An Analysis of the March 7, 1935 Radio Address of Senator Huey P. Long

Ernest Gordon Bormann
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AN ANALYSIS OF THE MARCH 7, 1935
RADIO ADDRESS OF SENATOR HUEY P. LONG

by

Ernest Gordon Bormann

State University of Iowa
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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts,
in the Department of Speech in the Graduate College of the State University of Iowa

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E.G.B.
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Chapter I
INTRODUCTION

On the evening of March 7, 1935, Huey Long talked to probably the largest radio audience of his career. He very nearly made good his boast that given forty-five minutes over a coast to coast hookup, he would "...cover Johnson's case from hell to breakfast."  


He was referring to Hugh Johnson's speech of March 4, 1935, in which the General had attacked Long as a "pied-piper" and a leader of the "lunatic fringe."

This speech of Long's was one of the most important of his life; its success increased his political power and prestige until it might be said that this was the apex of his career.


"Huey's greatest chance came after the attack of General Johnson. Already, in fact, he was nominated as a national personage, but the Johnson attack was like a ceremonial of induction. It laid upon him the official robes, and placed the insignia of importance on his brow."

A few months later, in September, he would lie in state at the Capitol building in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, dead of an assassin's bullet."
but with this speech in March Long had climaxéd a rapid drive from obscurity to national prominence.

Long's rise had been spectacular. In his few short years as a public figure he had forged a dictatorial political machine in Louisiana.³ By March of 1935 he was exercising a large influence on national politics. The Christian Science Monitor of March 11, 1935, commented on his importance:

In and through all these diverse and rapid developments there has been one connecting link, the figure of Senator Huey P. Long. For good or ill, there can be no question that the length of Senator Long's shadow continues to grow and is coming to fall athwart practically every political event in Washington.⁴

³ Farley, James A., Behind the Ballots, p. 238

"Huey P. Long, late Senator from Louisiana, who in a brief span of years built himself a place of power in national politics that was equaled or exceeded by few men of his generation. The meteoric rise of Huey as a factor in political affairs might seem like the theme for a motion picture scenario, except for the fact that it really happened. Starting from scratch, without wealth, family prestige, or influence of friends to set him going, Long climbed into absolute control of Louisiana while still a comparatively young man and he proceeded to wield that power with a vigor and ruthlessness that really startled his fellow countrymen."

⁴ Christian Science Monitor, March 11, 1935, p. 4o.

One of the most militant anti-Long organizations was the Louisiana Women's Association. Its leader Hilda Phelps Hammond said, "Huey Long's national power increased daily. In
long lines people stood outside the Senate gallery waiting their turn to hear him speak."


Long was the voice of the group which Hugh Johnson chose to call the "lunatic fringe," but to whom Long referred as the "dispossessed." As the champion of the underdog he is an important figure in contemporary history. A thorough analysis of the depression period should include an understanding of Huey Long and his grip on the imagination of the unemployed, the poor, and the desperate.

In addition to being the spokesman for the downtrodden in a depression era, Long has another significance. He stands today as a symbol of American dictatorship; indeed Harnett Kane subtitled his book about Long's administration, Rehearsal for Dictatorship, Thomas Harris called his biography of Long, The Kingfish--Huey P. Long Dictator, Hodding Carter calls his biographical sketch, Huey Long: American Dictator. In popular thinking he is considered the great American demagogue. Hamilton Basso mirrors this sentiment:

The tragedy of Huey Long was that it lay within his ability to be a great democrat. He began as one and the heights were there for him to climb, but he deliberately turned away in willful ambitious pride, and sought to build a lower kingdom of his own. It is for this as the most powerful antagonist of democracy this country has ever produced that he deserves a place in the American legend."

Senator Long and Father Coughlin were among the first influential political speakers to use the radio extensively. Long was recognized as an able and persuasive speaker on the hustings and on the radio. As a Senator he spoke voluminously on the floors of Congress. 7 Robert Oliver in his book The


"...of the seven hundred and forty-seven pages so far published in this session of the Congressional record, Long had filled eighty-nine."

Psychology of Persuasive Speech characterized Long as "a master of persuasive speaking" and quoted from Long's speeches to exemplify superior technique in prestige appeal and the use of suggestion.

8. Oliver, Robert T. The Psychology of Persuasive Speech, p. 82, p. 249.

As an important leader of the radical element in the depression era, and as a symbol of the American dictator, Long merits critical examination. He was recognized as an extremely able speaker, particularly in regard to persuasive appeals, in this connection he is interesting to the speech critic because of his reputation as a demagogue. Demagogue is a term that frequently is not well defined, so it would seem valuable to analyze a speech made by a recognized demagogue in an attempt to see in what regard the speeches of a demagogue differ from
other speeches, or to determine if they differ significantly at all.

Since the speech that Long delivered on March 7, 1935 in answer to General Johnson is conceivably his most important, marking the high water mark of his career; and since it represents Huey Long, the demagogue, in one of his most persuasive moments it has been chosen as the subject for this study.

Oddly enough, the speaking of Huey Long has not been studied extensively, as yet. Most of the biographers mention Long's speaking ability and some indeed consider the March 7, speech in some detail. But none of these comments contain any organized criticism of Long's speeches.

The basic assumption upon which the present study rests is expressed by Thonssen and Baird in their book *Speech Criticism*:

Like the historian, the rhetorical critic seeks some sort of unity in the pattern of social forces operating at a given moment in history. He seeks to secure a sufficiently large body of reliable data to enable him intelligently to understand a specific event -- a speech, for example -- in its relation to the larger whole of which it is a part. In keeping with the logical postulates of the organismic and Gestalt schools of thought, this doctrine asserts that the whole is primary, and that it governs the operation of the parts. Consequently, the specific occurrence must be explained in terms of the conditions under which it took place.

---


The emphasis in this thesis, then, is on explaining Huey Long's March 7th speech in terms of the whole of which it was a part.

The thesis, therefore, will be organized in the following manner: chapter II will involve an examination of Long the man and politician in an effort to determine the relevant ideas, motives, and aptitudes that he brought to the National political scene, chapter III will contain a broad and general examination of the political and economic climate of the years from 1932 to 1935, and more specifically this chapter will contain an examination of Long's reaction to this environment. Here we shall attempt to integrate the materials of chapter II involving Long's aptitudes and drives with his political and economic environment to explain why the Senator embarked upon a campaign for the presidency, why that campaign preceded as it did, and why this particular speech grew out of that campaign as it did. In chapter IV we shall examine the speech proper, the emphasis in this chapter will be on determining, insofar as possible, how the preceding events shaped the unique development of this particular speech. Here the unfolding speech will be examined to see how it fits into the continuum of history. Thus in chapter IV the speech will be considered as growing out of the events that preceded it and being molded by them and by the unique character of the speaker. To chapter IV the viewpoint of the thesis will be heavily in the direction of how the whole has influenced the part (i.e. the historical
setting has influenced the speaker and the speech.) In chapter V... The influence of the part on the whole will be considered. The speech is not completely explained by an examination of the way in which it grew out of the unfolding stream of events; the pressure that the speech exerted on the future stream of history must also be considered. Thus chapter VI will concern itself with the significance of the speech, its role in Long's campaign for the presidency and more generally its effect on the political and economic climate after March 1935.

The text of Senator Long's speech used in this study is the one reported (stenographically) in the New York Times. This is the same text that was read into the Congressional Record. The New York Times text was also used in examining General Johnson's speech of March 4, 1935.

Primary sources for the study include, Long's autobiography Every Man a King, and his book, My First Days in the White House. Newspapers consulted include, the New York Times, the Christian Science Monitor, The Daily Iowan (Iowa City, Iowa,) and The Manchester Guardian Weekly. The Congressional Record furnished other primary materials.

Forrest Davis' excellent though journalese biography, Huey Long, proved helpful and, because it contains the reports of extensive interviews between the author and Senator Long, it can in a sense be considered primary material. Other biographical
sketches that contain reports of interviews include *The Story of Huey P. Long*, by Carleton Beals, Raymond G. Swing's *Fore-runners of American Fascism*, and *American Messiahs* by the Unofficial Observer. One of the better secondary sources that treats in detail the rise of the Long machine and its course after his death is *Louisiana Hayride* by Harnett Kane. There is a wealth of materials in the periodicals of the period, but much of it is highly colored and repetitious. Among the articles that have been most helpful are Hamilton Basso's "Huey Long and His Background," in *Harpers* for May, 1935; "The Gentleman from Louisiana," by F. R. Daniell in *Current History* for November 1934; and James Rorty's article in the *Forum* of August 1935 called "Callie Long's Boy Huey."
Chapter II

LONG, THE SPEAKER AND POLITICIAN

Source and Integrity of Ideas

This speech, like most of Long's speeches in the years from 1932 to 1935, is based on the premise that the wealth of the United States should be distributed more equitably throughout the entire population.

As Long saw it, the basic economic problem was not over-production but under-consumption. He felt that the control of the wealth of the country was concentrated in the hands of a few wealthy financiers and as a result the great mass of the people were not getting a just proportion of economic goods and cultural opportunity. Thus he came to his basic premise, that wealth should be shared. As he translated this premise into concrete terms, wealth involved not only, "...a home and the comforts needed for a home, including such things as a radio and an automobile..." but also a "...complete college and professional training and education."

To understand the genesis and growth of Long's premise that the wealth of the United States should be distributed more equitably throughout the entire population, it is necessary to examine the ground where Long was born and raised, Winn Parish in upstate Louisiana.

Winn Parish is the home mainly of poor white
Protestant farmers. The barren land makes living hard. The red clay hills of Winn Parish have the reputation of being fertile ground for radical ideas.

In the war between the states Winn Parish did not support the South. Rorty describes the citizens of that time as, "Abolitionist, anti-secessionist, unionist, yeomen farmers of the Free State of Winn..." Always strongly socialistic,


Winn Parish went for the Populists at the turn of the century.


"In 1892 or thereabouts, Winn Parish elected a full populist ticket..." Rorty explains that he could find no written history of Winn Parish, most of his information was garnered from interviewing old residents of the region.

Some indication of the spirit of Winn Parish comes from Huey Long's father. Rorty tells of interviewing the elder Long:

"It was scarcely an interview. Huey Long Sr. had something to say, not for his son but for himself -- a simple violent person, still violent at eighty-three, the big-boned, six-foot frame erect and powerful, the voice roaring. This is what he said, 'Didn't Lincoln free the niggers and not give the planters a dime? Why shouldn't Huey take the money away from the rich and still leave 'em plenty? Abe Lincoln freed the niggers without a price. Why shouldn't the white slaves be freed and their masters left all they can use?' He paused, "Maybe you're surprised to hear talk like that. Well, it was just such talk that my boy was raised under and that I was raised under.'" A little later in the interview the elder Long
said, "There wants to be a revolution, I tell you. I seen this domination of capital, seen it for seventy years..."\[13\]

Senator Long suggested to Rose Lee in an interview that the roots of this wealth sharing premise were in Winn Parish when he gave the following rather romantic explanation,

"And now I'll tell you how the idea of this 'Share The Wealth' movement came to me...It goes back to when I was a little boy in the Parish of Winn, and I saw what happened when a community ceased to share its wealth... When I was nine years old, I saw a farm sold out for the first time. Some poor fellows that couldn't pay his debts..."\[14\]

To explain Long's premise about wealth sharing adequately we need also to consider the religious atmosphere of Winn Parish. The hill people of Winn Parish took their religion seriously. While a boy there Huey Long learned the Bible well.\[15\]

"He learned the Bible thoroughly, and recently said publicly that science had not succeeded in refuting a statement in it. He knows much of it by heart, and held a contest recently with the Junior Senator from Louisiana. Overton undertook to recite more from Shakespeare than Huey could recite from the Scriptures. After three hours neither had exhausted his memory..."
Long indicated that he found part of his inspiration for "Share Our Wealth" in the Bible. He writes in *Every Man a King*, that the "Law of Moses, Leviticus, Chapters 25, 26, 27 provides for freeing and refreeing all persons of debt every seven years and for distribution and redistribution of wealth every fifty years. See also Nehemiah, Chapter 5; St. James, Chapter 5."¹⁶

¹⁶ Long, *Every Man a King*, p. 297.

Forrest Davis feels that "Certainly, not since Bryan has an American politician referred current problems to the Bible for definitive solution. He (Long) reads the Bible daily...contends, in all sincerity, that he finds the groundwork and inspiration for Share-Our-Wealth in 'God's Law'..."¹⁷


In addition to these environmental factors we must consider the influence of State Senator Harper upon the youthful Long. After Huey started to practice law, shortly after passing the bar examinations, he found himself in financial difficulties. Among other things he had trouble paying the rent on his office. At this point Senator Harper gave Long some badly needed financial help, and they became friends. Senator Harper believed that the wealth of the country should be more equally distributed. He was author of a booklet entitled: *Issues of the Day -- Free Speech -- Financial Slavery*. Because of this pamphlet
Harper was indicted under the espionage act. Lawyer Long took the case for his friend. The ideas of Senator Harper were eagerly absorbed by the young lawyer with the radical Winn Parish background.  


"His (Harper's) campaign booklet: Issues of the Day -- Free Speech -- Financial Slavery got him indicted under the espionage act. Huey defended him in court and in the press...from Harper, Huey got his fixed idea of sharing wealth. Harper's little booklet contains all the ideas, much of the wording and statistics which Huey has used from that day to this...For seventeen years Huey's cry remained exactly the same! Huey used these identical statistics in his famous radio-broadcast reply to Hugh Johnson..."

At the time of Harper's trial in March of 1918, Long wrote a letter to the New Orleans Item in which he expressed the conviction that there was a need for more equitable distribution of wealth in the United States.  

19. Long, Every Man a King, p. 31.

"The Editor of the Item:
A conservative estimate is that about sixty-five or seventy percent of the entire wealth of the United States is owned by two percent of the people. Sixty-eight percent of the people living in the United States owns but two percent of its wealth...wealth is fast concentrating in the hands of the few...

But the greatest cause for industrial unrest is that of education. Authorities on education tell us that eighty out of every one hundred people in the United States never enter high school...this is the condition, north, east,
south, and west; with wealth concentrating, classes becoming defined, there is not the opportunity for Christian uplift and education and cannot be until there is more economic reform...

Huey P. Long

This letter illustrates Long's preoccupation with educational opportunity, in regard to wealth distribution. To understand this aspect of his thinking it is necessary to examine his own educational experiences in more detail.

As a high school student Long won a scholarship to Louisiana State University but because he did not have the funds to pay board and room fees he was unable to attend. It was not until after he had tried his hand at being a travelling salesman that young Long, still broke, decided to attempt to work his way through the University of Oklahoma Law School. But he was able to stay there for only a short time. Most of his legal training was gained at Tulane University, where he lived with his wife in straightened circumstances, worked at an incredible rate, and picked up enough law in eight months to pass the bar exams. This experience seems to have impressed him.
"He studied day and night, till he became as thin as a skeleton, but he passed his bar examinations at twenty-one. That was the education of Huey Long. Poverty, the want of privileges, and ambition to push ahead, all these are familiar factors in many American lives. But in Huey Long they burned his soul. Those who possessed while he suffered privation are the ones he is determined to penalize. And at the same time he will make it simpler for poor young people to obtain the education he could not have."

with the need for aid to young people with ability but without the necessary economic resources.

The source of Long's basic premise that wealth should be shared equitably is to be found, then, in his radical Winn Parish religious and economic background. His early predispositions and prejudices finding arguments in the Bible and from his association with Senator Harper. His preoccupation with education can also be explained in terms of his own educational experiences.

With a figure as controversial as Long it is doubly important to examine the integrity of the speaker's ideas. In that relation it will be necessary to ask first, was Long sincere in advocating a more equitable sharing of the wealth? and secondly, did Long cut through to one of the basic issues of his time?22

"...as critics...we look first to the capacity for formulation of ideas...This implies sound judgement on the part of the speaker; judgement to make fine discriminations between the essential and the nonessentials; facility in making analysis of questions, to the end that significant items are held constantly in view; capacity to sense what lies at the center of issues..."

Did Huey Long in March of 1935 fulfill the definition that Emerson laid down when he wrote, "I have observed in all public speaking the rule of the orator begins, not in the array of facts, but when his deep conviction, and the right and necessity he feels to convey that conviction to his audience—when these shine and burn in his address..."?


"Assigned to cover Huey's activities, I came to know him well," writes reporter F. Raymond Daniell, "Most valuable of all to me, though, was the insight Huey gave me into his real character, and right here let me say that for all his bluster...Huey was a lonesome crusader for a quack nostrum in which he believed with all his heart."


Barnett Kane considered the same question, "Was Huey, too, the victim of his plan; did he delude himself into thinking that it would somehow work? Some indications are that, during
his last years at least, he had convinced himself that he had
the nations salvation in his microphone messages. 25

Long's actions while governor of Louisiana give
evidence that he was sincere in his desire to equalize educational
opportunity and help the underdog. This was not his sole moti-
vation in many of his programs, his driving personal ambition
and his vindictive nature cannot be discounted, nevertheless,
as Boss of Louisiana he acted as though he were sincere.

Among his programs were free school books for all
school children, and a medical school for Louisiana State
University. During his administration the enrollment of the
State University more than doubled. While Huey controlled the
state government, Standard Oil was subjected to an "occupational
tax" for refining oil, and the poor were relieved of some taxes;
for example all property evaluated at $2,000 or less was exempted
from taxation. 26

26. Long recapitulates his program in Louisiana on page
280 of Every Man a King. Further discussions are
to be found in Forerunners of American Fascism and
Louisiana Hayride. Most biographers deal at length
with Long's administration in Louisiana.

Long himself maintained, "I had come to the United States
Senate with only one project in mind, which was that by every means of
action and persuasion I might do something to spread the wealth
of the land among all the people."  


It must not be forgotten that Long had been consistently advocating these ideas for many years, as the Unofficial Observer points out, "It is a matter of record that Long's Share-Our-Wealth movement and program for free popular higher education were not born of the depression and cannot be dismissed as the insincere opportunism of an irresponsible demagogue."  


It would seem that Long was sincere in these ideas, and when he expressed them as he did over the network on March 7, 1935, he was giving voice to his deep conviction. That is not to say that should these ideas have come into conflict with his personal ambition, he would have sacrificed his ambition to them, but it is safe to conclude that part of Huey Long's complex motivation involved a sincere belief that wealth should be shared more equitably.

Before attempting to answer the question: Did Long cut through to one of the basic issues of his time, it might be well to consider the native ability that Long brought to bear in a problem solving situation.  

"And the critic finds that the integrity of ideas can be judged through three principal means: determination (1) of the intellectual resources of the speaker,..."

The feat of passing the Louisiana bar examinations after studying eight months when many students found it difficult after three years in Law school is evidence of Long's native intelligence in addition the testimony of observers is voluminous. Raymond Swing, who sat in Long's

30. Daniell, "Gentleman from Louisiana," Op. cit., p. 177. "Beneath the comic exterior, however, there lies a shrewd and agile mind, a political strategist unhampered by ethical scruples...It takes more than a comic exterior for a lawyer to command $100,000 fees and win the commendation of such Jurists as the late Chief Justice Taft and Justice Brandeis."

bedroom as the Senator conducted the business of Louisiana, was impressed by his grasp of detail and relation in the affairs of Louisiana. Swing writes, "The mind which grasps swiftly the abstruse points of law seizes as swiftly on the essentials of knowledge. He knows the smallest details of the business of the port of New Orleans, of banks, of industries he has had to study..."31


Swing goes on, "Thus he carries the state's business in his head to the most trivial item. He knows every district, an incredible number of citizens by name and history and how
they stand..."^{32}

^{32} Ibid. p. 81.

Another example of Long's intellectual resources that is frequently cited is his pleading in the Galveston Rate Case. Forrest Davis describes it this way:

Huey strutted into the court room, dropped his brief case on the counsel table and, noticeably leaving it closed, began to argue from memory. For several hours he addressed the court, citing multiplied cases, exposing the whole technical situation, without a single reference to his notes. The judges were impressed; likewise the public. The whirlwind crusader from up North was gaining a reputation for legal skill, and the legends about his prodigious memory spread from parish to parish.^{33}


Long not only had a good memory but he had an ability to grasp the relationship and significance of practical situations. His ability to outwit opponents is indicated by dozens of examples.^{34} Typical was the tactic he used in the defense of Senator Harper. He made a list of the people that he did not want on the jury, then he managed to be seen talking with them in and around the courtroom. The government lawyers became suspicious and used up most of their challenges weeding out jurors that Long felt were undesirable to his case.^{35}

^{34} Infra. p. 44-50

^{35}
Indeed Raymond Moley concludes that Long had "...an extraordinarily powerful, resourceful, clean and retentive mind, an instrument such as is given to very few men."  

It is clear that Long had the mental equipment to discern the basic issue of his time. The next question is; Did he in fact do so?

Before the stock market crash of 1929 Long recognized the problem that was about to disturb the status quo. In the words of the Unofficial Obserrgor,
Long is a demagogue, no doubt, as well as a slick politician, but he has been making the same speech for seventeen years. He can fairly claim to have been consistent in advocating these fundamental issues, which did not become visible to others of our leading statesmen until the depression was biting deep into an unsound economic structure. 38


Carleton Beals says,

And that was the strength of Long’s appeal. He dared to put his fingers into the real ulcer of social evil in American life. The Roosevelt administration has constantly attempted to conceal it, has prescribed nostrums for the secondary symptoms which daily re-appear in different joints. 39


Beals sums up, “Whatever his solution, he -- not the administration people -- struck directly at the major problem of our time...” 40

40. Ibid., p. 315.

Forrest Davis, says, “Two points should be remembered in any appraisal of Long’s potency. One is that he promises to satisfy a hunger which has been at the bottom of more revolutions than any, the hunger for land and its urban counterpart, security.” 41

When Long analyzed the American economy and decided that the basic problem was not overproduction, but rather under-consumption he repudiated the "scarcity economics" that dominated many of the New Deal programs. Long's position was that production need not be cut to raise prices. If anything production should be increased to meet the needs of the people. Long felt that what was needed was a scheme that would facilitate the distribution of goods. Turning this analysis another way, he maintained that the wealth was unevenly distributed and a few financial leaders controlled most of the goods while the great mass of the people could not share them. By 1935 the strength of this analysis was apparent. The Manchester Guardian Weekly remarks,

"Senator Long has seen, as Mr. Hoover has not, that distribution rather than production is the crux of the economic problem, and it is the fact that he is right in this; though crude and violent in his remedies that makes him so dangerous."


