

ideology blocked and smothered the instinctive efforts of free men to work their own salvation. In a world intoxicated with abstractions, Roosevelt and the New Dealers stood almost alone in a stubborn faith in rational experiment, in trial and error. No one understood this more keenly than the great English critic of absolutes; Keynes, in an open letter to Roosevelt at the end of 1933, stated the hopes generated by the New Deal with precision and eloquence. "You have made yourself," Keynes told Roosevelt,

the trustee for those in every country who seek to mend the evils of our condition by reasoned experiment within the framework of the existing social system. If you fail, rational choice will be gravely prejudiced throughout the world, leaving orthodoxy and revolution to fight it out. But, if you succeed, new and bolder methods will be tried everywhere, and we may date the first chapter of a new economic era from your accession to office.

The question remains: why did the New Deal itself have the pragmatic commitment? Why, under the impact of depression, was it not overborne by dogma as were most other governments and leaders in the world? The answer to this lies, I suspect, in the point I proposed earlier—in the suggestion that the New Deal represented, not just a response to depression, but also a response to pent-up frustration and needs in American society—frustrations and needs which would have operated had there been no depression at all. The periodic demand for forward motion in American politics, the periodic break-through of new leadership—these were already in the works before the Depression. Depression, therefore, instead of catching a nation wholly unprepared, merely accelerated tendencies toward change already visible in the national community. The response to depression, in short, was controlled and tempered by the values of traditional American experimentalism, rather than those of rigid ideology. The New Deal was thus able to approach the agony of mass unemployment and depression in the pragmatic spirit, in the spirit which guaranteed the survival rather than the extinction of freedom, in the spirit which in time rekindled hope across the world that free men could manage their own economic destiny.

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THE New Deal of Franklin D. Roosevelt, just as the New Freedom of Woodrow Wilson before, and the Fair Deal of Harry Truman later, had its quota of ideologues, but was not an ideology; it had its following of true believers, but was not a chiliastic faith; it produced far-ranging reforms, but was not a crusade; it was rich in inventions, but was not an experiment; it mobilized huge majorities, but was not a revolt of the masses; it generated forceful national leadership, but was not a charismatic surrender. It is possible to see the New Deal as the fulfillment of the promise of American life—Herbert Croly's dream in the years before the first World War; or as an exercise in instrumental pragmatism which John Dewey had celebrated in the years following that war. But if it was the realization of the liberal promise or the application of the pragmatic philosophy, it was so by way of improvisation rather than design. All of these elements were present, but they do not express the dynamics of the New Deal. If it was anything, the New Deal between 1932 and 1940 was, simply and foremost, evidence of the viability of democratic politics in an age of crisis.

Ardently defended by its admirers, and bitterly denounced by its enemies, the New Deal came to make a lasting impression on the American experience—an impression, I venture to say, which in the long run can only be compared with the birth of the

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nation itself and the fratricidal blood-letting of the Civil War. The New Deal fascinated and continues to fascinate the national consciousness, not only because it was an intense and dramatic political episode, but also because it was, like the birth of the United States and the Civil War, a national event. By comparison, the earlier New Freedom and the later Fair Deal were merely incidents—the former a pale prospectus, the latter a faded post-script, to the politically most exciting period in American history.

### *Not an Ideology*

Though the New Deal was non-ideological, this does not mean that it was anti-ideological. In fact, it was shot through with ideologies, or utopias, whichever emphasis one may prefer. Total planners and piecemeal planners, budget-balancers and deficit-spenders, trust-regulators and trust-busters, protectionists and free traders, "sound money" proponents and inflationists—all vied with each other under the hospitable tent that was the New Deal. Wall Street bankers, Midwest farmers, Harvard economists, Columbia lawyers, labor intellectuals, old-time progressives, new liberals, social workers—men of the Right, Left, and Middle—supplied ideas and programs, if not panaceas. Theories were welcome as they had never been welcome before; and never before, or thereafter, did so many blueprints of a better order reach the citadel of influence. Ideas were, indeed, the true coins of the realm.

