

## A LESSON FROM FDR

# Uplifting the People

by Robert Ingraham and Theodore Andromidas

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### I. Introduction

Jan. 2—As the sixteen-year nightmare of George W. Bush and Barack Obama draws to a close, we find America in a great crisis, confronted with a series of choices as to what the nation's new direction will be in the months ahead. Our major banking and financial institutions are all insolvent; our industry and manufacturing have been plundered and shuttered; our nation is ravaged by an out-of-control drug epidemic; and America's once great and proud tradition of leadership in science and technology has all but vanished, with the deliberate abandonment of any national commitment to either the development of Fusion Energy or an aggressive Space Program.

Obviously, much can be said in regard to urgently-needed actions. These would include a major change in foreign policy, including friendly overtures to both Russia and China, and a willingness on the part of the United States to join in the new paradigm of global economic development. Such necessary actions also includes the passage of Glass-Steagall legislation and the implementation of a Hamiltonian credit policy to rebuild America's physical economy.

At the same time, however, even as the structures and components of our nation have been dismantled and damaged almost beyond repair, an even greater crisis exists as to the moral and intellectual carnage that has been wreaked on the minds and souls of the American people. We are dealing today with a severely damaged population, a population

which has been reduced to the level of effective moral, economic and cultural slavery. The chains that have been imposed over the last sixteen years will not be easy to break. And the greatest of all the harm that has been inflicted has been that which has been done to the youth of America.

This current article will deal, extensively, with measures that were taken by President Franklin Roosevelt. It is not, however, intended to be an "history" article, something which tells an interesting or inspiring story. We can learn from the past—yet, our focus is the crisis of today and the initiatives which must be taken now to move America toward rapid and sustainable improvement.

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### II. Lyndon LaRouche Speaks

On Tuesday, Dec. 27, 2016, during a conference call with associates, Lyndon LaRouche had the following to say, regarding the matters with which we are here concerned,



TheGadgetGuy1/youtube

*Detroit 2016: an abandoned auto plant.*

You've got to get the people back into understanding what is available to them. We've got to break the ice on slavery, on various kinds and degrees of slavery, inside the United States. And the ruin of our education system, all these kinds of things. These things have to be rebuilt. Because it is those kinds of things which, when done properly, will cause the leading of the recovery of the United States population. . .

Most of the people of the United States have been brainwashed. And I do mean, literally, brainwashed. And that's the thing you've got to correct. You've got to bring people who are actually ignorant, not just ignorant of particular things but ignorant in their behavior towards society in general. And if we want to win this thing, win a recovery of the U.S. economy, you've got to do that.

I think we have the latent option, in the United States, on this thing. I think we can probably get that back, again, and can push away the kind of thing that destroyed the financial system, the U.S. financial system, when President Franklin Roosevelt was crushed. It was that simple. And this is what you've got to have, is the leadership which goes like Franklin Roosevelt's campaigns; goes to the issues of what is necessary to instruct people to recognize the things that will make them better in terms of their behavior in society.

You have to really educate people, by using the kinds of tools of education which make them creative. That used to happen in the United States, that used to happen. And then it went down, when Franklin Roosevelt dropped out. But now we've seen everything, all the dirty business in the United States is still there and it has to be removed. In other words all these things, of the people who were opposed to Franklin Roosevelt, that has to be removed and a vision of what Franklin Roosevelt had accomplished, in a decade, particularly, that's what has to be created, and based on.

Thus, our task is defined, and the direction toward a solution is supplied by Mr. LaRouche. What is left to us is: first, to accept both the analysis and challenge as defined by LaRouche, without any short-cuts or quick-results schemes; and second, to organize and fight for this perspective and policy orientation.

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### III. Our Current Situation

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As of Jan. 1, 2017 there are approximately thirty-two million Americans between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four. If one takes a larger segment, there are almost eighty million Americans between the ages of seventeen and thirty-four. In other words, the "youth population" of America is equal in size to the total population of Germany or Iran. All of these youth have spent the majority, if not the near entirety of their lives under the immoral and inhuman policies of Bush and Obama.

What is the culture of this "youth nation"? They possess no sense of purpose for their lives, beyond mere personal desires; no sense of mission; no positive national identity; no sense of what it means to be productive; an almost complete lack of real labor skills, among all but a small minority; an almost total lack of classical culture; and a crippling inability to concentrate and work through difficult intellectual problems over a sustained time-period. Many small businesses and corporations describe the majority of American youth as "unemployable."

