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SOCIETY SECTION—THREE

President Roosevelt's Former Confidante Blames Administration's 'Failures' on Personal Flaws

Moley Says New Deal Created Consciousness of Class

By HARRY HANSEN

Raymond Moley's "After Seven Years," the story of his disillusioning experiences with Franklin D. Roosevelt and his policies, is a remarkable political document. Never before has an intimate written a psychological study of a President in office, finding the reason for that President's failures in personal flaws.

Beginning on a note of high progressive hopes, Moley ends with regrets at failure, at a great opportunity misused. For though he believes the President's administration has vastly improved social welfare activities, he blames it for creating a consciousness of class, a reckless attack on business, an undemocratic attempt to pack the Supreme Court and a form of personal rule based on the President's attitude of "telling, not asking."

We must, of course, make allowances for Moley's own ego. In graciousness and charm he must be the President's double. His book is filled with expressions of good will, of extenuating explanations, of friendliness. It is also true that his criticism of the President begins when the latter disregards his advice and begins to confer with Tommy Corcoran and Ben Cohen, who are upstarts in Moley's eyes. This much is evident.

But Moley's convictions are clearly stated. Happy to be in the confidence of the White House, he is also convinced that the proper evolution of American democracy is through the use of the Constitution, not setting it aside. He cannot sympathize with the President's mounting resentment against business, which is, after all, one of the normal activities of American citizens. He cannot understand why the President should scuttle the Disarmament Conference, embarrassing the Moley reputation before the world.

Finally he resents the court-packing plan as an attempt to impair the democratic process. For urging this on the President he blames Corcoran and Cohen, and if anyone can be spanked with words Moley administers to Tommy Corcoran the loudest, most resounding whacks that have been heard in the politi-

cal woodshed since T. R. walloped Taft.

From the start Raymond Moley had no great respect for the political astuteness of Tommy Corcoran and Ben Cohen. Corcoran was recommended to him by Felix Frankfurter and "had achieved no small success in placing young Harvard Law School graduates, recommended by Felix, in strategic posts at the Labor and Interior departments and the RFC."

Although Moley thought Cohen a magnificent legal draftsman and Corcoran an ambitious lad who "gloried in manipulating people," he looked on them as immature, and one of the most devastating passages in this book is his report of a conversation with Corcoran in which the latter is played like a fish on a line. It is clear that Moley blames the Corcoran influence for letting F. D. R. go wrong.

It was Corcoran, according to Moley, who made the remark, "Fighting with a business man is like fighting with a Polack. You can give no quarter." Moley also cites his enmity to the public utilities, declaring he said that "twenty years from now the government will own and operate all the electrical utilities in the country." To Corcoran and Cohen, Moley ascribes part of the blame for the court-packing plan, asserting that they plied Roosevelt with suggestions, "focusing his attention upon clever methods of achieving his ends through legislative indirection."

An idea of Moley's resentment against Corcoran is conveyed in Moley's account of what he said to Corcoran when the latter visited him in New York in June, 1936, and asked him to draft plans for the President's second acceptance speech. As reported here, what Tommy says makes him out some-



RAYMOND L. MOLEY..... Criticizes New Deal

thing of a fool, whereas Moley speaks wisdom. When Tommy speaks of the influence Moley could exert in softening the President's words by remarking, "You write the music; he only sings it," Moley lashes out at him:

"Tom, I got you entree into the White House to serve Roosevelt's ideas, not yours. I've never, in my association with Roosevelt, insinuated anything into his speeches. He and I have argued endlessly over

what the substance of a speech should be. But once he reached a decision I've never slipped anything over on him. I can only plead with you to do the same. Remember, when you get to work on speeches that you're a clerk, not a statesman."

Presidents are always enigmas to the public, and the motives for their acts in office are subject to deep interpretation. Raymond Moley's

Tommy Corcoran Gets 'Spanked'

account of the Roosevelt mind will be followed by others, some of which may differ with him. But we, as the public, will invite them. We will not adopt the attitude of Herbert Hoover, with whom Moley was sitting in a diner when the steward approached and said: "Do you think Mr. Hoover would like to hear the latest story about Mr. Roosevelt?" Hoover, "glowering at the menu, grumbled: 'I don't like stories about Presidents.'"

I am unable to touch on many of the issues discussed by Moley, who describes the beginnings of most of the important measures of Mr. Roosevelt's first term, but it is important to set down here his opposition to the Rooseveltian foreign policy, which he describes as a "slowly deepening and strengthening internationalism." He wonders why the President and Secretary Hull did not "forego a wringing of hands over the breaking of treaties to inquire why treaties were so brittle." He thinks the "continuous harping on the sanctity of treaties" made it possible for the Germans and Italians to bracket us with the nations that kept unjust treaties unrevised.

For Moley denies the President's contention that the world must be either all totalitarian or all democratic; he believes that different political ideologies can live side by side, just as different religions do. He does not believe that Great Britain and France fight for abstract democracy but for boundaries, and he cannot see the United States abandoning its democracy to fight a war against Germany because Hitler has oppressed his people. He is definitely isolationist and what might be termed an American continentalist. It is clear that he does not trust Roosevelt in international politics, that he feels the President has talked too much already. But Roosevelt is an experimenter—"change is as much the central fact of Roosevelt as it is of a kaleidoscope." Though this book was finished before Germany attacked Poland, it is safe to say that Moley refuses to see America as the tail to the British kite, encouraging British politics by sympathetic pronouncements and laws. [Harpers.]

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