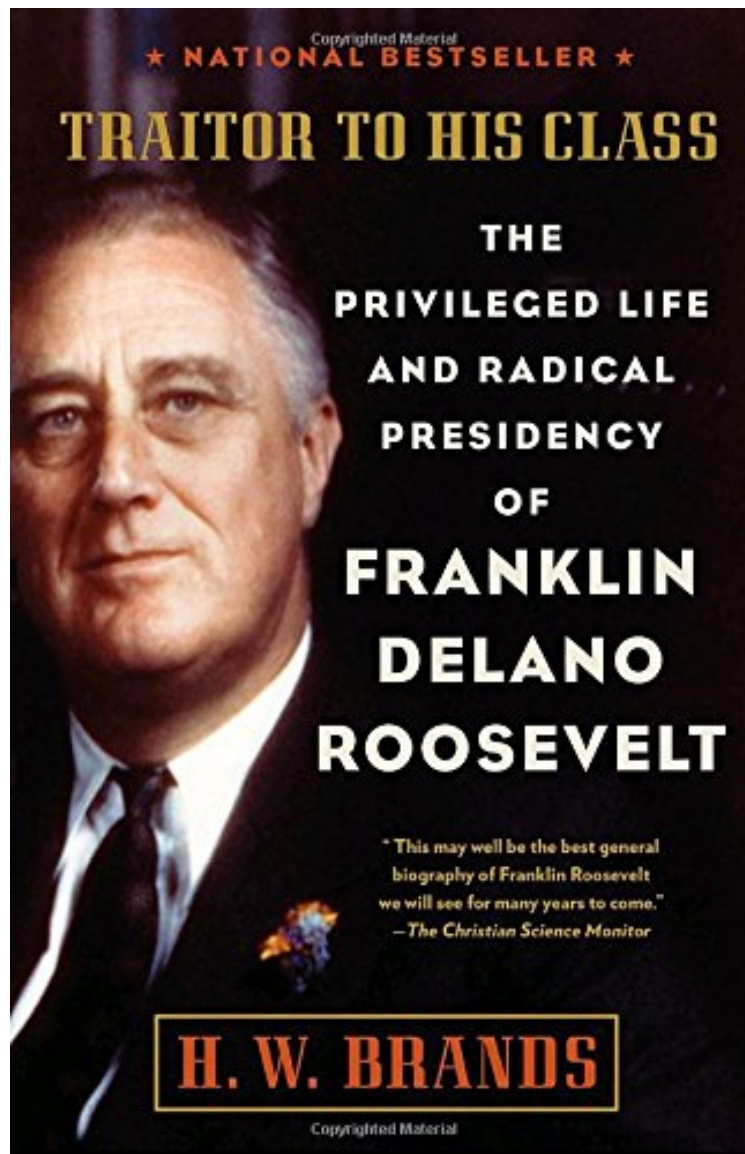


(Download free pdf) Traitor to His Class: The Privileged Life and Radical Presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt

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

H. W. Brands

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#320547 in Books H W Brands 2009-09-08 2009-09-08Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.20 x 1.90 x 6.10l, 2.50 #File Name: 0307277941888 pagesTraitor to His Class The Privileged Life and Radical Presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt | File size: 49.Mb