According to a report issued by the Economic Policy Institute in 2016, actual youth unemployment,<sup>1</sup> for high school graduates, stands at 33.8 percent for whites, 51.3 percent for blacks and 36.1 percent for Hispanics. It is far worse for those who have not completed high school, and even for college graduates, the national average is still over 20 percent.

At the same time, it is now reported by the Centers for Disease Control that one out of fifteen Americans is now addicted to heroin or some other opioid. That's 20 million Americans who are addicted. And these figures do not include consumption of methamphetamines, hallucinogens, ecstasy, or other "designer" drugs. Additionally, recent studies from states which have legalized marijuana indicate a significant jump in overall drug usage since legalization has taken effect. The impairment of cognitive functioning that has resulted from this saturation-level drug usage is beyond dispute.

Most readers have probably heard the term "Hoover-villes" used to describe the decrepit shanty-towns erected by the homeless during the 1920s and 1930s.

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1. That is, figures which reflect the combined total of the "official" unemployment rate, those whom the government omits as "not in the labor force," and those who are severely and unwillingly underemployed, many employed for only a few hours a week at minimum wage jobs.

They are back, but today's "Obamavilles" are much worse than their depression-era predecessors. On your computer, go to Google and type in the phrase, "Tent City" (or "Homeless Encampment") United States 2016. Look at the images. There are now thousands, perhaps tens of thousands, of such "camps" across the country. They are in every one of the fifty states. The majority of the residents are under thirty-five years old. Malnutrition, drug usage, disease and crime are rampant. This is now the reality—the day-to-day life—for those inhabiting these camps.

What we are facing today not simply an "economic" crisis. It is the very soul of America which is imperiled. Wake up! The danger today is actually far greater than during Roosevelt's lifetime. The damage is greater. When Roosevelt took office in 1933, the factories had only been shut down for three or four or five years. Now, it has been longer than an entire generation. Young people today do not even possess the memory of a time when America had a productive economy. The generation which put a man on the Moon is dead or dying, and their skills are dying with them.

At the same time, America has been at war for fifteen years, brutal, evil wars which are a disgrace to America's founding intention. If you are now eighteen years old, those wars began when you were two or three years old, perhaps only recently out of diapers. You have known nothing else your entire life. For the last eight years a man has occupied the White House who takes glee in murdering people each week, through drone attacks and other



EIRNS/Michael Steger

*A tent city in Ontario, Calif.*

ing drug usage.

Why focus this article on youth? Aren't all Americans, from all age groups, suffering? Yes, they are, but youth are the future. They can not and must not be abandoned, either morally or from the standpoint of national security. As stated, there are 80 million young adults in America. With them, we rise or fall. It is not an accident that the average age of an enrollee in one of Franklin Roosevelt's CCC camps was twenty. FDR rescued an entire generation, one which otherwise had no future, except perhaps as fodder for a growing fascist movement. This is where the intervention, no matter how difficult, has to be made, and it must be made now.

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#### IV. Franklin Roosevelt's Victory

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Lyndon LaRouche has often described the great turning point in human history which took place with the 1890 forced ouster of German Chancellor Bismarck and the 1901 assassination of U.S. President William McKinley.



East Liverpool, Ohio Mobile Upload

*Overdosed grandparents passed out in car, with child in back seat.*





irwinator.com

*Homelessness epidemic in the 1930s.*

From 1890 onward, all of Europe as well as the United States began a descent into what can only be described as a “New Dark Age,” a process which was dramatically intensified as a result of the destruction and horrors of World War I.

During those 40-plus years, leading into 1933, there was a continual decimation and demoralization of culture both in Europe and America. In science, in the classical arts, in economics, the hard-fought progress which had been achieved during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was rolled back. By 1933, not only were Germany and Italy both governed by fascist regimes, but most of the rest of Europe, most emphatically Britain and France, were dominated by a pessimistic fascist culture. The same process also occurred in the United States, typified by the major revival of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s.

Then came Franklin Roosevelt. Beginning in March of 1933, FDR—like a lightning bolt—took the United States in an entirely different direction.



<http://nddaily.blogspot.com>

*President Franklin Roosevelt, ca. 1941.*

He returned the United States to the intention of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. Despite massive opposition from London and Wall Street, he turned America on a dime. In economics, education, science and the arts, he revived and re-created the American Spirit. He, alone,<sup>2</sup> defied the moral and economic degeneration of that era. He, alone, defeated the slide into fascist pessimism. He set out to rescue and uplift the American people. He succeeded. That is the lesson we must learn for the challenge of today.