Long, however, had come to this conclusion before the depression pointed it up.

Not to be overlooked, either, is the fact that Long pitched his appeal on a high moral plane. He appealed to right and justice. He appealed to the Bible and the Deity. The wealth of the world was God given and no man or group of men had the
right to take another man's share. As an editorial in the Christian Science Monitor, remarked about Long's March speech, "With it the Senator from Louisiana is appealing to a fundamental sense of justice and humanity..."^3

---


Carelton Beals points up the same thing when he says, "Furthermore Huey was...talking...what millions thought to be good sense; for he was demanding, however impossible his instruments, that economic justice and diffusion of purchasing power which more staid economists...have found no means of suggesting."^4

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It must be concluded that Long cut through to the burning issue of his time. Early in his career he recognized the problem that was not only to disturb, but to rock to the very foundations, the status quo. To understand the appeal of the March speech this fact must be understood; it also must be remembered that Long pitched his appeal on a high moral and ethical plain. He called for justice and right, as expressed in the Christian religion. Here stripped of all the techniques and devices with which Long so ably presented it, was the engine of Long's power. His analysis of the fundamental problem of
American life in the years 1932-1935 was shrewd and searching, and he was sincere in believing the truth and worth of his ideas. This was the strength of Long's position -- his weakness will become apparent when his plan and his political ethics are considered in more detail.
Long's Personality

Any attempt to analyze the "Share Our Wealth" movement, or Long's political machine in Louisiana, or Long's campaign for the presidency must give heavy emphasis to Long's personality. When he died the "Share Our Wealth" societies faded, his political machine fell apart, the third party attempts withered -- as President Roosevelt won the 1936 election in a Democratic landslide.

All of Long's actions were highly personalized; he lent a unique flavor to national politics. It seems almost hopeless to attempt to delineate the personality of so fabulous a man in cold scholarly language with footnotes and objectivity. He lends himself better to fictional analysis and florid language. He seems to carry a charm and a sinister message that makes him attractive to creative artists. No scholarly objective biography has yet been written of Long, but in the years since his death at least five novels and one motion picture have dealt with fictional characters closely resembling Long. 45


Dos Passos, John, Number One, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1943.

Lewis, Sinclair, *It Can't Happen Here*.

Warren, Robert Penn, *All the King's Men*, Harcourt Brace and Company, 1946. (This book was made into a motion picture.)

Carleton Beals says of Huey Long, "...though his motives may not have been more complex than those of other men, at least all the acts of his life were heightened to an intensity that bears the hallmark of genius. He was a man of Gargantuan energy, evergreedy for experience, action, power."46


Long comments along the same lines in the beginning of his autobiography, *Every Man a King*. He remarks that while he is a comparatively young man to be writing an autobiography (40) he has actually lived and experienced as much as many men who are much older.

Hodding Carter, newspaperman in Louisiana during Long's regime, writes:

For Newspapermen, those were Gargantuan, memorable days. You stood beside his hotel dining table, as he slopped up great tablespoonfuls of cereal with a sidewinging sweep or tore broiled chicken to pieces with his fingers, and you jotted down the incessant harangues against the lying newspapers, the city machine, and the battered enemy politicians, while the bodyguards glowered protectively near by.47

When Long campaigned in Louisiana he slept only a few hours a day and worked at an incredible rate, as Forrest Davis says of one campaign:

The like of the 1930 campaign in Louisiana seldom has befallen an American commonwealth. Huey bought two sound trucks...and 'leap-frogged' the state...He spoke from the truck...while the second truck was being hurried to another village or town to drum up a crowd. Again the fabulously energetic campaigner performed prodigies. 48


Long made a habit of conducting his political affairs from a hotel bedroom while clad in pajamas and even in this setting he exuded energy. Raymond Swing sat in on a typical Long meeting and describes it this way:

Thus he confers with, or rather declaims, at his henchmen. He does not stay in bed, but as the excitement well up in him he leaps out barefooted, and giving his pajama pants a yank, parades and rants like an orator before a vast audience...his manner is not put on; this perpetual stump speaker is the real man.49

49. Swing, Forerunners of American Fascism, p. 79.

Swing goes on, "such a conference is a distressingly noisy business. One point settled, Huey climbs back into bed. He lies down flat...until the next point is mooted. An idea ignites in his mind; he sets up suddenly. Then as the fire develops, he leaps from bed. His men interrupt him...but he overpowers them with the stentorian passion of his shouted arguments..."

Moreover Huey Long's actions were inconsistent and unpredictable. He could be many things to many people, as Thomas
Harris says, "Neither saint nor devil, he was a complex and heterogeneous mixture of good and bad, genius and craft, hypocrisy and candor, buffoonery and seriousness." 50


This inconsistency can be explained in several ways. First Long seems to have been something of a leg-puller. It is impossible to read some of the stories written by interviewers without agreeing with Forrest Davis when he says, "An improviser of tactics, Huey further confounds prognosticators by a backwoods evasiveness, a great deal of loose, leg-pulling talk. He takes a country man's delight in mystifying the wise guys." 51


Secondly, Long was able to adapt to circumstances. He could rise to the situation, 52 This was preeminently true of his speaking. Daniells says:

He really was a great actor also, as he demonstrated at the Democratic convention in Chicago where he simplified the Roosevelt forces' hardest job by making a masterly lawyerlike defense of the right of his delegation to be seated after staging as outrageous a
burlesque as ever has been perpetrated before committees of a national convention.  

Long could adapt to circumstances. When he felt it advisable, he could be vulgar and emotional; if the circumstances required, he could be coldly logical. As Raymond Moley says, "At one moment Long was a buffoon, a loud-mouthed, loose-tongued blatherskite and rantor. Yet in five minutes he could turn this side of his nature off and become the cool earnestly persuasive and logical man who delivered that masterpiece of argument at the Chicago Convention of 1932."

Harris analyzes Long's ability to adapt to the audience this way:

Senator Long was a magnetic campaign speaker. He could raise himself to the level of the highest intellect or sink to the depths of the lowest. He had a gift for responding to the thought and temper of his auditors. It was his invariable habit in speaking to feel around awhile in an effort to learn just what phase of the pending question interested his hearers most. Once given a clue through unusual applause or suddenly aroused interest, he fed them the food they wanted; and they devoured it.

A specific example of Long adapting to an audience is given us by Carleton Beals when he describes a pro-Roosevelt
audience that Long was speaking to. After the mayor had intro-
duced Long,

Someone shouted, 'What about Huey fighting Roosevelt?'
At once Huey sensed he was addressing a pro-Roosevelt
crowd. Directly out from the speaker's stand was a
huge banner with Roosevelt's picture: 'We love our
President.'
'Just bring that banner right up to the platform so
everybody can see and hear,' cried Long. 'I love our
president, too...and I got him his nomination. But
for me he wouldn't be President... and I'll stand by
the party so long as it does not come between me and
the people...I may be contrary to what Roosevelt is
doing but not to what he said he'd do..."56


Through it all Long had a sort of charm and color
that drew the man on the street to him, particularly the poor
and uneducated. Long convinced many of these people that he
was one of them. That there was something engaging about the
personality of the "Kingfish" is indicated by the trend that
Hamilton Basso points out in the fiction that has been written
about him, "The Kingfish," Basso writes, "has risen book by book,
out of the muck of his own brand of totalitarian politics, un­
til, when last seen in fiction, he was asking Abraham Lincoln
to move over and give him room."57

57. Hamilton Basso, 'The Huey Long Legend,' Life, 21,
December 9, 1946, p. 110.

Hodding Carter, bitter enemy of Long's, points out
this appealing aspect of Long's nature when he writes, "You
interviewed him after he had precipitated a silly international incident by receiving a German admiral in disheveled green pajama's and you laughed in spite of yourself at his shrewdly appealing account of his gaucherie.58


And even Hugh Johnson in his speech castigating Long and Coughlin admitted,

I like Huey Long. He is one of the most plausible punchinello's in this or any other country. He is an able little devil and I can't help but gleefully admire his cast-iron cheek and his rough-and-tumble readiness to take on all comers, including the august Senate of the United States in session assembled.59


To Long's charm must be added a flair that can best be termed "color." Back in January of 1928 headlines on an inside page of the New York Times announced "Louisiana To Have Colorful Governor: Exciting Times are Looked for After Huey P. Long Takes Office Next June." The story read in part, "Mr. Long has always been good 'copy.' As Governor...he would be superior 'copy.' Let Senator Heflin and Governor Bilbo note the appearance of a worthy competitor in the field of light political farce.60

Huey Long was good copy as Governor and he became increasingly good copy as he moved into the National political arena. He had the flair and dash that caught the imagination of the people. In 1935 Hamilton Basso decided:

There is no man in public office, with the exception of President Roosevelt, about whom so much has been written and who is more widely known...People want to know about him. They may admire or distrust him, or even fear him but he has impressed himself upon their imaginations.  

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James Young points up the extent that Huey Long had captured the imagination of the American people by 1935 when he writes,

Capitol guides are a shrewd lot of men, who study humanity professionally and pass judgments accordingly. If we accept their view, the unbelievable has happened. After two short years the national spotlight centers upon another man rather than the master of the White House. By common consent swarming tourists no longer go direct to Pennsylvania Avenue and the sacrosanct precincts of the Presidential mansion. Instead they go to the Senate gallery, eager for a glimpse of the pugnacious Senator from Louisiana...

The moment he strides upon the floor, decked in sartorial elegance, there is a tightening of Senatorial tension, a flutter runs through the galleries, packed to the last seat if it be but rumored that the Senator will speak.  

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Add to this charm and color a persuasiveness developed during a career of political campaigning and door to door selling and you understand partially Long's hold on the popular mind.
Raymond Swing notes, "He is one of the most persuasive men living; this was the opinion given me... not by a Long supporter but by one of the key men in the fight against the Kingfish in Louisiana." 63

63. Swing, Raymond, Forerunners of American Fascism, p. 92.

Jim Farley has this to say about Long's persuasiveness on the stump,

I don't hesitate to say that we underrated Long's ability to grip the masses with his peculiar brand of public speaking, which was a curious hodgepodge of buffoonery and demagogic strutting, cleverly bundled in with a lot of shrewd common sense and an evangelical fervor in discussing the plight of the underprivileged. He put on a great show and everywhere he went, especially in the larger cities we got the most glowing reports of what he had accomplished for the Democratic cause... 64

64. Farley, James A., Behind the Ballots, p. 171.

James Young speaking of Long early in the year 1935 says,

His opponents begin to see that he has the sincerity — or appearance of it — which carries conviction to the emotional mind. The Senator used to be a book agent, and... understands how to approach a "prospect" and... how to get his name on the dotted line... Where the Roosevelt attitude is friendly and benign, the Senator has humor, "heart appeal." 65


Harris also talks of "heart appeal". He says of Long,
"There was in his native intellectual power an indefinable something that drew to him the faith and confidence of the people in the face of a public record that should have condemned him..."66


Perhaps this trait of Long's is partially explained by Hodding Carter when he writes of Long's supporters in Louisiana, "Huey Long was in the image of these little people. He talked their language. He had lived their lives. He had taken them up to the mountaintop and shown them the world which the meek would inherit."67


Certain it is that Long talked the idiom of the streets.

68. The March Speech is a good example of Long's speaking and its style will be analyzed in more detail when the craftsmanship of the speech is considered.


"No mass leader in American history ever more consistently aped the speech and manners of his following."

His grammar was bad, and he used the old slang phrases and colloquialisms that helped put the mark of the common man on him.

Here then is a sketch of the Huey Long of March 1935.
A man of extremes and contradictions, with great energy and activity. An extremely adaptive man, sensitive to the moods and feelings of his listeners, a man who could be all things to all people. A man who could plead cold logic to the supreme court brilliantly, and a man who could fire up the poor white audiences of his native south with an evangelical fervor. A man who could curse and swear and quote the Bible. Perhaps because of these things a colorful man, a man who sounded and acted like one of the people, because he was one of them. A personality that was engaging, persuasive, a charm that caused even enemies to smile "in spite of themselves."

Long's personality is pertinent in relation to the March radio speech for two reasons. First, Long's colorful personality and the publicity that he received built up a huge audience for him. 69

Secondly, Long's style of delivery is closely tied up with his personality. The strength of his radio appeals is partially explained by the fact that he was able to project his personality across the air waves. He managed to transmit his color, his humor, his charm, and his persuasiveness into the homes of his listeners.

Raymond Swing, a radio personality in his own right,
said of Long's radio speaking, "His style is first of all, last of all simple, direct, in the vernacular of the un­educated man. His inflections are vulgarly intimate; there is no talking down to his listeners. They feel that an unadorned personality is addressing them." 70

70. Swing, (Forerunners of American Fascism) p. 95.
Long's political code of ethics can be summed up in one phrase: the end justifies the means. Davis reports asking Long in an interview:

"What is your theory of democracy?" 'The rule of the people,' the Senator replied. 'My theory is that a leader gets up a program and then he goes out and explains it, patiently and more patiently, until they get it. He asks for a mandate, and if they give it to him he goes ahead with the program in spite of hell and high water. He don't tolerate no opposition from the old-gang politicians, the legislatures, the courts, the corporations or anybody.'


This is perhaps putting the best face possible upon it. On another occasion, more bluntly, Long said, "I used to try to get things done by saying please. That didn't work and now I'm a dynamiter. I dynamite 'em out of my path." 72

72. Ibid. p. 119.

Long summed up his political ethics more graphically only a few days before his assassination when he was preparing to return to Louisiana. Talking of his enemies in Louisiana he said to F. Raymond Daniell, "If they want to fight dirty, I'll fight dirtier. Hell's going to begin popping when I get home." 73
Translated into concrete terms this meant using, patronage, bribery, threats, pressure, and every devious political means to win. Typical of the Long political ethics in action was the way he built a political machine in Louisiana.

Forrest Davis says, "The Governor began his administration with characteristic vigor by "kicking the rascals out." He demanded the resignations of every public officer answerable to him... He systematically launched schemes which would oust the others... He was cruelly frank about it all. He wanted the jobs." 74

George N. Coad, New York Times correspondent in New Orleans sent back a dispatch in June 1928 saying:

The new Governor speedily showed his temper. His enemies were to be punished... Personally he organized the legislature, going much further than was customary in depriving political opponents of positions on committees... The next step in the Governor's campaign to seize as much power as possible was the introduction of bills designed to reorganize several important boards and commissions at once and give the governor the power to appoint majorities on each." 75

Long went to work on the members of the legislature
and by finding jobs for the Senators, Representatives, and their families he soon turned his small following into a majority. He was not bashful of these accomplishments; he talked of dealing the legislature "like a pack of cards;" said of one congressman "I bought him like a sack of potatoes."

Such an ethical standard has ramifications in the speech field. If a speaker believes, as Long's actions and utterances indicate he did, that the end justifies the means; then given a cause the speaker believes in sincerely he can justify to himself any technique and any appeal that proves effective.

As has been indicated Long's ends were generally beyond reproach. Thus in Louisiana as Governor he advocated (and delivered) better roads, better school facilities, and better services in the state institutions. On the national scene he was for a more equitable distribution of wealth, and he made his appeal on high moral grounds. Generally these ends were not and could not be attacked. But Long was open to attack in regard to his personal motivation, and in this particular of political ethics.

Some would justify his methods, as Garelton Beals does when he says:

Of course Huey, by smashing the past false simulation of democracy and forging his own power unshakeable, followed the only course by which he could break the old gang and create a true democracy...His methods were
inevitable and in themselves not reprehensible. No intelligent critic should attack Huey Long too much for the manner in which he smashed the die-hard clique...Huey pursued the only intelligent and effective course to destroy their greedy and ignorant job-holding monopoly...76


Here, nevertheless, Long was the most vulnerable. To ram through his program in Louisiana, Long destroyed all semblances of democratic government. He lived his last days surrounded by body guards, fearing the enemies he had made by using every means at his disposal to gain his ends. And finally he died by the bullet of a man who had been injured by his tactics.

Certainly measured in Mahatma Gandhi's terms, Long's political ethics fell far short of the mark. For the Mahatma told Vincent Sheean, "Means are not to be distinguished from ends. If violent means are used there will be a bad result." and when Sheean asked, "Are the means and the ends not to be distinguished if the end is good?" Gandhi answered, "The terms are convertible, no good act can produce an evil result. Evil means, even for a good end, produce evil results."77

77. Sheean, Vincent, Lead, Kindly Light, pp. 184-185.

Here certainly in the area of political ethics Long can be criticized, and insofar as he carried this concept over
into his speech of March 7, 1935, his speaking deserves to be criticized.

The other area where Long is liable for censure is his personal motivation. It has already been suggested that Long was sincere in advocating a more equitable distribution of wealth, and certainly he cannot be criticized in that regard. But Long was extremely ambitious and while it is difficult to decide when ambition ceases to be a good thing and becomes evil, still Long's ambition undoubtedly drove him to acts that cannot be condoned. In fact his political ethics might well be explained in terms of his personal ambitions and insofar as they are to be censured his ambition must also be criticized.

Another motive of Long's that is open to criticism is his vindicativeness. "Once disappointed over a political undertaking," Long writes in his autobiography, "I could never cast it from my mind." 79

Raymond Swing remarks, "the leit-motif in Huey's nature seems to be vindicativeness...His history (autobiography) is a long recital of how he downed his enemies, and few of his victories for the people of Louisiana are free from the
stigma of personal vengeance. Long is purported to have kept a "son-of-a-bitch" book with the names of his enemies marked for vengeance.

30. Swing, *Forerunners of American Fascism*, p. 82.


He had a little black book that all Louisiana knew and feared — Huey's "son-of-a-bitch book." Anyone who had ever done him a wrong of any degree was there, marked for vengeance.

Long as a man and personality is most open to criticism in the area of political ethics. His ethical code was simple; the end justifies the means. In practice the means frequently were highly questionable.

When Long's political ethics are considered in conjunction with his driving personal ambition and the vindicative-ness of his nature, it becomes highly questionable if Long can fulfill the criteria Quintilian set up when he said that an orator was "...a good man skilled in speaking." 82


Certainly that saintly man Mahatma Gandhi would say that Long was not a good man.
Long's Ability as a Political Tactician

When in his radio reply to General Johnson Huey Long outguessed the administration, it was no fluke. By March, 1935, Long had demonstrated time and time again his ability as a political strategist.

As has been suggested when Long's intellectual resources were considered, he had the ability to grasp the implications of a situation and cut through to the basic issues. He had also the ability to capitalize on the errors of his opposition and turn them into political advantages. He was unhampered by any ethical scruples as concerned means and his actions in Louisiana demonstrated political shrewdness.

Several examples should be sufficient.

When Long ran for Governor of Louisiana in 1928 he found himself involved in a race with two other candidates. Midway in the campaign a crisis developed for the Long forces. Huey describes the situation this way:

...we soon learned that a combination of interests had been effected between much of the support behind Governor Simpson and that behind Congressman Wilson so that, if I failed to secure a majority over both of them in the first primary, common cause would be made by both the Simpson and Wilson forces behind whichever candidate was second in the contest.

I discussed the situation with my campaign leaders and workers...

'There is no way to separate those leaders,' said one of my workers.

'Now there is a way,' I answered. 'We must keep tab
on how they are running, one against the other and direct our fire always against the strongest opponent until he becomes the weaker of the two, and then switch and direct our fire against the other, and keep those two bullies neck and neck for the next several weeks. Fire will break out between them as sure as lightning, if we can do that... 83

83. Long, Every Man a King, p. 101.

Long called the turn; there was trouble among the opposition and when, on January 20th, Louisiana voted 126,842 for Long; 81,747 for Wilson; and 80,326 for Simpson, the defeated candidates could not get together and no run-off primary was held. Thus Long was elected Governor of Louisiana with a minority of the popular votes.

Once in office Long had trouble delivering on his promise for free textbooks. For one thing the city of Shreveport was recalcitrant. The mayor of Shreveport, an old enemy of Long's, maintained that Shreveport could buy its own text-books and needed no State-bought books. Long was not a man to brook opposition. Shreveport was angling for an army air base. All but eighty acres of the land needed was in the hands of the Federal Government, but the State of Louisiana owned those eighty acres. When a delegation from Shreveport asked the Government to transfer the land his answer was simple. Shreveport could have both free text-books from the state and the airport or neither. Shreveport accepted the
text-book law and Long had the state deed the eighty acres of land over to the Federal Government.

But there was more trouble to come on the textbook issue. Because of the legal resistance by the corporations (who were to be taxed to pay for the books) the tax machinery was tangled in the law courts and there was no money available to pay for the textbooks as the school year approached in September. In Louisiana the Board of Liquidation of the State Debt has the power to borrow money from the banks on tax anticipation warrants. If the school children were to have books by September Long needed $500,000 to pay for them. The Governor went to the New Orleans bankers who were the State's fiscal agents and asked for a loan. New Orleans at this point was extremely hostile to the new governor, and the bankers declined to advance the money. Their legal advisors maintained that such a loan would be illegal, they said. Forrest Davis describes what happened:

"Then," said the Governor, "I will also be guided by your attorney's advice. You know the State owes you fellows $935,000 on Board of Liquidation loans now?" "Oh, that," said the banker's spokesman, "has been ordered paid by the last legislature." "Yeah, but it ain't been paid yet," retorted sharp Huey. "And what's more it ain't a-goin' to be paid. If it's illegal to make loans to the Board of Liquidation it's illegal to pay 'em. We'll just keep the $935,000 and buy the books and have $435,000 to spare..."84

See also *Every Man a King*. 
Needless to say the Bankers advanced the money, and the schools opened in September with the new State-bought books.