H. W. Brands : Traitor to His Class: The Privileged Life and Radical Presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Traitor to His Class: The Privileged Life and Radical Presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Process bookBy M. J. MccaffreyMr. Brands has written an approachable account of FDR's life. He does not dip too deeply into the waters of scandal and infidelity, and is content to note trips and meetings that are part of both Eleanor and Franklin's public schedules.If you want to know about the process that led to FDR's presidency, and the dance in which he engaged with Churchill and Stalin during World War II, this book will be informative and interesting.If you want to know more about what drove FDR to be the person he was, or for that matter why he was a "traitor to his class," you may end up disappointed. Brands, or his publisher, found the phrase to be catchy as a title, but does not make the connections to flesh it out.6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. "Fair and Balanced" AdmirationsBy GioH.W. Brands's admiration of FDR as a human being and as a politician is scarcely concealed. Here's his summary encomium from the last chapter of his biography, describing the reaction of Americans to the President's death: "[His presidency] had been a remarkable accomplishment, reflecting a unique bond between the President and the American people. They put their faith in Roosevelt because he put his faith in them. He believed in democracy -- in the capacity of ordinary Americans, exercising their collective judgement, to address the ills of that afflicted their society. He refused to rely on the invisible hand of the marketplace, for the compelling reason that during his lifetime the invisible hand had wreaked very visible havoc on millions of unoffending Americans. He refused to accept that government invariably bungled whatever it attempted, and his refusal inspired government efforts that had a tremendous positive effect on millions of marginal farmers, furloughed workers, and struggling merchants..." If that encomium seems more rhetorical than analytical to you, you're not alone. This journalistic biography is best at portraying personalities and personality clashes, and weakest at historical contextualization.In attempting to be moderately detached, Brands details FDR's weaknesses, frivolities, and errors -- his overweening ambition, his marital cruelties and follies, his manipulative relationships with friends -- but the overall picture is extremely engaging. It's easy to see how Roosevelt overcame both his advantages and disadvantages to become the master politician and popular icon that he undeniably was. The narrative breaks rather schematically into three sections: Roosevelt's youth and political activities before 1932, his two terms of office during the Depression, and his wartime years. Of the three 'acts,' the first is the most carefully constructed and the clearest in intention. Brands depict FDR as the product of extraordinary privilege and insulation from the lives of ordinary folk. At the same time, he links Roosevelt's development to the example of his predecessor and relative, Theodore, demonstrating fairly convincingly that FDR's economic and social platform derived more from Progressivism than from any ideology of the Democratic Party. It was his illness and paralysis, Brands argues, that brought FDR into contact with and empathy for the less-privileged Americans, and that forged his strengths as a leader in crises.Brands's focus during FDR's first two terms in the White House is on his political challenges -- his dealings with his own party and with Congress; his relationships with his aides and advisors, and the occasional rivalries between those aides; his election strategies, etc. Brands keeps all these juggling pins aloft with some skill, but unfortunately I was hoping for a different kind of analysis of these years, more in fulfillment of the implications of the book's title. Brands is at his most shallow in placing the "New Deal" in the context of American social history. Alas, that's what I was looking for, a coherent summary of the very real and very permanent changes in American society than accompanied the New Deal, with some answer to such questions as: 1. What was new about the Deal? 2. Whose Deal was it really? 3. How much did the New Deal embody Roosevelt's own vision? Brands portrays FDR's confrontations with Labor leader John L Lewis, for instance, entirely in terms of personalities and passing events, but the changes in labor relations and labor law during the New Deal years were among the most important developments of the era, and the underlying question is to what degree can those changes be considered accomplishments of Roosevelt's "betrayal" of his class. America arrived at the end of World War I still maintaining the class assumptions of common law master-servant relationships, but by the 1930s America was no longer a land of apprentices, master craftsmen, and yeoman farmers. Instead it was a nation of wage earners, and it was FDR's great opportunity to shape new perceptions and new laws to suit such new realities. That's what the NRA was about - not merely market recovery - and that's what FDR's confrontation with the 'nine old men' of the Supreme Court amounted to. The victories that FDR achieved with his liberal appointment to the Court, victories which were partly consolidated by his third electoral triumph and by the democratizing effect of his plans for benefits for returning soldiers, were in effect a "new and better" deal for ordinary Americans. Frankly, too much attention has been paid to the 'recovery' issues of the New Deal -- particularly with 75% or more of Americans keeping their jobs and doing rather well on the basis of price deflation -- and too little to the transformation of America from the hierarchical Gilded Age portrayed by novelists like Edith Wharton and Henry James to the bland but prosperous and egalitarian America post WW2.Brands establishes in his prologue, where he foreshadows the trauma of Pearl Harbor, that his deepest adulation of Roosevelt is reserved for his war leadership. Once again, the narrative focuses on interpersonal confrontations, chiefly between Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin, and to a lesser degree between Roosevelt and his generals. Oddly enough, however, by the time Brands gets to his chosen topic, his writing has become less cogent and carefully ordered. Many of the severest critics of this book, and by implication of Roosevelt himself as a war leader, are dismayed by the portrayal of Roosevelt's amiability toward Stalin. The critics howl that Roosevelt was naive, or that he was secretly sympathetic to communism, and that Brands should have revealed that ideological 'treachery.' What Brands does reveal is that

Roosevelt had every bit as much trouble with Churchill's motivations as with Stalin's. Honestly, whether you side with those who denounce FDR's policies toward the USSR, or with those who applaud his wartime leadership, you won't find much to support your bias in this entertaining but superficial biography.² of 2 people found the following review helpful. Good, Brief Overview of the Life of Franklin Roosevelt By Steven M. Anthony I was given this audiobook as a gift and found it to be a good, though perhaps overly brief overview of the life of one of our most controversial and celebrated Presidents. I suspect that my version (10 1/2 hours) is an abridged version, though I do not see that printed on the CD container. The book is perhaps more detailed. My great grandfather, an entrepreneur from the early 20th century despised Roosevelt more than the devil. The New Deal, support of organized labor, the income tax, socialism, all went against everything he believed in. He was convinced that World War II saved Roosevelt from defeat in the 1940 election and a lasting and deserved reputation as an abject failure as President. Nevertheless, World War II did in fact lift the country out of the Great Depression, and lifted Roosevelt into the pantheon of our most celebrated Presidents. This book is a fair and balanced treatment of Roosevelt's life. It is not a hagiography and gives the failures as well as the successes of Roosevelt's life and Presidency.

NATIONAL BESTSELLER 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.

.com 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) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. 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. Copyright 2009 Bookmarks Publishing LLC