## Creating a Solution

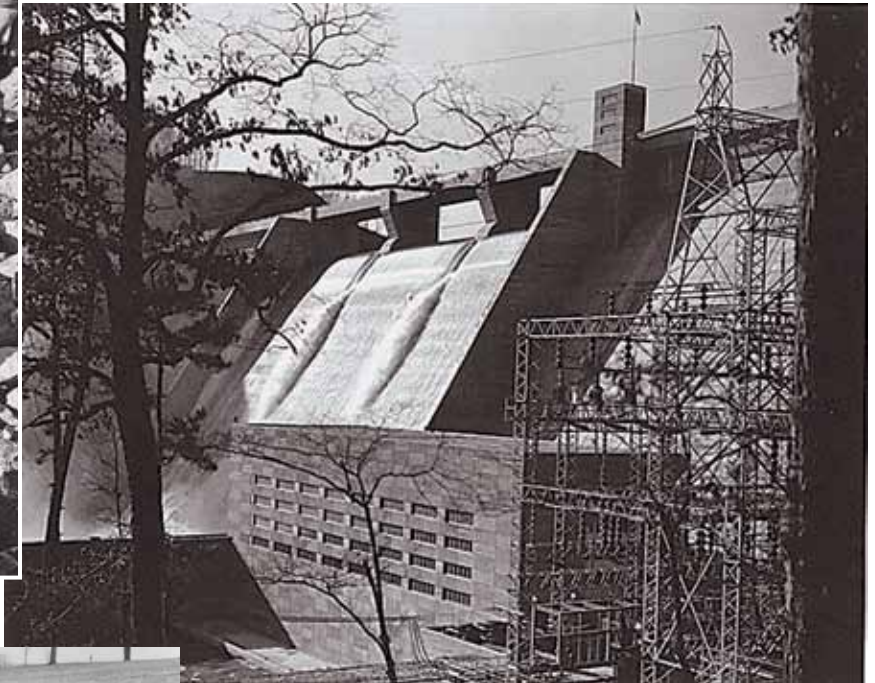
Consider, carefully, what Franklin Roosevelt initiated during his first 100 Days. None of it came from a “recipe book.” All of it was new. Things were done, experiments in policy were carried out, none of which had been done before, by anyone, at any previous time in human history. Solutions could not be copied from past events; creative interventions were required. Hovering over every action was a governing principle—to rescue and uplift the population and to rebuild the nation’s productive capabilities.

Far too often, when someone says that we need “productive” investment as opposed to “speculative” investment, this is taken to mean that we need more manufacturing. But if thousands of factories are producing designer tee-shirts or video games, does this signify an increase in the nation’s productivity? Productivity begins with devel-

2. One might add the quite different, even unique, role of the Soviet Union in this period as a second point of opposition to the dark age collapse in Europe.



*Works Progress Administration workers.*



FDR Library

*Norris Dam in Tennessee, part of the Tennessee Valley Authority project.*



U.S. National Archives and Records Administration

*CCC workers constructing a road, 1933.*



National Archives and Records Administration

*FERA camps for unemployed women in Arcola, Pennsylvania. "Second Camp" shown here ca. July 1934.*

oping the power of the individual human mind. People matter. At the same time that Franklin Roosevelt launched the unprecedented Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) project in 1933, he also created both the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), which together rescued seven million unemployed Americans—mostly young—and gave them jobs. Later, he would also create both the Civil Works Administration (CWA) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the latter of which employed an additional eight million, three million of whom were hired in its first year of operation.

Roosevelt's priority was to overcome the profound social crisis and human suffering within the nation. A type of "conveyor belt" was established, wherein young Americans, as they were rescued from despair and degradation, entered into an upward process of developing new skills, new talents, and new productive powers. People moved up from unskilled or semi-skilled labor to more sophisticated forms of employment, many joining the larger, more ambitious projects of the Public Works Administration or finding positions within the revived U.S. manufacturing sector. The dynamic was one of upward mobility, aided by the development of



new skills and educational opportunities. It is not a fluke, that as World War II approached, the United States Army actively sought out and recruited veterans of the Civilian Conservation Corps and enlisted many of them directly as NCOs (sergeants and corporals) to aid in the development of raw recruits.

