosperous, a Nation clear in its knowledge of what powers it has to serve its own citizens, a Nation that is in a position to use those powers to the full, in order to move forward steadily to meet the modern needs of humanity — a Nation which has thus proved that the democratic form and methods of national government can and will succeed.

In these coming years I want to provide such assurance. I want to get the Nation as far along the road of progress as I can. I do not want to leave it to my successor in the condition in which Buchanan left it to Lincoln."

My friends, that ambition of mine for my successor can well be the serious ambition of every citizen who wants his United States to be handed down intact to his children and grandchildren.

I spoke in the dead earnestness of anxiety, I speak to you tonight in the same earnestness. For no one who sees as a today's whole ~~the~~ picture of this Nation and and the world ~~with~~express can help but feel concern for the future.

To the President of the United States there comes every day thousands of messages of appeal,



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From the Papers of  
 Samuel I. Rosenman

of protest, of information and advice, messages from rich and poor, from business man and farmer, from factory employee and relief worker, messages from every corner of our wide domain.

Those messages reflect the most striking feature of the life of this generation -- the feature which men who live naturally in another generation can least understand -- the ever-accelerating speed with which social forces now gain headway.

A century ago, fifty years ago, even twenty-five years ago, the movements of civilization were far slower. The issue of slavery, for example, took at least forty years -- two generations -- of argument, discussion and futile compromise, before it came to a head in the tragic war between the States.

All human surges toward liberty and free government used to advance at that same slow pace. But today they rush upon us.

Economic freedom for the wage earner and the farmer and the small business man will not wait, like emancipation, for twenty years. It will not wait for four years. It will not wait at all.



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From the Papers of  
Samuel I. Rosenman

After the World War, there arose everywhere insistent demands upon government that human needs be met. The unthinking, who dwell in the past, have tried to block them. The wise who live in the present have recognized their innate justice and irresistibility -- and have sought to guide them.

In some countries, a royalist form of government failed to meet these demands -- and fell. In other countries, a parliamentary form of government failed to meet these demands -- and fell. In still other countries, governments have managed to hold on, but civil strife has ~~not~~ flared or threats of upheaval persist.

Democracy in many lands has failed for the time being to meet human needs. People have become so fed up with futile debate and party bickerings over methods that they have been willing to surrender democratic processes and principles in order to get things done. They have forgotten the lessons of history that dictatorships cost humanity far more than any temporary failures of democracy.

In the United States democracy has not yet failed even temporarily and does not need to fail. And we propose not to let it fail!



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Date Form 5-54

From the Report of  
Samuel I. Government

Nevertheless, I cannot tell you with complete candor that in these past few years democracy in the United States has fully succeeded. Nor can I tell you, under present circumstances, just where American democracy is headed nor just what it is permitted to do in order to insure its continued success and survival. I can only hope.

For as yet there is no definite assurance that the three horse team of the American system of government will continue to pull together. If three well-matched horses are put to the task of ploughing up a field where the going is heavy, and the team of three pull as one, the field will be ploughed. If one horse lies down in the traces or plunges off in another direction, the field will not be ploughed.

What you and I call the principles of the New Deal did not originate on the fourth of March, 1933. We think of that date as their beginning, because it was not until then that the social demands they represented broke through the inertia of many years of failure to improve our political and economic processes.

What were those demands and needs? How far did we succeed in meeting them? What about them today?



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From the Papers of  
Stanley I. Rosenbaum

Ever since the World War the farmers of America had been beating off ever-mounting disasters. This Administration tried to help them effectively where no other Administration had dared to take that risk.

The Agricultural Adjustment Act testified to our full faith and confidence that the very nature of our major crops makes them articles of commerce between the States. Many years ago I learned that the price of New York State wheat is fixed by the size of the Kansas crop -- that the price of Georgia cotton is fixed by the size of the Texas crop. Can it truthfully be said that the raising of wheat and the raising of cotton are only of local concern.

The A.A.A. testified also to our full faith and confidence that the preservation of sound agriculture is essential to the general welfare -- that the Congress of the United States had full constitutional authority to solve the national economic problems of the Nation's agriculture. By overwhelming votes, the Congress thought so too!



