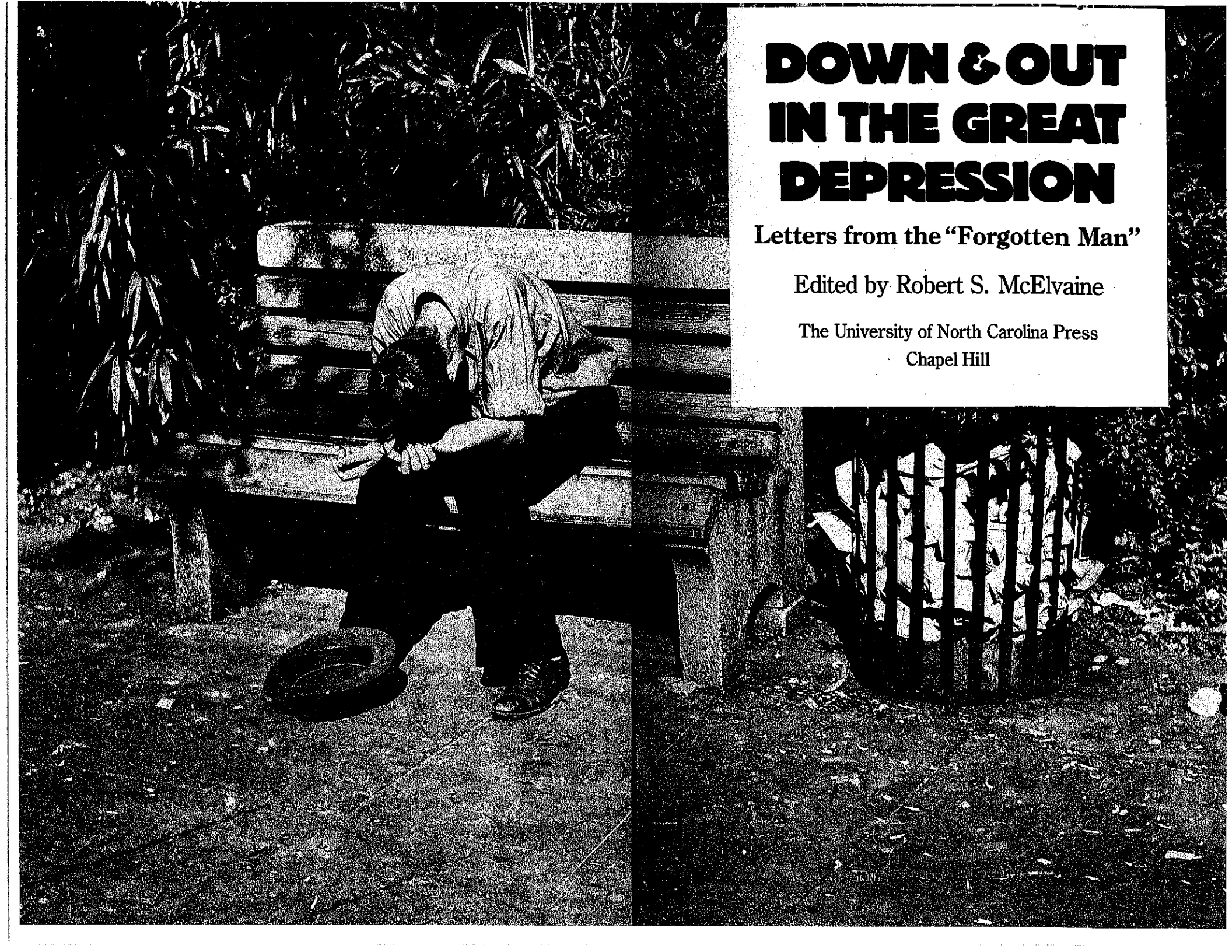




DOWN & OUT IN THE GREAT DEPRESSION

Letters from the "Forgotten Man"

Edited by Robert S. McElvaine

The University of North Carolina Press
Chapel Hill

quite poor but who express the same shame at asking for help and the same desire that their letters be kept confidential that are characteristic of the middle-class letters.

12. To have this baby come to a home full of worry and despair, with no money for things it needs, is not fair

Eureka, Calif.
June 14, 1934

Mrs. F. D. Roosevelt
Washington, D. C.
Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

I know you are overburdened with requests for help and if my plea cannot be recognized, I'll understand it is because you have so many others, all of them worthy.

But I am not asking for myself alone. It is as a potential mother and as one woman to another.

My husband and I are a young couple of very simple, almost poor families. We married eight years ago on the proverbial shoe-string but with a wealth of love. We both wanted more than anything else to establish a home and maintain that home in a charming, quiet manner. I had a job in the County Court House before I married and my husband was, and is, a surveyor. I kept my job as it seemed the best and only way for us to pay for a home as quickly as we could. His work was not always permanent, as surveyors jobs seldom are, but we managed to build our home and furnish it comfortably. Perhaps we were foolish to put all our money into it but we felt it was not only a pleasure but a saving for the future.

Then came the depression. My work has continued and my salary alone has just been sufficient to make our monthly payments on the house and keep our bills paid. But with the exception of two and one-half months work with the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey under the C.W.A, my husband has not had work since August, 1932.