## Jobs

In March of 1933, the U.S. Congress, at the request of President Roosevelt, created the Civilian Conservation Corps. Six weeks later Congress established the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA). FERA, between 1933 and 1935, created more than twenty million jobs, the equivalent of forty-five million jobs given our larger population today.

Franklin Roosevelt placed Harry Hopkins in charge of FERA, and Hopkins personified FDR's demand for "action, and action now"! In his first two *hours* on the job, Hopkins approved more than \$5 million in grants to various states for federal funding for "shovel ready" projects. Later, in November of 1933, the Civil Works Administration (CWA) was created as a subsidiary agency within FERA. This was designed from the beginning as a temporary measure. In its five months of existence, the CWA created four million jobs (the equivalent of nine million today). State governments submitted thousands of requests for aid in funding local projects, and, at one point, Hopkins was approving 100 projects per day.

Many historians have derided these jobs as "make work" or "ditch-digging" jobs, yet two points must be made on this. First, the CWA did not simply dig ditches or rake leaves. It laid twelve million feet of sewer pipe, and built or made substantial improvements to 255,000 miles of roads, 40,000 schools, and nearly 1,000 airports. It also provided considerable white-collar work, employing 50,000 teachers, as well as architects, bookbinders, writers and artists. At the same time, it is urgent to recognize that the CWA's employment of four million otherwise desperate Americans into projects which produced visible, tangible improvements in the condition of the nation, is precisely the means whereby optimism is nurtured. Despair is turned into hope.

A full rendition of all of the accomplishments of the New Deal is not possible here. Let us simply state, that



[newdealprogressives.org](http://newdealprogressives.org)

*President Franklin Roosevelt discussing plans with close assistant Harry Hopkins (left).*

under FERA, the CWA, the CCC, and the WPA, more than 14,000 new schools were built (and tens of thousands more repaired or upgraded) and more than 1,000 new public libraries; 12,000 road projects were carried out, and more than 120,000 new buildings, including post offices, courthouses, firehouses and armories, were constructed. Soil conservation, mosquito abatement, flood control and other useful projects were accomplished. These projects were carried out, not only in every state, but in almost all of the cities, towns and villages within the nation. Nearly every community in the United States had a new park, bridge or school constructed by one of these agencies.

In 1935, Roosevelt also established the National Youth Administration (NYA). Under this program, the government made it possible for 1.5 million high school students and 600,000 college students—the age range was from sixteen to twenty-five—to continue their education by providing them with part-time jobs. A key component of the program was job training. Although in recent years such vocational training has been rightfully criticized as a form of "tracking" of poor students into lower wage occupations, it must be understood that in 1933-1937 most of these students had no skills at all, and very little in the way of job prospects. The NYA exposed students to a wide variety of fields, including education, the arts, research and development, manufacturing, agriculture, and construction. As in the case of the CCC, with the outbreak of World War II, many of the NYA "alumni" played a significant role as secondary or even primary leaders in the development of de-



NARA

*Young men of Company 2314-C, Kane, Pennsylvania, study radio code in a camp.*

fense industries and the emergence of the productive capabilities of the war economy.

The Civilian Conservation Corps is of particular relevance for today, because its base for recruitment was entirely composed of unskilled, impoverished and often homeless youth.<sup>3</sup> These were the children of the “Roaring 20s,” many of whom grew up in a culture of crime and widespread alcohol and even drug use. It is not much talked about today, but there were more than 300,000 drug addicts in the United States in 1925 (in a total population of 115 million), and many Hollywood movies and “jazz” recordings of that time glorified drug usage, including cocaine, opium and marijuana. The CCC moved millions of youth out of their home towns and into facilities where, in addition to the daily work projects, educational instruction, reading skills, music and art were provided.

In his third Fireside Chat, on July 8, 1933, FDR would report to the American people the successful establishment and the importance of the Civilian Conservation Corps.

I welcome the opportunity to extend a greeting to the men who constitute the Civilian Conservation Corps. . . It is my belief that what is being accomplished will conserve our natural re-

sources, create future national wealth and prove of moral and spiritual value not only to those of you who are taking part, but to the rest of the country as well. . . You should emerge from this experience strong and rugged and ready for entrance into the ranks of industry, better equipped than before. Opportunities for employment in work, for which individually you are best suited, are increasing daily, and you should emerge from this experience splendidly equipped for the competitive fields of endeavor which always mark the industrial life of America.

