



FDR: The First Hundred Days (Critical Issue)

Anthony J. Badger

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The Hundred Days, Franklin Roosevelt's first fifteen weeks in office, have become the stuff of legend, a mythic yardstick against which every subsequent American president has felt obliged to measure himself. The renowned historian Anthony J. Badger cuts through decades of politicized history to provide a succinct, balanced, and timely reminder that Roosevelt's accomplishment was above all else an exercise in exceptional political craftsmanship.

Declaring that Americans had "nothing to fear but fear itself," Roosevelt entered the White House in 1933 confronting 25 percent unemployment, bank closings, and a nationwide crisis in confidence. From March 9 to June 16, FDR sent Congress a record number of bills, all of which passed easily. From legalizing the sale of beer to providing mortgage relief to millions of Americans, Roosevelt launched the New Deal that conservatives have been working to roll back ever since. Badger emphasizes Roosevelt's political gifts even as the president and his brain trust of advisers, guided by principles, largely felt their way toward solutions to the nation's manifold problems. Reintroducing the contingency that marked those fateful days, Badger humanizes Roosevelt and suggests a far more useful yardstick for future presidents: the politics of the possible under the guidance of principle.



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