My salary could continue to keep us going, but—I am to have a baby. We wanted one before but felt we should have more assurance for the future before we deliberately took such a responsibility. But now that it has happened, I won't give it up! I'm willing to undergo any hardship for myself and I can get a leave of absence from my job for a year. But can't you, won't you do something so my husband can have a job, at least during that year? I realize there is going to be a lot of expense and we have absolutely nothing but our

home which still carries a mortgage of \$2000. We can't lose that because our baby will need it. And I can't wait until the depression is over to have a baby. I will be 31 in October and I'll soon be too old.

We had such high hopes in the early spring that the Coast and Geodetic work would continue. Tommy, my husband, had a good position there, and we were so happy. We thought surely our dreams of a family could come true. Then the work ended and like "The best laid plans of mice and men" our hopes were crushed again. But now Fate has taken it into her own hands and left us to work it out somehow. I'm happy, of course, but Tommy is nearly out of his head. He has tried every conceivable prospect but you must know how even pick and shovel jobs do not exist.

If the Coast and Geodetic work could continue or if he could get a job with the Bureau of Public Roads, - anything in the surveying line. A year is all I ask and after that I can go back to work and we can work out our own salvation. But to have this baby come to a home full of worry and despair, with no money for things it needs, is not fair. It needs and deserves a happy start in life.

As I said before, if it were only ourselves, or if there were something we could do about it, we would never ask for help. We have always stood on our own feet and been proud and happy. But you are a mother and you'll understand this crisis.

Tommy is competent and dependable. He has a surveyor's license and was level man for the U.S. Coast and Geodetic work in this (Humboldt) county. He will go away from home for work, if necessary, but, dear Mrs. Roosevelt, will you see if you can arrange for a job for him? It sounds impossible, I know, but I am at a point where I ask the impossible. I have to be selfish now.

I shall hope and pray for a reply and tell myself that you are the busiest woman in America, if I don't receive it. I am going to continue to work as long as I can and then- an interval of waiting. God grant it will be serene and untroubled for my baby's sake.

Very sincerely yours,
Mrs. M. H. A.
Eureka,
Humboldt County,
California

72 Conditions of Life in the Thirties

at eny thing at all I havt had a days work for over two 2 years I am a disable body man and cant get a days work at all. I am a ruptured man my family is barfooted and naked and an suferns and we all are a goin to purish if I cannot get some help some way I cant get eny ade at all and if I could get it in Scot County where it is from me I could not go and get it for it is about 20 miles to the costly rail rode station from where I live in the county. I have got no horse no autmobel and no nothing to ride can you pleas if posible fix for me to get some help some way can you fix for me some way so my family will not purish.

So hoping to here from you soon from

N. P. [male]
Newcomb, Tenn.

27. I hate to see Xmas come this time

Sulphur Springs, Texas
December 11, 1934.

President Roosevelt,
Washington, D. C.

Dear President:

I am in debt needing help the worst in the world. I own my own little home and a few live stock. Nine (9) head of red white face cattle and a span of mules. I have them all mortgaged to a man and he is fixing to foreclose me.

I have done all I could to pay the note and have failed on everything I've tried. I fell short on my crop this time and he didn't allow me even one nickle out of it to feed myself while I was gathering it and now winter is here and I have a wife and three (3) little children, haven't got clothes enough to hardly keep them from freezing. My house got burned up three years ago and I'm living in just a hole of a house and we are in a suffering condition. My little children talking about Santa Claus and I hate to see Xmas come this time because I know it will be one of the dullest Xmas they ever witnessed.

I have tried to compromise with the man that I am in debt to and he wont except nothing but the money or my stock and I can't borrow the money and I need my stock so I am asking you for help of some kind please.

So I remain,

Your humble servant,
N. S. [male]
Sulphur Springs, Texas.

P.S. That man won't even agree for me to have my stock fed.

The Grass Root

28. We are on relief but the people here want give us any th

Parsons, Kansas
Nov-12-1935

To the President of the U.S.A.
Washing D. C.

Dear President I am writing you to let you know we are a family in N and are not getting the proper attention. I am a widow left without thang. I have a boy who was hurt in school he is cripple.

We are left with support of any kind we are on the relief but the pe here want give us any thang. we cant get any fuel Nothing a long food they wont give us any consideration at all. Just give us a little money enough to buy food. some weeks we dont have anythang to get food. children need every thang to wear. Money is so short I would apprecial the help I can get I have four children three boys and on girl and we h a home

[Anonymous]
Parsons Kansas

29. Time have been so hard on us

Knoxville, Ill.
March 29 1934

Mrs. Franklin Rosevelt

Dear Madam:

I now drop a few lines to ask you a few questions as I can not find out place else.

Now as my daughter die and left 3 little girls 4 years ago and as time been so hard on us and as I have been told by folks we should have a per for to help support the girls and as I have try to find out here and I cann have been told to write to you and ask you about it. Now I do not care to with Un little one and as last year was a very hard year on us and we : family of 9 and as my husband has been work on the ceed. Projest but it is very hard to keep 9 and 12 dollars other for me to see if I could not , pension to help care for the 3 girls.

for I am glad to keep them at home if I can only have a very Now I ha school them little one they need clothes and things and as I can not t

49. The way they are treating the darkies here is a shame

Vicksburg Miss
9-22-35

President Theo. D. Roosevelt. U.S.A.