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From the Papers of

Samuel I. Rosenman

You know who assumed the power to veto, and did veto that program.

In the campaign of 1936, I said: "Of course we will continue our efforts in behalf of the farmers of America. With their continued cooperation we will do all in our power to end the piling up of huge surpluses which spelled ruinous prices for their crops. We will persist in successful action for better land use, for <sup>re</sup>forestation, ~~and~~ for better marketing facilities for farm commodities, for a definite reduction of farm tenancy, for encouragement of farmer cooperatives, for crop insurance and a stable food supply. For all these things we have only just begun to fight."

Neither individually nor as a party can we postpone and run from that fight on advice of defeatist lawyers. But I defy anyone to read the majority opinion invalidating the A.A.A. and tell us what we can do for agriculture in this session of the Congress with any reasonable certainty that what we do will not be nullified as unconstitutional.



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From the papers of  
 General T. Roosevelt

The farmers were not the only people in distress in 1932. There were millions of workers in industry and in commerce who had lost their jobs, millions of young people who had never been able to find their first job, and even more millions whose jobs did not return them and their families enough to live on decently.

The Democratic Party made a gallant, sincere effort to raise wages, to reduce hours, to abolish child labor, to eliminate unfair trade practices.

We tried to establish machinery to adjust the relations between the employer and employee. We hoped that it would be operating smoothly before industrial warfare would overwhelm our efforts for industrial recovery.

And what happened?

You know who assumed the power to veto, and did veto, that program.

The Railroad Retirement Act, the National Recovery Act and the Cuffey Coal Act were outlawed as the Child Labor Statute had been outlawed twenty years before.



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From the Papers of  
Samuel I. Rosenman

Soon thereafter the Nation was told by a judicial pronouncement that although the Federal Government has thus been rendered powerless to touch the problem of hours and wages, the States were equally helpless; and that it pleased the "personal economic predilections" of a majority of the Court that we live in a Nation where there is no legal power anywhere to deal with its most difficult practical problems -- a No Man's Land of final futility.

Furthermore, court injunctions have paralyzed the machinery which we created by the National Labor Relations Act to settle the great disputes that are now raging in the industrial field, and, indeed, to prevent them from ever arising. We hope that this Act may yet escape final condemnation in the highest court. But so far the attitude and language of the courts in relation to many other laws have made the legality of this Act also uncertain, and have encouraged men to defy rather than obey it.



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From the Papers of  
 Samuel I. Rosenman

In the campaign of 1938 you and I promised this to working men and women:

"Of course we will continue to seek to improve working conditions for the workers of America -- to reduce hours ~~and~~ ever-long, to increase wages that spell starvation, to end the labor of children, to wipe out sweatshops. \*\*\* Of course we will provide useful work for the needy ~~and~~ unemployed. For all these things we have only just begun to fight."

again  
And here ~~again~~ we cannot afford, either individually or as a party, to postpone or run from that fight on advice of defeatist lawyers.

But I defy anyone to read the opinions concerning A.I.A., the Railroad Retirement Act, the National Recovery Act, the Cuffey Coal Act and the New York Minimum Wage Law, and tell us exactly what, if anything, we ~~can~~ do for the industrial worker in this session of the Congress with any reasonable certainty that what we do will not be nullified as unconstitutional.

During the course of the past four years the Nation has been overwhelmed by disasters of flood and drought. At times our productive land has been blown away or washed away at



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From the Papers of  
Samuel I. Rosenman

a rate that spells ruin to us and our children.

Modern engineering knows how to protect our land and our people from the recurrence of such catastrophes, and knows how to produce as a by-product the blessing of cheaper electric power. With the Tennessee Valley Authority we made a beginning of that kind of protection on an intelligent regional basis. With only two of its nine projected dams completed there was no flood damage in the valley of the Tennessee this winter.

But how can we confidently complete that Tennessee Valley project or extend the idea to the Ohio and other valleys while the validity of the Tennessee operation has been placed in such doubt by the language of the highest Courts that the lowest courts have not hesitated to paralyze it by sweeping injunctions.

