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**New Deal to New Frontier:
From Security to Opportunity in the American Welfare State**

Thomas Kaplan
Institute for Research on Poverty
University of Wisconsin–Madison

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Abstract

This paper considers U.S. social policy in the years 1935–1960 through the prism of recurring disagreements over the appropriate balance between social security and individual freedom. The disagreements were sharpest in the 1930s, when the Social Security bill was drafted and revised, and resumed in intensity after World War II, with the introduction of President Truman’s health insurance proposal. The disagreements diminished during the 1950s, as Republicans came to accept Social Security. When John Kennedy became president, during the first crisis in public confidence over the Aid to Dependent Children title of the Social Security Act, discussions about balancing security and freedom had lost currency. The paper argues that this loss of currency was unfortunate. The Roosevelt administration’s approach to balancing goals of social security and individual freedom was a reasonable gamble, even when applied to single women and their children, and might have served Kennedy and subsequent presidents well.

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The Clinton administration has on several occasions used an old rhetoric, concerning the need for personal security in an unstable world, to describe parts of its new domestic policy. Early hints of the rhetoric appeared in October 1993 in a presidential speech prepared for delivery at the University of North Carolina. Merging a series of proposals on health care, crime, trade, educational reform, and job training under the theme of domestic security for all Americans, an advance copy of the president's speech asserted that "the challenge of our times" is to give "people the security they need to build lives of responsibility and achievement, a foundation of economic security, health security and personal security."¹

President Clinton deviated from the prepared text in his delivery, and he did not actually say the above words. But the fact that the White House distributed the text in advance, not usual practice for Clinton's speeches because of his tendency to stray, indicated that someone in the White House was hoping the president would discuss the theme of domestic security in a prepared, scripted manner.

By December 1993 the president seemed more comfortable with a theme of security as an organizing principle of his domestic policy. In an interview with Sidney Blumenthal of the New Yorker, Clinton said:

[I]f you start with this core of common values and the desire of people to be secure in their homes, their persons, and their lives, and to see children brought up in safety, you can work from that back to a lot of these other issues in ways that people can understand....

I never really thought about it in these terms until I was able to get past the economic plan. I started thinking about what we were going to do about crime and violence and how that related to what I wanted to do about health care, how that related to what I wanted to do about giving every American the opportunity for lifetime education and training. And what struck me was that without a certain level of security people's lives are not ordered enough and they are not personally self-confident enough to undertake the changes that are necessary in the world we're living in, in the world toward which we're moving.²

Clinton is not the first president to use the concept of security in his social policy. His language in this regard was reminiscent of some of Franklin D. Roosevelt's domestic policy declarations of the 1930s. In one of Roosevelt's fireside chats of 1934, for example, that president also subsumed several of his priorities under the theme of security. "We seek," Roosevelt said, the security of the men, women, and children of the nation.

That security involves added means of providing better homes for the people of the nation. That is the first principle of our future program.

The second is to plan the use of land and water resources of this country to the end that the means of livelihood of our citizens may be more adequate to meet their daily needs.

And, finally, the third principle is to use the agencies of government to assist in the establishment of means to provide sound and adequate protection against the vicissitudes of modern life—in other words, social insurance.³

With the Clinton administration seeking at least occasionally to reawaken an earlier rhetoric of domestic security —and perhaps programs based on that rhetoric—it may be useful to review the history of the Roosevelt efforts. The earlier use of security as an organizing principle of domestic policy had both a beginning and an end. By the time of the War on Poverty in the 1960s, the effort had ended, to be replaced by a rhetoric of rehabilitation and opportunity.

Social and economic security are elusive concepts (as are rehabilitation and opportunity). What appears to some as minimally necessary economic security for every citizen seems to others a form of suffocating equality. Certainly a degree of socially assured security is necessary in any society. Few would invest for future gain or make plans for their children's development if the future were so insecure as to defy all plausible prediction. Yet, as some commentators have worried, too much security may stifle initiative if it results in personal efforts yielding little beyond the communal guarantee. At its worst, say some conservatives, a government that provides too much security may need to become so large as to threaten individual freedom or impair the performance of such desirable

"mediating" (between the individual and society at large) institutions as the family or religious organizations.⁴

Economic security and individual freedom need not always work in opposition to one another. As Clinton pointed out in his New Yorker interview, and as Roosevelt certainly believed, many people may need a basic level of security to feel comfortable enough to take full advantage of their freedoms and reach out for new opportunities. Yet the harmonizing of aspirations for security and freedom has not proved easy, as the debate that swirled around U.S. Social Security policy between 1935 and 1960 indicates. Although economists have recently emphasized tradeoffs between equality and efficiency, the more public debate has concerned the balancing of social security and individual freedom.⁵

In this paper, I view U.S. social policy over the twenty-five years between 1935 and 1960 through the prism of a debate concerning proper levels of social security and individual freedom. The debate was especially sharp in the mid-1930s and late-1940s, and largely disappeared in the 1960s. Despite useful criticisms of Roosevelt's social policy advanced by several researchers, my view on the debate over social security and individual freedom is generally sympathetic to Roosevelt's approach to the issue. The social policy of the Roosevelt administration was, in my opinion, reasonably carefully considered, and many of his policies offer a still useful model of government assistance to low-income citizens of the United States.

A contrasting argument—that Roosevelt's domestic programs were based more on confused experimentation than on any coherent view of appropriate government action—is now widespread. In a book originally published in 1967, Paul Conkin wrote that Roosevelt was "immune to the allure of abstractions," and that "Roosevelt's disciples or later apologists read into his beliefs some appealing and sophisticated but limiting rationalizations that simply, on the record, were not present in Roosevelt's own thought."⁶ Other historians have since commented on the chaotic nature of New Deal domestic and economic policy. Gore Vidal, whose historical novels show extensive knowledge

of the national political history of the United States, even argued that Roosevelt's experimental New Deal was just a matter of shuffling the cards and dealing the top ones out at random. If one shuffle failed to provide a good hand, Roosevelt reshuffled the deck and tried another deal.⁷

The argument that Roosevelt's social policy was on balance harmful to many of the poor, and thus offers an inappropriate model for Clinton or any other president to follow, is also common. Jerry Cates has shown that Social Security administrators during the Roosevelt and Truman presidencies restricted federal financial assistance to low-income elderly people in an effort to increase political support for a broader Old Age Insurance program available to people of all income levels.⁸ Linda Gordon has argued that the U.S. social welfare system created by the Social Security Act of 1935 generated at least two tiers of beneficiaries. The first, more privileged, tier consisted of white men, who received unemployment, disability, and retirement benefits under a social insurance program designed to maintain "their dignity and head-of-household status." The second tier consisted of single women and their children and most African Americans, who, at best, received assistance under a means-tested Aid to Dependent Children program which treated recipients as dependents of the state.⁹

Christopher Howard has similarly noted a troubling legacy of Roosevelt's social policy. The 1939 amendments to the Social Security Act moved coverage for widows and their children out of ADC and into a newly created survivors insurance program, leaving ADC with a "politically vulnerable constituency—families in which the father had deserted or been imprisoned or the parents had never married or were divorced." Although the 1939 amendments also increased federal support for the ADC program from 33 to 50 per cent of costs incurred by states, the overall effect of the amendment was a sharp reduction in political support for ADC.¹⁰

These criticisms of Roosevelt's social policy have undeniable merit. Yet if much of Roosevelt's domestic policy consisted of helter-skelter experimentation, key social policy advisors—and Roosevelt himself—also adhered to a reasonably consistent social insurance approach in

their considerations of social policy. And if their social policies had the effect of reducing financial and political support for citizens who did not qualify for the first-tier social insurance programs, Roosevelt and many of his advisors hoped and expected that, over time, the number of excluded people would fall.