Gentlemen: I think you Should invistigate this matter your Self. The way they are treating the Darkies here is A Shame. They wont give them food nor Cloths nor Work to do When they Ask for Any thing they drive them away as they were dogs. They wont even let them talk to the head man here. you Aught to See that Some men get this job that will give this Relief to whom it was Sent here for. you can prevent all brutle treatment of the Darkies here if you will. And its more than 200 Darkies in groups Standing on the Road each day. begging for food and Cloths. And the Relief working women. They tell them there is no job for them to hunt. And the Head men of the Office will help them to drive the Poor darkies as they were dogs. And I gets in My care and Rides from one end of the County to the other to See how the Darkies are treated. All of the Darkies in the Flooded District are in a Suffering condition I know Personally. And please Invistigate The Matter at once. The Darkies in Flooded District are not able to pay they Taxes and they wont let them make enough to pay them. And I Judge the Relief Workers are taking all of the Poor Darkies Money and buying fine Cars.

[Anonymous]

50. They are helping white but are not me poor colored man

October 27, 1935.
Marietta. Ga

The President Roosevelt:—

You honor sir and your royalty. Majesty. This is the one of the most honorable Colored workers of America who has been faithful and true law abiding Citizens of this Cob County & the City of Marietta, Ga Your honor sir I am down now is very feeble and isnt able to work for my living Ive been keep up by the releif but now have fail They haven't help me any in a month I am very poor and needing Condition I am not able to support my self so dear sir you honor I begging you please sir for food and raimont dear sir. I am very much in need now They are helping white but are not me poor Colored man my whife has been going there times after times but refused give her

anything to eat. So I am hoping through your highness and good natured and kindness that I succeed. So dear sir I am Thanking you in Advance and your benevolence will never be forgotten here after For I know have the power to Correct such matters if you will.

Those of the Community Chest and the state of Releif and the food Administration and distributors.

Your honorable
President Roosevelt.
Colored
Cob Co. Marietta. Ga.

51. We will have to face the winter naked, hungry

Huntsville Ala.
November 12, 1935

Mr. Woodworth

Dear Sir:

I wont to know why it is we people in Huntsville are working and cant get any money or food. We white and colored people we are on a starvation. It is any way on earth you can help us we are really in need. We han't got but one check in three months. We will have to face the winter naked, hungry + nothing to go up on not even fuel to burn. we can't live + work off of nothing.

We can't get any credit to get any food or any thing families of six + seven can't get food for their kids. The kids are hungry.

I will close
From
Huntsville

52. We hope all will get some, some get and the other dont

Selma Alabama
Sept. 1935

Dear Mr. President:

Please, please dont let our checks be stop they say that they have close up. We can't even get by now, what shall we do.

Please when they open Work for us the Women let us have a fire our legs are acking now where they work us all the cold Winter And we did not have a fire. please send us some more good meat. for we Cant get Any it is so

high. School os open We haven't got Any clotheing for our chridren and our self. Some got dresses and some did not. what shall we do. it is getting cold And we havent got no Coal + no wood we just can get a little food. Please see about us and when you send Any cover to Any thing We hope all Will get Some, Some get and the other dont, some get a raise And some get a cut. We thank you for All you are doing. Thank you.

The Colored
Women.

53. Hope that sometime . . . you will mention what the value of the coloured votes has been to you if you think they are worth it

Burlington, Iowa
Nov. 4-36

President + Mrs. Roosevelt

Dear Ones:—

Congratulating you first on your success in staying in the "White House." for which I am well pleased.

I want to write just briefly about my work in the campaign.

First let me say most everyone takes for granted "Coloured" voters are Republican we owe that party a debt.

I worked day and night proving to the U.S.A. voters that phrase is not true. I think this election will convince all, because the Negro of today are more educated. Of course when there are more in one locality it is easier for them to prove their ability to fill worth while positions.

I wasn't working in this campaign to fill an office. I was working for the betterment of this community in which I live, and the men I worked so hard for I feel are real men that will back me up and show a few of my race folk here a little consideration.

I struggle here trying to educate my boy (19 yrs.) and girl (17 yrs.) and trying to keep this locality a haven for them so to speak.

I worked without pay so as to prove to the people here I wasn't working for a personal cause.

I'm not on relief. My husband is a Railroad chef, I worked at odd jobs since where I live my vocation isn't patronized very much. Would like to obtain Ia. lincise but do not feel I can afford spending that much right now right on the verge of winter.

Hope that sometime during your future talks over the radio you will men-

tion what the value of the coloured votes has been to you if you think they are worth it.

Trust that this letter will reach your hands.

Happiness and Success to Both of You.

Sincerely
Mrs. I. H.

54. All we ask is that you please remove this Negro sewing-room from our midst at once

July 10, 1936

Mr. Harry L. Hopkins
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

We, the residents of N. Spring Street, Concord, N. C. are all ardent supporters of President Roosevelt and the New Deal and have been loyal Democrats for a long time, and in behalf of this same White neighborhood on N. Spring Street, we are asking you to remove a negro sewing-room that was put in our midst this week.