Perhaps one of the outstanding examples of Long's ability as a political strategist is furnished by his fight against impeachment proceedings during his term as Governor of Louisiana. In this fight Long exhibits his characteristic ability to take the offensive against overwhelming odds, capitalize on the opposition's errors and emerge victorious.

The history leading up to the actual impeachment is involved, but for the purposes of this study it is sufficient to note that Long, having successfully forged a political machine during the first session of the Louisiana legislature, felt strong enough to call a special session to tax Standard Oil. It soon became apparent that Long had overplayed his hand. Mysterious pressure was applied to the legislature from many sides and suddenly Long found that he not only had lost control of the legislature but that he actually stood impeached. The many enemies he had made during the early part of his administration now joined forces with Standard Oil and it looked as though the political career of the young Winn Parish Lawyer was over.

But the Governor did not take all this laying down. His legislature may have deserted him but he could still turn to the people. The night after the impeachment proceedings
had been ordered he struck back in a radio address over the station of his friend K. W. Henderson of Shreveport.

To offset the effect of the newspapers (who were all against him) Long now turned to the machinery that he had set up to distribute circulars and began to flood Louisiana with broadsides. Long stumped the state taking his case to thousands of people.

But Long was taking no chances; secretly he was negotiating with Senators who might prove friendly. Then dramatically he made public a document signed by fifteen Senators (enough to block the two-thirds necessary for impeachment) stating, "That by reason of the legal irregularities and the circumstances bearing upon the procedure...we cannot conscientiously and will not approve the impeachment proceedings and charges..."^5

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This document became famous as the "Round Robin" and the charges against Long fizzled out.

Carleton Beals decides:

Huey had won by patronage, astuteness, and appeals to the people. All told, his defense against the organized corrupt might of the whole state was brilliant; his campaigning, his maneuvering, his final denouement, a masterful piece of political ingenuity...People like a man apparently whipped who puts up a remarkable fight and wins.^6

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Thus Long apparently in serious political trouble took the offensive and carried his case to the people. The impeachment proceedings gave him an opportunity to pose as a man unjustly attacked by Standard Oil, and by some careful maneuvering he emerged, if anything, in a stronger position politically than before.

One final aspect of Long's political acumen needs to be touched upon because it is pertinent to the March speech. That is that Long early realized the political potential of radio. Harris writing of Long's political career in Louisiana remarks, "Forced by the antagonism of the newspapers and by repeated attacks of a vigorous minority upon his political strength and public standing, to make frequent use of the radio as a means of reaching the people he developed a radio technique that was marvelously effective." 87


Beals says, "...Huey had developed a remarkable radio technique...While I was in Louisiana last April, he spoke for five hours over the radio, weaving argument, anecdote, special pleading." 88


So by March of 1935 Long had demonstrated on many
He had shown his talent to take the offensive and capitalize on his enemies' mistakes. He had also developed through the years in Louisiana an appreciation of the power of radio as a political weapon and an ability to take full advantage of it.
Chapter III

In his preface to Since Yesterday, Frederick Lewis Allen remarks, "...the heart of the story of America in the nineteen-thirties was obviously the enormous economic and political transformation which took place..."89 In paraphrase

89. Allen, Frederick Lewis, Since Yesterday, 1940.

it could well be said, "...the heart of the story of Huey Long in the nineteen-thirties was obviously the enormous economic and political transformations which took place..." While, as Adolphe Roberts suggests, Long "was sui generis as he once arrogantly said of himself...he probably could have slashed his way to power in any epoch,"90 there is no denying the fact


that his rise was speeded by conditions.

Undoubtedly the depression was the most important event of the years 1929 to 1935 and furnished Long with a huge audience of downtrodden and unemployed. The depression must be translated into human terms if we are to grasp the significance and appeal of Long's March radio speech. But to get the complete story of the nation's troubles we must examine the statistics as well.
There was no omen of tragedy, no auger of the enormous economic transformation, on September 3, 1929 when the Dow-Jones index of stock market prices reached its high water mark. But on September 5 there was a sharp break in the market; September 24 and September 29 saw new crises, followed by the largest breaks of the year on October 3 and 4. The stock market was perhaps the most spectacular barometer of the times.

The fluctuations in stock prices were fantastic, as Charles and Mary Beard summarize them:

Between September, 1929, and January, 1933, according to the Dow-Jones index of stock prices, 30 industrials fell from an average of 364.9 to 62.7 dollars per share. A group of 20 public utilities stocks dropped from 141.9 to 28.0 dollars per share. Twenty railroad stocks declined from an average of 182.0 to 28.1 dollars per share. Other indices recorded the same catastrophe. According to the New York Times index of 50 stocks (25 industrials and 25 railroads), the average price fell from 300.52 to 58.65 dollars per share. A compilation by the Standard Statistics Company (Inc.) of 421 stocks (351 industrials, 37 public Utilities, and 33 railroads) based upon an index number of 100 as the 1926 monthly average, showed a decline from 225.2 to 49.1 from September, 1929, to January, 1933. According to the same source and during the same period, the index of 20 New York bank stocks fell from 357.8 to 67.9."91


The stock market may have been the most spectacular indication of the crisis but there were other ominous indications, less obvious but more far-reaching, that were to effect every American.
Throughout the country the banking structure began to crumble:

Between June 30, 1929, and June 30, 1930, 640 banks suspended, as against 549 for the previous corresponding period. During the next fiscal year 1553 banks closed their doors, tying up over a billion dollars in deposits, as compared with $345,000,000 in the previous season. For the first ten months of 1932, the number of bank suspensions was 1199 and the impounded depositor's funds amounted to $605,000,000.92


The Hoover Administration took steps to halt the bank failures. The Reconstruction Finance Corporation Act of January 1932, created a corporation capitalized at $500,000,000 and authorized to make loans directly to banks and railroads. The Home Loan Bank Act of July 1932 was primarily designed to rescue banks by setting up a group of Home Loan Banks to discount home mortgages held by building and loan associations, savings banks, and insurance companies.

But Dumond remarks that,

Nothing, however, seemed able to stop the trend toward a bank panic. Withdrawals continued, bankers refused to borrow and lend, and confidence was not restored... Banks were temporarily closed by governors' proclamations in Nevada...Louisiana...Michigan...New York City...Almost then the entire country was without banking facilities and without currency.93

93. Dumond, Dwight Lowell, America in Our Time, pp. 439

Still more ominous and fundamental was the fact that
industrial production was cut back sharply. The downward movement began in July of 1929 and continued until March of 1933, a period of three years and nine months of steady decline. It was the most severe economic recession in our history. The output of machinery began to fall in June of 1929 and by the end of the year new orders for machine tools and foundry equipment had dropped off 50%. Employment in the machine industries fell 10% by the end of 1929. Overall by the end of 1929 the output of manufacturers had fallen 24%. 94


As the crises developed the output of capital goods (i.e., machine tools, factory equipment, and other facilities used to make consumer articles like automobiles and radios) fell drastically. In 1932 the production of machine tools was 92.5% lower than in 1929, foundry equipment was being produced at a level 82% below the 1929 mark. A drop in investments accompanied the drop in capital good production. Investments totaled $15,000,000,000 in 1929 and only $3,000,000,000 in 1932. 95

95. Ibid., p. 184

Although production of consumer goods was not as sharply restricted as that of capital goods, it was markedly
curtailed. While by 1932 the output of all forms of capital goods was 75% lower than in 1929, the production of durable consumption goods (automobiles, furniture, etc.,) was 75% lower and of non-durable consumption goods (food, etc.) 30% lower. 96

In the end it was the individual wage earner who absorbed the impact as the monetary structure fell apart and the machinery of industry creaked to a halt. There is little agreement about the exact number of unemployed but there is general agreement that they numbered among the millions.

The more conservative estimates are mirrored by Dumond who says;

By April, 1930, there were 3,167,000 unemployed, by government figures. This increased to...10,000,000 in February, 1932. 97

Others like Corey felt that the unemployment was much more severe:

By the spring of 1933, the lowest depth of the depression, unemployment in all occupations had reached the staggering total of 17,252,000...The blight of unemployment fell upon

96. Ibid., p. 203
Minton, Bruce and Stuart, John, The Fat Years and The Lean, p. 225.

97. Dumond, Dwight Lowell, America in Our Time, p. 448.
35% of the gainfully occupied: ... other millions were working only part time... 98


Perhaps Basil Rauch sums up the situation as well as possible from the conflicting evidence:

The complete story of the nation's troubles. The most important statistical expression of the course of the depression was the one which was most disputed. The estimates of unemployment which were offered by respectable authorities differed by as much as five million. None denied that in 1932 at least ten million wage-earners were out of work. 99

See also Beard, Charles A. and Mary R., Op. cit. p. 64.

It is necessary to stress the unemployment aspect of the economic breakdown, for unless the disintegration reflected in the collapse of the stock market, the bank failures, and the production outbacks, is translated into human terms of unemployment and the accompanying hardship, the political climate and the mood of Huey Long's audience cannot be fully appreciated.

To the people of the United States these statistics meant quiet factories, empty shops, breadlines in the poorer districts, and more and more panhandlers. They meant "Hoovervilles," makeshift groups of shacks, springing up on the outskirts of cities. They meant increased numbers of homeless sleeping in doorways and on park benches; they meant more hitch-hikers on the highways and more hobos in the
freight yards.

The distress, however, was not confined to urban areas. The economic collapse of industry had been ushered in by the stock market crash of 1929, but the farm economy had been in straightened circumstances since 1921. The Beards remark:

Since the collapse of war prices in 1921, agriculture had been sinking toward or below the level of subsistence...Between 1920 and 1933 one farm in every four was sold for debts or taxes. The increase of tenancy, already long in process, was speeded up to a startling momentum. If the loss of homes and employment, if distress and discouragement, had any meaning in terms of humanity, the plight of agriculture was certainly tragic.100


Thus by 1932 much of the "enormous economic" transformation had taken place. Unemployment figures were somewhat in excess of 10,000,000, the industrial machine had stalled and production was but a shadow of its former self, the financial structure was collapsing and the farmers, smarting under a decade of depression, were in extremely straightened conditions.

The year 1932 also brought a presidential election and, when the results were in, a new president. The interim between the election of Franklin Roosevelt and his inauguration was one of inaction and despair. According to Dumond,
...the weeks between the election in November and the
inauguration in March were the most depressing the
nation had witnessed since the winter of 1860-1861.
Unemployment had reached an estimated peak of 15,000,000.
More than 200 cities were facing imminent bankruptcy...
Property was forfeited and millions of people had lost
their hard-earned equities...Private and local relief
could no longer bear the burden of these unprecedented
conditions...Millions had reached maturity without the
prospect of honest labor. The situation was not only
acute it was desperate...101


**Government and the Depression**

This great economic upheaval was bound to make itself
felt upon the philosophy and practice of government. In his
inaugural address President Roosevelt spoke out boldly,"... the
only thing we have to fear is fear itself -- nameless, un­
reasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts
to convert retreat into advance..." If necessary he said he
would ask for "broad executive power to wage a war against
the emergency, as great as the power that would be given to
me if we were in fact invaded by a foreign foe."102

102. Roosevelt, Franklin D., *The Public Papers and

Dumond maintains, "the inauguration of Franklin D.
Roosevelt on March 4, 1933, initiated the most sweeping social
and economic revolution in the history of the United States."103
In a more restrained vein, Dixon and Eberhart say, "Perhaps the most extensive program of regulation ever to be initiated under any single administration was begun after President Franklin D. Roosevelt took office."  

The new administration swung into rapid action. Frederick Allen says of those first months,

The next few months in Washington provided a spectacle unprecedented in American history...The administration hopper produced bill after bill, the President passed the bills on to Congress with terse recommendations for passage, and Congress...passed them, often with scant debate, sometimes without an opportunity for all members to read them, much less comprehend their full significance. Never before except in wartime had the Executive been so dominant over Congress...
the Agricultural Adjustment Act.

It is plain then that President Roosevelt's New Deal accepted at the outset the philosophy that government must take a hand in combating the depression. Nevertheless, the early New Deal programs were based not upon changing the basic structure of capitalism but rather upon increased regulation by the government of the existing financial organization.

Some of the acts of the New Deal are irrelevant to the discussion of Huey Long's campaign for the presidency and his speech of March 1935. Three areas of New Deal activity are pertinent, however. To some extent Long's national career hinged upon the depression and the success of the Administration's efforts to combat it. Whatever his motivation, Long emerges in this period of history as one of the sharpest critics of the Roosevelt administration, a good deal of the March 1935 radio address involves an attack on the NRA, the AAA, and the various unemployment relief measures. It becomes a necessity therefore to examine these three measures in some detail to determine first their effect upon the American people (Long's radio audience) and second to see how well Long's contemporary criticism stands up in the light of subsequent historical evaluation.

The Federal Government's Efforts at Unemployment Relief

The Roosevelt Administration, faced with unprecedented
numbers of unemployed, took vigorous action, not always well unified and well planned. Thus it struck at the problem through no fewer than four different programs, the CCC, the FERA, the PWA, and the CWA.

Among the first of the Government measures to give aid to the unemployed was the Civilian Conservation Corps. Those enrolled in the program were mostly young men from seventeen to twenty-eight years of age. The service cost $851,009,459 before the end of the fiscal year 1934-1935.

One million men passed through the CCC by June 30, 1935.106

106. Dumond, America in Our Time, pp. 476-477.

President Hoover's Administration had authorized the Reconstruction Finance Corporation to lend the states $300,000,000 for relief. Under the Roosevelt Administration the Federal Emergency Relief Act was approved on May 12, 1933. Under the terms of this legislation the Reconstruction Finance Corporation was authorized to borrow $500,000,000 to furnish states with unreturnable contributions rather than loans. Of the $500,000,000, $250,000,000 was to be made available to the states on the basis of one federal dollar for every three dollars of local money. The rest was to be used for direct grants to states who could not afford to match the federal money. In February of 1934 another $950,000,000 was
appropriated by Congress for the FERA and by December of 1934 about one sixth of the population of the country was on relief. Of this number about ninety percent were dependent on the dole.107


The final grants of money for the FERA were made in December of 1935.

Under the terms of the National Industrial Recovery Act of June 16, 1933 a Public Works Program was established under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior, Harold Ickes. The administrative set-up for this program was elaborate. It was decided that Public Works to be undertaken had to fulfill the criteria of being socially useful, sound from an engineering standpoint, an aid to the revival of industry, and able to provide immediate work for the unemployed. Because of its elaborate organization it was slow in getting started and as the winter of 1933-34 approached the Civil Works Administration was inaugurated as a stop-gap program until the Public Works Administration could begin to function. $400,000,000 were released from the FERA and administrative machinery was hurriedly set up. The CWA program terminated with the ending of the FERA at the beginning of 1935.
The most ambitious program was that of the Public Works Administration. This program undertook 8010 non-federal projects and it was estimated that it provided full time direct employment for one year to 720,000 persons and indirect employment to 3,500,000 more. Before the end of the fiscal year 1935-1936 the Public Works Administration had carried out projects costing $2,410,828,000.108


Undoubtedly these programs relieved some of the worst sufferings, but in many important respects the administration's relief programs were unsatisfactory. Hicks points out,

In one respect the relief activities of the government proved enormously disappointing. The relief roles somehow failed to shorten and for the most part tended even to lengthen...Year after year there seemed to be no really significant falling-off in the relief roles.110


The Administration's varied and at times hastily conceived relief programs by March, 1935, were thus relieving
some of the most severe hardships of the unemployed, but had proven disappointing in solving the problems of unemployment. The National Industrial Recovery Act

When in his speech of March, 1935, Huey Long singled out the NRA and turned the scathing fire of his sarcasm upon it, he chose one of the most far reaching and controversial of the New Deal programs.

The fundamental purpose of the National Industrial Recovery Act of June 16, 1933 according to Raymond Moley, "...was to modify the characteristics of a chaotic competitive system that could...produce sweat shops, child labor, rackets, ruinous price cutting...Its chief objective was the initiation of preliminary steps toward a balanced and dynamic economic system."111

111. Moley, *After Seven Years*, p. 184.

Long's view of the purpose of the act was more closely akin to that of liberal and radical critics of the act. Norman Thomas, for example, says, "The President might talk much about the more abundant life, but they (NRA and AAA) incarnated the inescapable capitalist doctrine that profit depends upon relative scarcity."112

112. Thomas, Norman, *After the New Deal, What?*, p. 27.

The National Industrial Recovery Act contained two parts, (a) the Public Works Program which has been discussed in relation to unemployment relief, and (b) the industrial control section. The industrial control section provided that (1) codes of fair competition be established for each trade or industrial association, (2) that no codes were to create monopolies, (3) that the anti-trust laws were suspended in regard to any action taken under the codes, and (4) the president might require licenses for producers in any industry where necessity demanded.113

113. Dumond, America in Our Times, pp. 498-512.

To administrate the program the National Recovery Administration (NRA) was set up and Brigadier-General Hugh S. Johnson was appointed as its chief administrator. General Johnson had been closely associated with Bernard Baruch and the War Industries Board of the First World War. Johnson was dynamic, colorful, and given to scathing utterances.114

114. Moley, After Seven Years, p. 43.

"Johnson had, by now become a fixture of our little group. Baruch had dropped him into our midst casually enough; but, once there, he exploded, like an elaborate fireworks display, into a series of enchanting patterns. We had a preview of all the color, spirit, and versatility that were later to fix the eyes of the country on him, and it captivated us."
Johnson loved to dash off speeches -- particularly scathing analysis of Hoover policies -- and loved even more to read them aloud with gusto.

General fairly burst upon the National stage. John Hicks says of him, "His vigorous and colorful personality won for him a degree of popularity that for a time rivaled even the President's; next to the President he was certainly the most conspicuous figure in American life." Indeed it was this same General Johnson whose burning radio speech over the NBC network set the stage for the reply of Long's that is under consideration.

The Johnson organization faced a gigantic task in attempting to organize the entire complex economy of the United States, but led by the dynamic General the job went ahead with haste and vigor.

"To supervise and press forward the gigantic process of organizing trade, industry, and labor, the National Recovery Administration was established under the direction of General Hugh Johnson, who combined a limited amount of homely wisdom with the irritating methods of a drill sergeant. Leaders in commerce, industry, and trade unionism rolled into Washington. Amid much confusion and table pounding, codes were drafted, approved, and put into effect."
By September, over six hundred codes had been drawn up and were in operation. Ninety-five per cent of the business interests of the country had adopted satisfactory codes and there was a blanket code for all industry not organized under a special code. At its inception the NRA took on some of the aspects of a crusade. President Roosevelt launched the campaign on July 24 with a radio address to the nation. A symbol was designed in the form of a blue eagle and the slogan, "We Do Our Part," was decided upon. Each cooperating business and industry had the right to display the symbol and the slogan. Parades were held in most of the larger cities, with bands and banners to help "break the panics back."117


In addition to eliminating cut-throat competition, and unfair practices, labor was to be provided for under section 7 (a) of the National Industrial Recovery Act which provided:

(1) That employees shall have the right to organize and bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing, and shall be free from the interference, restraint, or coercion of employers of labor, or their agents...

(2) That no employee and no one seeking employment shall be required as a condition of employment to join any company union...

(3) That employers shall comply with the maximum hours of labor, minimum rates of pay, and other conditions of employment approved or prescribed by the president.118
This was to be one of the most troublesome sections of the whole bill for the NRA. Labor began recruiting new members and rapidly built up the strength of the unions. The year 1934 proved to be a disastrous one on the labor front. Strike after strike resulted from grievances springing from the administration of section 7(a). A longshoremen's strike on the Pacific Coast developed into a general strike throughout the San Francisco area. In September strikes broke out in the textile industries. Labor Unions charged that the National Labor Board that had been set up to administer section 7(a) was more interested in preventing strikes than in securing enforcement of the act.

In addition to labor unrest there developed through the latter part of 1933 and 1934 a ground swell of opposition to the NRA. Radical leaders from the left charged that the codes were blueprints of fascism and a sellout of labor.

Other liberal elements maintained that business had an undue influence in drawing up and administering the codes.


Small business men complained that they were discriminated against in the codes so that they could not compete with big business. Big business in the meantime launched an attack on the liberality of the labor provisions of section 7 (a).

Basil Rauch sums up the entire NRA this way:

Whether ideal ends...could not be approached for sheer lack of time, sound leadership, and correct execution, or whether the conflict of interests between employers and labor was too profound in any case...the NRA in practice fell far short of the expectations of even its most ardent supporters.

As the NRA went into operation the unwieldy codes caused some embarrassing slips of administration, and the program got some bad publicity. An example was the case of the tailor in Jersey City. In the spring of 1934 this tailor, a man by the name of Maged, pressed a suit of clothes for 35¢ instead of the 40¢ prescribed by the code. He was arrested, tried, fined a hundred dollars and sentenced to thirty days in jail.

The repercussions are summarized satirically by James Young:

Stepping from the obscurity of his shop, he ranks as the figure of the day. The greatest show on earth gets under way with its three rings of radio, news reels,
and newspapers. Unfortunately Mr. Maged is behind bars and cannot broadcast his impressions of NRA, which might be interesting. By one means or another, experienced ringmasters speak for him. Radio does the best it can with the comment by weepy-voiced broadcasters. As his jailer will permit him to be interviewed, the press records his menu, which is moderate enough; the way he slept last night, the state of his health. For their part, the news-reel men do not fail to photograph the four children and their mother, striving to keep shop in absence of father and husband.123


Long referred to this widely publicized affair and used it as an example to develop his case against the NRA.