But, for precisely these reasons, there was little of the ideological in the New Deal—if by ideology one means a coherent and consistent set of beliefs, values, opinions, and aspirations. To attempt to construct out of the welter of these beliefs and values, opinions and aspirations an internally congruent system of thought is to do violence to history and to the meaning of the New Deal. Not that such attempts have not been made, or will not be made in the future. But they can be made only at the risk of great distortion. For the New Deal was an ideologically much too elusive phenomenon to be squeezed into the convenient categories of ideological analysis. In fact, insofar as it responded to ideological pressures at all, the New Deal was engaged in a continuous effort to disengage itself from ideological commitments.

The difficulty of ideological analysis is that it cannot easily free itself from the Aristotelian mode of thinking, with its neat and even aesthetically satisfying dichotomies. This is the mode of thought which pitches liberty against security, private property against public ownership, national regulation against decentralization, monopoly against competition. Granted, the New Deal emphasized the positive role of national government and strong federal action. But, granted too, the consequences of such action, as in the federal grants-in-aid programs, were an enormous expansion and strengthening of both state and municipal activities. Granted, the Tennessee Valley Authority represented as "socialist" an undertaking as had ever been devised in the United States. But, granted too, one of its consequences was the flowering of private enterprise in an area where previously it had great trouble flowering. Granted, the New Deal promoted social and economic security in manifold ways. But, granted too, it did not do so at the expense of liberty: there was hardly a period in American history in which public discussion of public issues and the freedom to speak freely had been practiced with as much abandon as under the New Deal. The New Deal simply defies ideological classification.

All this does not mean that the New Deal was not anchored in a cultural milieu of attitudes and predispositions which was congenial to its operation. This milieu was the liberal tradition in America. As Louis Hartz has suggested, in one sense the whole American political tradition is liberal. In this perspective, the New Deal, non-ideological though it was, was clearly an indication, if not a vindication, of liberalism. Without this tradition, there would have been no New Deal. But, in the American context, the liberal tradition as such has rarely been experienced as an ideology. Rather, it appears as a cultural fact which, like the air we breathe, is so close, so natural, so much a part of our daily life that we fail to notice it. The liberal tradition explains, I suspect, why its many contradictions and inconsistencies were "built in" New Deal programs, plans, and policies. For liberalism, unlike other isms, has never been a set of dogmas, but a state of mind. It represents an attitude which insists on questioning self-evident propositions, partly to find out what evidence there is to support them, partly to discover possible alternatives. It follows that liberalism is not bound to any particular social or economic system. No wonder that so many different ideologues, theoreticians, administrators, and politicians could find the New Deal a congenial environment in which to work. Indeed, they

shaped that environment. And the New Deal reflected, in varying degrees and at varying times, the varying enthusiasm and different approaches to the national problems.

### *Not a Faith*

That the New Deal gave new hope to millions, that it brought new confidence into government, that it ultimately became a testament of national courage, there is little doubt. Where there had been drift, the New Deal offered mastery. Just as Hoover's "we are at the end of our string" had symbolized the old order, Roosevelt's "firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself" symbolized the new approach. But at no time did the New Deal assume that man does not live by bread alone. It generated fresh expectations in the hearts of people who had recently experienced little but misery, and a new spirit came about the land. But it was a hope and a spirit nourished not by promises and good intentions, but by governmental action. The New Deal was a reconfirmation of the old American assumption that action is its own reward. What the New Deal articulated was not a faith in a better morrow, but a call for action now.

And the people were captivated, not because they were asked to be true believers, but because action gave them a new sense of dignity. The dole had given them the minimum means of subsistence, and charity had made them loathe a humility to which they were not accustomed. Now they found their way into public works, conservation corps, rural settlements, and, as the economy began to grind again, back into jobs in industry, transportation, and commerce. They were grateful. But even if the New Deal had tried to take the role of the savior, it is doubtful that it could have saved many souls. What generated the new spirit that made the thirties so exciting was not government action alone. True, the government played a role it had never played in the lives of Americans before. But what sustained the popular drive and confidence that came with the New Deal was the old faith that man can control his destiny—even the conditions that make action and self-help possible.