This is supposed to be a Government project, and it is at least a mile from the negro settlement. It is being conducted in a negro woman's home, in which she occupies part of the house, and there are 39 negro women attending the school. This negro owns five houses and lots, her own car, and also teaches a negro school, which is a project also. The two adjacent homes she owns on this street both have sewing-rooms in them. To make one of the houses available she had the sheriff of Cabarrus County evict a White family from the house, BECAUSE she said she could get more money from the Government. Now we believe in these projects and think you've done a wonderful work, but do you think that she deserves this position she has and the rent she is receiving from our Government?

I wish to refer you to the Sheriff of Cabbarus County, Mr. Ray C. Hoover, and also to the Mayor of this city, Mr. W. A. Wilkinson.

Before closing let me state this negro has no dependents at all, and we would certainly appreciate you looking into this matter and removing this thorn at once. It is needless to say that this is one thing that the Southern people do not approve. If she were needy and deserving it would be an entirely different matter, but she doesn't need this income from the Government. Mr. Hopkins, we don't care how much the Government gives her,

although we have plenty of other deserving people that need help, ALL we ask is that you please remove this NEGRO sewing-room from our midst at once.

Respectfully and sincerely,
Citizens and Residents of
N. Spring St.,
Concord, N.C.
Cabarrus County

55. Negroes being worked ever where instead of white men
it dont look like that is rite

[Canton, Georgia
July 22, 1935]

[President Franklin D. Roosevelt:]

dear Sur as you are the president of our State it looks like you could do Something to help out the poor white people the negroes can get work where the poor white man canot and his family are one Starvation The negroes are in post offices getting \$1000 dollars a month and white families Suffering and it is not write just look at it your Self if it was your family in Canton Ga there is a negro working in the post office and white men cant get a job to feed his family and a white woman up holding for just Such as that and negroes being worked ever where instead of white men it dont look like that is rite and is not rite and lay off white men where there is a large family and keep men with big farms and just a man and wife and both at work unless there are something done the poor people will pursh to death will you please help the poor people out this relief work is not helping the poor out just make \$300 a week them that uses the pick and Shovel and the ofice men and woman gets the rest there is to many in office for the poor working man to get any pay. rote by a woman that has a large family and is on Sufference

[Anonymous]

Chapter 5. To Be Old, Sick, and Poor



*There is no experience in an industrial
neighborhood more poignant and heart-
breaking than those connected with old age.*

Jane Addams

81. Keep out of so much sin and the terrible things idleness leads to

[Arkansas
March 1936]

Dear President.

In the past several months more than one time it has come to me that I should write you about this relief that is so widely and fast spreading all over these united states, Mr Roosevelt I want to ask you to please stop it, there is plenty of people today on relief who have plenty, just want to idle about not work think its fine for some poor working man to keep them, there are hundreds and hundreds of folks who should be making their own living and could get work if they wanted it, but it is coming to the point where no one wants to work, every one is fighting and struggling to get on relief.

And Mr Roosevelt, I do believe if you could really see the ruin it is doing you would I know stop it, the idleness it is causing, the sin it is causing and all sorts of mean things. plenty of rich families here with a half dozen or more nigger families living on their farms one to run at their call they furnish them a house and manage to get them on relief for food and clothes. this relief is really getting things in a bad condition. there is plenty here in my sight both black and white on relief, I am sick most all time can't hire one to do a thing have to struggle along somehow. don't even raise a garden or a thing to help themselves just go around bragging about the government keeping them, and more and more getting on every day, people separating and men being put in pen for their awful crimes and their families put on relief, screening and fixing all the houses they have never had a screen before and wouldn't have now if they had to earn them. niggers and all.

Mr Roosevelt I really believe if you could see even what I do everyday you would change your mind and put this relief out of sight, and let men and women go to work and keep out of so much sin and the terrible things idleness leads to, Mr President I don't think God intends or wants us few slaves to keep up the idle world, Do you? keep them in idleness and sin, for God is a just God he says so in his Holy word. and this is not just. there is work for every one in this land if they would get out and do it, God has furnished plenty of land and every for every one of us to have something to do besides loaf and get into all sorts of trouble and sin.

The taxes are getting so heavy on us few who are trying to get along it takes all we can make to pay our tax. my last word is Please put the relief off the map and make folks go to work.

Mr Roosevelt, I hope you read this letter and feel that it is really sincere,
And Yours Truly,
A poor Southern Ark Woman.

82. If my husband new this he would kill me

Nov 27 1935
Nashville ten

To the Govner Mr Roosevelt Just want to tell you a few words Lisen half the men you have Put to work taken there money When they get Paid an spends it for whiskey some don't Com home with a Penny as have a wife an 4 an 5 Children not a Bite to eat an no money to Pay Rent some Com home an give there wife 7 an 8 dol take the rest an go get whiskey my husband does the same way an i am tired of it Couldent you have there checks mailed to there home an we Could have a much Better living you Can help us Women in that way Please do want tell my name but wish you would Pass that law to send there Check to there home

an oblige to you
Just a Friend

P S if my husband new this he would Kill me

83. It makes us feel like an American citizen to earn our own living

Battle Creek Mich.
April 5, 1936

President Roosevelt:

Please continue this W.P.A. program. It makes us feel like an American citizen to earn our own living. Being on the dole or relief roll makes us lazy and the funds are not enough to live decent on. We are thankful for what we receive though.