Other unfavorable publicity was coming to the NRA from the board of inquiry headed by Clarence Darrow. The Darrow report was highly unfavorable to the NRA124 and General


Ironically, the New Deal had rescued monopoly at the direct expense of the masses. Such was the conclusion of the National Recovery Review Board, on which Clarence Darrow acted as chairman.

Johnson did not take the criticism lying down. There ensued a noisy exchange of vituperation between the General and the outspoken lawyer. Once again the newspapers had a field day.125


While the Darrow report fills pages of the press, the denials and justifications of General Johnson and the administration forces fill other pages. If the situation were less tragic it would be an opera bouffe upon the grand scale. With accustomed restraint Mr. Darrow and the General defy each other in eight-column headlines. Myriad columns of type, seas of ink, trainloads of paper...

Under headlines of "NRA, Serious Squalls Imperil Blue Eagle's
Flight," the story of Newsweek for July 7, 1934 read in part,

The mills closing last week caught the national eye because it brought out the antagonism of organized labor and industry under the recovery act's provisions...
The story then goes on to discuss the Darrow inquiry, Mr. Darrow...resigned from the Review Board late last week, wearied by some 200,000 words expended in reports and conflicts with Mr. Johnson's organization. Its (the review boards) final blast against the NRA asserted, "Thousands upon thousands of small enterprises in many lines of business have petitioned for relief. The answer has been to drive the car of suppression still more relentlessly upon them."

126. Newsweek, July 7, 1934, p. 28.

In September, disgruntled, blaming labor for the failure of the NRA, General Johnson resigned.

Amidst the unfavorable publicity, and with the growing realization that the NRA was not proving measurably successful either in restoring prosperity or employment the man on the street began to lose faith in the NRA.

The Lynds found that in Middletown in 1935, "A factor in this business-class jollification was 'the end of the NRA'."


The Lynds go on to elaborate the Middletown reaction to the NRA: pp. 22-23.

...Middletown's businessmen drove ahead with as much of the NRA as they could stomach. In October, 1933 they actually staged an enthusiastic NRA parade which the press described as "the greatest peacetime parade in Middletown's history..."
But as the fall and winter wore on, NRA became troublesome to one group or another...Labor began to organize...Some local plants... took advantage of the NRA wage rates to drive down... relatively low wages... As the halo around the New Deal wore off with the non-appearance of prosperity, local protest over these complications mounted.

A labor leader in Middletown is quoted by the Lynds as summing up labor's viewpoint this way:

Finally a sense of futility and disillusionment with the NRA settled down over the workers when they realized how ineffective their long-distance letters and telegrams to Washington were as compared with what the X's (industrialists) representatives in Washington were able to do on the spot.128


By March of 1935 the NRA had been generally discredited. It had failed, after a dynamic start, to relieve the problems of unemployment and it had failed to restore a measure of prosperity, unfavorable publicity along with the failure of section 7(a) to satisfy labor's demands combined to create in the public mind an aversion for the NRA. General Johnson had resigned as head of the organization and two months after Long delivered his speech the supreme court was to declare the NRA unconstitutional.

The Agricultural Adjustment Act

Huey Long might be considered a farm boy. He was born on a farm and it was in the upstate farming area of Louisiana that he first got his political start. As Governor
of Louisiana early in the depression he gained nation-wide publicity for his drop-a-crop plan. A scheme to increase the price of cotton by declaring a one year holiday on cotton raising. The Louisiana legislature adopted the proposal but Texas refused to cooperate and the plan fell through. As might be expected Long proved to be a constant critic of the New Deal farm program and had a proposal of his own to solve the farm problem.

The Agricultural Adjustment Act of May 12, 1933 drew Long's fire in his radio address of March 7, 1935 so it is important to survey subsequent historical judgements to better evaluate Long, the critic. The AAA, along with the NIRA, was the cornerstone of the New Deal's reform program. Its purpose was to limit what was considered an overproduction of farm products and thereby raise the prices. It was hoped that the exchange level of farm prices could be raised to the 1914 parity with other prices.

The AAA was put under the jurisdiction of the Department of Agriculture and was supervised by Secretary Wallace. The part of the act pertinent to this study involved a plan for production controls. The act provided for voluntary reductions of crop acreage of basic agricultural commodities. In order to get the farmers to reduce their acreage, contracts were to be drawn up between the individual farmers and the
government limiting acreage and in turn the farmer was to receive a cash subsidy for keeping his acres idle.129

Also Dumond, Dwight L, Roosevelt to Roosevelt pp. 456-459.

In the summer of 1933 the AAA entered into cotton agreements with some 1,000,000 growers controlling about 73 per cent of the total cotton acreage. Since the crop was already in, 10,000,000 acres of cotton were plowed under to fulfill the contracts. During the first season the AAA did not try to reduce the plantings of wheat and corn, but in 1934 a reduction of fifteen per cent in wheat acreage, twenty per cent in corn acreage, and a cut of twenty-five per cent in hog production was attempted. In this regard thousands of young pigs and sows were purchased and slaughtered. With the AAA embarked upon an ambitious program of crop reduction, during the spring of 1934, nature took a hand. In June of that year headlines in Newsweek magazine proclaimed "Mother Nature Lays Down a Withering Calamitous New Deal, Reducing More Crops Than AAA Decreed."

The story went on:

Rain and hail beat down on a scorched midwest last week and broke the most disastrous drought in the nation's history...In Washington plans were rushed to relieve the critical area of 264 counties in 12 states and sufferers in 24 other states...Consumers may also be sufferers for Washington expects food prices to rise...
Destroying property at an estimated rate of $1,000,000 a day, drought burned a hole in the heart of the great Northwest wheat and dairy lands and blackened the great plains until they resembled Belgians war torn fields... In Kansas, grasshoppers and winds robbed hot fields of 1,000,000 bushels of wheat a day... Estimates showed that 500,000 head of cattle moaning and staggering... too weakened to be sold or eaten, and deputy sheriffs shot them down. At least 500,000 more, threatened with starvation... In one month providence managed to cut wheat, cattle, swine, and corn production below objectives set by Secretary Wallace a year ago... AAA found itself hurriedly going into reverse. 130

130. Newsweek, June 9, 1934, p. 3.

The drought was the worst since 1894 and it, combined with crop reduction, added nearly 1,000,000 farm families to the relief rolls. The drought reduced the corn crop to about 50 per cent of the anticipated 1934 yield. Sixteen per cent of the cattle were killed off by starvation and about thirty per cent, or 20 million, of the hogs died. Farm prices did rise during the year 1934 but it is difficult to decide whether acreage reduction or the drought was most responsible. 131 At any rate, higher prices did not help the farmers who, because of the drought, had no crops to sell. After years of depression nature had added to the farmers burden, drought, dust storms, and grasshoppers. Many farmers were suffering the tribulations of Job.

The drought, augmented now by more and more dust storms, stretched into 1935. A few weeks after Long delivered his speech, Newsweek magazine reported,

Last summer's drought forced the abandonment of 31,440,000 acres of planted grain and the slaughter of 6,181,029 cattle. Last week's dust storm destroyed some 5,000,000 acres of winter wheat -- all of Nebraska's crop, half of Kansas's and a quarter of Oklahoma's. The price jumped four cents, touching 95 3/8 cents on Friday.132


It was the time of the Okies, the period John Steinbeck wrote about in the Grapes of Wrath. Into this setting Long delivered his radio address. The farmers that heard him had suffered from a man made depression since 1921 and now they were in the grasp of one of the most fearful droughts in the nation's history. The AAA had run afoul of the farmers age old problem of trying to plan in the face of the unpredictability of nature.

Basil Rauch judges that "The first full year of AAA operation and the tragedy of the Dust Bowl increased rather than diminished the proportions of the farm problem."133

133. Rauch, Op. cit., p. 120.

As John Hicks says of the AAA, "Caustic criticism of so vast an undertaking was inevitable."134 Certain it is that
criticism rained in from all sides. As with the NRA, the AAA was charged with being a program based on the philosophy of "economic scarcity."  

Farmers whose lifelong habits were geared to producing more, not less, chafed under the restrictions, and were particularly upset about the destruction of crops and animals. Basil Rauch points out that "Some farmers called the drought a punishment by God for the sin of destroying nature's bounty."  

Hicks judges that "They (the farmers) signed the contracts and accepted the benefit payments because they needed the money, but they resented the system."  

Other critics, Long among them, pointed out that there really was no overproduction of farm products when the minimum needs of the people were taken into consideration. Dumond sums up this position:

Finally, there existed considerable doubt, based upon scientific observation, whether there really was such a
thing as over-production; whether surpluses had not accumulated because of improper distribution and sub-normal standard of living on the part of a considerable portion of the population. Certainly, the destruction of food-stuffs, including the dumping of more than $300,000 worth of pork into the Mississippi River...was nothing but criminal waste; and, at a time when 15,000,000 families were dependent on public charity...was not conducive to general approval of the scarcity theory.138


In operation, too, the AAA proved to benefit the larger farmers and landholders to the detriment of the share-cropper and tenant farmer. This was particularly noticeable in the South.139


"...on the frank confession of the Secretary of Agriculture, federal activity affected primarily 'the top third of the farmers in the country,' that is, principally landowners great and small...it conferred few benefits, often personal losses on tenants, share-croppers, migratory workers, and field laborers..."

It was estimated that many of the 1,000,000 farmers added to the relief roles during this period had been driven from the land in the South by the restriction of cotton acreage.140

140. Dumond, Roosevelt to Roosevelt, p. 494-495.

"In many sections of the South, the effect upon the cotton sharecropper was disastrous. There was normally a total of 1,500,000 sharecroppers whose position was little better than that of peons. The retirement of cotton acreage drove so many of
them off the land as to add nearly 1,000,000 people to the relief roles.

Thus by March 1935 the farmers generally were little better off than they had been in March of 1933, when President Roosevelt was inaugurated. The AAA had embarked upon an ambitious program of crop reduction and subsidy payments, but drought had cut production even more than planned, the resulting increase in prices aided the farmer but little since they did not have much produce to sell, and rising farm prices caused rising food prices for the urban population. True, the AAA had aided some of the larger landowners, but the tenant farmers and share-croppers, particularly in the South, were if anything worse off because of the farm program. It was with these poor farmers of the South that Long had a particular appeal.

Another thing that farmers generally resented was the destroying of crops and the slaughtering of livestock. Many other consumers suffering from shortages of food, also felt that the administration's program was wasteful.

**Evidences of Unrest**

The first evidence of unrest was revealed when desperate farmers struck out blindly and spontaneously with direct action. "Farm Rebellion," proclaimed the headlines of the lead story in *Business Week* for February 8, 1933. "Grim and
intimidate sheriffs and courts so that the orderly processes of foreclosure and tax sale have become a farce in a dozen states or more. Farm rebellion is aflame throughout the agricultural region...In the tall grass country of Minnesota and South Dakota and the corn and hog area of Iowa, and the spring wheat country of Nebraska and Kansas...there is the seat of incipient revolt and rebellion.141

141. *Business Week*, February 8, 1933, p. 3-4.

Across the midwest farmers were taking direct action. They went on strike, picketing roads and blocking shipments of milk and produce to larger towns. They organized to stop the sale of mortgaged farms, and, inevitably, violence flared.142


With the coming of the New Deal and direct relief to farmers including subsidy payments under the AAA, violence was not so often appealed to but in many places unrest boiled hard beneath the surface.

Mention has already been made of the rash of strikes that broke out under the NRA during the year 1934, indicative of the industrial unrest.

Other direct action was taken during the depression when the veterans staged a bonus march on Washington during the Hoover administration.

While violence and direct action was indicative of
the unrest, for the purposes of this study it is more pertinent
to examine the political expressions of the unrest.

To a certain extent President Roosevelt's election
itself was an indication of the extent and depth of the
general dissatisfaction in 1932.

The Beards point out:

The total popular vote rose nearly three millions above
that cast in 1928, showing, even when increase of popu-
lation was discounted, that strong currents of popular
sentiment had been set in motion...A detailed analysis
of the balloting by counties revealed that, on the whole,
the old centers of disaffection which had supported
William Jennings Bryan in 1896 threw their weight to
Roosevelt in 1932. It also revealed the fact that
counties and cities which had long been set down in the
statistics of politics as 'rock-ribbed Republican' ex-
perienced upheavals that were almost volcanic...143


Still other observers maintained that Roosevelt's
majority of over seven million votes represented the reaction
against economic reverses. Some maintained that 'any
Democrat' could have been elected because of the depression
and the popular reaction against the administration in power.144

144. Cowperthwaite, Lowery LeRoy, A Criticism of the
Speaking of Franklin D. Roosevelt in the
Presidential Campaign of 1932, Unpublished Ph.D.
Thesis, State University of Iowa, 1950, volume
1, p. 2.

There were other indices of the temper of the times
as the Roosevelt administration got under way and the flush of
newness wore off. With recovery slow and disappointing, radical political parties and radical organizations mushroomed across the land. In California in 1934 Upton Sinclair, writer, muck-racker, visionary reformer, burst upon the political scene with his EPIC plan, to End Poverty In California. He very nearly was elected governor of the state despite the militant and solid opposition of the media of communication.

In Minnesota Floyd Olson was Governor and leader of the Radical Farmer-Labor party, which threatened to gain strength in several other midwestern states.

The La Follettes had formed a third party in Wisconsin for the 1934 election and were carrying on in the 'progressive' tradition.

North Dakota, considered one of the most politically radical of all the states, was a hot bed of unrest.

In Montana, Senator Burton K. Wheeler, was a radical 'dark horse' candidate for a third party. In the South such men as Eugene Talmadge and Senator Bilbo were in power.145

145. See the Unofficial Observer, American Messiahs, for a complete analysis of this radical movement.

These straws in the wind can be given a greater significance by a more detailed analysis of three movements that were characteristic of the times and the mood of the
people. These three are the Technocracy movement, Doctor Townsends' old age pension plan, and Father Coughlin's National League for Social Justice.

Technocracy

"In the winter of 1932-1933, from September to February," writes Dumond, "the most widely discussed subject in the United States was a new plan for remaking the state known as Technocracy."146

146. Dumond, America in Our Times, p. 455.

In 1919 Thorstein Veblen had published his book The Engineers and the Price System. Veblen's thesis had been that the engineers and technicians had made industry tremendously productive, but that the men who controlled the price system kept throwing up barricades and dams to stop and hinder full productivity in the interest of making an immediate profit. Veblen suggested that engineers, if given full control, could bring the whole economic system into balance, operate at capacity on the theory of the balanced load where cost per unit of output is at a minimum and the result would be a standard of living hitherto undreamed of.147

Howard Scott took up the thesis, and under the auspices of Columbia University was allowed to carry on the Technical Alliance's Energy Survey of North America. Engineers and Architects were employed on the survey and it was announced that the Department of Industrial Engineering and the Architect's Emergency Committee of New York City were sponsoring the survey. Attention was drawn to the survey by a report of the Department of Public Information of Columbia University in 1932. Immediately Technocracy created a furor.

Stuart Chase sums up Technocracy in what he calls "its simplest terms," this way:

The technical arts cannot be halted. As they march they are exploding employment, money values and vested interests. The price system cannot withstand an infinite series of such explosions without collapse. At which point, if we can only keep our wits about us and see that the collapse is on paper only, we have the opportunity to institute a more modern system, amenable to the laws of physics, capable of dealing with 154,000 kilogram calorie magnitudes and upwards, and perhaps solving the economic problem for all time. It should be operated, says Technocracy with charming modesty, by technicians.\(^{148}\)

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In concrete terms the technocrats suggested that the price structure, money, debts, banking, securities, and the political system be discarded. Technocracy would be set up in its place under the control of the engineers. Each
individual would be required to fulfil a period of service to the state. This would be his energy contract and in return he would receive energy certificates which he could exchange for goods. There would be no profits under the system and everyone would receive equal income throughout life. Because of the great increase in the productivity of machines and technology released from the shackles of the price system and operating on the balanced load principle, this energy contract would only involve a four hour day for 165 days a year for a period of twenty years. The result would be an unheard of productivity and a high standard of living for everyone.

Technocracy enjoyed a brief and huge popularity. Leagues were formed and a great deal of publicity was given to the movement. In its latter stages it took on the form of a cult. Scott, who was the leader of the group, conducted the affairs rather badly. He talked often and frequently out of turn. The press ridiculed his program out of existence. People found it difficult to think in terms of an energy currency based on ergs. Scott's attempt to disassociate wealth and money made his program appear impractical.¹⁴⁹


Technocracy's thesis was substantiated by Harold Loeb and associates who, operating independently, made a study in an
attempt to find out how much America could produce if all skills, machines, processes, and resources were operating at top efficiency. They decided that under such conditions every American family could be provided with goods and services at an annual rate of $5,000. The Beards pass judgment upon the Loeb survey in these words:

Dealing with what was technologically possible, it left more or less out of account what was sociologically possible. Not without some reason, therefore, did professional economists regard it as 'utopian.' At the same time there was significance for economic theory in the fact that managers of industries could produce twice as much wealth if they could get a free hand to operate at capacity speed.150


The sudden growth and demise of Technocracy indicates two things about the temper of the people. First, that they were intrigued by the novel idea of greater abundance and less work, and second, that they found it difficult to maintain interest in an abstruse and apparently impractical program in the face of a hostile press.

Long's appeal was much the same as the Technocrats; he too intimated that if productive capacity were fully used everyone would have a high standard of living and it would not be necessary to work more than thirty or thirty-five hours a week. But Long made his program simple to understand and he did not divorce price and money from wealth and production.
Long's program survived and grew in the face of a hostile press.

**Dr. Townsend's Old Age Pension Plan.**

Dr. Townsend's plan for revolving old age pensions was a simple scheme to return prosperity to the country by giving every person over sixty a pension of $200 a month with the stipulation that none of the $200 could be saved but must be spent before the next $200 could be received. This increase in purchasing power was to start the machines of industry whirling and return prosperity. The plan was to be financed by taxes on business transactions.

The thing that makes the Townsend plan significant as a gauge of the time, is its rapid growth. Starting with little or no organization at the beginning of 1934, Townsend claimed by 1935 that there were 3,500 old age pension clubs, and he had a good deal of support from people who did not belong to the clubs. In January of 1935 the "Townsend Weekly" was started and soon had 125,000 paid subscribers. Claims of up to 25,000,000 signatures on petitions before congress were made by Townsendites.

Raymond Swing summarizes the scope of the Townsend program this way:

*His success is really not phenomenal; it only seems so to those who do not appreciate what Americans are made of. Today (1935) he leads millions of them.*
I am told that 25,000,000 Americans have signed petitions to Congress for the enactment of the Townsend plan. I doubt if anyone has tabulated so many signatures, but that is beside the point. Put it this way: more people have signed up for the plan than have signed up for any other specific measure before this or any other Congress. Three thousand Townsend clubs were formed in about six months. Huge Townsend meetings are daily occurrences...more letters have poured into the Congressional office building this year demanding the plan than ever came in asking for anything else.151

151. Swing, Raymond, Forerunners of American Fascism, pp. 122-123.

Thus by March 1935 the Townsend followers were a potent political force, but beyond this they indicated something of the temper of the times. They mirror the deep unrest and the striving after a simple concrete solution to the economic problems of the time. As Raymond Swing notes:

Dr. Townsend himself is not so significant as the important credulity he reveals in the American nation. Six years ago, during good times, he could not have obtained 25,000 signatures for his plan. Now the masses are ready to believe and -- a point worth stressing -- they will not be satisfied with anything a great deal more sober. It is dissatisfaction with the attainable which leads to fanaticism and at last to social fury...when the great masses are ready to believe the impossible, that is an ominous political fact.152

152. Swing, Raymond, Forerunners of American Fascism, pp. 131-132.

Father Coughlin's National League for Social Justice.

When Father Coughlin launched his National League for
Social Justice in 1934 he was already a national power. He had started modestly broadcasting over Station WJR in Detroit during the 1920's. Suddenly in 1930 with the depression settling over the land his popularity began to increase. He included more and more politics and economics in his sermons, and as his following grew he branched out, organizing the Radio League of the Little Flower and engaging time on radio stations in Chicago and Cincinnati. Overnight he became a national figure. He started broadcasting over the Columbia network. He lashed out particularly against the bankers and money interests. A speech of his entitled "Hoover Prosperity Means a New War" resulted in 1,200,000 letters. Another in which he called Morgan, Mellon, Mills, and Meyer the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse brought him 600,000 letters.

When the Columbia Broadcasting company refused to renew his contract he created his own network that eventually included twenty-six stations across the entire nation at a cost to him of $14,000 a week. Contributions from his radio audience supported this personal network of his.

Coughlin waxed in power with the banking crisis of 1933 and he became a force in National politics. He backed Roosevelt in the 1932 election with his cry of "Roosevelt or Ruin," and after Roosevelt's election he went to Washington and conferred with Raymond Moley and other key men.

Coughlin maintained that his National League for
Social Justice was not a political party but rather a national lobby. Some indication of the effectiveness of the National League for Social Justice is given by the result of the league’s telegraph lobby against the World Court. Telegrams descended upon the Congress by the tens of thousands, the Washington telegraph offices could not handle the deluge and telegrams routed through Chicago were sent to Baltimore and then shipped to Washington by interurban trains.153


By 1935 Father Coughlin began to become critical of the New Deal and he was said to have talked with Huey Long. There was no indication of an open alliance but when Hugh Johnson delivered his phillipic of March 4, 1935, he lashed out at Father Coughlin as well as at Huey Long.

Several pertinent inferences can be drawn from Coughlin’s career. First, Coughlin indicated the great potential of the radio for political organization. Starting from scratch and relying almost entirely upon the radio, Coughlin built a formidable organization in the National League for Social Justice. Second, Coughlin’s sudden rise to national prominence coincided with the onset of the depression which indicates the growing dissatisfaction and unrest of the depression era. Third, the radio Priest’s success
indicates that there was a good deal of appeal in his attack on bankers and millionaires. This idea is important in examining Long's career and deserves further examination.