Roosevelt and his social policy advisors engaged in a dangerous, but self-conscious, gamble: they accepted, and perhaps even encouraged, the long-standing popular dislike of public relief programs. They also, however, tried to reduce the number of participants in these programs by fashioning alternative social insurance benefits. To generate political support needed to create and sustain higher social insurance benefits, Roosevelt and his advisors emphasized distinctions between social insurance and public relief. This emphasis probably had the effect of reducing still further public support for relief programs.

Roosevelt's gamble worked over time for the elderly. The Social Security retirement program grew to encompass most workers who reported official earnings. In 1991, more than 25 million retired people over age 62 received relatively generous Social Security retirement benefits through a social insurance program, and only about 2 million elderly people received the less generous public relief benefits of the Supplemental Security Income program.¹¹

The gamble did not work for single mothers and their children, most of whom receive government benefits only under the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program, which has the many disadvantages that Linda Gordon has described. Still, the fact that the gamble did not work for single mothers and their children does not mean that it was a heedless gamble (or not a gamble at all but an intentional effort by Roosevelt and his advisors to punish single mothers and their children). Indeed, given enduring attitudes toward relief programs, the most likely way to gain future increases in public benefits for single parents and their children may be renewed efforts to distinguish social insurance from public relief and to develop desirable social insurance programs.¹²

This strategy might, of course, turn out to be unsuccessful. Perhaps an effort to increase public support for existing relief programs like AFDC represents a better approach. Gordon, for example, has suggested that political leaders and scholars should point out "some of the unfairness in our characterizations" of AFDC recipients, question "government subsidies ... to the middle class and the wealthy as well as those to the poor," and try to "give credit for the hard work that many welfare recipients are doing bringing up children in poor neighborhoods."¹³ Gordon may well be correct, although I think a strategy more like the New Deal approach has a greater chance of improving conditions for single women and their children. Either approach represents a gamble, but a gamble that turns out wrong need not have been a heedless gamble. If President Clinton's rhetorical focus on security leads him or others to emphasize new social insurance programs that, like survivors insurance in 1939, attract a significant share of current relief recipients but in the process increase social disapproval of those who remain on relief, that might be a gamble worth taking.

A NEW DEAL: SHAPING THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT OF 1935

Whether because of his own instincts or because of the often excellent staff he attracted, Roosevelt had developed a reasonably coherent social policy by the time he became president. His social policy included the following characteristics:

1. The word "relief" meant for Roosevelt what it had meant to most English speakers since the Elizabethan Poor Laws: assistance provided either through cash or jobs—that is, cash relief or work relief—to the poor—that is, to people with an income below some level. Adhering to Anglo-American convention, Roosevelt did not like relief. Many people, including Ronald Reagan, have quoted Roosevelt's warning in his State of the Union Address of 1935 that "the lessons of history, confirmed by the evidence before me, show conclusively that continued dependence upon relief

induces a spiritual and moral disintegration fundamentally destructive to the national fiber. To dole out relief in this way is to administer a narcotic, a subtle destroyer of the human spirit."¹⁴

At the time Roosevelt made this statement, he was almost certainly referring both to cash relief and several common forms of work relief. He merged in this speech, under the category of "sappers" of the "vitality of our people," the following examples of relief: "the giving of cash, of market baskets, of a few hours of weekly work cutting grass, raking leaves or picking up papers in the public parks."¹⁵ Roosevelt also implied in the speech, however, that work relief which was "useful—not just for a day, or a year, but useful in the sense that it affords permanent improvement in living conditions or that it creates future new wealth for the Nation"—was superior to cash relief.¹⁶

2. Although Roosevelt did not like relief, he believed it to be a necessary function of government. He wanted government to behave decently toward its citizens, and he demonstrated both as governor of New York and as president that he thought the decent thing to do was to provide relief to starving people. As a young Columbia law student courting Eleanor Roosevelt, who was then working at a settlement house, Franklin once accompanied Eleanor while she walked an ill child home to a tenement. "My God," Franklin told Eleanor, "I didn't know people lived like that."¹⁷ Roosevelt was expressing a long-held conviction when he stated in a fireside chat of 1934 that "the primary concern of any Government dominated by the humane ideals of democracy is the simple principle that in a land of vast resources no one should be permitted to starve."¹⁸

3. Following the conventions of the Elizabethan Poor Laws, Roosevelt believed that state or local governments, not the national government, should have responsibility for both work and cash relief. In the extreme emergency of the Depression, Roosevelt knew that states lacked the capacity to provide that relief, and he was quite willing to help them with both work and cash relief. In the future, as Roosevelt said in his 1935 State of the Union speech, "the federal government must and

shall quit this business of relief," but not until the Depression was over and states had regained their financial capacities.¹⁹

4. Roosevelt made an important distinction between government's role as a provider of relief and its role as an insurer of economic security against the hazards of industrial life. In a fireside chat delivered in April of 1935, he discussed both the form of work relief embodied in the Works Progress Administration, which Congress had just authorized, and his proposals pending in Congress for Social Security. He attempted a sharp differentiation between the two programs. The Social Security provisions, Roosevelt said, were "intended to relieve, to minimize, and to prevent future unemployment." The WPA, on the other hand, was "to establish the practical means to help those who are unemployed in this present emergency."²⁰

This effort to distinguish between relief and security was less usual among contemporary politicians than were the other features of Roosevelt's social policy. The attempt to forge the distinction was also mildly surprising, at least in one political sense. Roosevelt believed that the federal government should play a new, vigorous, and permanent role in assuring security, even as its role in relief should be temporary and limited. He thus attempted to appropriate a European tradition of permanent national social insurance for use in the United States. As a political leader trying to educate and persuade Americans of the utility of this foreign tradition, Roosevelt might have been expected to blend it in and make it seem part of the Anglo-American relief tradition. Yet because that tradition was unpopular, even if familiar, he instead attempted to maintain a rhetorical and administrative wall between relief for the poor and social insurance for all Americans.

The original Social Security bill, which Roosevelt introduced in Congress in the spring of 1935, included eleven distinct titles, encompassing assistance to states for the cash relief of impoverished children and the low-income elderly, several health and social service programs, and two social insurance sections. These two sections—Title II, Old Age Insurance, and Title III,

Unemployment Insurance—attracted by far the least support in Congress, and Roosevelt had to exert special effort both to keep them in the bill and to maintain their separation from the other sections.

Title II almost certainly would not have survived Congress without Roosevelt's vigorous personal lobbying. As the bill was being considered in the House Ways and Means Committee, House leaders told Roosevelt that Title I (old age assistance for the low-income elderly) was popular, but that the Title II social insurance program for the elderly could not be passed. Roosevelt responded that he would not accept Title I without Title II.²¹ During conference committee consideration, the president endangered passage of the entire bill by insisting that it not include the Clark amendment added in the Senate that would have sharply reduced the coverage of Title II.²²

Roosevelt also initially sought a clear administrative separation between the Old Age Assistance relief provisions of Title I and the Old Age Insurance provisions of Title II. The original Social Security bill proposed that the Federal Emergency Relief Administration manage Title I as a relief program and that the Department of Labor administer Title II. Congress changed this administrative approach, not wanting the popular Title I housed in an "emergency" relief agency which Congress hoped soon to end, and also not wanting to place more authority in the hands of Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins.²³ Instead, Congress gave responsibility for administering both Titles I and II, along with Unemployment Insurance and the Aid to Dependent Children program, to a newly created and independent Social Security Board. Although Old Age Insurance remained the only program in the Social Security Act wholly managed by the United States government rather than by state agencies receiving federal aid, OAI thus came to be administered within the same federal agency as Old Age Assistance and Aid to Dependent Children.