So we as W.P.A. workers in Battle Creek Michigan, appeal to you as our Great Leader to continue this great cause for Better citizens in Battle Creek Michigan.

Your Faithful,
W.P.A. workers
of Battle Creek

and I can hardly feed them right: Because. dont have the right kind of thing: I have one sickly child and he need milk I can buy the milk for him because my Husband wages are to small. I think this country ought to look after her own. people. unstead the country Her people are in-need: There are many poor in the world that need help. I hope day condition will be better. I think is ashame that the men made the money 1 week ago. and to run in the rain after it this is unsted be on Relief But they dont want no more Relief But after all the men work and get the money. How do they except to suport a family:

I hope this matter will be take care of
from a Mother.

95. We are poor people but we are human

Rising Sun Md.
Jan 13 1936

To our President

Whom it May Concern

We are writing you in regards to a Sewer System project which is going on in Rising Sun. Md. In which we men are working. We want to know why it is that we are not getting the Proper W.P.A. wages. It seems to us that the wages was set at 45 Cents an hour for 30 hrs a wk and they here are Making us work for 35 hrs a week at about 23 cents an hour which amounts to \$32 a month and they say we get all bad days off which is all right. But it seems to us that we have to work any way or walk out in it 4 or 5 Miles as some of us do no matter how the weather may be and expect us to stand out in to it until 12 Oclock.

What we men want is work. And we all need it but we want W.P.A. wages. And Paid by the wk not Month. And we want 45 Cents and hour. for 30 hrs the same as they are paying all W.P.A. workers—We are willing to work on this job that way. By the hour and Not by the Month. We are willing to work at those wages and loose the bad days. We are not asking for any thing but what we are intitled too. Will you please see that this matter is looked into as soon as Possible.

President Roosevelt we are Poor People but we are human. We wish to be treated that way. The Majority of us men gave you our votes and we are intending to again at this election And we are thanking you for the good

you have done us. And thats why we are writing you we feel you'll give us justice and again we thank you.

Respectfully.

W.P.A. workers.

P.S. we absolutely can't live on this small am't as some families have 10 children. Can't buy clothes or pay doctor bills and then eat. Now won't you kindly Please see this is looked into at once.

Thanking you.

96. We go home to nothing to eat and no fire to keep us warm

[Union City, New Jersey]
Jan. 4, 1936

Harry L. Hopkins
Washington D. C.
Dear Mr. Hopkins

I am writing to you because I am sick and tired of starving after I have done my share and worked in all kinds of weather for the money to feed and take care of my family. What I do earn is barely enough to keep us in food until the next check. Every check I get is so late that I am in debt up to my neck when it gets here and by the time I get through squareing up for what I owe for food and coal and medicine there isn't enough left for one decent meal. My check is so small that I can't afford to even buy myself a pair of underwear to wear while I work out in the open and so half the time I am sick with the gyppe. There are six in my family and their whole expense is on my check. My last check is overdue since Dec. 31st, 1935. We go out in all kinds of weather and they say "you get your check today sure when we start but when our day is done they tell us Tomorrow or next day and we go home to nothing to eat and no fire to keep us warm. The relief station won't give us any help at all. Every day is the same old story. Today is Saturday and they told us sure we would get our check today and now after starving all week and I really mean starving because we are, They told us we would maybe get it Tuesday. and so we can go without fire or food till then and then it will be the old story again. Can't you please do something about this?

A Union City, New Jersey
P.W.A. Worker. Thank you

103. The money was taken from the laborers and given the bosses more than they ever got

Central city Pa.

4—8—36.

Mr. Harry L. Hopkins, W.P.A. Ad. Washington, DC.

Dear Sir: I am a Democrat and was for the New Deal and would be yet if it were not for the way we laborers are treated here in Central City where we have jobs on W.P.A. The bosses and timekeepers get thier pay regular and \$125.00 a month at that more than any foreman as ever got here. and the laborers are getting less than ever, in other words the money was taken from the laborers and given the bosses more than they ever got, well we get this "Widows Mite" whenever the autocrats in Johnstown feel like sending it, while the bosses and all thier "Assistants" (thier is two or three big salaried ones on every job where there was just an foreman before) go arround getting drunk and getting votes, but do you think they are getting them? they are practically ruining the Democrat party, strong New Dealers are turning to the Republican party. Then their is the "Pull type" who has to say who gets a job and who dont. I tell sir the Democrats are ruining them selves by thier cheap way of managing things we Democrats ourselves can see it Mr Roosevelt and I believe yourself has said politics was not to be in W.P.A. well let me tell you your word surely don't mean anything in Somerset Co then. We worked in Johnstown knee deep in mud and received no pay yet, and before we got the last pay we waited on it one month and then was short and have a promise of being short this time after waiting for a centuary to get it, the foremans have had two pays since we got one, is that our new deal? Whats the delay? There now is twenty job Holders for a job than one man did before, and still every thing is delayed more than ever. we were better off when we got relief we starve now before we get pays and have it spent before we get it and us the red a good some space will not permits us to sign our names but we are labors on W.P.A. Projects in Central City

[Anonymous]

Chapter 8. The Conservative



*Are there no prisons?
And the Union workhouses?
Are they still in operation?*

Scrooge

105. The more you give the lower classes the more they want

[Fayetteville, W. Va.
Nov. 4, 1936]

[Dear Mrs. Roosevelt,]

... Personally I have found that the more you give the lower classes the more they want. Never satisfied. In my charitable work I become discouraged and it makes me know what your husband is up against. The people (some) are so simple-minded. They think the President is going to keep on giving. My gardener (White) and my maid (col.) voted democratic this election, not from coercion on my part but because "Roosevelt will take care of us."

