

new lectures or to refresh old ones, and they will want to add it to the reading lists they hand out to their students. But this is probably not the sort of book that a high school teacher of American history would find particularly useful either as recommended reading or from which to draw material for classroom presentations.

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Michael Simpson. *Franklin D. Roosevelt*. New York: Basil Blackwell, 1989. Pp. 90. paper, \$7.95.

This is an admirable synthesis and condensation of the existing literature enriched by the author's own shrewd assessments of Roosevelt the man and his achievements. Despite sparing use of anecdote, a clear and convincing portrait both of Roosevelt's character and of his major policies, foreign and domestic, emerges from Simpson's narrative. This is no small accomplishment in so few pages. The book's four chapters, one each on youth and early career, "the road to the White House," the New Deal, and world affairs are followed by a brief conclusion and useful "notes on further reading."

To Roosevelt's upbringing at Hyde Park is attributed the calm self-assurance, eagerness to please, persistence, and "determination to play his cards . . . close to his chest" that became characteristic of his leadership. An ambition to follow in the footsteps of his famous cousin Theodore may have influenced his courtship of Eleanor Roosevelt, TR's niece, as well as his pursuit of appointment as Assistant Secretary of the Navy in the Wilson administration.

Further clues to Roosevelt's leadership and decision-making style are found in his four years as governor of New York and his triumphant 1932 presidential campaign. Roosevelt surrounded himself with able subordinates (the "Brains Trust") who had useful ideas of their own, demonstrated his eagerness to learn from them, and inspired great loyalty in them. But he continued to keep his own counsel and follow his own uncanny political intuition. Stressing his belief that the depression was a domestic problem and revealing his bias toward government action, Roosevelt urged "bold, persistent experimentation. 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."

The numerous initiatives of the first and second hundred days reflected his willingness to experiment; their underlying similarities rather than differences are stressed. Although Simpson awards only "two cheers" to the New Deal because of issues left imperfectly addressed, he nonetheless credits Roosevelt and the New Deal with "profound and enduring" achievements (the development of a managed economy and the launching of the welfare state that strengthened business and finance, business opinion to the contrary notwithstanding), restored public confidence, and united the country physically and spiritually.

In world affairs, Roosevelt cautiously awaited the moment when the conjunction of domestic and international politics would enable him to assert the interests of the United States without undermining his support at home. "He brought a united nation into the war, devised and carried out his own strategy, and ensured that the United States would at last play a part in world affairs commensurate with her might and her destiny." Truly a Commander in Chief, FDR played a critical role in strategic planning of the successful international war effort and demonstrated "a happy knack of selecting and then inspiring outstanding commanders, fitting the man to the task with exactitude." If he unwisely delayed talks on the post-war future of Europe and exaggerated his ability to influence Stalin, these miscues must be seen in the context of his successes. The survival of democracy "was due in a large measure to his presidency."

Franklin D. Roosevelt can be recommended with confidence to teachers at both the secondary and collegiate levels as supplemental or required reading for their students. The narrative is so spare, however, that students whose knowledge of the Roosevelt era is derived primarily from Simpson's account may fail to develop a full appreciation of its dramatic context.

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