In the press of events, the administration did not contest this managerial merger of relief and social insurance (although modest effort was exerted to place the entire Social Security Board within the Department of Labor). The decision not to contest Congress's decision on administrative

placement may well indicate that Roosevelt and his social insurance planners (perhaps not surprisingly) gave less weight to this management issue than to program concerns.

Roosevelt, however, continued to maintain his own sense of the differences between social insurance and relief. His social insurance planners had long contended that, unlike relief programs with their preindustrial antecedents, Titles II and III were modern programs necessary for the new economic insecurities of an industrial age.²⁴ After Congress passed the Social Security Act, Roosevelt's signing statement focused on the significance of Titles II and III to an industrial society. "The civilization of the past hundred years, with its startling industrial changes, has tended more and more to make life insecure," said the president in his signing statement. "Young people have come to wonder what would be their lot when they came to old age. The man with a job has wondered how long the job would last." Roosevelt was clearly thinking of old age and unemployment insurance when he concluded the signing statement with these words: "If the Senate and the House of Representatives in this long and arduous session had done nothing more than pass this Bill, the session would be regarded as historic for all time."²⁵

SHAPING A NEW GOVERNMENT PROGRAM

The Impact of the 1936 Presidential Election

The early administrators of Social Security knew that, except for Roosevelt, most political leaders supported the relief titles of the act more than the security titles. Although a majority of Republicans had voted for the final Social Security bill in both the House and the Senate, many had earlier expressed fears that the security features of the act would lead to excessive regimentation. In House floor debate on the bill, Republican Congressman Daniel Reed predicted that if Old Age Insurance passed, "the lash of the dictator will be felt and 25 million free American citizens will for the first time submit themselves to a fingerprint test."²⁶ Republican Congressman James W.

Wadsworth argued that "this bill opens the door and invites the entrance into the political field of a power so vast, so powerful as to threaten the integrity of our institutions and to pull the pillars of the temple down upon the heads of our descendants."²⁷

During the 1936 presidential campaign, Republicans escalated charges that Social Security would reduce individual freedom. Alf Landon, the Republican candidate who, as Governor of Kansas, had expressed some support for Social Security, now denounced the Social Security payroll tax as a "cruel hoax" on American workers and said that "the Republican Party will have nothing to do with any plan that involves prying into the personal records of 26 million people."²⁸ In St. Louis, on the last Saturday of the campaign, Landon asked how any administrative effort could possibly keep track of 26 million Americans. "Imagine the field opened for federal snooping," he said. "Are these 26 million going to be fingerprinted? Are their photographs going to be kept on file in a Washington office? Or are they going to have identification tags put around their necks?" And on the day before the election, all the Hearst papers featured the following spread on page 1: "Do You Want a Tag and a Number in the Name of False Security?" On page 2 was a picture of a bare-chested man with a metal chain and identification tag and the caption: YOU.²⁹

The Republican campaign against Social Security did not have its desired electoral effect; the President and the Democratic Congress carried the 1936 election with large majorities. Still, the Social Security Board administering the program paid attention to the campaign and worked hard to dispel notions of regimentation. Knowing that each American worker covered under Title II would need a unique identifying number, the board distributed 50 million leaflets explaining the Old Age Insurance program in general and the numbering system in particular, and released explanatory films for use in movie theaters. As Roosevelt had envisioned, postal clerks in familiar neighborhood post offices, not a new and unknown bureaucracy, made the initial assignment of Social Security numbers, working face-to-face with area residents. The Social Security Board asked Americans to accept

"assignment" of a number, not "register" for a program, because of a concern that registration might connote a form of regimentation.³⁰

Alternative Proposals

Before the 1936 election, Roosevelt had occasionally expressed the hope that Herbert Hoover would be the Republican nominee. In part this hope stemmed from the president's belief that Hoover would make a weak candidate. But Roosevelt also considered Hoover to be, in the words of aide Raymond Moley, the only Republican leader with "the massive convictions and intelligence to provide an alternative to the New Deal."³¹ In the years since Hoover's defeat in 1932, he had made powerful statements against the loss of individual freedom he believed must occur if large governments insured the economic security of their citizens.³² Roosevelt thought an election pitting himself against Hoover would squarely place this issue before the American people. The president was confident that his own position would prevail, but he also believed intelligent discussion of the issue to be desirable.

Although Landon raised the regimentation issue, he did so with less success than Roosevelt thought Hoover would have attained. Because of this Republican failure to realize electoral gain from the issue in 1936, critics of Social Security temporarily shifted their focus to two new concerns. The first of these involved politically troublesome comparisons between Titles I and II; for a long time, more elderly people would receive so much more money under Title I relief than under Title II social insurance that strong political arguments could be advanced for the outright elimination of Title II or a merger of the two programs. The second concern involved forecasts that the Old Age Insurance fund would generate a huge and politically tempting surplus, actuarially projected to be drawn down starting forty years later but available until then for whatever politicians might decide.

Social Security administrators ended concerns about the surplus by abolishing their plans to develop one. The 1939 amendments to the Social Security Act rescinded payroll tax increases scheduled under the original act, advanced the date of first payments to retirees under Title II,

provided for monthly payments to survivors, and stipulated that current workers would pay for current beneficiaries, with only a small surplus.

The troubling comparisons of Title I and Title II presented a less tractable problem for Social Security leaders. Benefits under Title I Old Age Assistance, a relief program paid out of general government revenues, could begin immediately after passage of the Social Security Act. Old Age Insurance benefits, in contrast, required the prior payment of payroll taxes into a fund. Under the original act, payroll taxes were to begin on January 1, 1937, and no benefits were scheduled to be paid until 1942. Social Security staff were uncertain whether Americans would be willing for long to pay taxes into a Social Security program that was not yet paying benefits.

In the late 1930s and early 1940s, this imbalance between Titles I and II led critics of Social Security to propose two quite different alternatives. The first was the termination of Title II and transfer of its financial resources into a larger Title I program. Under this scenario, Social Security retirement benefits would become a means-tested welfare program available only to the low-income elderly. The other alternative was the elimination of the Title I welfare program and the conversion of Title II into a flat grant—an identical monthly stipend paid to all Americans over age 65 regardless of their past earnings or current income.

The primary respondent in the Roosevelt administration to these proposals was the chief administrator of Social Security, Arthur Altmeyer. Altmeyer had been a state labor administrator in Wisconsin, where he became acquainted with Frances Perkins, who had similar responsibilities in New York State. After Perkins's appointment as U.S. Secretary of Labor, she offered Altmeyer the post of Assistant Secretary of Labor and then Chairman of the Technical Board to the Cabinet Committee on Economic Security, which Roosevelt appointed in 1934 to develop a Social Security plan. Upon congressional passage of the Social Security Act, Roosevelt appointed Altmeyer to the three-member

Social Security Board. Altmeyer became Chairman of the Board in 1937 and Commissioner for Social Security in 1946, when the Board was abolished.

Altmeyer vigorously opposed both the outright termination of Title II and the flat grant proposals, and his reasons for doing so revolved primarily around the security aspects of Social Security. If Title II were eliminated and payments made only to the low-income elderly under Title I, he feared that future officials would find it easy to reduce or eliminate those payments. The poor would then have no economic security.