The groundwork had been laid for attacks on bankers and financiers by the action of the Senate of the United States which passed in the spring of 1932 a resolution establishing an investigating committee to look into the actions of the stock market and various financial firms. The committee opened hearings on April 11, 1932 and held sessions until June 23rd of that year. Early in 1933 the hearings were resumed. The findings were little short of sensational and the hearings received voluminous publicity.

The Beards remark:

...metropolitan papers... were moved to place reports from the committee rooms on their front pages under startling captions. Some odors simply could not be confined...the nation was literally rocked by revelations, confessions, admissions, and even apologies from the highest men in the highest places...154


John Spivak translates this idea into human terms when he records a conversation with Mississippi farmers in an article called "Bitter Unrest Sweeps the Nation."

One of the farmers says, "...the only trouble is that the government is still being run by the millionaires. You know what Huey Long says? The wealth of this country
is in the hands of a dozen men. Now that ain't right... that they should have all them millions and we ain't got a sack of flour."

"What would have happened if the government had not given you relief?" I asked.

"We'd a-done something. We was just about ready for revolution," one said grimly.

"Them millionaires up East -- they're to blame for these conditions..."

This bitterness against millionaires is one of the most pronounced sentiments in the South. The Louisiana Demagogues cries... have found sympathetic ears in the Southern Farmer.155


From these evidences of unrest we see that March, 1935, was a time of restlessness, frustration and despair. The people were grasping eagerly at any plausible concrete program that promised them relief from the long grind of the depression. The rapid growth of Technocracy, Townsend clubs, and Father Coughlin's National League for Social Justice, all point up the mood of the dispossessed and unemployed.

By March of 1935 many millions had been suffering for six years from the depression. Relief had kept them from starving, but the main New Deal measures had failed to restore prosperity or more important to furnish them with a job. Increased prices and increased business activity had not alleviated the plight of the unemployed industrial worker or the drought ridden farmer, agricultural worker, and sharecropper. The aged, bereft of savings, were in critical
condition. After six years of depression these elements of
the population formed a great reservoir of discontent. These
forces expressing themselves in mushrooming radical movements
awaited only a strong leader to organize and marshal them
into a potent political force.

Many in 1935 were like the young man Frederick Allen
tells of, "One thinks of the remark of a young man during the
dark days of 1932: 'If someone came along with a line of stuff
in which I could really believe, I'd follow him pretty nearly
anywhere.'"156


The Townsendites, the members of Father Coughlin's
League for Social Justice, the Southern poor white farmer and
share-croppers, the drought ridden farmers of the mid-west,
were ready and waiting for the strong voice of a radical
leader who could convince them that he knew where he was going.
The time was ripe for Huey Long. We have seen something of
the sort of man that Long was, of the drives and aptitudes
that he brought to the national political scene. Farley
characterizes the period and Long's reaction to it this way,

The times were still far from normal, and countless voters
were in the ugly frame of mind brought on by the hard­
ships of the depression. They were ready for rash
action under a reckless leader...Sensing the temper of
the times, Long was preparing to make a bid for national
power. It was evident that he had in mind the formation
of a third party ticket for the Presidential election of 1936.157


His Ambition for the Office

As Long’s public career developed, perhaps his strongest drive became his desire for power. Long enjoyed the exercise of power, liked the spotlight, liked being the "Kingfish." Long’s administration in Louisiana was notorious for the manner in which he gathered the power of the state government into his hands.

Harding Carter, Louisiana Newspaperman, judges, "My own conviction is that Huey Long was no true revolutionary. Power for power’s sake was his mastering god. No revolutionary but -- the word is used not loosely but gingerly -- a dictator, sui generis, the first truly such out of the soil of America."158


Long’s desire for the spotlight was not easily satisfied and on the eve of his election as Governor of Louisiana, Hamilton Basso heard him say, "This is only the beginning. We’ll show this New Orleans gang who is boss. From now on I’m the Kingfish. I’m gonna be President some
day." Basso concludes, "I have heard many such declarations since and have come to understand his driving mania for power." 159


Legend has it that when former President Coolidge visited Louisiana during Long's administration, Long suggested a caption to the photographers; the former President and the future President. He is said to have asked searching questions about the manner in which the Hoovers were taking care of the White House. Finally Coolidge wondered about the rather unusual interest and Long explained that when he was elected Governor of Louisiana he had found the executive mansion in bad shape and was forced to build a new one. He said that he wanted to know what to expect when he became president.

Webster Smith notes,

"Long for President."
Two days after Huey Long was elected to the United States Senate his supporters exultantly placarded the state with posters bearing the above legend. And on the outskirts of New Orleans there was swung a great canvas banner: "Huey P. Long, President of the United States in 1936." It is a known fact that Huey has for some time had a presidential complex in his ego. Even before this he had mentioned himself as interested in the comforts of the White House, and several weeks before his election as senator he had told reporters that he "would consider the presidency if the opportunity presented itself." From the stump, he had several times informed the voters that he "was headed for the White House." 160

That he had definite Presidential aspirations is indicated also by his posthumously published book, *My First Days in the White House*. This book is basically a campaign document; in it Long describes his imaginary campaign for the presidency in 1936; his ultimate victory; and the way he carries out his wealth sharing platform as chief executive.

Thus there can be little doubt that when Long arrived on the national stage he had already embarked upon a campaign designed to make him president of the United States, taking advantage of the economic unrest of the day Long evolved a political strategy adapted to the times.

**Long's Political Strategy**

Long's political strategy involved three elements:

(1) a publicity campaign to get his name before the public,
(2) the development of a national political machine in the form of the "Share Our Wealth" movement, and (3) an attack on the Roosevelt administration.

Apparently Long decided that to be a successful challenger for the highest office in the land he had to be well known. To this end he followed a course of action that was bizarre and striking. In the years from 1932-1934, Long consciously strove for national notoriety. This might well be called his clown period.161

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"Ever since he has been in politics he has fostered the public notion of him as a sort of clown."


"Piquing the nation's interest more each week, Huey clowned, arranged for the Senate restaurant to serve potlikker, made his name remembered by little daily deeds of flamboyance...He entered bars, ordered the doors locked, invited everybody there to be his guest, and sang hillbilly songs..."

Forrest Davis tells of interviewing Huey Long in 1935;

I asked, politely, if the Senator was aware that many of his fellow citizens regard him as a light-minded clown, whose monkey-shines are incompatible with the dignity of a statesman.

The Senator cupped a hand over his mouth and laughed soundlessly.

'I know,' he said abruptly dropping his veiling lids, 'It cuts both ways; it helps and it hurts, that kind of a reputation. Some of them stab at me for makin' light of my enemies, but a lot of 'em wouldn't even have heard of Huey P. Long to stab at him if it hadn't been for the Kingfish and some tomfoolery. 162


Thomas Harris feels that this clowning on the part of Long was a shrewdly calculated political strategy, he writes:

The whole political life of Huey P. Long was what Victor Hugo aptly described as a "unified, single-stringed plot." The wildest caper, the most incomprehensible absurdity, had its place in his scheme of political progress. Huey Long profited politically from policies and acts which men regarded as the inventions of a lunatic. 163

But Long was an astute enough politician to realize that, while clowning could gain him publicity and notoriety, in order to be considered a candidate for the presidency he had to get the people to take him seriously. Thus by 1935 a prestige campaign became a necessity to establish in the public mind the impression that Long was in reality not a clown but a shrewd and capable statesman.

This prestige campaign was even more necessary because in 1933 Long had suffered some extremely damaging publicity in regard to the Sands Point affair. Long, apparently drunk, was involved in a brawl in the wash room of the Sands Point, L. I., Bath Club on the night of August 27, 1933. The publicity that this event received seems to have been all out of proportion to the significance of the affair and for a time was felt to have destroyed Long's political career. 164


"The story could not be suppressed. It was the news of the week in every paper in America,...The nation sought to bestow credit...Funds were collected for a medal. Cartoons of the "Louisiana Crawfish" appeared."


Thus as March 1935 approached, Long was embarked upon a campaign to overcome the general impression that he was a clown and to make the transition to a serious presidential
candidate. The second part of Long's strategy involved the establishment of a strong personal political machine on the national level. To facilitate in this, Long organized in January of 1934, the "Share Our Wealth" movement. The slogan was patented and a staff of twenty girls was hired to handle the mail. The Shreveport Louisiana minister, Gerald L. K. Smith was retained as national organizer and careful membership files were kept. There were no dues and anyone could organize a club. As Long expresses it in the circular that he sent to prospective members:

Let everyone who feels he wishes to help in our work start right out and go ahead. One man or woman is as important as any other. Take up the fight! Do not wait for someone else to tell you what to do. There are no high lights in this effort. We have no state managers or city managers. Everyone can take up the work and as many societies can be organized as there are people to organize them. One is the same as another. The reward and compensation is the salvation of humanity. Fear no opposition.\(^{165}\)

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When Long first arrived on the national political scene he seems to have toyed with the idea of working his campaign for the Presidency through the Democratic party. Camelton Beals, says, "His purpose was clear -- to dominate the Democratic Party nationally or else to break it and form his own party."\(^{166}\)
To be sure he supported Franklin Roosevelt in the campaign of 1932, but even during the campaign there were indications that the yoke of party regularity sat heavy on Huey's shoulders. As James Farley records in *Behind the Ballots*:

"The Louisiana Senator was itching to perform a stellar role; he wanted to steal the national spotlight; and there is no doubt on earth that, in the back of his mind, he was already looking forward to the day when he himself would be a candidate for the Presidency...He wanted the National Committee to provide him with a special train, equipped with loud-speaking devices...in which he would travel all over the United States..." Farley interpolates,"...it would be a fatal mistake of policy to have the presidential candidate outshone by a mere campaigner in the ranks." So Farley refused to give Long his special train and tried to mollify the Louisianan but "He knew he was being given the 'run-around' and he received the bad news with a mixture of disgust, disappointment, and rage."167

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The Senator soon became aware that the administration forces were being careful not to give him any opportunities
that he could capitalize on politically. In addition, Long was by temperament a poor follower. Carelton Beals describes an interview with Long at the Chicago convention of 1932:

To the reporters he repeatedly declined the Democratic nomination for President, three times in fact. 'Roosevelt can serve the cause better than I. I do not wish the nomination.' His interviewers became really convinced that he did not want it. 'How about the Vice-President?' someone asked. The Senator gave him a withering look. 'I wouldn't be Vice anything. I'd rather be the biggest man in a little village than the second biggest man in a great city. Huey Long stands second to nobody.' 168


There is an element of truth in the Unofficial Observer's statement that "...it is quite likely that no amount of cajolery and tender handling would have kept Huey happy and in line with the New Deal his own ambition was probably too great." 169


Whatever the contributory causes, by 1933 Long had decided that the greatest stumbling block to his ambition was President Roosevelt himself. Long's actions indicate that he felt it of primary importance, to pave the way for his own candidacy, that President Roosevelt's great popularity be destroyed. Long thereupon embarked on a campaign to discredit the administration and destroy the popularity of the President.
In the spring of 1933, Huey declared war on the administration. He explained it with his famous owl analogy; Hoover was a hoot owl, Roosevelt a scrooch owl. "A hoot owl bangs into the roost and knocks the hen clean off, and catches her while she's falling. But a scrooch owl slips into the roost and scrooches up to the hen and talks softly to her, and the hen just falls in love with him, and the first thing you know, there ain't no hen." 170


Long resigned from his senatorial committees and viciously attacked the New Deal. The administration struck back by giving federal patronage to Huey's political enemies in Louisiana. But Long was not to be embarrassed by so simple a political maneuver. Quickly he called his state legislature into session, and passed laws rendering the federal patronage impotent. 171


In fact, after the attempt to discipline him, Long's attacks on the administration increased. He gave special attention to the majority floor leader, Senator Joseph Robinson of Arkansas. He even intimated that Robinson was using political influence to gain clients for his law firm. 172

"Robinson replied stiffly that Huey's ideas were little less than confiscation of wealth. That was all that Huey wanted. Using his windmill gestures, he advanced on Robinson. Why, the Democratic leader was practically in bed with Herbert Hoover. Huey wanted Robinson for Vice-President on the Republican ticket...then, as the Senators jumped, he let them know they had a new phenomenon to deal with...Out came a reference book, a list of corporations whose business was handled by Robinson. "The Senator's law firm represents every nefarious interest on the living face of the globe...You don't have to eat a whole beef to know if it's tainted...When a man comes into the Senate without enough clients to make a Corporal's guard, and winds up representing every big corporate interest, if that don't mean something, what does?"

But Long reserved his most powerful thrusts for the postmaster general, James A. Farley. Early in 1935 Long launched an attack on Farley that carried his name to the headlines across the nation. After the fireworks were over Long is purported to have said, "Jim was the biggest rooster in the yard, and I thought that if I could break his legs, the rest would be easy."173


Carelton Beals writes, "Though a rule or ruin type, Huey's tactics were canny. He flung himself with double-barreled shotgun onslaught upon the man who is both the weakest and the strongest link in the Roosevelt machine, his old friend Jim Farley..."174

Farley later analyzed the situation this way,

Early in the winter of 1935, Long decided that the time had come to begin his political assaults on the Roosevelt administration and the Democratic Party and he made up his mind that the most effective way of accomplishing it was to make me bear the brunt of the attack...I was a fairly easy target for his shafts because for some time the press...had been carrying articles criticizing me for acting in the dual capacity of Postmaster General and National Chairman of the Democratic Party. 175

175. Farley, James A., Behind the Ballots, pp. 243-244.

Long accused Farley of being implicated in a wire service to gambling houses. He charged him with corruption in the awarding of contracts; specifically he said that Farley had used a $52,000,000 RFC loan to force a railroad official to support a Democratic candidate. He also accused Farley of illegal presentation of $80,000 in new stamps to friends, and suppressing the Department of Justice charges against large party contributors. He summed up his opinion of Farley, "Jim can take the corns off your feet without removing your shoes."

These were serious charges full of news value and the dynamic way that Long carried the attack kept the matter in the headlines. The administration became disturbed and searched for ways to neutralize his effectiveness. 176

"Day after day, Huey was threatening to 'blow the roof off the Capitol.' Skillfully he wove together an assortment of unrelated truths, half-truths, innuendoes, insinuations, and downright lies. He intimated that he was prepared to expose the Roosevelt administration. I was unworried, because I knew I was completely innocent. I was, however, annoyed. I knew that Long was not concerned with me, but was sighting his oratorical guns on the Roosevelt administration, having third-party ambitions in 1936. Roosevelt was aware that he was the real target of Long's attack and was most anxious that I clear myself."

See also Farley, James A., Behind the Ballots, pp. 224-225.

To better understand the effectiveness of the March 7 speech it should be fit into its proper niche in the series of radio speeches that Long gave as he carried on his campaign for the presidency over the air waves.

On March 17, 1933 Long delivered a thirty minute radio broadcast over the NBC network from Washington. At this time he was still in the Roosevelt camp. The speech was composed largely of quotations from well known authorities all designed to prove that the wealth of the country should be distributed more equitably. Long quoted at great lengths from President Roosevelt's campaign speeches. There was no humor in this speech, no ridicule, no sarcasm. Long hardly mentioned himself and there was a noticeable lack of ethical proof.177

A little more than a month later, on April 21, 1933, Long again took to the air-waves. He talked on the subject of "Expanding the Currency." In this speech Long introduced more ethical proof referring to his activity in the senate in relation to the currency question. This speech was heavily statistical with slightly more emotional proof than the speech of March 17. There was no attack on Roosevelt and no use of humor.  

The Senator's next radio address was on February 23, 1934, his famous "Every Man a King" speech over the NBC network. During the course of this address Long began to gently attack the Roosevelt administration. He noted that Roosevelt had done nothing to redistribute the wealth. The Senator also announced the founding of the "Share Our Wealth" society and plead for members. There was a bit of ridicule of the NRA, but Long touched upon this point only briefly. The speech as a whole was more impassioned and the language more connotative than the other speeches had been.

For almost a year Long was silent as far as important
radio speeches are concerned and then with his national power growing, and his national reputation spreading early in January of 1935 he again took the offensive against the administration in a rapid and unprecedented series of radio broadcasts.

He led off in January of 1935 with a speech about "Share Our Wealth." In this speech the Senator attacked Roosevelt directly and by name. The January speech contained more ethical proof than any of the previous speeches. Long particularly belabored the point that he now had to say "I told you so." His predictions had been right, he had been vindicated by the logic of events. There is less dependence upon authority and evidence, and more appeal to emotions in this speech than in the others. Long concluded the speech by singing the theme song of the "Share Our Wealth" society. A song that he had written called "Every Man a King." 180


On the 19th of January Long was back on the attack again with a radio speech called "Our Growing Calamity."

This speech was a strong and direct attack on the administration, and upon President Roosevelt personally. The Louisianan particularly singled out the Administration's stand on old age pensions. There was more ridicule in this speech, though Long still depended heavily on statistics, and quotations from
authority (particularly the Bible.) It contained the most direct and impassioned attack on the administration of any of the speeches to this time. The Senator concluded with a strongly emotional quotation from a newspaper human interest story that was highly derogatory of Roosevelt.  

On February 10, 1935, Long followed up with a speech called "Our Plundering Government." There was more prestige appeal in this speech than usual, Long changed from using the personal pronoun "we" to using "I". Still the trend that was evident in the other speeches was reversed. Where, up to this point, the trend had been from heavy use of authority, evidence and logic, to a growing attack on the administration, and the President, by the use of ridicule and emotional appeal, this speech was once again heavily authoritative and the attack on Roosevelt was not as sharp as some of the previous attacks had been.

The explanation for this reversal is to be found within the speech itself. Long said,

Speaking over this broadcast tonight from coast to coast I notice a large number of Eastern stations. I didn't know that when I came here, so therefore, some of the manuscript which I had prepared will be discarded, because I am particularly anxious that I may be permitted to reach into this Eastern territory and to say some of the things I have often wanted to be heard by the people living in the Eastern states.
From our analysis of these speeches it can be concluded that Long's strategy when dealing with a new audience that might be neutral or hostile to his case consisted of heavy use of authority, logic, and evidence, with little use of humor, invective, and ridicule. Usually, with audiences of this type, he explained his plan very carefully. When he felt that his listeners were familiar with his cause and favorable to it, his appeals became increasingly more emotional, his attacks on the president became more direct, and he resorted to the use of ridicule and invective.

Long was scheduled to carry on this series of broadcasts with another speech entitled "Our Blundering Government," to be delivered March 7. But on March 4, something happened to change Long's plans and give him an opportunity at a huge new radio audience. Long's political strategy in carrying the attack to the Roosevelt administration in Senate and over the air, particularly his attack on Jim Farley, paid off. For on March 4, 1935 General Hugh Johnson, former administrator of the NRA, spoke over a national radio hookup. General Johnson's speech, apparently the result of Long's goading, gave Long a dramatic chance to carry his attack on the administration to the people of the United States.
General Johnson's Speech

The occasion for the General's speech was a Redbook Magazine banquet. It soon became apparent, however, that Johnson was delivering no ordinary after dinner speech. As the speech progressed it developed into a slashing diatribe and the objects of the General's invective were Huey Pierce Long and Father Coughlin. It was a masterly exhibition of argumentum ad hominem.

As his speech began the General, in dramatic language, sketched the background of 1932, the despair of the depression, the hunger, the want, and then he told of the way the new administration had caught the faith of the people and moved with vigor to meet the problems of the time. Johnson eulogized the New Deal in colorful prose and pointed out the positive action that President Roosevelt had taken and the benefits that had accrued from that action. But the General said, "...the punch is gone. The drive is stopped."183

183. The text of General Johnson's speech that is quoted in this section is to be found in the New York Times, March 5, 1935, p. 10.

The reason that the drive is stopped, said the General, is that, "The spontaneous cooperation" is gone. What needed to be done, in Johnson's estimation, was "To restore this cooperation to solve the problems now. If we don't we are heading for dictatorship."
As Johnson analyzed the situation the blame for this lack of cooperation can be laid on three groups, "...there are three groups -- rather than parties -- and...two of them are lunatic fringe." The first group is the "old guard" the ultra-conservatives. But Johnson did not stop to consider this group at length. Instead he concentrated on the other group. "The second fringe is the residue. They have emotions rather than beliefs..." And, he continued, "Huey Long and Father Coughlin are rapidly appearing as leaders of the second -- the emotional -- fringe..."

As Johnson saw it, this was no small group, "Counting busted business men, the unemployed, large segments of farmers not yet helped, and the dependents of all of these there are about 80,000,000 abused babies in this country...they are ready to strike back at disaster in any way that is shown them..." In view of this large reservoir of discontent the General felt that the time had come for someone to speak out boldly of the danger. "You can laugh at Father Coughlin, you can snort at Huey Long but this country was never under greater menace..."

The General then turned his attention to Huey Long's "Share Our Wealth" movement. "Its not what these men say that is dangerous it is the devilish ingenuity of their way of saying it..." But for all of that the General asserted that the plan would not work. Huey Long and Father Coughlin are but a couple of Pied Pipers leading this fringe by their emotions to their
own doom. Johnson then considered Father Coughlin's economic reforms and dismissed them as ill-advised and impractical.

"Stripped to the facts -- and whether consciously or not -- these two men are raging up and down this land preaching not construction but destruction -- not reform but revolution -- not peace but the sword..."

The General concluded the speech with a plea for a return of the spontaneous cooperation that had characterized the first days of the New Deal.

Carelton Beals feels that:

After long indecision, though seeing in Huey a force that might split the Democratic Party and jeopardize Roosevelt's re-election, not knowing whether to placate, pretend to ignore or fight openly, the administration finally grew so nervous over the ticklish Farley matter, it became so necessary to conceal that morass with a dust cloud, that it stampeded into a cavalry charge led by...Hugh Johnson.