Some of us (conservative democrats) regret the prevalence of certain graft in minor county officials, Relief offices, Welfare, etc. but I know it's all too far away for you to control.

... You may be assured I am not looking for a position, and I have no axe to grind. I merely wish to help in what I know to be a most crucial situation, and most difficult to solve. My only solution is the hope of work for everyone. If ONLY the wheels of industry can keep humming we may see our way out. Otherwise it may be serious.

With congratulations and my very best wishes for you and President Roosevelt during the coming four years.*

I am very sincerely yours,
Mrs. N. J. S.

... I feel that you and your husband are earnestly trying to solve today's problems.

106. The so called social security act . . . is nothing but downright stealing

[no address]
Jan. 18, 1937

[Dear Mrs. Roosevelt]

I . . . was simply astounded to think that anyone could be nitwit enough to wish to be included in the so called social security act if they could pos-

*The letter was written the day after Roosevelt's huge victory in the 1936 election.

sibly avoid it. Call it by any name you wish it, in my opinion, (and that of many people I know) is nothing but downright stealing. . . .

Personally, I had my savings so invested that I would have had a satisfactory provision for old age. Now thanks to his [FDR's] desire to "get" the utilities I cannot be sure of anything, being a stockholder, as after business has survived his merciless attacks (if it does) insurance will probably be no good either.

... [She goes on to complain about the lack of profits.]

Then the president tells them they should hire more men and work shorter hours so that the laborers, who are getting everything now raises etc. can have a "more abundant life." That simply means taking it from the rest of us in the form of taxes or otherwise. . . .

Believe me, the only thing we want from the president, unless or if you except Communists and the newly trained chiselers, is for him to balance the budget and reduce taxes. That, by the way, is a "mandate from the people" that isn't getting much attention.

I am not an "economic royalist," just an ordinary white collar worker at \$1600 per. Please show this to the president and ask him to remember the wishes of the forgotten man, that is, the one who dared to vote against him. We expect to be tramped on but we do wish the stepping would be a little less hard.

Security at the price of freedom is never desired by intelligent people.

M. A. [female]

107. I have spoken to one Italian whom I met

[New York, N. Y.
October 1933]

[Mr. Harry Hopkins
Washington, D.C.]

[Dear Mr. Hopkins:]

Will you please investigate the various relief agencies in many cities of the United States. The cities where there are a large foreign and jewish population. No wonder the cities are now on the verge of bankruptcy because we are feeding a lot of ignorant foreigners by giving them relief. And, they are turning against us every day. I would suggest to deport all foreigners and jews who are not citizens over the United States back to any land where they choose to go and who will admit them. As America is now over crowded with too much immigration and it can not feed even its own citizens without

feeding the citizens of other foreign nations. I have found out after careful investigation that we are feeding many foreigners who send out their wives to work and who have money in the bank. While the men drink wine and play cards in saloons and cafes. I have spoken to one Italian whom I met. And I ask him what he was doing for a living. He said me drinka da dago red wine and play cards and send the wife out to work. Isn't a very good thing for us to support them. No wonder the taxpayers are grumbling about taxes. Most of them are a race of black hands murders boot leggers bomb throwers. While most of the sheeney jews as they are called are a race of dishonest people who get rich by swindling, faking and cheating the poor people. Besides the jews are responsible by ruining others in business by the great amount of chisling done. And selling even below the cost prices, in order to get all the others buisness. The foreigners and jews spend as little as they can to help this country. And, they live as cheap as they can. And, work as cheap as they can, and save all the money they can. And when they have enough they go back to their country. Why don't we deport them under the section of the United States Immigration Laws which relates to paupers and those who become a public charge. The Communist Party is composed mostly by foreigners and jews. The jews are the leaders of the movement and urge the downfall of this government. . . .

A Taxpayer

108. The administration at Washington is accelerating it's pace toward socialism and communism

Hornell, New York
March 7, 1934

My Dear Senator:

It seems very apparent to me that the Administration at Washington is accelerating it's pace towards socialism and communism. Nearly every public statement from Washington is against stimulation of business which would in the end create employment.

Everyone is sympathetic to the cause of creating more jobs and better wages for labor; but, a program continually promoting labor troubles, higher wages, shorter hours, and less profits for business, would seem to me to be leading us fast to a condition where the Government must more and more expand it's relief activities, and will lead in the end to disaster to all classes.

I believe that every citizen is entitled to know the policy of the Government, and I am so confused that I wish you would write me and advise me whether it is the policy of this Administration, of which you are a very im-

portant part, to further discourage business enterprise, and eventually set up a program which eliminates private industry and effort, and replaces it with Government control of industry and labor,—call it what you will: socialism, facism, or communism, or by any other name.