Much nonsense has been written to the effect that the New Deal made of Americans unthinking and faithful dependents of a "welfare state," so-called—a people which has lost initiative

and entrusts its fate to the benevolence of an all-powerful government. The welfare state, it is alleged, is the new dispensation—man's reward on this earth for conformity and compliance based on faith and political suicide. But the New Deal was not a sacred mission; it was a most secular, indeed profane, manifestation of modern man's quest for security—not the security that comes from an anticipation of heavenly bliss, but the security that comes from an ability to make this earth one's home.

The New Deal, then, was not an "escape from freedom," a surrender of the intellectual faculties. Rather than calling for faith, it was an enormous educational effort. Perhaps never before in the history of the republic was it necessary to re-educate the preferences and redirect the energies of the people. Whatever one may wish to call it—propaganda or education—the American people were exposed to a flow of information about the activities of the government unexcelled in the past. And the people responded. There was new understanding of the difficulties besetting the nation, a new tolerance of innovations, and a new commitment to creative intelligence in politics. Rarely has there been so much knowledgeable participation of the people in public affairs. Letters poured into Washington, and the newspaper columns reflected popular interest. Rather than escaping from freedom, people once more had a genuine sense of being part of the governmental enterprise. Not submission to authority, but a lively feeling of one's efficacy, one's ability to influence the course of events, characterized the popular response. It has sometimes been said that if the New Deal had wanted to assume totalitarian forms, it could have done so without much difficulty—for people were ready to accept almost anything that would give them a better deal. Nothing could be further from reality. The New Deal was what it was and became what it became precisely because it did not promise a millennium, but confronted the American people with the harsh realities of the present, first at home, and then abroad.

### *Not a Crusade*

To think of the New Deal as a unified program, a plan, or a policy is as mistaken as to think of it as a movement or a crusade. There were many programs and policies, and there

was more than a movement. What made the New Deal the phenomenon it was—a new deal in American life, a fresh start—was not a zest for reform, but the need to respond to national problems as they were dictated by the exigencies of the moment, not as they may have been preconceived by reformers. Whatever preferences for reform may have motivated individual New Dealers as they found themselves in the seats of power and influence after the politically lean years of normalcy, the task at hand was to revive the economy, not to translate long-cherished proposals for reform into reality.

Reforms, of course, there were. Some were successful and became permanent features of American life. Industrial violence, long the scourge of labor-management relations, gave way to the peaceful method of collective bargaining. Unemployment and old-age insurance programs remedied long-standing ills among the socially and economically most disadvantaged sector of the population. Securities legislation brought discipline and responsibility into the disorderly state of banking and investment practices. But other reforms were doomed to failure. Rural resettlement was a temporary stop-gap and fell victim to its own idealism. The National Resources Planning Board never got off the ground. Other programs were conceived as self-liquidating and were liquidated, though some of them, like the Civilian Conservation Corps or Public Works Administration, left a rich heritage of national accomplishment. Still other programs represented *ad hoc* inventions to cope with pressing problems which had hardly been envisaged by the reformers. They were, in fact, determined efforts by the government to maintain the *status quo*. Programs such as agricultural adjustment or bank deposit insurance were acts not so much of reform as of preservation.

The one attempt made to conduct a crusade—the National Recovery Administration under Hugh Johnson—resembled more an Alice-in-Wonderland grotesque than a viable governmental structure and policy. NRA had important successes—abolishing child labor, setting maximum hours and minimum wages, removing unfair trade practices, and so forth—which, once re-enacted after NRA's demise, became monuments of social progress. But, on the whole, NRA was a fiasco because it tried to do too much in too little time within a single institutional setting which, at its roots, sought to reconcile business regulation by business itself with protection of free-market mechanisms by the government. The effort often led to an atmosphere of his-

trionics much at variance with that kind of earnestness that is the hallmark of reform. The Blue Eagle campaign was more a circus, really, than a crusade, and few tears were shed when the whole enterprise was declared unconstitutional.