Johnson himself maintained in the speech, that "I want to make it very clear that I am speaking for myself alone -- a gratuitous volunteer. Nobody in the administration has been consulted about this speech..."

Whether or not

Johnson was acting as the spearhead of a concentrated administration attack, it is evident that President Roosevelt

was searching for some way to combat Long, and after Johnson's speech many administration leaders joined in the attack on Long.

The speech of Johnson's had immediate repercussions. The press reaction suggested relief that at last someone had been found who was not afraid to trade verbal blows with Senator Long. An editorial in the New York Times was typical:

Our Washington correspondent predicts that General Johnson's speech will release others from the sort of moral terrorism set up by Huey Long and Father Coughlin. It is devoutly to be wished that this prove true... He (Johnson)... led the way in breaking through a censorship... many public men dared not speak out for fear that it would be at the risk of political assassination. Others lived under the fear of what was supposed to be an irresistible power of a vast radio audience... His (Johnson's) speech was... like the break-up of a long and hard winter... he is to be thanked for taking his courage in both hands... 186


In the Senate on March 5th the result was even more explosive. In a fiery speech Long blasted Johnson, by linking his name with Wall Street and Bernard Baruch. Long spent a good deal of time attacking Baruch. After Long had finished, Senator Joseph Robinson, showing more spirit than usual, arose and castigated him with unprecedented bitterness. Robinson's argument was mostly ad hominem. "Egotism, arrogance, and ignorance are seldom displayed in the Senate of the United States. They require a measure of talent possessed only by
the Senator from Louisiana." Robinson continued shaking with emotion, "...he attempts to promote his own personal ambitions ...month after month the Senator from Louisiana has disgusted this body with repeated attacks upon men who are superior to him..." 187

187. The Congressional Record, March 5, 1935.

Long, who had been absent while Robinson was speaking, returned and using notes his secretary had taken, answered Robinson in a wild session that ended with the searching, by the capitol guards, of a man accused of being Long's body guard.

"Long Denounced by Party Leaders on Senate Floor; Senator Robinson Demands Stop be Put on His Raving and Arrogance; Huey's "Guard" Searched; Previously Louisianaian, in Rage, had Assailed Johnson, Baruch, and the President,"

Under these front page headlines the New York Times story began; "

One of the most scathing denunciations in the history of the Senate was delivered today by Senator Robinson... who, following an attack on General Hugh S. Johnson, Bernard Baruch and President Roosevelt, by Senator Long, declared the Louisiana Senator was "egotistical, arrogant, and ignorant," and had just uttered the "ravings of a madman."...At the end of the exciting scene, Chester W. Jurney, Senate Sergeant-at-Arms warily searched for weapons a Louisianaian who sits daily in the gallery and is described as Long's chief bodyguard.188

The front page of the Christian Science Monitor for March 7 carried the following headlines, "Johnson attack on "Pied Pipers" Blasts Way for Administration to Halt Long and Radio Priest; Majority Leader Robinson Arraigns Louisiana Kingfish for "Ravings" Baily follows by Declaring he wouldn't Take Long's Word for Anything." The story commented, "The Johnson speech precipitated such a day in the Legislature on March 5 as has rarely occurred; it kept onlookers in breathless suspense over the next dramatic move."189


In Iowa City, Iowa, the Daily Iowan carried front page headlines that proclaimed, "Robinson Accuses "Kingfish" of "Arrogance," Angry Senator Urges State to Curb Menace." The story said, "Senator Joseph T. Robinson...his face glowing red with anger, today climaxed a furious word battle with Huey Long...Long kept the Senate in uproar most of the day..."190


On the seventh of March the New York Times again gave front page prominence to the Senate sessions, under headlines that read "Long and His Foes Continue Battle on Senate Floor." 191
Because of the great deal of publicity given these Senate Sessions by the newspapers, the public was aware of the explosive possibilities inherent in Long's radio reply to Johnson.

With the whole nation curious, excited, and stimulated by the events of the preceding week, with tremendous publicity and an unprecedented build up, Huey Long spoke over the NBC network from the studios of the National Press Club, for forty-five minutes on the evening of March 7, 1935. That evening the Senator from Louisiana talked to probably the largest audience of his career.192
Newspaper pictures show the Senator seated behind a plain wooden table behind a single overhead microphone. The New York Times said of the speech, "He spoke over a nationwide hook-up from the NBC station at the National Press Club. For three minutes, before his speech started, he accommodated photographers by gesticulating for them -- and in that period he made more gestures than in his forty-five minutes on the air. For when the broadcast started he was subdued and deadly serious." 193 The Louisianan often spoke over the radio extempore, but on this occasion he had a manuscript. 194 He departed frequently from the prepared speech, however. The internal evidence suggests that Long's time was running out and he had to cut short the development of the latter portions of his plan.
Newsweek magazine said: "Let's make the fight," he pleaded, abandoning his prepared address in his emotions. ¹⁹⁵


The New York Times described his delivery:

Departing frequently from the text of his radio address... the Senator waved his hands and ran them through his curly shock of hair as he spoke in the crowded studio. He had three of his bodyguards accompanying when he arrived. They sat close by while he talked. ¹⁹⁶


**Long's Purpose and Strategy in This Speech**

When Hugh Johnson unlimbered his vocabulary and began applying argumentum ad hominem to Huey Long he threw down the gauntlet to a champion. In his political activity in Louisiana Long was notorious for his use of invective and vituperation. ¹⁹⁷


"Attacking his political enemies with invective, ridicule, and no regard whatever for the amenities."


"In Louisiana he didn't bother much about the dignity he put on elsewhere, but spoke abusive profanity. That particular evening he called new Federal appointee Peterman, of whom everyone speaks highly, not merely a 'rat but seventeen kinds of a rat.'"
His activity in the Senate and his political activity


"On the Senate floor he gyrated and orated hour after hour, assailing and ridiculing those Senators who opposed him. There in the chamber where Calhoun and Webster and Hayne had debated, this man...insulted his colleagues with his whip-lash tongue and abused the administration..."

in the National spotlight had left little doubt that in the


"The Kingfish became more violent with each month. 'Frank-Lin De-La-No Roo-Se-Velt.' He rolled each syllable. And then he hurled words not often used publicly of American Presidents: "He's a Liar and a faker!"... Huey played no favorites in his compliments among the New Deal officials. Henry Wallace was "Lord Corn Wallace, the Honorable Lord Destroyer, The Ignoramus of Iowa"; Ickes, "the Chinch Bug of Chicago"; Farley; "the Prime Minister, the Nabob of New York"; and he saved his longest words for last: "The expired and Lamented Royal Block, Hugh Sitting Bull Johnson, the Neww Co-La-La of Oklahoma."

roughhouse of political mudslinging he was a man to be reckoned with.

Certain it is that the great majority of his audience expected that he would answer General Johnson in kind. After


"Senator Long's broadcast speech was not what many expected. They listened for something vituperative and abusive."
the personal mauling that Johnson had administered to him -- he called Long a "revolutionary," a "Catiline," a "Pied Piper," and several other unflattering names, including the one hidden in this innuendo, "Huey knows what part of a horse he can be --"


Long must have been greatly tempted to answer with some of his notorious vituperation.

But Huey was an astute politician and he realized that Johnson's attack had given him an opportunity to talk to the largest radio audience of his career. 202 With this in mind

202. Time, March 16, 1935, p. 15

Long is quoted as saying, "There will be 25,000,000 people listening to me tonight."

Long decided to soft-pedal the personal attack of General Johnson and concentrate on a persuasive presentation of his "Share Our Wealth" program. 203


"Senator Huey Long...had his opportunity tonight to reply in kind to the bitter personal attack
made upon him by General Hugh S. Johnson in the
now-famous speech...But that is what he did not
do. Instead he took the occasion to deliver a
skillful exposition of his share-the-wealth
theory in what was for him exceedingly moderate
and moderated language...In other words Huey
Long saw a chance to put his political doctrines
verbatim into scores of newspapers, all over the
land to an extent which had never before been
possible to him. The consensus here (Washington)
tonight is that the Senator from Louisiana made
a most sagacious move."

Where a less astute political tactician might have
been carried away by the trend of events, Long grasped the
implications of the situation; saw that this was the break in
the administration's armor that he had been waiting for;
realized that here was a chance to reach a great new radio
audience. Long saw how neatly this fitted into his overall
strategy and his campaign for the presidency. He took the
opportunity to plead for more members for his "Share Our
Wealth" society and carry on his prestige campaign to enable
him to become a serious candidate for the presidency.

General Johnson's attack had also given him an
opportunity to raise the other issue that was close to his
heart. Long's break with the administration and his attempt
to discredit it has been pointed out. For that purpose he
had attacked Farley, now General Johnson's speech gave him
an opportunity to focus attention on the administration and
attack it over a radio network to a vast new audience.
The evidence would indicate that Long decided on the following strategy for this speech. While it would be interesting to answer Johnson's name calling in kind; while the people are expecting billingsgate, yet here is a priceless opportunity to make an appeal to a large radio audience. The shrewdest course of action is to bring all the persuasion possible on the "Share Our Wealth" program. If Johnson is mentioned attack him in connection with the NRA and broaden the attack to cover and discredit the Roosevelt administration at the same time. Not to be forgotten was the campaign to build up the prestige of Long and make him into a serious candidate for the presidency.

Three previously considered motives of Long, find expression in the purpose of this speech. They are his sincere belief that wealth should be shared; his driving ambition for the presidency; and his vindictiveness against the administration. This speech was designed then to (1) attack and discredit the administration, (2) build up the prestige of the speaker, (3) activate the audience to write letters to Long in order to promote the building of the "Share Our Wealth" society.

The dominant motive was probably Long's desire for the presidency. He felt that once he became president he could succeed in sharing the wealth and in punishing his enemies.
All three purposes of this speech have a direct bearing on Long’s candidacy for the highest office in the country. The value of attacking the administration and building up the speaker’s prestige has been considered. He wanted people to write to him so that he might get a mailing list of interested people who could form the nucleus of a political party.

The basic purpose of this speech was to advance Long’s candidacy for the office of the President of the United States. And it is with this purpose in mind, keeping also the proper prospective of the political climate of the years 1932-1935, and of Long’s strategy to this point that the speech proper must be considered.
Chapter IV

THE SPEECH

In order to develop the manner in which the speech reflects the historical setting, four topics will be examined at some length: (1) the introduction, (2) the attacks on the administration, (3) the prestige campaign by Long for himself, and (4) the conclusion.

The second aspect that will be considered is Long's "Share Our Wealth" plan as developed in this speech. To a certain extent this is to be considered in a more abstract way than is the first topic. Long's plan was developed in many speeches and much campaign literature and should be considered not only as it impinges upon this specific speech, but rather against the larger background of Long's campaign for the presidency and the general political and economic climate. Therefore, Long's plan will not be so tightly integrated into the specific event that took place on the night of March 7, 1935. Rather, a more general examination of the ramifications of the plan will be made, and this speech will be considered as more or less an exemplification of these generalizations.

To develop the examination of Long's Share Our Wealth plan three topics will be examined, (1) the dramatization of the plan, (2) the plan as a forensic weapon, (3) the validity of the plan as a course of action.
Just as the craftsmanship of a chair may be examined not so much in relation to a certain house, a certain room, or the furniture in that room, but rather in relation to ideas of chair building in general, so a speech can be examined for craftsmanship in relation to speech theory. It shall be the purpose of the third section of this chapter to examine the speech for its craftsmanship. To some extent this aspect of the speech will be abstracted from the historical setting; indeed, some of the theory that will be used to measure the craftsmanship is as old as Aristotle.

Four topics will be developed in regard to the craftsmanship of the speech (1) its organization, (2) the development of ideas, (3) its style, and (4) the persuasive techniques the speaker employed.
Brief Summary of the Speech

In a few brief sentences of introduction Long sketched the immediate background of the controversy and mentioned the speech of General Johnson. Quickly, however, he indicated that he did not intend to trade blows with the General. "It will serve no useful purpose to our distressed people for me to call my opponents more bitter names than they called me."204

204. The quotations from the speech are taken from the text printed in the New York Times, March 8, 1935, p. 16. See Appendix.

Practically ignoring Johnson, Long then moved into the body of his speech and began developing his first point, that the blame for the present situation lay with the Roosevelt administration. In developing this idea, Long argued that because Roosevelt had had the power, he must take the responsibility. Long went further; he linked Roosevelt's name with Hoover's. Roosevelt's farm policy was the same as Hoover's he charged. Roosevelt's advisors were the same advisors that Hoover had had.

Long next turned his attention to the NRA. This was fascism, he contended. Without mercy he ridiculed this administration supported agency.

Still developing his first contention, Long moved on to a more general consideration of the conditions in the country.
He said that there was misery and want, in a land of abundance. To prove this point he quoted from the opposition, from President Roosevelt, Mrs. Roosevelt, Harry Hopkins, and General Johnson.

In short, in his first point Long fought back against the declaration of war on him by the administration. But he did not spend much time attacking General Johnson personally; instead he spent about the first quarter of his speech attacking the entire Roosevelt administration and its policies.

The second main division of the speech consisted of an analysis of the causes of the undesirable condition that Long maintained the country was in. The basic trouble, according to Long, was the maldistribution of wealth. To support this argument, he quoted statistics, cited as authority an editorial from the *Saturday Evening Post*, and developed an analogy. He went on to show that the maldistribution of wealth was getting worse instead of better under the Roosevelt administration. He concluded that the only thing that could make matters better would be to redistribute the wealth.

This brought Long to his third major section, his answer to the crises, the "Share Our Wealth" program. Before giving an exposition of the plan proper, he placed the weight of authority behind it. The list that he brought forward in favor of his program was impressive. The Pilgrim Fathers,
The Bible, Lord Bacon, Milton, Shakespeare, Socrates, Plato, Diogenes, Pope Pius XI, Marconi, Daniel Webster, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Abraham Lincoln, Andrew Jackson, William Jennings Bryan, and Theodore Roosevelt were all behind his program, Long maintained. To clinch the argument from authority, he quoted Herbert Hoover in the campaign of 1932, and indicated that Franklin Roosevelt had been for his program, too, during that campaign.

After associating his cause with these great names, Long proceeded to develop his plan in six simple concrete proposals. Into the discussion of the plan he skillfully wove refutation to the attacks that had been made against his proposal. He refuted specific charges of Hugh Johnson and Arthur Brisbane. Long devoted almost half of his time to the development of his "Share Our Wealth" program.

In his conclusion, Long read parts of three heavily emotional letters. All three told of severe economic want. "That," said Long, "...is what is going on, the plight of America today...we are going on with the St. Vitus dance of the Roosevelt depression." He ended with a powerful conclusion of application. "Won't you write me tonight?...Won't you organize a "share our wealth" society?" He left no doubt about what his listeners should do,"...write to me, Huey P. Long, United States Senate, Washington, D. C."
Thus, at the start Long side stepped a personal feud with General Johnson and instead made it clear that this was a war between himself and the administration. He quickly carried the attack to Roosevelt, placing the responsibility for the crisis on his shoulders. He then emphasized the current economic misery and ridiculed the administration's measures to combat it. He dealt, particularly, with the NRA. Next, he analyzed the causes of the existing bad situation, maintaining that the unequal distribution of wealth was the root of the trouble. Finally, he concentrated his greatest effort on explaining and defending his "Share Our Wealth" plan. He concluded with a rousing emotional appeal, in which he specifically asked that his listeners write to him in support of his plan.

Carrying Out The Strategy In This Speech

Long develops three main issues during the course of this speech: (1) Roosevelt is to blame for the present intolerable situation; (2) the cause of the problem is maldistribution of wealth; and (3) the solution to this problem is Long's plan for "Share Our Wealth."

In considering Long's strategy and purpose in this speech and the way in which he translated this strategy into concrete terms to achieve his purpose, the development of the first issue is of prime importance. This first issue, which
Long spent about fifteen of his forty-five minutes in presenting, is the part that most clearly grows out of the events preceding the speech and knits the speech into the historical continuum. The first issue is an example of Huey Long, the skillful politician, grasping the implications inherent in the occasion and adapting to them.

The second issue that Long develops is characteristic in language and logic of most of his speeches. Long's analysis of the maldistribution of wealth amounts to almost a commonplace that the Louisianan had memorized and which he would inject at opportune times into many of his radio speeches. In this issue Long uses some of the statistics and much the same development that he had used in his letter to the New Orleans Item, seventeen years before in March of 1918. Thus only insofar as the Senator's tactics apparently included a presentation of his entire position in this speech is the development of the second issue of significance in regard to carrying out the strategy of this speech.

The third issue, or the exposition of the plan proper is also characteristic of many of his radio addresses. Like the second issue its main significance, in regard to strategy, is that it indicates that Long decided to cover his entire position, and plead for adherents for his "Share Our Wealth" society. Yet only in regard to the slighting of some of the
planks in his platform in his development of this issue much different than it had been on many previous occasions. The thing that is most unique about this speech is the development of the first issue.

An examination of Long's previous radio addresses had indicated his tendency to approach a new audience warily. He characteristically used a great deal of authority and much logical proof in developing his ideas before a new and possibly hostile audience. In his first radio addresses he seldom used ethical proof and his attacks on the Roosevelt administration were few and gentle. He used humor and ridicule sparingly. Perhaps the fact that he had over a number of years developed the reputation of being something of a clown, caused him to adopt these forensic methods to make the transition to a serious candidate.

The first tactical move that Long made after the Johnson speech (aside, of course, from the hornet's nest that he stirred up in the Senate, which undoubtedly was partially designed for the publicity he would receive from it) was to bargain with the network officials for more time. He had been originally scheduled to speak for thirty minutes but he managed to gain an additional fifteen minutes, giving him forty-five altogether.

"By a bit of clever bargaining, he had assured himself of fifteen extra minutes, a full three-quarters of an hour. When the broadcasting people offered him the time, they informed him that there had been a great demand from stations all over the country to join the hook-up.

'If that's the case,' said Long, 'I think I ought to be paid. I wouldn't mention it,' he continued, 'if I were trying to get some time from you. But if the people are demanding to hear me... I think you ought to pay me.'

The broadcasting company decided to compromise by offering him an extra fifteen minutes, which was all he wanted in the first place."

With the longer time on the air, Long decided that he would try to analyze the maldistribution of wealth, carefully explain his plan, and in addition attack the administration and launch his own prestige campaign before a great new audience. In other words all the things that he had apparently been trying to do in a series of addresses he now seemed to have decided to attempt in one forty-five minute speech. Not only that, but this speech was to include many new listeners, which meant that Long, if he ran true to form, would have to approach them very carefully in regard to attacking the administration and in his use of ethical appeal. Long was faced therefore with the task of developing in about fifteen minutes an attitude within the mind of a new audience that would allow him directly to attack President Roosevelt and build up his own prestige. He had an advantage in this instance of appearing in the role of the underdog, as a man
attacked by almost overwhelming forces. Nevertheless it was a challenging situation, and how well Long met it can indicate to a large measure, how skillful and persuasive a speaker he really was.

Thus in examining the speech in relation to its historical context and Long's personal attributes the main emphasis will be given to the introduction of the speech, the conclusion, and the development of the first issue, namely that Roosevelt is to blame for the present crises.

Introduction

The theme of the introduction is war, funerals, and death. War involves Senator Long and the administration, death and funerals involve General Johnson and the NRA. When a queen dies in a far away land her first favorite is given the honor of being buried alive with her, Long says. He leaves the audience to make the inference that Johnson is being buried with the NRA.

Still carrying through the analogy of death, Long claims there is about to be a funeral procession for the NRA, and taking note of the fact that Johnson's speech at the Redbook Magazine banquet was on the occasion of the publication of the General's memoirs, Long goes on to say that the speech of Johnson's was "...delivered on the eve of the announcing of the publication of his own obituary in the Redbook Magazine."
This theme is concluded when Long likens General Johnson to the colored lady in Mississippi who said at a funeral, "I is the wife of these remains." Thus the introduction serves to give the impression that Johnson is a discredited man or, in Long's figure, "A dead dodo."

While discrediting Johnson, Long is careful to give the impression that the NRA Administrator is not important; that the real war is between the Roosevelt administration and himself. According to the Senator, Johnson was selected by the White House to lead the attack, but he was only the vanguard of many attackers. Long says that Johnson's speech "...was followed by a fluster and flurry on behalf of the administration spellbinders in and out of Congress."

The introduction is charged with interest devices. A striking first sentence, appeals to interest in conflict and humor, analogies and anecdotes are combined to catch the attention of his audience. But the introduction serves a further purpose; it helps to remove, or at least to minimize, the unfavorable impression of the speaker that had previously been established by his opponent. This Long accomplishes by claiming that his opponent is a discredited man."

Thus Long begins to carry out his strategy in the introduction to the speech. He mentions Johnson and takes advantage of the interest aroused by Johnson's attack; then he
begins to shift attention to his war with the administration, laying the groundwork for the attempt to discredit the administration that is to follow in the body of the speech. He begins the prestige campaign for himself by suggesting that Johnson, who attacked him so viciously, is in reality a discredited man. Long points out the direction the speech shall take when he says, "I shall undertake to cover my main subject and make answer to these gentlemen...it will serve no useful purpose to our distressed people for me to call my opponents more bitter names than they called me."

Development Of The First Issue.

To begin the development of this argument Long raises the issue in the form of a question. "What is the trouble with this administration of Mr. Roosevelt and of Mr. Johnson, Mr. Farley, Mr. Astor and all their spoilers and spellbinders?" In this question Long is careful to put Roosevelt first and then bring in his supporters, including Mr. Farley, whom he has been attacking so viciously in the Senate, and Mr. Astor, a well known financier, as well as Johnson. Thus Long reinforces the impression that this battle is not between Johnson and Long but between Long and the Roosevelt administration.