If the titles were merged and identical payments made to all the elderly—or if, as in the "double-decker" proposals that proliferated around 1940, a large portion of the payment was a flat grant with a smaller portion varying according to past earnings—then it seemed to Altmeyer and his close associates that large uncertainties would be introduced into the program for all beneficiaries. If payments are based on earnings, people nearing retirement or thinking about how much private life insurance to buy can review their earnings and estimate with some security what their retirement or survivor benefits will be. But if payments are an arbitrarily selected amount for everyone, paid for out of general revenue, then future Congresses could raise or lower the payments at any time. Wilbur Cohen, who in the 1940s and early 1950s was an assistant to Altmeyer, later said that the flat grant or double-decker approach was unacceptable "in President Roosevelt's and other people's minds" because such approaches "would give people anxiety and insecurity in being able to retire from employment and being sure that they could organize their life ... when they don't know what their pension amount is going to be."³³

Altmeyer also believed that flat grants and double-decker grants with a large flat component would increase economic equality more than the American political system could tolerate (and probably more than Altmeyer himself thought appropriate). Social insurance benefits should be proportional to earnings, Altmeyer believed, because most of U.S. society was organized around the

match of social rewards to earnings. "There is considerable variation in wages through the United States," said Altmeyer in a 1952 speech, "and it is possible under a contributory social insurance system to relate benefits to these variations.... This relationship between past wages and benefits not only gives us an understandable and acceptable touchstone to measure the general adequacy of benefits provided, but insures that the individual benefit is related to the actual individual wage loss sustained."³⁴ He believed that an effort to make all payments equal would ignore important American political realities, resulting in reduced support and greater political instability for Social Security.

As Jerry Cates has shown in his book Insuring Inequality, Altmeyer's efforts against converting Title II into a flat grant or a means-tested welfare program were vigorous and persistent. Until Title II payments finally exceeded Title I in the early 1950s, Altmeyer even worked to limit increases in Title I benefits, out of concern that such increases would make comparisons of Title I and II still more politically disadvantageous to Title II.³⁵ Cates was critical of Altmeyer's strategy, and there seems little doubt that higher Title I benefits, or a merging of Title I and Title II into a flat-grant program, would have helped many elderly people in the 1940s and 1950s. Altmeyer, however, believed he was taking a longer-range view, concentrating on a future when most retirees would have paid enough into the Title II fund to justify higher and more politically secure payments than he thought a flat-grant system unconnected to previous earnings would generate.

SOCIAL SECURITY IN THE TRUMAN ADMINISTRATION

World War II for a time interfered with interest in flat-grant or double-decker proposals. After the war, when Republicans gained control of Congress in the 1946 elections for the first time since 1930, they expressed their continuing concerns about the effect of Social Security on individual freedom by voting down proposals to increase the scope of the Social Security program. The most

important of these votes was a reversal, passed over President Truman's veto, of an Internal Revenue Service administrative decision to include as covered "employees," subject to the Social Security payroll tax, several new occupational groupings, including life insurance agents and door-to-door sales representatives.

With Truman's surprise electoral victory in 1948 and the recapture of Congress by the Democrats, the president thought the time right for a large expansion of the Social Security program, most notably through the addition of national health security for all Americans. He had sensed great sympathy during the campaign to his charge that the "do-nothing Congress" of 1946 had failed Americans most seriously in the area of health care. With encouragement from Truman, Senator James Murray and Representative John Dingell introduced an omnibus health plan, similar to proposals they had sponsored in earlier sessions, that included provisions for national health insurance.

The Murray-Dingell bill became controversial, mostly because of its health insurance features. Opponents raised in new and more potent forms the regimentation arguments advanced during the 1936 election, and the resulting controversy affected political sympathy for Social Security more generally. Immediately after the 1948 election, the American Medical Association retained a California public relations firm that had successfully linked with communism a California state proposal to provide health insurance for all Californians. In a time of intense concern over communism, this proved a winning public relations strategy nationally as well as in California. "Would socialized medicine lead to socialization of other phases of American life?" asked one pamphlet the firm produced for its national campaign. The pamphlet went on to answer "Lenin thought so. He declared 'Socialized medicine is the keystone to the arch of the Socialist State.'"³⁶ (The Library of Congress could not find this statement in Lenin's writings.)

Polls had suggested substantial initial public support for the Murray-Dingell bill, but the support quickly diminished in the face of the antiregimentation campaign. Many supporters of

national health insurance proposed a variety of compromises. Substantial bipartisan support existed for the proposal of Senators Lister Hill and George Aiken to subsidize individual premiums for low-income people joining Blue Cross and Blue Shield plans.³⁷ In addition, working under Altmeyer, I. S. Falk and Wilbur Cohen developed the idea, later enshrined into Medicare, of providing national health insurance only for people receiving a Social Security benefit. Other compromises were also under discussion, but President Truman seemed to want all or nothing, and he got nothing.

Indeed, Truman may have achieved worse than nothing. His unsuccessful campaign for national health insurance both eliminated the issue as a serious political option for the next generation and tarnished the political image of Social Security more generally. Evidence of the political harm done to Social Security appeared in 1949, when Truman proposed to elevate the Federal Security Agency, which administered Social Security, to cabinet status. Oscar Ewing, the director of the agency, had led the President's fight on health care and been characterized as a strong proponent of socialized medicine. Congress quickly rejected the President's reorganization proposal. The antiadministration New York Daily Mirror attributed the defeat of the proposal to Ewing's status as "the principal advocate of socialized medicine in this country" and to the reputation of the Federal Security Agency as "the center of socialistic concepts of the old New Deal and the new Fair Deal."³⁸

Truman's insistence on the national health insurance provisions of the Murray-Dingell bill, and his unwillingness to compromise, probably derived from several sources. In later comments to an interviewer, Altmeyer attributed Truman's uncompromising promotion of national health insurance to the president's stubborn personality.³⁹ The historian Monte Poen has suggested several political reasons for Truman's unwillingness to compromise: Truman hoped the Congress elected in 1950 would be more responsive; national health insurance proposals had the advantage of making other Fair Deal proposals seem moderate by comparison; and the Hill-Aiken compromise, with its means-tested

assistance to purchase private insurance, did nothing to help union members, a central part of Truman's constituency.⁴⁰

Whatever the other reasons, Truman also seemed to feel a strong emotional commitment to reducing economic insecurity among Americans. As a young man, he had worked unsuccessfully to make a financial success of his parents' heavily mortgaged farm. He had also lost sizable investments of time and money in mining, oil and gas leases, and a Kansas City men's clothing store. As Truman himself recognized, only a timely offer of a political job from the Pendergast machine saved him from a desperate financial situation.⁴¹

Direct experience with economic insecurity is certainly not a necessary precondition to sympathy for policies that reduce overall economic insecurity; despite unsuccessful business investments in the 1920s, Franklin D. Roosevelt had never experienced serious personal economic insecurity.⁴² Yet Truman's economically troubled past may have given greater urgency to his policy concerns. He wrote in his memoirs that "I have had some bitter disappointments as President, but the one that has troubled me most, in a personal way, has been the failure to defeat the organized opposition to a national compulsory health-insurance program."⁴³

ECONOMIC SECURITY IN THE EISENHOWER ADMINISTRATION

If Truman's personal experience with economic insecurity affected his later domestic priorities and political judgment, certainly his successor was not so influenced. When Dwight Eisenhower left his position as Armed Forces Chief of Staff in 1947, at the age of 57, he had never in his adult life had to concern himself with such basic issues as where he would live. "The Army," the historian Stephen Ambrose notes, "had always provided the answer."⁴⁴ Eisenhower had never learned to drive a car, he did not keep a checkbook, he had never been in a laundromat or supermarket, and he did not

know how to use a dial telephone.⁴⁵ He had thought long and deeply about the role of the United States in the world, but he had reflected little on domestic concerns.

When Eisenhower became president in 1953, the Republican Party also regained control of Congress. Many Republicans still associated the Federal Security Agency with collectivist regimentation, and Eisenhower replaced Oscar Ewing at the head of the agency with Oveta Culp Hobby. Hobby had been head of the Womens Auxiliary Army Corps in World War II, when she met General Eisenhower. She and her husband, a wealthy Houston newspaper publisher who had been governor of Texas during World War I, had been among the first "Democrats for Eisenhower" in the 1952 campaign and were instrumental in the unusual victory of a Republican presidential candidate in Texas.⁴⁶ With Hobby in office, the President resurrected the Democratic proposal to elevate the Federal Security Agency to cabinet status, but used the reorganization as an opportunity to get rid of long-time administrators like Arthur Altmeyer and Jane Hoey. The Department of Health, Education and Welfare was created in 1953, with Hobby as its first secretary.