It is only in the perspective of history that the New Deal can possibly be conceived as a political or social movement. But even in this perspective, it was only a new phase, a most intensive phase, perhaps, forced by the great depression to heroic exertion, in the long-range national development which is the promise of American life. It was directly related—not only in ideas it shared, but also in some of its older personnel—to both the Square Deal and the New Freedom, to the historical trend to achieve Jeffersonian ends by Hamiltonian means. That the Square Deal had been Republican and the New Freedom Democratic made the national character of the New Deal all the more poignant. Of all the movements, so-called, in American history, the New Deal was truly national in scope, liberal in purpose, and effective in action.

### Not an Experiment

The New Deal has come to be cited as the prize exhibit of the success of the experimental method in the making of public policy and the development of administrative techniques. The New Deal's willingness and capacity to chart new social and political paths is seen as an expression of John Dewey's philosophy of instrumentalism. But this interpretation represents a tendency to over-intellectualize the political process. It is more often in the nature of an apologia than of analysis. By calling anything new an "experiment," success of the experiment is heralded as proof of the uses of experimentation, while failure is explained away as inconsequential. The analogy between social efforts to create new alternatives and scientific experimentation ignores more than it explains. In fact, when the metaphor becomes a myth, it may be detrimental to a genuine understanding of the New Deal.

Roosevelt himself gave credence to the experimental metaphor when he declared that what the country needed was "bold, persistent experimentation." Yet one may doubt that his call for experimentation was intended to make experimental pragmatism

into a political formula. His notion hardly included the scientist's image of the carefully designed and controlled experiment. As he suggested, "it is common sense to take a method and try it; if it fails, admit it frankly and try another. But above all, try something." But an experiment is the very opposite of common sense. Quite clearly, Roosevelt's accent was less on the nature of the method used than on the injunction to "try something." Roosevelt was prepared to try things, not to test theoretical propositions or to follow hunches—his mind was much too untheoretical for that—but to meet urgent social needs and pressures. Indeed, many potential New Deal proposals never left the drafting boards, not because they might not have worked, but because they were politically unfeasible. And not a few others were prematurely terminated long before their success or failure could have been demonstrated.

Though the New Deal was not an experiment or a series of experiments, it was admittedly an experience in social inventiveness. There was, again in Roosevelt's words, no room for "foolish traditions." Innovation, not experiment, was the trade-mark of the New Deal. The proliferation of administrative agencies came with the suspicion that the old-line departments would not or could not aggressively pursue the new policies; balancing the budget no longer meant what it had traditionally meant—social values defied accounting in terms of dollars and cents, and it was the national economy, not the government budget, that was thought to be at stake; an agriculture of abundance was to be realized, paradoxically, through promoting programs of scarcity, like killing pigs and plowing under the crops which could not be marketed at adequate prices; and on the political front, from Roosevelt's personal appearance at the 1932 Chicago convention to his breaking of the two-term tradition eight years later, the New Deal defied conventions. Yet, it is interesting to note that in politics proper this proved most difficult, as the ill-fated "court-packing plan" or the President's aborted attempt to influence the 1938 Democratic primaries demonstrated.

But, paradoxically too, the New Deal with all its inventions was in the great American political and social tradition. For that tradition meant innovation: free public lands, free religious worship, free public education, a chance at economic betterment and social mobility, a broad democratic franchise, and many other social gains had at first been innovations—inventions which at one time had made the difference between the Old

World and the New. The New Deal was in the mainstream of that tradition, but again with a difference.