In attacking the Roosevelt administration one of the most subtle and plausible devices that the Louisianan Senator uses is the Roosevelt-Hoover-depression stereotype. The
speaker, in analyzing the audience, seems to have decided that Hoover had become a stereotype of the depression, and if he could associate Roosevelt with Hoover in the minds of his audience, he would discredit the administration. Hoover indeed had come to be identified in the popular mind with the depression. Such terms as "Hooverize," and "Hooverville," had become part of the American vocabulary by 1935.206


"...those bleak settlements ironically known as 'Hoovervilles' in the outskirts of cities...groups of makeshift shacks constructed out of packing boxes."

Ironically enough President Roosevelt had helped to create the Hoover depression stereotype in his campaign of 1932,207 and Long now tries to turn the tables on the President


"...the issue of Republican responsibility for the depression, to which the Democratic nominee (Roosevelt) devoted no less than three major addresses (Columbus, August 20; Baltimore, October 25, and Boston, October 31)"

by identifying Roosevelt with the Hoover-depression stereotype that existed in many peoples' minds.

Long begins by maintaining that the only difference between Roosevelt and Hoover is that Roosevelt could get his program put into effect and Hoover could not.
By use of an analogy Long attempts to cement Roosevelt's name with Hoover's. He presents the comparison in this way: Roosevelt and Hoover have the same kitchen cabinet. There may be a difference in the waiters in the dining room, but the same old cooks are in the kitchen. Expressing the analogy in his characteristic down-to-earth idiom, Long says, "...the same set of old cooks are back there fixing up the vittles and grub for us that cooked up that mess under Hoover." He heightens the humor by introducing a detail, "There has never even been a change of seasoning."

Long then asks a lengthy question loaded with emotionally charged words, a leading question which suggests that the present situation is highly undesirable. The language is simple but particularly connotative. In effect, what Long asks is: Do you think this terrible program is original with Roosevelt? Whether the audience answered "yes" or "no" the assumption had been made and accepted that the program of the administration's was undesirable.

After answering the question in the negative, he goes on to amplify the "no" and further link Roosevelt's name with Hoover's by associating Roosevelt's farm program with that of the former president. Hoover proposed to plow up every fourth row of cotton, Long says. "What did Mr. Roosevelt propose to take the place of the Hoover program?" he asks, and then with sarcasm he answers, "It was to plow up every third row of
Long's point that the Roosevelt administration differed from Hoover's not so much in philosophy as in application was not only a clever bit of persuasion but was also a shrewd observation that historians would later partially vindicate.  


"In a sense Herbert Hoover rather than Franklin Roosevelt inaugurated the New Deal."


"Hoover was quite as much interested as Roosevelt later became in providing public works to take up the slack of depression unemployment."

Ibid, p. 650.

"Another Hoover policy with a definitely New-Dealish flavor was embodied in the Home Loan Bank Act of July 22, 1932."

In other words there was enough truth in this analysis to make it plausible and an extremely effective forensic weapon. Since Long based his case upon the assumption that the distribution of wealth had to be drastically altered, he was consistent and correct in maintaining that neither Hoover or Roosevelt had taken any steps to alter radically the way in which the wealth of the nation was distributed.

Another charge that Long makes in attacking the administration is that Roosevelt's programs are inefficient, fascist, and stupid. The Senator picked a timely aspect of
the administration's program to attack; one that was particularly vulnerable, the program associated in the public mind with General Johnson, the NRA. In picking the NRA to concentrate on, Long again gives evidence of his political acumen, his ability to discern the weaknesses of his enemies and to choose the most relevant and pertinent materials in developing his speeches. As our earlier examination of the NRA has indicated, by 1935 the program was generally discredited and certainly a weak spot in the New Deal's armour.

The NRA, Long charges, is fascist. He links it with the programs of Hitler and Mussolini. Parish and Huston say of Robert Ingersoll, "Against the religious dogma and practice of his day he let loose a terrific blast of coarse common sense."209


It might well be said that against the NRA Long let loose a terrific blast of coarse common sense, because his attack is reminiscent of the ridiculing technique of Ingersoll.

Everything from a peanut stand to a powerhouse had a separate book of rules and laws to regulate what they did. If the peanut stand started to sell a sack of goobers, they had to be careful to go through the rule book. One slip of the man and he went to jail. One fellow pressed a pair of pants and went to jail because he charged 5 cents less than the price set up

A tailor named Jack Magid in New Jersey was arrested, convicted, fined, and sent to jail. The crime was that he had pressed a suit of clothes for 35 cents when the Tailor’s code fixed the price at 40 cents.

So they wrote their NRA rule books, code laws and so forth, and got up over 900. One would be as thick as an unabridged dictionary and as confused as the study of the stars. It would take forty lawyers to tell a shoe shiner merchant how to operate and be sure he didn’t go to jail. Some people come to me for advice as a lawyer...I couldn’t understand it myself. The only thing I could tell them was it couldn’t be much worse in jail than it was out of jail with that kind of thing going on in the country...

Here was audience adaption with a vengeance. Long takes the examples of malpractice and administrative red tape in the NRA and dramatizes them, explaining them in the language that his audience can understand. The satire appeals to the natural interest in humor, and through it all is a strain of ethical appeal. The NRA codes were so complicated that Long could not understand them either. He feels that they are ridiculous. The audience can identify itself with Long.

Long is careful to go over the head of Johnson and to link the NRA with Roosevelt. He attacks the NRA again making a humorous reference to one case that reached the Supreme Court, but was dismissed because the court could not find the right rule book. He then branches out from the NRA and includes the "...F.W.A, W.R.A, G.I.N.S, and every other flimsy combination,"
and asserts that these programs have "...ran the whole country into a mare's nest." Long's criticism of the NRA was shrewd and telling. The codes really were unwieldy and difficult to administer and they did involve a degree of regimentation that many people rebelled against. All in all his attack on the NRA was ably done. It was a good analysis presented in concrete and telling terms. The ridiculing technique was particularly devastating.

Carl Mote evaluates Long, the New Deal critic, this way:

Long understood Roosevelt perhaps better than any other contemporary politician and since Long was ruthless in pursuit of an enemy and possessed great ability to dramatize an attack, until Long's death, the New Deal bureaucracy had a worthy foe. There has been none since his death.211


Long's Prestige Campaign

Long begins his ethical appeals in the introduction of his speech and as he moves into the body of his discourse and the development of the first part of his speech. Instead of only pointing out the faults of the administration, he pauses to assess the blame for the present economic situation. There is definite evidence that he follows this development because the issue of "who is to blame?" gives him an opportunity
to make a powerful ethical appeal. In doing this he was adapting to the audience situation as he saw it and to the occasion. The occasion gave him an opportunity to pose as an underdog unjustly attacked a good opening for his prestige campaign.

The administration tries to blame him, Long says, but he is not to blame. Here he weaves into his speech a particularly effective and pertinent folk tale. 212 "They are like old

212. Davis, op. cit., p. 293.

"I culled a selection of folk sayings from Long's speeches as they had fallen from him in the heat of harangue, indicating long familiarity. This anthology I read, as a test, to my father, who as a boy after the Civil War was taken by his father to Northwestern Ohio... My father nodded his head comprehendingly over each locution, with the pleasure of hearing the half-forgotten metaphors of childhood. The idiom had been in the speech of Northwestern Ohio as in that of Winn Parish."

David Crockett," he says. David Crockett, it seems, went out possum hunting. He saw a possum jumping from tree to tree and shot, but he missed. He still saw the possum, so he shot again, once again he missed. Then he discovered it was not a possum at all but a louse in his own eyebrow. Long applies the lesson without violence or vituperation. "I do not make this illustration to do discredit to any of these distinguished gentlemen; I make it to show how often some of us imagine that we see great trouble being done to us by some one at a
distance, when in reality all it may be is a fault in our own make-up." Thus he issues a tactful rebuke to his opponents and appeals to humor with one well chosen illustration. The way Long handles this story is skillful indirect suggestion and good ethical proof.213


"...a speaker's good will is revealed through his ability to offer necessary rebukes with tact and consideration."

Long goes on to maintain that the Roosevelt administration feels that after its experiments have failed it can help itself by attacking those who told them that these programs would fail. Here Long leaves the suggestion with his hearers that he has been right, and his opponents have been wrong. This ethical appeal is designed to show his listeners that he is an intelligent man who has been able to predict the future. He further suggests that he is being unjustly attacked by those who really are at fault. These appeals help overcome the negative aspects of his clown reputation.

As Long develops the Hoover-Roosevelt-depression stereotype, he several times identifies himself as an enemy of Hoover's policies. Thus he says, of Hoover, "...we managed to lick him on a roll call in the United States Senate time after time." and a little later while talking of Hoover's
farm program he notes; "We laughed him to scorn, and so we beat Mr. Hoover on his plan." After his attack on the Administration, Long reinforces the idea that he has been vindicated by the logic of events; that his analysis and predictions of the Roosevelt and Hoover programs has been correct. This passage is heavy with ethical appeal:

And now on top of that, they ordered a war on me because nearly four years ago I told Hoover's crowd, it won't do, and because three years ago I told Roosevelt and his crowd, it won't do. In other words, they are in a rage at Huey Long because I have had to say 'I told you so.'

As he draws to a close the development of the first part of his speech, Long's appeals to establish the probity of his character become more direct. He reiterates again that Roosevelt is to blame, and that he (Long) analyzed the situation correctly. In fact he says that he was the first man to see the problem correctly.

I was one of the first men to say publicly, Mr. Roosevelt followed in my track a few months later...we said that all of our trouble and woe was due to the fact that too few of our people owned too much of the wealth... So I said to the people of the United States...in the early part of 1932...I said then as I have said since... So we convinced Mr. Franklin Delano Roosevelt that it was necessary that he announce and promise to the American people that in the event he was elected President he would pull down the size of the big man's fortune and guarantee something to every family...Mr. Roosevelt made those promises...But no heart has ever been so saddened, no person's ambition was ever so blighted as was mine when I came to the realization that the President of the United States was not going to do what he said he would...

This is the most important part of the development of
the first issue. After his attack on the administration and his attempt to build up his prestige, Long here drives home that point that he has been leading up to all through the first part of the speech. There have been indications as the speech progressed, starting with the story of David Crockett, developed first with humor, the thread picked up and reiterated, again, developed at greater length, the attack gradually becoming stronger and more direct, until finally Long answers the question he raised at the beginning of the consideration of this issue. What is the trouble with the Roosevelt administration? The answer, according to Long, is Roosevelt; Roosevelt with the louse in his eyebrow, Roosevelt whose program is the same as that of Hoover, Roosevelt who foisted Hugh Johnson and the NRA on the people, Roosevelt who followed Long's lead (the inference is for political purposes) before the election and promised to distribute the wealth more equally, but did not keep the faith after the election.

Long's judgment has been vindicated by the trend of events, for Long voted against the Hoover and the Roosevelt programs; the programs that have done nothing to avert the crises. The real cause of the problem is the unequal distribution of wealth which these programs do not remedy; Long is still fighting for a more equal distribution of wealth, and is being attacked unjustly by the people who are really to
This is the way that Long carries out his strategy in this speech. He sidesteps a personal feud with Johnson and moves in to attack and discredit the Roosevelt administration and build up his own character, sagacity, and good will. He does this cleverly, lodging the ideas on the fringes of the attention early in the speech, using humor, then growing suddenly serious, building minor emotional climaxes but always changing pace with a bit of humor, and always returning to the basic theme that the blame is with the administration, until at the end of this section his appeal on this major proposition is direct, sustained, and deadly serious.

By the end of this part of the speech, Long apparently feels that he has developed in the audience an attitude that will allow him to continue his attacks on the administration through the course of the speech in a more direct and forthright manner. At all times his attacks on the administration and his ethical appeals are closely interwoven and they are reiterated throughout the remainder of the speech. Typical of the sort of appeals that Long uses in this regard is the emotional climax he builds to after the development of the second part of his plan. After explaining that he stands for better educational opportunity, he says:

I cannot deliver that promise to the youth of this land tonight, but I am doing my part. I am standing the blows,
I am hearing the charges hurled from the four quarters of the country. It is the same fight which has been made against me in Louisiana when I was undertaking to provide the free school books, the free buses, the cheap university facilities and things of that kind to educate the youth of that state, it is the same blare which I heard when I was undertaking to provide for the sick and afflicted in Louisiana, where they are provided for as nowhere else in the whole world.

When the youth of this land, however, realize what is meant and what is contemplated in the "Share our Wealth" program, that it means an absolute, complete training and educational training for them, regardless of their financial billingsgate and profanity all the Farleys and Johnsons in America can't prevent the light of truth from hurling their understanding letters against the dark canopy of the sky.

Conclusion

Long's conclusion is a combination of emotional appeal and what Sarett and Foster call a "conclusion of application."214


"His (the speaker's) closing words should make the course to be taken crystal clear. He may ask his audience to sign a petition, buy bonds, vote for him...The end of a speech is the place to answer the question, "What of it?" to tell those present exactly what they can and should do about it."

Long devotes a fairly large proportion of his time to his conclusion and carefully builds to the greatest emotional climax of the speech.

The language is simple but emotionally charged and the conclusion is well adapted to the audience and to the economic conditions of 1935.

"This country cannot continue to go as it is at this
time." Long says, "There is such misery as ought to reach the heart of every man; ...I have letters before me and they come to my office by the hundreds and by the thousands and they describe conditions more pitiful than have ever been." This is the key to the technique Long uses in the conclusion. He reads testimonial letters, a radio practice that is still current. Long uses this common advertising practice to help him sell his "Share Our Wealth" program.

The letters are simple and touching. They all tell of severe economic want. Here is a typical example:

I have a letter from Little Rock, Ark. Here is a poor woman trying to get something to do;...she says: "I can't make a living. I wanted to get a job where I could be at home when the boy comes from school, and I do want to to finish him at school. He is in the eighth A grade. God will surely bless you if you will help me get a job. I have no money to live on. Sincerely.

Long's next line is powerful, simple but full of emotional overtones. "That," says Long, "is just a letter from a mother."

The letter itself is extremely well chosen. Short, written in a style that gives it the stamp of authenticity, it contains within it strong appeals to sympathy. The mother cannot make a living. She has no money to live on. She is worried and proud of her son; she wants him to go to school. The line, "He is in the eighth A grade." is eloquent. It is not pertinent to the subject of the letter, yet it reveals all the pride of the mother in her son and is the sort of thing
that makes the letter sound genuine.

The reference to education that Long has stressed in developing his plan, is echoed in this letter, and finally there is a religious flavor to the letter reflected in the call to the Deity, "God will surely bless you if you will help me..."

The next letter is "from a poor nigger down in our country." The sentiment of the letter is much the same as the others,"...extreme hunger and actual distress." The final letter that Long reads also is well selected:

We do not have shoes and clothing to keep us warm.
You go to the ERA office to ask for help. They look at you slant-eyed, just as good as to say, 'What sort of a creature are you and what zoo did you escape from?'
The office helper is always well dressed and drives good cars, while we are hungry and naked."

While this letter again points up the poverty, it also makes another appeal. It appeals to the sense of irritation and frustration with the administrative red tape of relief organizations. It appeals as well to the rankling of the pride that goes with asking for help.

"That is what is going on...Ladies and Gentlemen." Long grows more emotional, "...we are going on and on with the St. Vitus dance of the Roosevelt depression...the plight becoming worse and worse as time goes on. The only relief that we have in sight is to share our wealth."

The sense of climax grows more intense as with short staccato sentences, parallel in structure, Long makes
the application and tells them exactly what course of action
they should follow.

Won't you write me tonight? Won't you write me tomorrow?
Won't you organize a "share our wealth" society? If
you want a copy of my speech, write to me. If you want
the statistics to prove anything I have said, write to
me. Organize a "share-our-wealth" society in your community;
write to me, Huey P. Long, United States Senate, Washington,
D. C.

At the beginning of this passage the sentences are
short, consisting of questions all starting with "won't you..."
Then there is a short transition of two sentences starting
with "If you want..." At the end of the section Long is using
imperative sentences. The command is to organize a society
and "write to me." The "write to me" refrain gives unity and
coherence to the whole section and is reiterated over and over
again. The phrase "write to me" appears in five of the six
sentences in this section. Five times in the course of these
few sentences Long pleads, "write to me" there is little doubt
about what course of action his auditors should take.

Long has now come to the emotional climax of his
speech.

I will send you the credentials, I will send you the
material, but get out and organize your friends; let's
make the fight, let's make the politicians keep the
promises or vote somebody into office that will keep
the promise that in this land of abundance none shall
have too much, none shall have too little; in the land
of too much to eat and too much to wear and too many
homes to live in, and too many automobiles to ride in,
that we shall see the blessings of this land given us
by God and by mankind, shall be reasonably shared by
all our people.
Huey Long was finished. He ended by saying "I thank you!"

The conclusion involved the longest sustained emotional build up and the greatest climax of the speech. Long fulfills the criteria that Sarett and Foster suggest when they say "The emotional conclusion is effective, if used with due restraint, after a speaker has established a foundation that justifies deep feeling. Moreover, this type of conclusion is inherently climactic."215


Long's conclusion might be characterized, then, as an emotional conclusion of application.
Long's Dramatization of His Plan

In this speech Long develops his plan in a series of six proposals. He gives most of his attention to the first three planks of his platform and handles the last three in briefer fashion. The first proposal is to tax the rich and guarantee every family a $5,000 homestead; the second is to guarantee everyone an education through college; the third is to guarantee a minimum yearly income of $2,500 for every family. The fourth proposal is for Long's farm program; the fifth involves an old age pension; and the sixth calls for a veteran's bonus. It is plain that the first three proposals carry the widest appeal since they encompass the greatest number of people. The last three appeal mostly to minority groups; the farmers, the old people and the veterans.

Long spends about one half of his forty-five minutes developing and explaining his plan. In doing so he points out that his proposal is to the best interest of his audience; in line with its standards of ethics and ideals; approved by the majority of the people; and backed by the judgment of experts.216

"Not all persuasive speeches proceed in the same fashion, but they have a community of method by which they are marked...here is a checklist...

2. Show the audience how the proposal is in accord with:
   a. its own best interests;
   b. its standards of ethics and ideals;
   c. the opinion of the majority;
   d. the judgment of experts."

The plan, Long explains, is "for the redistribution of the wealth and for guaranteeing comfort and convenience to all humanity out of the abundance of our country." Long recognizes that his program might be considered radical by some of his audience when he says, "I hope none will be horror-stricken..." Long continues, "Think first that such is the declaration on which Mr. Roosevelt rode into nomination and election to President of the United States." This is an attempt not only to put the authority of Roosevelt's name behind the proposal, but to point out that since Roosevelt was elected on such a program, the authority of the majority of the people would seem to be behind it as well. (The opinion of the majority)

Long, next injects a bit of ethical proof into the discourse. "While my urgings are declared by some to be the ravings of a madman, and, by such men as General Johnson, as insincere bait for a pied piper, if you will listen to me you will find that it is stating the law handed down by God to man." (The proposal is in accord with the standards of ethics
and ideals held by the audience.)

The Pilgrim Fathers were advocates of share the wealth, says Long. To substantiate this point he quotes from the contract of the pilgrims. "You will find that what I am advocating is the cornerstone on which nearly every religion since the beginning of man has been founded."

Then the speaker claims that:

It was urged by Lord Bacon, by Milton, by Shakespeare in England; by Socrates, by Plato, by Diogenes and the other wisest of the philosophers of ancient Greece; by Pope Pius XI in the Vatican; by the world's greatest inventor, Marconi, in Italy; Daniel Webster, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Abraham Lincoln, Andrew Jackson, William Jennings Bryan and Theodore Roosevelt in the United States, as well as by nearly all of the thousands of great men whose names are mentioned in history.

This section reinforces the idea that Long in speaking to a new audience realized that he had some resistance to overcome for his plan and for himself. As he put it, some people may be "horror stricken" at the "Share Our Wealth" program. Some people may believe that his speeches are "the ravings of a madman," or the "insincere bait for a pied piper." To overcome any such feeling he emphasized that his plan was not unusual but actually as old as the Bible and that it was advocated by many great and revered men. In this section Long's argument is very close to what Baird calls "Substitution of authority for argument."217

"A third fallacy...occurs when the talk refers not to the truth or falsity of a proposition but to the fact that some alleged authority supports it. We must make clear the legitimate use of authority as one of the methods of supporting an argument and the identification of the authority with some idea in order that the prestige of the speaker may carry through successfully the given proposition."

Because of the new audience he also relied heavily upon authority. Here he once again links his cause with great names and revered institutions. However, since he was attempting to cover much more ground than usual in this address he links only the names with his cause rather than quoting the words of each authority. (In earlier speeches he often quoted at length from these authorities.) While Long had gleaned quotations from the writings of many well-known men to the effect that it was desirable that the wealth of the land be shared more equitably it should be noted that none of them had actually gone on record as favoring Long's specific plan. Here Long makes a neat transference of the authority and prestige of men who at some time in their careers made statements that could be interpreted as being in favor of a more equitable sharing of wealth, to his specific plan, which he elegantly called "Share Our Wealth." In effect what Long was saying was that these men advocated sharing the
wealth (i.e. the general principle of distributing wealth more evenly), and that therefore they were for "Share Our Wealth" (i.e. the Long plan with its six specific proposals.)

So when Long applies these authorities to his specific plan as he does when he says, "...that plan, taken from these leaders of all times and from the Bible,...that plan of our Share Our Wealth society..." he is indulging in a practice that cannot be condoned from an ethical viewpoint. While it is effective persuasive technique it is a misrepresentation of facts, a shady use of authority and an example of Long's political ethics (the end justifies the means) in action.

Thus before Long begins the exposition of his plan, because he feels that in a new audience some resistance to his plan and personality is likely, he first shows the audience that his proposal is in accord with the opinion of the majority, the judgment of experts, and the popular standards of ethics and ideals.