## A New Economic Platform

During his first 100 Days, Franklin Roosevelt also established both the Public Works Administration (PWA) and the Tennessee Valley Authority. Space prohibits a lengthy discussion here of either of these two projects.

Let us simply state that the PWA was tasked with responsibility for the building of larger infrastructure projects, many of which produced a powerful effect in improving the economic productivity of the nation. Among the PWA’s many accomplishments were the construction of the Grand Coulee Dam, the Bonneville Dam, the Triborough Bridge, the Lincoln Tunnel, LaGuardia Airport, Los Angeles Airport, and the Upper Mississippi River locks and dams. There were hundreds of such projects, including canals, tunnels, bridges, and highways. Like the WPA, the PWA also built scores of new schools, libraries, hospitals, post offices and playgrounds. It was also involved, in partnership with the Rural Electrification Administration, in projects which led to the successful electrification of the entire nation.

Unlike the WPA or the CCC, the PWA operated largely by contracting out projects to private companies. The PWA spent over \$6 billion in contracts to private construction firms, and much of the workforce for these projects was more skilled, for example, than the typical CCC recruit. In some respects, the PWA model might serve today as a framework for the involvement of private corporations, such as Caterpillar and Bechtel, in projects such as the Bering Strait tunnel, a national high-speed rail project, and the development of new fresh water capacities.

3. The despair facing American youth at that time was the subject of a number of films, including 1933’s *Wild Boys of the Road* by William Wellman.



National Archives

*La Guardia Airport, built in New York City by the WPA in 1939.*

PWA projects created a “multiplier effect,” and it is estimated that for every worker on a PWA project, two additional workers were employed indirectly in the private sector. During its years of operation, PWA projects consumed roughly half of the concrete and a third of the steel of the entire nation.

As to the Tennessee Valley Authority, in a nutshell, Franklin Roosevelt took an area, including parts of seven states and encompassing an area eighty percent the size of England, and utterly transformed it, utilizing the most advanced industrial, technological and scientific means available at that time. The region in question was the poorest in the nation, with only a small fraction of the residents having access to electricity. Income for many families was below \$100 per year, and thirty percent of the population was affected by malaria.

Under the slogan of “electricity for all,” more than forty-five dams and hydro-electric projects were built. Additionally, more than twenty coal-fired and natural gas power plants were constructed. Later, after World War II, the TVA would embark on an ambitious project for the construction of nuclear power reactors. A region of the nation, one which encompassed 80,000 square miles, was transformed from the most abject poverty

and cultural ignorance, into a driver for a dramatic increase in the economic productivity of the entire nation.

### **The Measure of Success**

Between 1933 and 1937 unemployment was reduced from 22.6 percent to 9.1 percent. By no means was this improvement all due to direct government employment. In May 1935, private sector industrial production was fifty-five percent higher than in May 1933. By 1937, industrial production surpassed pre-1929 levels. The multiplier effect from PWA, TVA and related projects was felt throughout the private manufacturing, agricultural and construction sectors.

At the same time, the profound consequences which flowed from Roosevelt’s banking reforms, including most particularly the Glass-Steagall Act, as well as from the initiatives of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, choked off much of the pre-1933 non-productive speculative investments in the financial sector, while simultaneously establishing a Hamiltonian-type flow of credit into productive, physical investment.

Bear in mind that all of this was accomplished within the context of a global economic depression, of contracting trade and shrinking markets. It was also accomplished over the intense opposition of Wall Street and the City of London, whose intention never wavered from destroying Roosevelt, destroying the New Deal, and plunging the United States into the same downward-spiraling crisis which gripped Europe.

Roosevelt succeeded, but let us again emphasize that his success must not be measured in statistics, let alone in dollar figures. Rather, the actual success is seen in the uplifting and transformation of the people of the nation, in increasing the moral and cognitive powers of those same people. Alexander Hamilton would have recognized this yardstick for success, and it is important that we perceive clearly what it is that must be done today.



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## V. Developing the Mind

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As already stated, in looking at the various construction projects of the WPA, FERA, and the CWA, one is struck by the great number of schools and libraries which were built or modernized. Throughout the New Deal, a stress was placed on the question of literacy.

If one looks at why the American Revolution succeeded and why, for example the French Revolution descended into barbarism, literacy—that which elevates the human mind—is at the very center of the difference. At the time of the American Revolution, literacy rates stood at near 100 percent in the major cities of Boston, New York and Philadelphia, and the American colonies possessed possibly the most literate culture in the world. In *Literacy in Colonial New England*, author Kevin Lockridge used legal records to demonstrate that,

Among white New England men, about 60 percent of the population was literate between 1650 and 1670, a figure that rose to 85 percent between 1758 and 1762, and to 90 percent between 1787 and 1795.