The stage was thus apparently set for a major restructuring of Social Security in the name of reduced government regimentation and increased scope for personal freedom and responsibility. Truman was out of power and his health security proposal no longer enjoyed public support, Eisenhower had swamped Adlai Stevenson in the 1952 election, and key defenders of Social Security had lost government positions. Eisenhower seemed to be no supporter of Social Security, having said in his pre-presidential days, according to an advisor, that "if security is what you want, the most complete security of all is in jail."⁴⁷ Hobby believed she had been asked to Washington to help tame the beast of collectivism, and the struggle over national health care policy had convinced her and others that the Social Security Administration was at the center of the problem. In Congress, a wing of the Republican Party, led by Representative (later Senator) Carl Curtis of Nebraska, launched a lengthy investigation of Social Security and the Social Security Administration. Curtis was appointed

chairman of a special subcommittee of the Ways and Means Committee, which subpoenaed and questioned Altmeyer and seemed on the verge of proposing something like a flat grant.

Yet just when major changes in Social Security seemed inevitable, liberal Republicans in Congress and the Eisenhower administration—especially Hobby's Under Secretary, Nelson Rockefeller, and the Under Secretary of Labor, Arthur Larson—led a successful fight to move the Republican Party away from seeking fundamental changes in Social Security and toward expansion of the existing program. Representative Curtis was persuaded not to introduce his bill, and Larson presented a series of defenses of the existing Social Security approach to a variety of Republican constituencies around the country. Why this major change in Republican Party attitude occurred just when Social Security seemed so vulnerable has always been puzzling. In part, as Martha Derthick has noted, Curtis's identification of troublesome ambiguities within Social Security may have been "an outstanding example of what a later generation is pleased to call policy analysis," but Curtis never made clear to potential conservative allies why a conceptually sharper, but initially more expensive, flat grant program was preferable.⁴⁸ Also, some combination of the personal commitment of officials like Larson and Rockefeller, along with a new assessment of the political popularity of a Title II program which by the mid-1950s was providing significant assistance to a majority of elderly Americans, was probably at work.

Larson's defense of Social Security proved even more successful than Altmeyer's efforts. A former law school professor whose academic specialization was in the field of workmen's compensation, Larson gave a series of speeches in which he argued that contributory Social Security in its current form fostered individual self-respect because no means test was required of recipients, promoted individual freedom and social efficiency because workers were free to move to other jobs without concern for pension benefits, and encouraged individual enterprise because benefits were related to earnings.⁴⁹

Larson seemed especially persuasive with Eisenhower, who appointed Larson to be the Director of the United States Information Agency and then a Special Assistant to the President. At the urging of Larson and Rockefeller, Eisenhower proposed several expansionary Social Security amendments, enacted in 1954, that increased benefits and brought most self-employed workers into the system. Alluding primarily to these changes, Republicans like Larson exulted "that the real drive for liberal social legislation was coming from a Republican administration, while a Democratic Congress was generally found on the side of opposition to such legislation."⁵⁰

In turn, long-time Democrats worried that Eisenhower and the Republicans were successfully appropriating the popularity of Franklin D. Roosevelt. In 1956, Elizabeth Wickenden, a federal public welfare official during the New Deal and then a consultant on social policy to liberal groups, wrote Nelson Cruikshank of the AFL-CIO about an "opportunity to pin the anti-social security label back on the Republicans."⁵¹

The two parties competed for the next few years for the distinction of being most forward-looking on contributory Social Security. In discussing a Democratic proposal to raise benefits, Eisenhower said if we "just say no, we'll get rolled," and for the most part he refused to say no.⁵² As a result, in his two terms Social Security benefits were raised every two years, more categories of workers were brought under the program, and early retirement benefits were provided first to women and then to men. Congressional votes were overwhelmingly in favor of the expansions; the 1956 amendments passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 372–31 and the Senate by 90–0, and the 1958 amendments passed by 374–2 in the House and 79–0 in the Senate.

Congress voted on these Social Security issues in the context of the unusual political circumstances of the Eisenhower presidency. During the eight-year administration, Republicans controlled Congress only in the first two, and then by narrow margins: eight votes in the House and only Vice President Nixon's vote in the equally split Senate. The Republicans lost both houses in

1954, and their losses grew in the elections of 1956 and 1958. No president had ever before contended with three successive Congresses controlled by the opposing party.⁵³

As the two parties struggled to define themselves to voters in this new context, Democrats came to rely heavily on a proposal to assure disability benefits for workers covered by Social Security. Disability insurance was one addition to the Social Security program that the Eisenhower administration refused to accept.⁵⁴ In part to attain political advantage, the newly Democratic-controlled House Ways and Means Committee proposed in 1955 several Social Security amendments that included disability benefits. A series of legislative battles followed. The amendments passed the House in 1955, but the Senate refused to consider them until the next year. In hearings before the Senate Finance Committee in 1956, Marion Folsom, the new Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, opposed disability insurance, stating that "we need more time to develop ... and evaluate" related programs like vocational rehabilitation.⁵⁵ The Finance Committee then removed disability benefits from the Social Security bill, but the full Senate restored them by a vote of 47–45. On the day he signed the bill, President Eisenhower lamented in a press conference, clearly referring to the disability provisions, that "we are loading on the social security system something I don't think should be there, and if it is going to be handled, should be handled in another way."⁵⁶

As the conflict over disability insurance demonstrated, the two parties could still manage to find areas of important disagreement concerning Social Security. By 1960, however, after eight years of competing with each other for the distinction of firmest supporter, they were far more alike than different in their overall attitudes toward the program. As a result, discussions about Social Security lost some of their earlier theoretical underpinnings. In the 1930s and 1940s, concepts of collective economic security for working Americans had competed with contrasting concerns over the loss of freedom and increased regimentation seemingly inherent in collective economic security. Indeed, with the examples of German and Italian Fascism and Soviet Communism so current, government assurance

of some level of economic security in the context of a respect for individual liberty was seen as a central issue of the day.

By the late 1950s this issue was no longer a primary part of the political debate over Social Security, which had achieved the status of a permanent feature of the political landscape, requiring little discussion or defense. When a new Democratic president, who like Eisenhower had never experienced personal economic insecurity, faced in the early 1960s a major social policy challenge concerning single women and their children, the ideology of economic security was no longer a featured part of political discussion.

ECONOMIC SECURITY AND OPPORTUNITY IN THE NEW FRONTIER

The Emergence of ADC as a Political Issue

From 1935 to 1960, the Aid to Dependent Children program, although part of the original Social Security Act, had attracted only slight attention. Staff in the Children's Bureau of the Department of Labor developed the initial report on the program for Roosevelt's Committee on Economic Security in 1934, and their proposal received little thought after that point.⁵⁷

Children's Bureau staff recommended that the federal government pay one-third of the costs of the ADC program, under the assumption that state and local governments would also each pay one-third of the costs. The suggested federal share derived from provisions of an Old Age Assistance bill that had received serious congressional consideration in the previous session. When the Committee on Economic Security separately proposed that the federal government pay 50 percent of the cost of the Old Age Assistance program included in the Social Security bill, the Committee gave no thought to a comparable adjustment in ADC.⁵⁸

The primary discussion in Congress of the ADC title occurred in the House Ways and Means Committee. Several members raised the question of whether the federal government's one-third

obligation should be open-ended. Congressman Fred Vinson proposed, and the committee adopted, an amendment limiting the federal obligation to no more than one-third of an \$18 per month grant for the first child and \$12 for each subsequent child. These amounts were chosen because they were the maximum amounts payable under a Veterans' Pension program covering children of soldiers who had died during World War I. No one pointed out during the quick discussion of the issue that widows also received a grant (of \$30 per month) under the Veterans' Pension Act. If comparability with the Veterans' grant was the goal, then a single parent should receive \$30 monthly under ADC plus the \$18 or \$12 per child. In testimony before the Senate Finance Committee, Frances Perkins asked the committee to remove the per child limitations so that the federal government could at least pay the full one-third of costs in states that elected to give higher benefits than provided under the Veterans' Pension program. A motion on Perkins's suggestion never came to a vote.