### *Not a Revolt*

Easy comparison can be made between the New Deal's success in mobilizing great electoral majorities and the plebiscitary mirages performed by totalitarian regimes. Both, it has been claimed, represented that revolt of the masses which José Ortega y Gasset had so somberly described only a few years earlier. Increased popular participation in the most far-reaching decision a national community can make—the election of its government—has been said to be a sign not of social health, but of social tension; an index of cleavage rather than consensus; evidence of despair rather than creative involvement.

Whatever the veracity of this argument in regard to totalitarian mass behavior, it lacks relevance to the New Deal as a political event. The New Deal elections were not plebiscites, but hard-fought, free battles of the ballot. Even in the landslide election of 1936, almost seventeen million people, or about 38 percent of the total electorate, voted for the Republican candidate. In spite of the personal attractiveness of the Democratic candidate, few campaigns in twentieth century America have been as genuinely democratic as the early New Deal elections. Although the press was predominantly anti-New Deal, rarely has there been so much discussion of the real issues facing the nation. What moved the New Deal majorities was not a sense of revolt, but a renewed spirit of confidence in the willingness and ability of the government to carry out the popular mandate.

In organizing its electoral majorities, the New Deal restructured the political map. Its political techniques were anything but the contrived plebiscitarian technology of mass manipulation. That the New Deal succeeded in harnessing to its wagon the forces of labor, the young as well as the old, the socially underprivileged ethnic groups, farmers as well as urbanites, former Republicans as well as former Socialists, was not the result of hidden persuasion or silent threat, but of its sensitivity to popular needs and demands. In doing so, the New Deal was an almost perfect system of political feedback. Rarely in a modern democracy has the politics of democracy been equally conducive

to the strengthening of democracy as a viable political system.

Had the New Deal been an ideology, a faith, or a crusade, it might have been otherwise. But because it was none of these things, the New Deal could engage in its support the great electoral majorities which it needed in order to cope forcefully with the tasks of the nation. Nevertheless, impressive as the New Deal majorities were, it would be to simplify the situation if one elevated the New Deal into a flowering of the majoritarian principle as a "general will." The New Deal majority was, above all, a product of the political process as it had developed its particular flavor in the American culture. In the abstract, one might say that the majority demanded "something be done," or that it approved of what was done. Yet, that something was invariably done, sooner or later, does not mean that the majority, so-called, was agreed on what should be done, or that it endorsed what was done for the same reasons. To assume that the New Deal majorities were united in purposes and goals is not only naive, but incorrect. The New Deal majorities were, in reality, only evidence of the complex processes of group adjustment and compromise that had preceded the electoral majorities; proof that these processes were reasonably efficient in generating the electoral power that was needed to continue the processes of adjustment and compromise. Like all American majorities, the New Deal majorities were the products of a salient coalition politics, only more so. No ideological or militant politics, no revolt of the masses, could have been equally successful—at least not in a free democracy.

### *Not a Charisma*

If ever the right man came to occupy the right office at the right time, Franklin D. Roosevelt was that man. Indeed, so close was the contemporary identification of New Deal and FDR, and so close does it continue to be in the perspective of history, that it is difficult to think of the one without the other. Both FDR's most devoted supporters and his most vociferous critics, as well as the historians of whatever persuasion, are agreed that it was the President who symbolized the New Deal. But to acknowledge that FDR was the chief architect of the New Deal, its most convincing spokesman, its forceful leader and also its most tan-

gible target, is not to imply that he was a charismatic personality. Undoubtedly, there were people who ascribed to him the qualities of charisma—infallibility, omniscience, omnipotence. And some of his most bitter opponents were equally intent on seeing in him the very incarnation of the charismatic opportunist. But neither orientation is correct. FDR was unduly loved by some and unduly hated by others, but to the vast majority of the American people he was Mr. President—the legally chosen head of a government whose function it was to represent and execute the power of the nation in time of crisis. This role FDR was superbly fitted and able to carry out.