Comparing this to what later existed in the United States in 1930, we see a shocking decline of literacy, a decline which accelerated dramatically after Ulysses Grant's 1875 Civil Rights Act was declared unconstitutional in 1883. The rate of student enrollment in America's schools in 1930 was almost exactly the same rate of enrollment as in 1830, which itself was a decline from the Revolutionary War period. And, although rates fluctuated, in general, by 1930, only half of all five to eighteen year-olds were enrolled in school. Rates for African-Americans were much lower than for whites.

In the southern states, the situation, even among whites, was far worse. Fewer than five percent of the teachers in this region had college training; more than sixty percent had no definite professional training of any kind. While illiteracy ranged from thirty to forty-five percent of the total population in the southern half of the nation (three times that of other areas of the country), only one southern pupil out of ten who enrolled in school reached the fifth grade, and only one in seventy reached the eighth grade.



National Archives

*Violin instruction under the direction of the WPA Federal Music Project in New York City.*

This situation would not change until the New Deal. Then the overall enrollment rates for five to eighteen year-olds rose from fifty-one percent in 1930 to seventy-five percent in 1940. The difference in the white and black enrollment rates narrowed from twenty-three points to seven points. Under Franklin Roosevelt, more than 31,000 schools were either built or renovated.

### The Arts

In 1935 Franklin Roosevelt created Federal Project Number One, known as “Federal One,” for short. This project not only extended economic relief and protection to artists, actors, writers, and musicians, but it also initiated a sweeping, in-depth effort to bring the civilizing benefits of music and classical culture to tens of millions of Americans.

Three years after the establishment of Federal One, Roosevelt wrote to his friend, the journalist Hendrik Willem Van Loon, “I too, have a dream—to show people in the out of the way places, some of whom are not only in small villages but in corners of New York City—something they cannot get from between the covers of books, some real paintings and prints and etchings and some real music.”

At the heart of Federal One was the Federal Music Project, and between 1935 and 1938, 275,000 live “performances, programs, and recitals” were given, performed before 147,000,000 people in forty-three states and Washington, D.C. The number of symphony or-

chestras in the nation rose from nineteen to one hundred fifty-three, with the Federal Music Project directly creating thirty-four new orchestras and aiding in the creation of one hundred more.

The more profound aspect of this effort, however, did not lie simply in the aid it provided to professional musicians, but the ambitious musical education program it initiated. The Federal Music Project provided classes in rural areas and urban neighborhoods, providing music education in all public schools. The program recruited and retrained approximately 1,600 music teachers, and the classes over which these teachers presided included hundreds of thousands of students, classes which included both vocal and instrumental instruction.

Thousands of new and used musical instruments, including violins, cellos, flutes and oboes, were purchased and made available, free of charge, to young students in musical programs throughout the nation.

Before the Federal Music Project came into existence, it had been estimated that two-thirds of the 4,000,000 children in the 143,000 rural schools in America were without music instruction in any form. The activities of its music teachers penetrated into the remotest rural communities. These teachers also were leading large classes in the slums and congested areas of the great cities. Classical music became the “people’s music,” available to urban and rural areas alike, to the wealthy and the poor.



National Archives

*A WPA Federal Music Project production of Macbeth.*

## A Dialogue with the American People

On March 12, 1933, only eight days after taking office, Franklin Roosevelt addressed the American people, by radio, in the first of what would become known as his “Fireside Chats.” During those eight days, FDR had taken a series of bold emergency actions to deal with the national banking and financial crisis, including the passage of the Emergency Banking Act on March 9

and the declaration of a four-day “bank holiday.” At that time, sixty percent of American households owned radios, and on March 12, FDR became the first President to speak directly to the majority of the American people. He began by saying,

I want to talk for a few minutes with the people of the United States about banking—with the

comparatively few who understand the mechanics of banking but more particularly with the overwhelming majority who use banks for the making of deposits and the drawing of checks. I want to tell you what has been done in the last few days, why it was done, and what the next steps are going to be...



Library of Congress/Russell Lee

*John Front and daughter listening to the radio in their home.*

Roosevelt gave a concise presentation on how banking worked, why a national bank holiday had been necessary, and the actual state of the banking system in the United States at that time. The affect on the American people was powerful and almost immediate.