These decisions to limit ADC may have reflected hostility to the program, but Edwin Witte, Executive Director of the Committee on Economic Security, thought they resulted more from a lack of interest at a time when Congress had much ground to cover than from serious program concerns.⁵⁹ When Congress next considered adding to the ADC program a grant for caretakers, in the 1950 Social Security amendments, the debate seemed just as casual and the level of interest just as low. This time, however, Congress added the grant.

Much of the reason for the lack of interest was a belief that the ADC program was likely to shrink in future years. With the addition of survivors benefits to Title II in the 1939 amendments, the Social Security Board began predicting that both OAA and ADC would wither away as Title II covered increasing numbers of older people and children. By the late 1950s, the prediction concerning OAA appeared increasingly reasonable: the number of OAA recipients fell steadily from a high of 2,789,000 in 1950 to 2,394,000 in 1959. The opposite occurred in the ADC program, however; over the same period, the number of ADC recipients rose from 2,234,000 to 2,953,000.⁶⁰

Gradually during the 1950s, members of Congress and the public began to note that ADC caseload trends did not seem to reflect a program that was withering away. Although the number of children on ADC due to the death of a parent was declining as Social Security Survivors Insurance began to provide for that population, the number of ADC children deprived of a parent for other reasons had grown sharply. Witnesses at Congressman Curtis's hearings on the Social Security program in 1954 expressed initial concerns about the changing nature of the ADC population.⁶¹ In the early 1960s, reports on the issue began to appear in popular magazines. U.S. News and World Report raised the connection of nonmarital births to rising ADC caseloads in an article of 1961 titled "The Growing Scandal in Relief." The article cited several dramatic examples, such as a woman in New Jersey "with 14 illegitimate children, by 10 different fathers" who had "drawn more than \$61,000 in welfare money over an 18-year period."⁶² Readers Digest followed quickly with an article on "Children without Fathers: The Shocking Truth about the Aid to Dependent Children Program," and Look weighed in with an article on "Welfare: Has It Become a Scandal?"⁶³

Newburgh

Many expressions of concern about welfare crystallized around what became known as the "Battle of Newburgh." In October of 1960, the City Council of Newburgh, New York, an economically depressed community of 31,000 sixty miles north of New York City, selected Joseph Mitchell as the new city manager. The city had administrative responsibility for both the ADC and General Relief programs, and Mitchell quickly made welfare his principal concern. He issued a series of controversial directives: General Relief and ADC recipients were to collect their checks at the police station, newly arrived welfare applicants were to show they had a concrete offer of employment before their arrival, all applicants had to demonstrate they had not voluntarily left their last job, all benefits were payable in the form of vouchers rather than cash, and able-bodied men were to receive their benefits through work relief.⁶⁴

Mitchell's requirements were crudely and vaguely worded, and many violated state and federal laws. In addition, his efforts to justify the requirements led him to overstate the number of people on relief, the cost of relief to Newburgh, and the level of migration to the area. Professionals in the national social welfare network had little difficulty pointing out flaws in Mitchell's analysis and proposals, and much of the national media printed their pointed rebuttals.⁶⁵

Still, Mitchell's suggestions seemed to touch a nerve. Barry Goldwater met with Mitchell and said that every city should adopt the Newburgh plan. Mitchell gave a series of generally well-received speeches in upstate New York and New York City, in which he claimed that he had been unfairly "castigated, disreputed, and torn apart limb for limb, figuratively, by a fraternity of do-gooders" for his Newburgh proposals.⁶⁶ A Gallup poll indicated heavy public support for the Newburgh measures, and Mitchell claimed to have received from 10,000 to 15,000 letters supporting his position by a ratio of 100 to one.⁶⁷ For President Kennedy, whose interests as a senator had focused primarily on foreign and military policy but who took office as the "Newburgh Battle" raged, the issues must have seemed troubling. It was clear that the public was, for the first time, expressing a demand for ADC reform, yet his liberal constituency viewed the Mitchell proposals as unacceptable.

Rehabilitation and Opportunity

The historian Edward Berkowitz has suggested that Kennedy's route out of this difficult situation was to accept the notion of rehabilitation.⁶⁸ If welfare families could be rehabilitated, then Kennedy could tell those who had supported the Newburgh proposals that he was addressing problems associated with welfare, but he was doing so in a humane way that satisfied liberals.

The rehabilitation concept which Kennedy endorsed was broad and probably too vague. It encompassed programs to reduce individual pathologies through intensive social casework (as exemplified in amendments of 1962 to the Social Security Act), along with sometimes conflicting efforts to reduce social pathologies (as exemplified in the experimental Gray Area projects supported

by the Ford Foundation). The breadth of the rehabilitation concept would have important implications for President Johnson's later War on Poverty.

An equally significant feature of the new emphasis on rehabilitation in the 1960s was its largely unrecognized discordance with New Deal social policy. Lyndon Johnson had worked in a New Deal agency as a young man, and he wanted to be remembered as the president who completed the Roosevelt revolution.⁶⁹ Yet Roosevelt never proposed a War on Poverty. If Roosevelt had used the metaphor of war to describe his domestic policy at all, he would more likely have proposed a War on Economic Insecurity, affecting the security of all Americans, than a War on Poverty, aimed at rehabilitating the poor. A key institutional embodiment of Roosevelt's social policy was the Federal Security Agency, formed in 1939. The institutional embodiment of Johnson's War on Poverty was the Office of Economic Opportunity, established in 1965. By the mid-1960s, a rhetoric of opportunity had fully replaced a rhetoric of security.

CONCLUSION

At the end of a speech on his Newburgh proposals, City Manager Mitchell quoted the following "creed," which, he said, "describes the citizens of Newburgh, and I as their City Manager":

I do not choose to be a common man. It is my right to be uncommon if I can. I seek opportunity, not security. I do not wish to be a kept citizen, humbled and dulled by having the state look after me. I want to take the calculated risk; to dream and to build, to fail and to succeed. I refuse to barter incentive for a dole. I prefer the challenges of life to the guaranteed existence; the thrill of fulfillment to the stale calm of Utopia.⁷⁰

Some of this sentiment may have been attributable to a contemporary fascination with the writings of Ayn Rand, but the statement does indicate the contest between security and liberty that resulted from the proposals of Roosevelt's Committee on Economic Security. Arthur Altmeyer also noted the contest in a 1948 speech, in which he argued that "Social Security is an effort to reconcile freedom

and security. This is the central issue of our time."⁷¹ The contest lost some of its force in the 1950s, and concerns over opportunity largely eclipsed economic security concerns in the 1960s.

It is impossible to know what would have been the political and administrative fate of ADC had Presidents Kennedy and Johnson discussed the program through the prism of economic and social security and the need to reconcile that security with freedom, as well as through the prism of rehabilitation. The relative success of Social Security over time, however, may suggest that the ADC program would have benefited from a carefully crafted focus on security.⁷²

Roosevelt and his advisors seldom tried to hide the freedom-security dilemma. Indeed, Roosevelt gave the impression of desiring broad discussion of the issue, apparently hoping that the 1936 presidential election would serve as a referendum on it. Roosevelt and his Social Security administrators consciously tried to reduce the level of governmentally imposed regimentation Social Security required, but also stressed that new industrial conditions had rendered unrealistic Jeffersonian dreams of a land filled with independent farmers who required no added economic security from their government.