I am not addicted to annoying public office holders with correspondence, but if there are any private rights left in this country, then I would appreciate an early reply to this letter, so that I may take such action as is still possible, to protect myself and family.

With kindest personal regards,

Yours truly,
W. L. C. [male]

WLC:JFE

U.S. Senator Robert F. Wagner
Senate Building,
Washington, D. C.

109. If its colored + foreign your so interested in
place them to themselves + not amongst "humane" people

[New York, N. Y.
May 1936]

Mr Hopkins

Dear Sir: When you opened that "Sewing Project" at 18 St N.Y.C. did you forget that there are still a few "white Americans left. Its the worst thing as far as placing is concerned. Nothing but colored, Spanish, West Indies, Italians + a hand ful of white Every colored that comes in is placed as "clerk, head or boss over tables + Knocking other people around. Well, if you dont see a race riot there its a surprise. If its colored + foreign your so interested in place them to themselves + not amongst "Humane" people— You just making the whites take a back seat. Its a very good useful project + hospitals + poor need the things that are made But the system is rotten Just like a lot of cattle Being driven around when its time to go home they all rush no matter who they bump into. Too many bosses + no one seems to Know whats to be done—Maybe a few of us whites would like to be placed in something else but a "Sweat shop" work 6 days a week its a wonder they let you have Sunday off. If you dont give American people more of a Show we will take up with President Roosevelt who did this good act so Americans dont starve.

A disgusted
American

110. They should kick them all back to Europe as the majority of them are absolutely no good

August, 12, 1935.
Chicago, ILL.

Mr. Harry L. Hopkins
Works Progress Administrator,
Washington, D. C.
Dear Sir:

I have been following the editorials, in regards to this—Works program, and note the difficulties that are arising practically all over. Well our government doesn't think that the, Communistic element is worth bothering about, however I have worked for the government for the past ten years, and I am still working for them temporarily. The—whole trouble is that the majority of those involved in these strikes, and other troubles, are nothing more than the worse kind of radicals. They not only try to disrupt business, but they are paid by Russia to get in every military organization, and create discontent and do damage where ever they possibly can. They are in every large or small factory in the Country. Do you think all those so called accidents that happen to are ships and aircraft just happen, not much, they are the work of very clever radicals in practically every instance. It is high time that this country "woke up" before it's too late.

I was formerly employed as a laborer, then was promoted to Timekeeper, well I know that the C. W. A. was drawn up in a hurry, and that they had quite a time in eliminating the graft, in a City like Chicago, but now that they have taken more time with this new program, they will be able to cope with the situation. I also realize that the wages they are paying the men, on these different projects are lower than on the—other job. However if they wanted to work, bad enough that wouldn't stop them, it's only these racketeering Unions, and a lot of city politicians, that think they can get their hands on some graft. Well it's a wise move to stand pat, and show them that they will get nowhere with these strikes.

Although there must be some way to overcome these "racket Unions", I—wonder if the men were made Temporary Federal Government Employees, Then the racketeers wouldn't have the nerve to monkey with them, as—they would never try to fool with the Federal Government. One more point that I would like to suggest, There were hundreds of Timekeepers whose work was perfect and far above reproach, well as the majority of

those fellows like myself have good discharges from the different branches of the service. So far all these jobs only benefit the majority of foreigners on relief. I think all former C. W. A. employees in good standing should be given jobs corresponding to the ones they held on the C. W. A. After all those men have had the experience, and if their work was done right, they deserve a job, a lot more than the majority of those foreigners. Do you realize that there are Thousands of young men like myself that have done something for our country, and have tried to stay off the relief rolls the past two years. Well if anyone should get a decent job those men should. The majority of Foreigners think it's smart to get on relief, drive a car, have two, or three others in the family working and live off of a big-hearted Uncle Sam. They should kick them all back to Europe as the majority of them are absolutely no good.

I have worked around some of the largest Navy Yards in the U. S. and these racketeering Unions never tried to monkey with the work men, because they were Government employees, well the same thing could be done in this case. On our C. W. A. project there was no graft, and the job went along with little or no trouble. However even then those Communistic Reds tried to disrupt the workers, they would usually have girls distributing booklets or papers, but the investigators could never seem to get the ones at the head of their organization, we had the same trouble in the service. It is time something should be done, after all it is an offense against the government, in a lot of cases. They send stuff through the mails, that any other country, would throw them in jail for, they have tried to wreck Army equipment and in some cases have succeeded in causing serious accidents, if they are allowed to continue they will eventually try to cause a revolution in this country.

And you can take it from me, that if their policies were any good they would be using them over in their own country. I've seen the other Countries and there are none that could even compare with it, well the only way to keep it that way is to be prepared to defend it against any and all enemies. The foreign element in this country are allowed entirely too much leeway in practically every respect, even before they are Americanized. Take the Chinamen they get here open a business, make a fortune and it goes directly back to China, well the other Foreigners do the same thing, yet if we tried to do that in their country you wouldn't last a month. Those Japs never should have been allowed to buy land here, as they underwork the American farmers, The most of those foreigners live good on a tenth of what a white man could exist on. Well here's hoping something will be done SOON to relieve the present employment situation in Chicago, For those not on relief.