While it is facile to interpret the New Deal in terms of the President's role and personality, one wonders what FDR would have been like as a chief executive without the New Deal. Was it because FDR was not an ideologue, a reformer, or a prophet that the New Deal was not an ideology, a faith, or a crusade for reform? Or was it because the New Deal was none of these things that FDR came to play the role he did? A categorical answer is impossible. The President's personality and the character of the New Deal, if it is permissible to speak of character, were admirably blended to produce the kind of strong governmental leadership which the nation required in the moment of crisis. But this makes it all the more necessary not to exaggerate, yet also not to minimize, the role of the President in the total configuration of the New Deal. Because the tendency to exaggerate has probably been the dominant one, it seems desirable to point to some less frequently noticed features of the New Deal's personnel.

While Roosevelt never allowed the impression to prevail that he was not boss and master of the situation, his effectiveness as a leader did not derive from an unqualified loyalty that he may have been able to exact from his "subordinates." Rather, it derived from his ability to allow his lieutenants enough free-wheeling initiative to work out programs and policies—and it was one of his favorite images to see himself as the quarterback who was merely called upon to call the signals. The forceful leadership provided by the New Deal was not just Roosevelt's, but truly the product of teamwork. Leadership under the New Deal was both concentrated, in the White House, and decentralized, in the many departments and agencies of the federal government, most of them headed by able men who themselves were leaders, not henchmen or yes-men.

Moreover, the spirit of leadership under the New Deal was not only pervasive in the executive branch, but also in the legislative branch, and, after the mandate of 1936, in the judicial branch as well. There has been a tendency to neglect the part played by Congress in providing political leadership. There were the "Hundred Days," it is true, when the new Congress had little choice but to go along with the President's "must" programs. But the New Deal Congresses were not simply "rubber-stamp" legislatures. They included men of vision, wisdom, and sagacity, progressives who often succeeded in moving the White House in directions in which it would not have moved on its own initiative. Similarly, once the Supreme Court—or rather two of its members, including the Chief Justice—had realized that it could not set itself up against the wishes of the great majority of the people and the popular President, it produced decisions which themselves were important ingredients of New Deal policies.

It is in this larger context of "collective leadership" shared by all the branches of the federal government that the President's role must be located. Economic policies and social programs came from many sources—braintrusts, interest groups, administrators, Congressmen, and Justices. It was Roosevelt's genius that he could pick men with ideas, and it was his glory that he encouraged ideas; it was his skill that he could articulate both popular needs and governmental responses; it was his confidence that he could transmit similar confidence to his associates; it was his power that he could humor, persuade, and, if necessary, threaten those who sat on the sidelines; it was his personality that he could make charm and courage instruments of government; above all, it was his spirit that he could convey his own idealism to the people as well as those who worked with him and for him.

But Roosevelt was not an ideologue—for he did not work with theoretical preconceptions, but with presuppositions. He was not a prophet—for his faith was terrestrial, not celestial. He was not a crusader—for he did not do many things he might have done by way of reform. He was not an agitator—for he was not driven by frustration, but committed to the proposition that common problems are best solved by common efforts. He was not a charismatic leader—for his own self-image as a politician forbade a charismatic image to be held by others. Roosevelt was a politician who saw that the business of gov-

ernment was politics, and who came to the business of government as a politician.

### *A Mature Politics*

If the New Deal was not an ideology, a faith, a crusade, an experiment, a revolt, or a charisma, what was it? In retrospect, what makes the New Deal so memorable, so significant an event in the history of the United States is that it is both a symbol and evidence of the nation's political maturity: its ability to solve its problems through politics rather than through ideology or violence. Politicians though they were, the Founding Fathers essentially distrusted politics. Whatever their real commitments, they believed in the cult of reason and natural law. In the Civil War, ideological intransigence—Lincoln, who came too late and passed away too early, excepted—underlined the poverty of politics, so largely responsible for both the violence and its unfortunate aftermath. By way of contrast, the New Deal was neither distrustful of politics nor poor in political strategies. If a commitment there was, it was a commitment to a mature politics.