Contemporary proponents of health and economic security programs may need to take similar steps to allay concerns about regimentation when possible and to address them forthrightly when not. Instead of regional health care alliances, for example, a modern equivalent of the friendly neighborhood post office might be possible as the initial point of citizen contact with a health security system. As the United States moves away from an industrial economy, current proponents of domestic security programs might also publicly discuss, as Roosevelt did, the need to develop social programs that reflect economic transformations. In any major economic change, some people are likely to be left behind. As President Clinton mused in the New Yorker interview, and might publicly suggest more often, such people arguably need a tangible base of security to allow them to make hard

transitions in a world in which eighteenth-century concepts of economic liberty no longer have easy relevance.

Endnotes

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³Franklin D. Roosevelt, "The First Fireside Chat of 1934," in Samuel I. Rosenman, ed., The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Vol. 3 (New York: Random House, 1938), pp. 316–317.

⁴For example, see Herbert Hoover, The Challenge to Liberty (New York: Charles Scribner, 1934) and Robert A. Nisbet, Community and Power (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962).

⁵For discussions of equality and efficiency, see Arthur M. Okun, Equality and Efficiency: The Big Tradeoff (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1975) and Robert Haveman, Starting Even: An Equal Opportunity Program to Combat the Nations's New Poverty (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988).

⁶Paul K. Conkin, The New Deal, 3rd ed. (Arlington Heights, Ill: Harlan Davidson, 1992), pp. 14, 15.

⁷Gore Vidal, Screening History (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 72. See also Anthony J. Badger, The New Deal: The Depression Years, 1933–1940 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1989), pp. 6–7; and Robert S. McElvaine, The Great Depression: America, 1929–1941, 2nd ed. (New York: Times Books, 1993), pp. 117–119.

⁸Jerry R. Cates, Insuring Inequality: Administrative Leadership in Social Security, 1935–54 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1983).

⁹Linda Gordon, "How 'Welfare' Became a Dirty Word," The Chronicle of Higher Education, July 20, 1994, pp. B1–B2. See also Gordon, Pitied But Not Entitled: Single Mothers and the History of Welfare (New York: Free Press, forthcoming).

¹⁰Christopher Howard, "Sowing the Seeds of 'Welfare': The Transformation of Mothers' Pensions, 1900–1940," Journal of Policy History, 4, no. 2 (1992), p. 216.

¹¹U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Ways and Means, 1993 Green Book (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1993), pp. 43, 853.

¹²Publicly guaranteed child support assurance programs may be an example. See, e.g., Irwin Garfinkel, Assuring Child Support: An Extension of Social Security (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1992).

¹³Gordon, "How Welfare Became a Dirty Word," p. B2.

¹⁴Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Annual Message to the Congress," January 4, 1935, in Rosenman, ed., Public Papers and Addresses, Vol. 4, p. 19.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 20.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁷Quoted in Joseph P. Lash, Eleanor and Franklin (New York: Signet Books, 1971), p. 198.

¹⁸"The First Fireside Chat of 1934," June 28, 1934, in Rosenman, ed., Public Papers and Addresses, Vol. 3, p. 313.

¹⁹"Annual Message to the Congress," January 4, 1935, in Rosenman, ed., Public Papers and Addresses, Vol. 4, p. 20.

²⁰"The First Fireside Chat of 1935," *ibid.*, p. 134.

²¹Edwin E. Witte, The Development of the Social Security Act (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1962), pp. 95–97; Arthur J. Altmeyer, The Formative Years of Social Security (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966), p. 34.

²²Altmeyer, Formative Years, p. 42.

²³Witte, Development of the Social Security Act, pp. 102n, 145; Altmeyer, Formative Years, pp. 36–37.

²⁴For expansion on this point, see Edward D. Berkowitz, "Introduction: Social Security Celebrates an Anniversary," in Berkowitz, ed., Social Security after Fifty: Successes and Failures (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1987), p. 19.

²⁵Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Presidential Statement upon Signing the Social Security Act," August 14, 1935, in Rosenman, ed., Public Papers and Addresses, Vol. 4, pp. 324–325.

²⁶Quoted in Altmeyer, Formative Years, p. 38.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Quoted in Arthur M. Schlesinger, The Politics of Upheaval (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960), p. 614.

²⁹Ibid, p. 636.

³⁰Altmeyer, Formative Years, pp. 69–70.

³¹Quoted in Schlesinger, The Politics of Upheaval, p. 575.

³²Hoover's Challenge to Liberty offers a good example of his arguments.

³³Wilbur Cohen, Panelist, "Social Security: The First Half Century, A Discussion," in Gerald D. Nash, Noel H. Pugach and Richard F. Tomasson, eds., Social Security: The First Half Century (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988), p. 47.

³⁴Arthur J. Altmeyer, "A Look at the Future," address delivered to the New York State Welfare Conference, New York City, November 17, 1952, p. 5, in Arthur J. Altmeyer Papers, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Box 17, Folder 6.

³⁵Cates, Insuring Inequality.

³⁶Quoted in Monte M. Poen, Harry S. Truman versus the Medical Lobby: The Genesis of Medicare (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1979), p. 148, and in Paul Starr, The Social Transformation of American Medicine (New York: Basic Books, 1982), p. 285.

³⁷Poen, Truman versus the Medical Lobby, pp. 165–167.

³⁸Quoted *ibid.*, p. 164.

³⁹Interview with Arthur J. Altmeyer, September 14, 1987, Oral History Collection, Columbia University (draft copy in the Altmeyer Papers, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Box 18, File 7), pp. 131–140.

⁴⁰Poen, Truman versus the Medical Lobby, pp. 169–170.

⁴¹David McCullough, Truman (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), p. 160.

⁴²Many writers have suggested that Roosevelt's polio attack of 1921, shortly after an unsuccessful race for the vice presidency, gave him a more developed perspective on human suffering than he would have attained without his health problems. Frances Perkins stated that "Franklin Roosevelt underwent a spiritual transformation during the years of his illness" (Frances Perkins, The Roosevelt I Knew [New York: Viking Press, 1946], p. 29). See also Garry Wills, "What Makes a Good Leader?" Atlantic Monthly, April 1994, pp. 71–80, in which Wills argues that Adlai Stevenson was "Roosevelt without the polio—and that made all the difference. [Stevenson] remained the dilettante and ladies' man all his life" (p. 80).

⁴³Harry S. Truman, Memoirs: Years of Trial and Hope, Vol. 2 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1956), p. 23.

⁴⁴Stephen E. Ambrose, Eisenhower: Soldier and President (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), p. 233.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, p. 299.

⁴⁶James A. Clark, The Tactful Texan: A Biography of Governor Will Hobby (New York: Random House, 1958), p. 197.

⁴⁷Arthur Larson, Eisenhower: The President Nobody Knew (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968), p. 138.

⁴⁸Martha Derthick, Policymaking for Social Security (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1979), pp. 241–243.

⁴⁹Arthur Larson, speech to the Economics Club of Chicago, May 18, 1954, in Altmeyer Papers, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Box 17, Folder 1.

⁵⁰Larson, Eisenhower, p. 137.

⁵¹Elizabeth Wickenden, letter to Nelson Cruikshank, April 3, 1956, in Elizabeth Wickenden Papers, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Box 10, Folder 4.

⁵²Quoted in Mark H. Leff, "Historical Perspectives on Old-Age Insurance: The State of the Art on the Art of the State," in Berkowitz, ed., Social Security after Fifty, p. 34.