Over the course of his

twelve-year presidency, Roosevelt delivered thirty Fireside Chats. In response, millions of letters flooded the White House. Farmers, business owners, men, women, rich, poor—most of them expressed the feeling that the President had entered their home and spoken directly to them. This was not a one-way street in which FDR simply “reported” to the American people. It was a dialogue, wherein the American people were recruited into active participation in a discussion process as to merits of crucial policy initiatives and the future course of the nation.

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## VI. What Is Needed Today

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It is extremely illuminating to read and study the dozens of speeches which President Franklin Roosevelt delivered during both his first 100 Days, and throughout the entirety of his first year in office. Many issues are discussed. His initiatives to deal with the banking crisis particularly dominate many of his initial addresses. Yet, throughout that three to twelve month period, one theme drowns out all the others. Put people back to work! Again, and again, and again, FDR hammers away at the absolute necessity for aggressive action to provide citizens with useful, gainful, employment.

Recently, a great deal of attention has been given to the seemingly miraculous accomplishment by China in uplifting 700 million of its people out of poverty. Unfortunately, most of the news media deal with this breakthrough as if it were a “statistic.” “Lifting people out of poverty” is not a statistic; it is not about numbers. The accomplishment is one of uplifting hundreds of millions out of despair and degradation into an environment of hope and optimism. This is the necessary pre-condition for the emergence of a Renaissance within human society. What will have an even more profound impact, is if the new jobs that are created are ones that do not simply provide income, but are also producing tangible, visible improvements within society as a whole. Thus, the culture of the entire nation is uplifted. A sense of mission takes hold. A dynamic leading to a profound increase in national productivity is unleashed.

According to the 2009 “Infrastructure Report Card,” issued by the American Society of Civil Engineers, America now needs to spend \$1.13 trillion



Library of Congress

*Rural electrification, one of FDR's major initiatives, in California's San Joaquin Valley in 1938.*

simply to sustain and repair already existing infrastructure (e.g., roads, bridges, dams, levees) within the nation. The report also states that it would require an additional \$4.69 trillion to build the absolutely necessary new infrastructure required to meet the nation's needs over the next two decades. That's a total of almost six trillion dollars. During his campaign, President-elect Donald Trump, to his credit, repeatedly stated his intention to spend \$1 trillion on the nation's infrastructure. Despite the fact that this would be the strongest commitment by any U.S. President to such an effort since the assassination of John Kennedy, it is still far too little.

The Civil Engineers' report includes only such future projects as they deem “necessary.” It does not include a national high-speed rail system, Fusion Energy research, NASA funding, a Bering Strait tunnel to connect to the Eurasian Landbridge, a bold fresh water development program, or other such projects. It includes nothing on the scale of FDR's Tennessee



Valley Authority. So their figure of \$4.69 trillion for new infrastructure construction is far too small.

Between 1933 and 1935 the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (the forerunner of the WPA) and the Public Works Administration together spent \$9.1 billion on infrastructure construction. That represented 12.5 percent of the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). An equivalent expenditure for today's GDP would be \$2.3 trillion. And that \$9.1 billion figure was only what was spent by FERA and the PWA; it does not include any of the additional spending by the TVA, the CCC, the NYA or several other agencies active in the first years of the New Deal. It also does not include the credit made available through the Reconstruction Finance Corporation or the reorganized commercial banking system.

It is also a certainty that, were a full "Roosevelt approach" taken today, this would result in the creation of, minimally, twenty to thirty million new, productive jobs.

### **Saving the Citizenry for 'That which is Better'**

On March 6, 1936 Franklin Roosevelt delivered his Annual Address to the United States Congress. In it, he stated,

In March, 1933, the problems which faced our Nation and which only our national Government had the resources to meet were more serious even than appeared on the surface.

It was not only that the visible mechanism of economic life had broken down. More disturbing was the fact that long neglect of the needs of the underprivileged had brought too many of our people to the verge of doubt as to the successful adaptation of our historic traditions to the complex modern world. In that lay a challenge to our democratic form of Government itself. . .

Ours was the task to do more than to argue a theory. The times required the confident answer of performance to those whose instinctive faith in humanity made them want to believe that in the long run democracy would prove superior to more extreme forms of Government as a process of getting action when action was wisdom, without the spiritual sacrifices which those other forms of Government exact.

