



Traitor to His Class: The Privileged Life and Radical Presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt

By H.W. Brands

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A brilliant evocation of the qualities that made FDR one of the most beloved and greatest of American presidents.

Drawing on archival material, public speeches, correspondence and accounts by those closest to Roosevelt early in his career and during his presidency, H. W. Brands shows how Roosevelt transformed American government during the Depression with his New Deal legislation, and carefully managed the country's prelude to war. Brands shows how Roosevelt's friendship and regard for Winston Churchill helped to forge one of the greatest alliances in history, as Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin maneuvered to defeat Germany and prepare for post-war Europe.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Amazon Best of the Month, November 2008: With *Traitor to His Class: The Privileged Life and Radical Presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt*, H.W. Brands penetrates the clenched grin of Franklin Delano Roosevelt in a masterful biography of one of America's most beloved leaders. Though born into the upper crust of society, FDR dedicated his career to fighting for the common good and the ideals of the American Dream. With the same exhaustive research familiar to fans of his biographies of Benjamin Franklin and Andrew Jackson, Brands provides a portrait of an unflinching (and often recalcitrant) figure whose unshakable confidence inspired a beleaguered nation. FDR's path may have been unorthodox (evidenced by an unprecedented 12 years spent as commander-in-chief) and arguably illegal (the New Deal didn't always work well with the Constitution), but his shared goal of a stronger America at home and abroad endeared him to voters of varying backgrounds. "We are determined to make every American citizen the subject of his country's interest and concern," proclaimed Roosevelt in 1937. "The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little." -- *Dave Callanan*

From Publishers Weekly

It is unfortunate for University of Texas historian Brands (*Andrew Jackson*) that his serviceable biography of Franklin Roosevelt comes on the heels of Jean Smith's magisterial Francis Parkman Prize winner, *FDR* (2007). Still, Brands provides an entirely adequate narrative detailing the well-known facts of Roosevelt's life. We have the young Knickerbocker aristocrat somewhat tentatively entering the dog-eat-dog world of local Democratic politics in New York's Hudson Valley. We have him embarking on a marriage with his cousin Eleanor that was fated to be politically successful but personally disastrous. We also have the somewhat spoiled son of privilege facing the first real battle of his life—polio—and emerging with greatly enhanced fortitude and empathy. Appropriately, Brands gives two-thirds of his book to FDR's presidency and its two most dramatic events: the domestic war against devastating economic depression (fought with tools that many in America's upper classes considered socialist), and the international war against Axis power aggression. It is fitting that Roosevelt commands the amount of scholarly attention that he does, but sad that so much is wholly redundant with what has come before. 16 pages of photos. (Nov. 4)

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

FDR faced a huge range of challenges when he became president—from the economic collapse at home to the growing threat of Fascism abroad. Similarly, critics never tired of pointing out all the challenges Brands must have faced in writing a one-volume biography of the man: how to synthesize the private and the public lives of a man who left no journal or memoirs, yet whose story seems so necessary to imagine a way to overcome the malaise of our own times. Most reviewers were impressed that Brands could pull it off at all. That he does so in a lively and engaging way earned him extra praise. If *Traitor to His Class* adds little new information to the scholarship on FDR, speculates about his motives, and gives short shrift to parts of the New Deal, Brands was easily forgiven.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Nancy Adams:

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