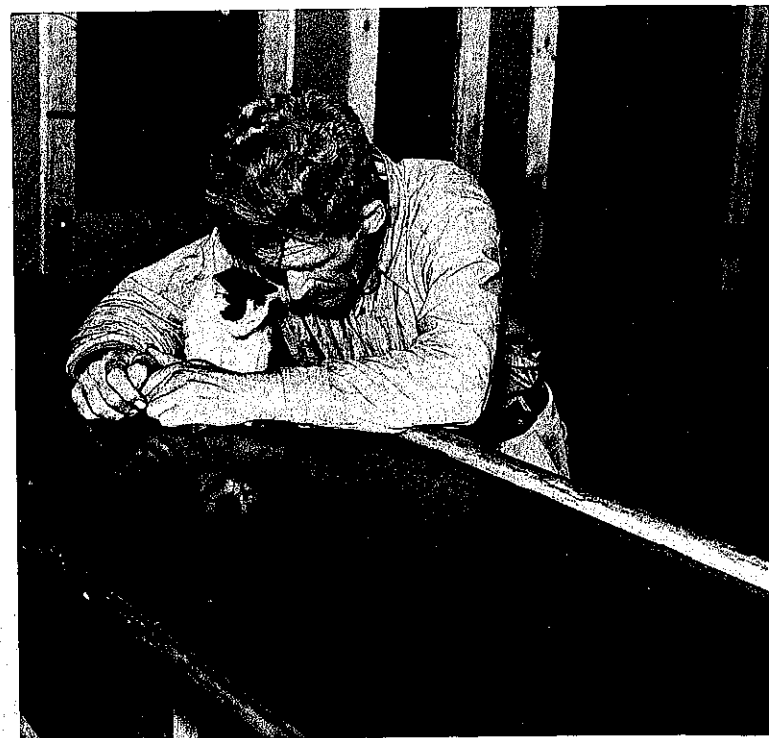
154 Reactions to the Depression

The Civilian Conservation Corp, is one of the best places for the boys of this country. It should be open to all boys from 17 to 30 and it should be for a year instead of six months. Their conditions could also be improved.

Respectfully

An Ex-Leatherneck

Chapter 9. The Desperate



No work, no hope; just live from one day to the next. Maybe better times are coming. Personally, I doubt it.

A small-town housewife, 1933

170. But God, I think, made Franklin D.

Cleveland, Ohio
February 19, 1936.

The President of the United States,
Washington, D. C.,
Dear Sir:

"I THINK THAT WE SHALL NEVER SEE
A PRESIDENT LIKE UNTO THEE.

A MAN WHO HUNGRY MOUTHS HATH BLESSED,
UPON THIS EARTH'S SWEET FLOWING BREAST.

A MAN WHO LOOKS TO GOD EACH DAY,
AND LIFTS HIS TIRED ARMS TO PRAY.

IN WINTER AND IN SUMMER WEARS
A SMILE, THOUGH NUMEROUS HIS CARES.

UPON WHOSE BOSOM SORROW'S LAIN,
WHO INTIMATELY LIVES WITH PAIN.

POEMS ARE MADE BY FOOLS LIKE ME,
BUT GOD, I THINK, MADE FRANKLIN D."

Most sincerely yours,
W. P. A. worker 81058,
Cleveland, Ohio.

P. S.

Lest friends should say, "He seeketh fame."
I'll send this off without my name.

171. I do hope you will ask our dear president to divide up the wealth as soon as possible

New York, Dec. 3. 1936

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

I do hope our dear President will come home very soon, and start to divide among the people of this country the billions of dollars of the Duponts, Rockefellers, Morgans, and their kind. My children need so many little

things that my husband and I are anxious to get our share. My husband says that President Roosevelt got a mandate from the people at election to redistribute wealth. He says the common people have woken up, and are not going to be slaves any more to keep the Duponts and Rockefellers and Morgans in luxury. And he says, too, that the mass of the people are not going to be satisfied with any increases in wages or bonuses. They demand their share, and they are going to get it, or they will give the multimillionaires a bloody revolution. Our neighbor, who is a Republican, says that President Roosevelt was just "conning" the people with his radical promises in order to get elected. He says that all your family care about is money and their actions show it. He asked my husband what he thought about your son getting engaged to the Dupont girl right after election, and showing his contempt for the common people who voted for your husband. He, also, asked my husband what he thought of your son-in-law begging a job from Hearst. Both Dupont and Hearst did all they could to beat President Roosevelt at the election. My husband said that he had to admit that your son and son-in-law were two despicable and contemptible men, but that he was sure the President would not turn traitor to the people and let his name go down in history with that of Benedict Arnold. I think my husband is absolutely right. We have been in this country for four generations. We are entitled to our home, and money for our children just the same as the Rockefellers, Duponts and Morgans. Yes, and we are entitled to have just as much money as they have got. My husband says that anyone who trifles with the people at this time had better be careful. He says the old order of slavery has gone, and the people are going to work to pile up wealth for others. I am sure I don't know as much about it as he does. But I do hope you will ask our dear President to divide up the wealth as soon as possible.

Yours very truly
Mrs. M. B.

172. No other president ever had it so hard

Colorado Springs, Colo.
August 16, 1937.

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt,
White House,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:—I am writing to you in regard to Our President. About that third term. It would mean chaos if he did not again be President.