That challenge we met. To meet it required

unprecedented activities under Federal leadership to end abuses, to restore a large measure of material prosperity, to give new faith to millions of our citizens who had been traditionally taught to expect that democracy would provide continuously wider opportunity and continuously greater security in a world where science was continuously making material riches more available to man. . .

Nor was the recovery we sought merely a purposeless whirring of machinery. It is important, of course, that every man and woman in the country be able to find work, that every factory run, that business and farming as a whole earn profits. But Government in a democratic Nation does not exist solely, or even primarily, for that purpose.

It is not enough that the wheels turn. They must carry us in the direction of a greater satisfaction in life for the average man. The deeper purpose of democratic government is to assist as many of its citizens as possible, especially those who need it most, to improve their conditions of life, to retain all personal liberty which does not adversely affect their neighbors, and to pursue the happiness which comes with security and an opportunity for recreation and culture.

Even with our present recovery we are far from the goal of that deeper purpose. There are far-reaching problems still with us for which democracy must find solutions if it is to consider itself successful.

It is useful to note, that during the period of 1933 to 1935, while the fascist regimes of Hitler and Mussolini enforced their dictatorships through the deployment of "blackshirts," "brownshirts," and other murderous "fascisti" composed largely of previously unemployed and displaced youth, a similar problem never arose in the United States. There was, indeed, a powerful *bona fide* fascist element, led by groups such as Jacob Raskob's American Liberty League, the Crusaders, the Black Legion and the American Bund—almost all of whom had deep ties to Wall Street—but there was no fascist mass movement of American youth. Instead, those youth were in Roosevelt's CCC camps, or employed through the NYA, or working on a CWA project, or receiving music training through the Federal Music

Project. This is what is possible when despair is transformed to hope.

## VII. Granting Access to the Sublime

In addition to the “jobs program” presented above, there exists, today, an even more powerful weapon available to our movement in this crusade to rescue our nation. An inkling as to the nature of that weapon is to be found in the activities of the Schiller Institute New York Community Chorus over the past twenty-four months.

On the one hand, the multiple performances of Handel’s *Messiah*, African-American spirituals and other classical compositions throughout the New York metropolitan area, particularly the “Living Memorial” concerts on the fifteenth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, has effected a powerful intervention into a population dragged down by pessimism and fear over the last fifteen years. The concerts and related activities have been a living “clarion call” to all New Yorkers to find “that which is better” within each of us.

The potential of this embryonic process is still much greater. Earlier, in this article, material was presented as to the state of youth in present-day America. It is a generation saturated with both legal and illegal drugs, one in which the ability to carry out sustained, concentrated creative work has been severely damaged, and one in which the experience of true human optimism is almost unknown. How does one go about changing this?

The classical approach of the Schiller Institute Chorus, under its leaders, provides the correct pathway. Participants in such a chorus are involved in sustained work, sustained concentration, all of which is intended to produce something beautiful, something universally true. There is an obvious moral component in this, but there is also the neurological issue. Let us be very explicit here. Marijuana use is now epidemic among young people, and regular use of marijuana impairs cognitive functioning. The video game/social media culture furthers this cognitive destruction. The mind loses its higher capacities and the soul is enervated. The choral principal, as now underway in New York, pro-



EIRNS/Stuart Lewis

*Members of the Schiller Institute Chorus rehearse under the leadership of Diane Sare.*

vides “creative therapy,” in a manner of speaking, to strengthen the human identity. New cognitive powers, language skills, ear-training and concentration skills are being developed.

Imagine a very young girl who is given a violin and provided with a good teacher. As the child works with her instrument over a period of weeks and months, an entire new world opens up. New levels of human understanding, previously completely unknown, emerge; new powers of cognition; a greater understanding of artistic beauty. Glimpses of what Friedrich Schiller identified as “The Sublime” begin to take hold within the mind and heart of the young violinist.<sup>4</sup> An unseen, but sensed, higher identity, one which is both beautiful and lawful, offers itself to the young artist.

Essentially, what is being discussed here is the creation of a new Cultural Platform for America, which is, in fact, absolutely indispensable for the rescuing of the American people.

Everything that must be done over the coming period—economically, financially, artistically, morally—must be governed by a principle of upward progress, progress which is visible—tangible—as an active idea within society. In this way America can be rescued and become, once again, an active friend and partner to other nations throughout the world.

4. In her autobiography, Marian Anderson describes how she bought her first violin, for \$3.98, from a pawnshop when she was nine years old.

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TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2016

Volume 3, Number 65

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