A mature politics cannot afford to be either ideological or utopian. Ideologists and utopians are essentially apolitical. They are, in many respects, like children who are preoccupied almost exclusively with what they want when they want it, for whom their little selves are the center of the cosmos. Preoccupied with their own diagnoses and therapies, ideologists and utopians are, paradoxically, "thoughtless" in the literal sense of the word—blind to the needs of others and unconcerned with the consequences of their self-centered aspirations for others. Responsibility is a concept alien to both children and ideologues alike. Maturity, on the other hand, is the capacity to respond to others without making the demands of the self the sole criterion of perception or behavior. Real and necessary as the demands of the mature person are, maturity involves recognition of the legitimate interests of others. A mature politics involves adjustment, compromise, integration. It can never be a purely ideological politics which exaggerates the importance of the self at the expense of the other, or which may even mean the destruction of the other.

The New Deal was a politics of maturity in this sense, for it brought to the problems it faced political, not ideological, solutions. This is often not understood by its ideological critics or ideological defenders. The very debate which the New Deal aroused, and continues to arouse, is the best evidence. The New Deal is "incomprehensible" to the ideologues of the Right and Left because it was so unideological, because it was not a "scheme" but a "deal" so different from the political solitaire which the ideologue likes to play. The New Deal was a search for acceptable solutions to problems rather than an imposition of preconceived solutions on problems. The ideologues and theoreticians were necessary to the New Deal, vital in its growth and development, but they could not be its conductors. Some were disgusted, others despaired, unable to fathom the rationale of a program which was no program and had no rationale that fitted their ideological preconceptions. Those who stayed with the New Deal—men as different in their interest as Harold Ickes, the old progressive, or Jesse Jones, the financier, or Henry Wallace, the Republican farmer—served the New Deal for what it was: not a return to an ideological yesteryear, or a road to a utopian tomorrow, but a political enterprise which harnessed political forces in the spirit of political maturity.

It was not so much a characteristic of the New Deal's political maturity that many ideas and interests found expression in the hurly-burly of politics, but that politics took these ideas and interests seriously, that it encouraged their expression, that it took it for granted that these ideas and interests would clash, and that it was ready to give, but also to take away. The New Deal represented, on the level of national politics, a tough-mindedness that allowed for little ideological self-indulgence. Ideological thinking, however camouflaged, is tender-minded because it is self-indulgent. But in politics self-indulgence means bargaining from a position of weakness rather than strength. It represents an escape from a politics of maturity, not a recognition of the potentialities as well as limitations of political life. The New Deal was politically tough and mature, for it accepted the limits of the possible.

Too much emphasis has been placed on the role of the "brain trust" and the intellectuals who joined the New Deal. That they played an enormous and desirable role in orienting the public policies of the New Deal cannot be denied. But to assume that they operated with the single-mindedness of an idealized high

command is to ignore the great diversity of backgrounds and opinions that they brought to bear on the common effort. Rarely did New Deal measures represent a clear-cut ideological preference. Programs were proposed, adjustments were made, compromises were negotiated, and the new syntheses only remotely resembled the original proposals. The New Deal was a governmental process which reflected the necessities and obstacles of a mature democratic politics.

Only when the shadow of war had become a spectre worse than depression, and when the New Deal had remedied much of what sickened American life, did politics give way to defense and apologia as well as to surrender of the political imagination. There appeared the bandwagon mentality—what Morris Cohen has called "the vile habit of thinking that the latest is always the best"—and the convenient belief that present trends will continue indefinitely into the future. It was then that the New Deal tended to become an affair of pronouncement and magic formula. But this, in fact, meant the end of the New Deal. Yet it is against this later phase that the New Deal can be best assessed—as a flowering of sensitivity to the paradoxes, ambiguities, complications, compromises, and adventures of politics. To live with these characteristics, not only to tolerate them but to thrive on them, was the mark of that political maturity which distinguished the New Deal as a national event.