The Ohio River and the Dust Bowl are not conversant with the habits of the Interstate Commerce Clause. But we



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From the Papers of  
Samuel I. Rosenman

shall never be safe in our lives, in our property or in the heritage of our soil until we have somehow made the Interstate Commerce Clause conformant with the habits of the Ohio River and the Dust Bowl.

In the campaign of 1936, you and I and all who supported us did take cognizance of the Ohio River and the Dust Bowl. We said: "Of course we will continue our efforts ~~and~~ for drought and flood control \*\*\*. For these things we have only just begun to fight."

Here, too, we cannot afford, either individually or as a party, to postpone or run away from that fight on advice of defeatist lawyers. Let them try that advice on sweating men piling ~~more~~ sandbags on the dikes at Cairo.

But I defy anyone to read the opinions in the T.V.A. case and the A.A.A. case and tell us exactly what we can do as a National Government in this session of the Congress to control flood and drought and generate cheap power with any reasonable certainty that what we do will not be nullified as unconstitutional.

The language of the decisions already rendered and the wide-spread refusal to obey law incited by the attitude of the



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From the Papers of

Samuel I. Rosenman

DRAFT #21

-15-A

courts, create doubts and difficulties for almost everything else for which we have promised to fight -- help for the crippled, for the blind, for the mothers -- insurance for the unemployed --



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security for the aged -- protection of the consumer against monopoly and speculation -- protection of the investor against unscrupulous promoters -- curbs on the overweening power and the unholly practices of utility holding companies -- the wiping out of slums -- cheaper electricity in the homes and on the farms of America. You and I owe it to our selves individually, as a party, and as a Nation to remove those doubts and difficulties.

That obligation began running on the morning of 22 November 4, 1936, four months ago. That obligation was to begin that fight not sometime in the unpredictable future, but in the very next session of the Congress of the United States -- and to carry it on to a successful finish as soon as humanly possible.

In this fight, as the lawyers themselves say, time is of the essence. In three elections during the past five years great majorities have approved what we are trying to do. To me, and I am sure to you, those majorities mean that the people themselves realize the increasing urgency that we meet their needs now. Every delay creates risks of intervening events which make more and more difficult an intelligent, speedy, and democratic solution of our difficulties.



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As Chief Executive and as the head of the Democratic Party, I am unwilling to take those risks — to the country and to the party — of postponing one moment beyond absolute necessity the time when we can free from legal doubt those policies which offer a progressive solution of our problems.

We must find a way to adapt the wholly reasonable interpretations of our law to a practical way of modern life. And we must do it now. Floods and droughts and agricultural surpluses, strikes and industrial confusion and disorder, cannot be handled forever on a catch-as-catch-can basis.

I have another solution — not so great an ambition as that which I have for the country, but an ambition which as a life-long Democrat, I do not believe unworthy. It is an ambition for the Democratic Party.



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From the Papers of  
SAMUEL T. ROOSEVELT

In its modern history, our party has not often been the majority party.

Before the depression the wisecracks used to call us an unnatural combination of diverse elements. But the depression made evident a fundamental community of economic interest of those elements in the modern world, making us the most natural unit in American political history. For the common man of the farms, the mines, the factories and the offices of the Nation now knows that each is the other's customer and ally in a common national prosperity.

The Democratic Party, and its associates, have had the imagination to perceive essential unity below the surface of apparent diversity. We can, therefore, long remain a natural rallying point for the cooperative effort of all of those who truly believe in political and economic democracy.



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From the Papers of  
 Samuel I. Rosenzweig

It will take courage to let our minds be bold and find the ways to meet the needs of the Nation. But for our Party, now as always, the counsel of courage is the counsel of wisdom.

If we do not have the courage to lead the American people where they want to go, ~~somebody~~ <sup>God</sup> else will.

Here is one-third of a Nation ill-nourished, ill-clad, ill-housed -- NOW!

Here are thousands upon thousands of farmers wondering whether next year's prices will meet their mortgage interest -- NOW!

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DRAFT #21

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Here is the dust bowl beginning to blow again -- NOW!

If we would keep faith with those who had faith in us,

I say we must act -- NOW!



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