⁵³Ambrose, Eisenhower, p. 474.

⁵⁴The Eisenhower administration's position received the strong support of the American Medical Association. Disability benefit bills of the 1940s, which had not passed Congress, included government-set payments to physicians for certifying disability, and the AMA worried that the payments might be a first step on the road to socialized medicine. See Derthick, Policymaking for Social Security, p. 301.

⁵⁵Quoted in Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1956, p. 395.

⁵⁶Quoted *Ibid.*, p. 397. Eisenhower's concerns were not without foundation. See Edward D. Berkowitz, "Disability Insurance and the Social Security Tradition," in Nash, Pugach, and Tomasson, eds., Social Security: The First Half Century, pp. 279–298.

⁵⁷The title of the Aid to Dependent Children program was changed in 1962 to "Aid to Families of Dependent Children."

⁵⁸Witte, Development of the Social Security Act, pp. 162–165.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, p. 164. Gilbert Steiner has also written that the decisions were "as much because of lack of interest as because of real opposition." See Steiner, Social Insecurity: The Politics of Welfare (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1966), p. 24.

⁶⁰Social Security Bulletin: Annual Statistical Supplement, 1959, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Social Security Administration, Table 117.

⁶¹Altmeyer, Formative Years of Social Security, p. 225.

⁶²"The Growing Scandal in Relief," U.S. News and World Report, September 11, 1961, p. 84.

⁶³Charles Stevenson, "Children without Fathers: The Shocking Truth about the Aid to Dependent Children Welfare Program," Reader's Digest, November 1961, pp. 72–80; Fletcher Knebel, "Welfare: Has It Become a Scandal?" Look, November 7, 1961, pp. 31–33.

⁶⁴"Newburgh's 13 Point Welfare Code—A Futile Gesture," in Will the Newburgh Plan Work in Your City?, National Association of Social Workers, undated, in Wickenden Papers, Box 1, Folder 15.

⁶⁵For example, see "Claims and Facts about Newburgh's Welfare Problems," *ibid.*, and Eve Edstrom, "Newburgh Is a Mirror Reflecting on Us All," Washington Post, August 6, 1961, p. E1.

⁶⁶Joseph McDowell Mitchell, address to the Kiwanis Club of New York City, September 27, 1961, p. 4, in Wickenden Papers, Box 1, Folder 15.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁶⁸Edward D. Berkowitz, America's Welfare State: From Roosevelt to Reagan (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), pp. 106–111.

⁶⁹Nicholas Lemann, The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and How It Changed America (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), p. 182.

⁷⁰Mitchell, address to the Kiwanis Club of New York City, pp. 11–12 (underlinings in original speech). Mitchell attributed the "creed" to Dean Alfange.

⁷¹Arthur J. Altmeyer, speech to the National Social Welfare Assembly, June 7, 1948, in Altmeyer Papers, Box 17, Folder 6.

⁷²Arthur Altmeyer was not optimistic that a "social insurance system can provide protection against destitution due to such causes" as marital breakups and nonmarital births (Altmeyer, Formative Years of Social Security, p. 188). Currently, however, the Child Support Assurance System advanced by Irwin Garfinkel and others attempts to create such a social insurance program. See, for example, Irwin

Garfinkel, Sara S. McLanahan, and Philip K. Robins, eds., Child Support Assurance (Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute Press, 1992).

The American welfare state was created in 1935 and continued to develop through 1973. Since then, over a prolonged period, the capitalist class has been steadily dismantling the entire welfare state. Welfare reforms, in the form of the GI bill, provided educational opportunities for working class and rural veterans, while federal-subsidized low interest mortgages encourage home-ownership, especially for veterans. The New Deal created concrete improvements but did not consolidate labor influence at any level. Capitalists and management still retained control over capital, the workplace and plant location of production. Trade union officials signed pacts with capital: higher pay for the workers and greater control of the workplace for the bosses. New Deal to New Frontier: From Security to Opportunity in the American Welfare State. Institute for Research on Poverty Discussion Paper, No. 1045-94. Madison: Institute for Research on Poverty. Losing Ground: American Social Policy 1950-1980 Welfare as We Knew It: A Political History of the American Welfare State Liberalism After the Sixties: A Reconnaissance): The Achievement of American Liberalism: The New Deal and Its Legacies America's Struggle Against Poverty. Jan 1900. 293-311. The New Deal established federal responsibility for the welfare of the U.S. economy and the American people. Despite the importance of this growth of federal responsibility, perhaps the greatest achievement of the New Deal was to restore faith in American democracy at a time when many people believed that the only choice left was between communism and fascism. United States: The New Deal. Read more about the New Deal and its impact in America. In 1935 the New Deal emphasis shifted to measures designed to assist labour and other urban groups. Roosevelt's domestic programs were largely followed in the Fair Deal of Pres. Harry S. Truman (1945-53), and both major U.S. parties came to accept most New Deal reforms as a permanent part of the national life. Which brings us to a new paper that looks at exactly the same point. It's by one of my favourites, Tim Smeeding: Myths about welfare states and their effects on economic development abound. The American welfare state appears relatively small only by restricting the comparison to rich nations, ignoring employer-provided health insurance, pensions, and public education, and measuring size relative to GDP, rather than on a real per capita basis. The inclusion of public education turns the United States from a laggard to a leader in welfare state development. Real per capita social welfare spending in the United States is larger than that. in almost all other countries! Even if employer-provided benefits and tax expenditures are.

New Frontier, political slogan used by U.S. President John F. Kennedy to describe his concept of the challenges facing the United States in the 1960s. The term was most prominently used by Kennedy in the speech with which he accepted the nomination as presidential candidate of the Democratic Party in 1960. Thank you for your feedback. Our editors will review what you've submitted and determine whether to revise the article. Join Britannica's Publishing Partner Program and our community of experts to gain a global audience for your work! External Websites. WRITTEN BY. The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. New Frontier (28.2). Kennedy's proposals which included a higher minimum wage, tax cuts, money for the military and space program, and new programs to help poor and unemployed Americans. He had trouble getting Congress' support on many proposals. Peace Corps (28.2). program of volunteer assistance to the developing nations of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Passed under LBJ, opened the door for many non-European immigrants to settle in the U.S. by ending quotas based on nationality. Warren Court (28.3). Beginning with the 1954 landmark decision *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Court under Chief Justice Earl Warren took an activist stance on the leading issues of the day. The American frontier consisted of the relatively unsettled regions of the United States, usually found in the western part of the country. Here, both land and life were more rugged and primitive than in the more settled eastern part. As one frontier area was settled, people began moving farther west into the next unsettled area, sweeping aside the Native Americans as they went. While most Americans have a more balanced view of the settling of the West, many Americans still see aspects of the frontier, its people, and their beliefs as inspiring examples of traditional American values in their original and purest form. How did the frontier movement, which lasted more than two centuries, help to shape these basic American values? In American history the frontier is the process of settlement of new lands in the West, plus the geographical zone of settlement, together with the impact on the frontiersmen and the nation at large. As pioneers moved west they changed their customs, behavior and values and became more "American"; Frederick Jackson Turner called this "the significance of the frontier," Turner argued in 1893, one change was that unlimited free land in the zone was available and thus offered the psychological sense of The New Deal and the Fair Deal were bold measures for their generations, but now this is a new generation. A technological output and explosion on the farm has led to an output explosion. An urban population revolution has overcrowded our schools and cluttered our cities and crowded our slums. All over the world, particularly in the newer nations, young men are coming to power, men who are not bound by the traditions of the past, men who are not blinded by the old fears and hates and rivalries -- young men who can cast off the old slogans and the old delusions. The Republican nominee, of course, is a young man. Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal promised security and succor to those in need. But the New Frontier of which I speak is not a set of promises. It is a set of challenges.