The Senator then goes into the plan itself. He says, "I propose first that every big fortune will be cut down immediately." He handles the exposition of the point in specific fashion, "We would send everyone a questionnaire..." Then he traces two examples to show how it would work. He develops this part deductively. He states in general language what he proposes, "I propose that the surplus of all the big fortunes go into the United States ownership." He applies
this general proposition to two specific cases. He examines the cases of Henry Ford and the Rockefellers. All the individual assets of Henry Ford over $4,000,000 would be turned over to the National Government. If this were done with all large fortunes Long estimates that the government would receive about $165,000,000,000 to $175,000,000,000. People with property amounting to from $5,000 to $4,000,000 would not be affected by Long's plan, but those with assets of less than $5,000 would be given enough so that everyone would have a minimum of $5,000 worth of property. Here the Senator shows how his plan would be to the best interests of that share of his audience who had less than $5,000 worth of property. This appeal to personal gain is the basic appeal which Long uses in developing his plan and dramatizing it. He recurs to it again and again. With this appeal Long was putting into practice the shrewd analysis of the American audience that he made to an interviewer when he said, "I know what American's want. A radio, a car, some money in his pockets -- that's all any American cares about."219


In Middletown in Transition the Linds found that the one business that did not decrease appreciable during the depression was the gas station business.

In this way Long makes his argument concrete and vital
to his audience. He answers the question, "What is in this for me?" by saying, "...every family would start life again with homestead possession of at least a home and the comforts needed for a home, including such things as a radio and an automobile."

The thing to notice about the exposition of Long's plan is the simple, clear, common sense way he develops it. Long does not talk in generalities. He talks in terms of $165,000,000,000 and $5,000, he speaks of automobiles, radios and homes. Thus he dramatizes his plan, makes it seem real and close to his listener, makes it seem understandable and practical.

This first part of Long's plan would not take all the wealth that had been confiscated. Approximately $65,000,000,000 would remain. With this the Senator would accomplish the second part of his program, "That we turn our attention to the children and to the youth of the land, providing first for their education and training." This educational program would involve not only elementary and secondary school, but also college and vocational or professional school for every child. For those who could not afford to pay their own living expenses the government would pay their way. Here is an echo of Long's early educational experiences and the frustration that he felt at being unable to go to college.

The next plank in the "Share Our Wealth" platform
provides that the hours of work per week will be cut to about thirty; the working year is to be cut to eleven months so that everyone can have a one month's vacation. A minimum earning will be established for every person with a family to support of not less than $2,500 per year.

The fourth part of Long's plan is his agricultural program. It would be that "specified in the Bible." Long would differ with the administration: "We would plow up no crops; we would burn no corn and throw no milk in the river; shoot no hogs and slaughter no cattle to rot." This is a return to the attack on the administration and once again Long picks the most vulnerable aspect of an unpopular program. Our earlier analysis has suggested that the AAA programs that involved crop and livestock destruction were highly unpopular. Long attacks this program with direct, concrete and connotative language. Instead of following the administration's program Long would "...store the surplus in the government warehouses for the next year." When the warehouses contained a year's supply, there would be an agricultural holiday and no crops would be raised that year. That would be the time when the government work projects would be carried out in that region. If the farmers had additional spare time "...some of us who have grown old would go back to school and learn some of the things we forgot since we became grown, and maybe learn some of the things they didn't know anything about when we were
Long's time apparently was running out, for he handled the next two parts of his plan in a few words. "...an old-age pension to everyone above sixty..." We also include in our program that we will not quibble about the soldier's bonus..."

Long's strategy in this speech was to cover his entire position. His analysis of the economic troubles in the country; his program to remedy this situation; and his attack on the administration must have built up the impression in the minds of his listeners that instead of being a clown he was actually an intelligent, hard-headed politician. Certainly this was a man-sized job for a forty-five minute speech. When Long discovered that he did not have time to develop all the planks in his platform completely he slighted the programs that appealed primarily to minority groups (many of whom would also undoubtedly find the first three planks attractive). This seems to have been a wise and natural decision. With Long's motivation, the attack on the administration and his own prestige campaign could not be slighted. He had already carefully and at length explained the first three parts of his program, the parts that carried the widest and most tangible appeal. Thus in slighting these last planks he seems to have followed the predictable and natural course.

There were large elements of exposition in Long's
speech. The language and economics involved were simply handled and easily understood. In dealing with his plan he talked in terms of dollars and cents which helped to dramatize its appeal. The outstanding characteristics of this expository development were its clearness and vividness.

Raymond Moley comments, "Wallace, seeking eminence as a leader of the masses, cannot convey in his oratory the notion that he knows what the masses want. He cannot enlist the zeal of the necessitous, because he cannot reduce his offering to concrete terms, as could Huey Long."220

220. Moley, 27 Masters of Politics, p. 86.

The Plan As A Forensic Weapon

As a forensic weapon, Long's plan was well forged. It seemed concrete and specific and yet in important particulars it was vague. Like the Technocrats, Long made the promise of more abundance and less work, but unlike the Technocrats Long did not abandon money and the price system. Indeed in working out his plan he emphasized the identification of money and wealth. Since this identification was easy for his audience to make it made Long's program seem feasible.

When Long said that a man who owns $200,000,000 would be allowed to keep $4,000,000 and the other $196,000,000 dollars would be divided among the people who had less than
$5,000 dollars, it sounds simple and easy to do, so long as the identification between wealth and money is kept rigid. As Long develops his plan it sounds as though the wealthy people will turn over to the national treasury a great amount of hard cash money and this money in turn will be distributed to the underprivileged. Of course this is a rather drastic over-simplification of wealth in a complex economy and of its relation to money. Actually many financiers with assets valued among the millions would not have anywhere near that much cash money. Much of their wealth would consist of land, factories, equipment, and other means of production, which would be impossible to divide and distribute as one would cash. But this functional weakness is its forensic strength; this oversimplification makes the plan easy to understand.

Raymond Swing put his finger on the main question. "It may be as simple as a box of kindergarten blocks, but could he win mass votes, or organize nearly four million people in eight months, by distributing a primer of economics?" 221

221. Swing, Forerunners of American Fascism, p. 102.

Now critics of Long's plan had to try to divorce wealth and money. This made their analysis seem complex and abstruse to the popular mind long accustomed to making the identification in their daily affairs. Hugh Johnson points this out in his speech of the 4th of March when he says, "It
is not what these men say that is dangerous it is the devilish ingenuity of their way of saying it... that's language anybody can understand. And the tortured talk and $4 words with which the economists answer him is too much for 99% of the people, including myself."


Garelton Beals sums up Long’s plan this way:

Of course as vote-getting bait for a power mechanism, a cat-skinning process, nothing more astute than Huey’s plan was ever invented... Most people are dissatisfied but at the same time afraid to change. They want to have their cake and eat it too. Huey did just that — on paper. The social evils would be corrected and the capitalist system saved. 223

223. Beals, op. cit., p. 311.

Beals goes on to point out the vagueness of Long’s plan and the advantages that this vagueness gives it as a forensic weapon:

Also, the vagueness of Huey’s plan, and vague it was despite its dazzling use of astronomical figures in a beggar’s bank account, has the further advantage that, not being specific, it permits of political trading with other groups. Originally Huey advocated a $30 old age pension plan; this now reads ‘an adequate old age pension.’ Reverend Smith told me, "We discovered that we were running foul of $40 pension advocates and $100 pension advocates and the Townsend $200 advocates, so we decided to put in the word ‘adequate’ and let every man name his own figure. This attracted a lot of Townsendites to us."

224. Ibid. p. 311
Another feature of Long's plan that made it a valuable forensic weapon was its appropriateness for the times. The political economic climate of 1932-1935 was ready and ripe for such a simple concrete scheme with its plausibility and its promise of a new abundance. The rapid growth of various radical groups and the popularity of panaceas of various types that have been considered in some detail in the third chapter all point up the mood and temper of the people that this plan is well designed to exploit.

Long's Plan As A Course Of Action

As a forensic weapon Long's plan was cleverly designed, skillfully presented, and extremely effective. But to evaluate this plan as a skillful persuasive technique is not enough. To fully judge Long as a speaker and to better evaluate the integrity of his ideas it is necessary to consider "The 'truth' of the idea in functional existence." 225


"...the integrity of ideas can be judged through three principal means; determination...(3) of the "truth" of the idea in functional existence."

It is necessary to consider the question, "Would Long's plan, if put into operation, have produced the results he claimed?"

This is a complex question with ramifications in the
field of rhetorical ethics. Three things must be kept in mind while making judgments; (1) some aspects of Long's pro-
gram have since been adopted, (2) the plan as presented undoubtly would not have produced all the results Long so dramatically claimed it would and (3) there is some evidence
that Long while keeping his plan simple so that his listeners could easily grasp what his goals were was actually planning on a much more complex and comprehensive scale.

Many aspects of Long's program have been absorbed into present governmental activity. His farm program is very similar to the storage policies of the Commodity Credit
Corporation. Old age pensions are a reality in all the states of the union, and the veterans were paid their bonus in 1936. In addition more stringent income tax laws since 1935 have to a large measure done what Long was advocating with his capital levy; namely to siphon off a large share of higher bracket in-
come into the United States Treasury. The concept of Federal
Aid to education is still a lively one and may indeed have more vitality today than it had in 1935 when Long was advoca-
ting it. Thus, many of Long's programs have proven themselves to be worthwhile.

Despite the worth of some of his ideas there is little doubt that if his program would have been put into effect in March of 1935 it would have failed to do all that
he said it would do.

Long's plan, if implemented, could not have produced a $5,000 homestead, including a home and the comforts of home, an automobile and a radio.

It is highly doubtful if Long's plan as he explained it could have worked at all. The most glaring weakness was involved in his identification of money and wealth. How, his critics asked, could the tracks and rolling stock of a railroad, once confiscated by the government be divided among the people to furnish them with an automobile or a radio? And yet, if they could not be so divided how could Long make good on his promise. He had counted the book value of this equipment into his total of wealth to be distributed.

Raymond Swing attacks Long's plan on this point when he says;

...property as such cannot be redistributed. How, for instance divide a factory or a railroad among families? Value lies in use, and if the scheme were to be realized, all property would have to be nationalized, and the income from use distributed.226


Caretton Beals makes the same charge:

It should be noted that much of our total wealth is in purely latent resources, not exploitable for a long time to come. This and the 24 billions in warships, museums, churches, libraries, schools, public buildings, etc., can scarcely be distributed, nor the billion invested in highways, bridges, ports, dams, parks, etc...By what magic
are railways, factories, mines, forests, highways, schools, oil wells, battleships, etc., to be converted into a house and lot, an automobile and a radio, and a bank account for every family in the nation? A levy on excess capital would not turn the trick.227


Isaac Lippincott, Professor of Economics at Washington University, explains the argument in greater detail:

One curious fact about man-made abundance is that it exists more largely in the things which create well-being than in the actual commodities which administer to your immediate wants. Herein is a fragment of the illusion of plenty. This is a part cause for the misconceptions of former Huey Long...Lest you fail to understand this statement it is worth the time to put it in other words. The thought is that a great portion of the things which we call wealth are not in a form in which you and I can use them for immediate consumption. These things consist largely of farm land, factories, railroads, machine tools, and many crude products on their way to manufacture...you will discover that over 71 per cent of this wealth is in real estate, plant and equipment and approximately another 5 per cent is in transportation and transmission enterprises...This means that upwards of 76 per cent of our enormous wealth is locked in the preparatory things...If the physical wealth were divided you might get a worn-out locomotive, or a freight car, or possibly a couple of dozen telephone receivers and a few loads of sand...228

228. Lippincott, Isaac, Sold Out, pp. 9-11.

It is obvious that Long's plan as presented could not produce the benefits that he claimed it would. On the surface it would seem to have been as Carleton Beals charges, "...a turnip on the end of a stick in front of about 7,000,000 people
in this country to keep them hopefully plugging for him." 229


Previous evidence would indicate that Long was too clever a man to have deluded himself into believing that this simple scheme would do all the things he claimed it would. It is easy then to assume that Long was a cynical charlatan exploiting the people with this plan. Indeed this is the charge sometimes made in heat of controversy during the years 1934-1935. But there is evidence to indicate that such a judgment is an oversimplification. Long was extremely ambitious and vindictive, but he also was a doer. His career in Louisiana indicated that he would deliver on his promises if he possibly could. It is hard to escape the feeling that there was a streak of vanity in Long that made him proud of accomplishing the things that he had promised to do.

The often candid Long once wrote in a campaign circular:

...It could be my vanity that makes me work and fight for these things...Maybe...it is not any deep feeling that I have for schools and school children that caused me to want to give students free books or see them educated; maybe it's no love of mine for the cause of distressed humanity...that causes me to sponsor this plan...it may be that I simply want to have the vanity and pride in my heart satisfied so that I can say that I did those things, -- but what matters? I would use any person on earth whom I thought of service to help do good of that kind regardless of his motive. If I saw a wagon going my way, as long as it goes that way, I would ride in it,
no matter who was driving the wagon.230


And, of course, in addition to this motivation, Long did have a sincere desire to see the wealth shared more equitably. This leads to the consideration of a possibility that Raymond Swing suggests when he says, "It (the plan) isn't meant to be specific. It is only to convey to the unhappy people that he believes in a new social order in which the minimum of poverty is drastically raised, the rich somehow to foot the bill..."231

231. Swing, Forerunners of American Fascism, p. 102.

Further substantiation for this point of view can be gathered from two sources. Long's own book My First Days in the White House and Forrest Davis' biography Huey Long.

In My First Days in the White House, Long pretends that he has been successful in the election of 1936 and describes his administration and the way he implements his program. His farm program is substantially the same as developed in this speech, his educational plank is much the same, but there is a change in the capital levy part of his program. This change will take care of the argument that wealth cannot be distributed since it consists mostly of producer rather than
consumer goods. In this book Long suggests the establishment of, ...a federal organization to be incorporated under the name of the Federal Share Our Wealth Corporation. We propose that it shall operate as a steward and trustee for the American people...the corporation would hold all the private stock in trust for the American people and issue its own stock for redistribution to the people who lacked their fair share of American wealth.232


While this would answer the arguments of those who said wealth could not be shared by simple division, Long's plan as presented in this book would not furnish nearly enough income to deliver all the benefits he had promised. As Raymond Swing points out, "The income from $5,000 would not be much for each family, not more than $200 or $300, certainly not enough to make true the dream of a home free of debt, a motor car, an electric refrigerator..."234


But this is not the significant part of *My First Days in the White House*. What is significant is the hint of a still greater and more comprehensive plan. Long describes a grandiose river development program of flood control, electrical power development and irrigation. He writes of this plan, "There are 1,600 individual projects, including navigation improvements, reservoirs, levees, irrigation, and dams..."
scattered through virtually every state in the Union..."235

Long, My First Days in the White House, p. 29.

Long describes how he calls in the Mayo brothers and asks them to take over the project of organizing a federal medical research center, "...the finest laboratory on the face of the globe," and briefly, Long, mentions government control of the railroads. This hint of a more comprehensive plan is further amplified in Forrest Davis' book. Davis describes interviewing Long at length, and the results of that interview seem pertinent enough to justify a detailed examination.

Davis begins by saying:

I stumbled on the fact that Senator Long is "planning" for America. He, I am sure, did not intend to have it known. He said: "I don't like to talk about those things. I don't want people to get the idea that I'm a dreamer or a visionary. The way I want people to regard Huey P. Long is as a shrewd politician, shrewd and hard. 236

According to Davis, Long was struck by the theory of plenty. He was said to be familiar with Harold Loeb's A Chart of Plenty, and with the Technocrats.237 Long called in a group of experts to help him map out his program, and Davis describes how the plan evolved and grew in scope:

235. Long, My First Days in the White House, p. 29.


...when Huey and the experts took to figuring how they might provide homesteads for families in three-room, cold-water flats in New York's lower east side, they were forced to elevate their sights to the whole problem of decent modern housing for the masses. That led to the stubborn question of what should be done in the power age with cities built for a railroad age. The matter of removing stranded city populations to the country, for so-called subsistence farmer, led to the thought of decentralizing industry. And, when they came to consider what expedients the state, guaranteeing a family wage, would be put to in supplying work to justify the wage, they entered upon the exciting prospect of magnificent, Continent-changing public works. Wherever they turned, they ran smack dab into the categorical necessity of a gigantic, comprehensive plan. 238


As Long explained his plan to Davis it included:

Rationalization of industry in regions best suited to each industry;
Rebuilding the cities and spreading population along broad main highways, in self-contained communities;
The utmost in technological developments for factory and home;
An expansion of the country's educational plant; at least a five-fold immediate increase in facilities for higher education;
Stimulating production of goods so that a decent minimum of well-being -- balanced wholesome diet; sufficient clothing, modern shelter, health, recreation, etc. -- may be the lot of every man, woman, and child in the land;
A series of public works, designed not only for utility but beauty...parks, schools, stadia;
Altering the face of the mid-Continent, specifically, by a ten-billion dollar flood and drought relief program in the Mississippi valley. 239


If in reality Long had two plans, one simple concrete
and easy to understand that served as a forensic weapon and the other more detailed and comprehensive which was to be the actual plan to bring about the promised benefits, then criticizing Long's plan poses a problem for the rhetorician.

It raises the question of whether such a procedure is legitimate or not. Is it ethical to present a patently unworkable program because it is simple, easy to understand, and explain, and plausible enough to be a good persuasive device? Is it ethical to present a plan designed, as Raymond Swing suggests, "...only to convey to the unhappy people that he believes in a new social order in which the minimum of poverty is drastically raised..."? 240


Upon closer examination, such a course cannot be condoned. In reality when the speaker follows this procedure, his listeners are not given an opportunity to make a decision on the basis of the real issues. The plan that Long presented in his radio addresses seemed to keep the framework of democracy and capitalism; the plan that he outlined to Forrest Davis on the other hand would require a great deal of centralized control to inaugurate.

Forrest Davis judges of this latter plan:

That leads inescapably, in the opinion of thoughtful economists with whom I have spoken, to an iron grip
on the banks, the currency, and the whole credit mechanism. That, too, spells dictatorship. Share-Our-Wealth, as it stands and imperfectly as the intentions of its author have been worked out or revealed, points to a central, cohesive will, exerting almost unlimited power. 241


As a practical persuasive device this technique of having two plans, one for action and one for speaking was effective; ethically Long's position was untenable.

To sum up; many of the elements of Long's program as presented in his March 7th speech have since been adopted as part of our governmental policy and have proven themselves to be of some value. Despite the worth of many of his ideas, the plan as presented in the speech was impractical and could not have produced many of the benefits he claimed it would. But there is some evidence that Long realized the shortcomings of his plan in functional existence, and used it mainly as a forensic weapon while he was drafting more comprehensive and far reaching plans to produce the benefits he promised. If this was the case he was following a practice that the rhetorical critic cannot condone from an ethical standpoint, since he did not give his hearers a chance to judge the case on its true merits.
**The Craftsmanship of the Speech**

**Organization:**

Only if this speech is considered as growing out of the events that preceded it can the organization of the materials in it be adequately explained or evaluated. Divorced from this context the organization does not seem particularly logical or particularly effective; considered in this context it seems to be both.

To some extent Long follows the traditional problem solution ordering of materials, what Thonseen and Baird call the logical order for "proponents of a proposed course of action."²⁴²


"C. The material can be divided according to issues developed by the proponents of a proposed course of action.

1. Present conditions are bad; the proposed plan will correct the difficulties; the proposed plan is practical."

Yet considered as a problem-solution type of speech the development of the first part of the address (i.e. the attack on Roosevelt.) might well be considered extraneous and at first glance the speech seems to break into two distinct parts.

The way these two apparently distinct ideas, that is the attack on the administration and the problem-solution
analysis, fit smoothly into place and become one organic whole. It becomes clear when we consider Long's strategy and purpose, the audience and the occasion. Organizing his materials in this way gave him an opportunity to conduct a prestige campaign for himself early in the speech, thus making it easier for him to gain acceptance for his plan. It also allowed him to make the transition from the immediate occasion (namely, the Johnson attack) to a presentation of his "Share Our Wealth" plan. The audience was expecting him to attack Johnson. By organizing his materials as he did he was able to mention Johnson briefly in the introduction, shift the attack to Roosevelt, shade the attack on Roosevelt into an attack on the existing economic situation, move from this attack to an analysis of the causes of the problem and then logically to a solution for the problem.

Considered in this light the organization clearly makes sense and indeed seems to be excellent for the speaker's purposes. As Thonssen and Baird remark,

A speech conforming to the principles of good organization may be ill-adapted to the specific audience for which it is intended. In other words, so-called natural or logical structure may not coincide with the most effective sequence of presentation. It may be necessary to alter the natural order sharply to accommodate the speech to certain people. 243


Coppens calls this the 'oratorical' method of arrangement; and defines it as 'that which departs
designedly from the natural order to avoid some special difficulty or to gain some special advantage, sacrificing regularity to usefulness.

Long's organization of materials in this speech exemplifies what Saret and Foster call "The method of conciliating." They point out:

When an alert speaker expects that his audience will be hostile toward his ideas, he tries to find the point of least resistance and in his introduction to concentrate his attack on this point. As a rule, that point is in the speaker himself, for usually the audience is more hostile toward the speaker's idea than toward the speaker...He should first win a friendly hearing for himself as a man; he should try to establish such contact with the audience that it likes him...Then he has a chance to transfer that open-mindedness from himself to his cause...After a speaker has taken his first step, he may break down hostility by quoting authorities in whom the audience has confidence... 244


Thus it seems that Long followed an organizational pattern in developing his ideas that most effectively achieved his purposes, so that considered out of context the organization might seem disjointed and unnatural, but when the speech is fitted into its historical background and into the more specific events involved in Long's campaign for the presidency the organization becomes understandable and the speech stands forth as an organic entity growing out of the unfolding stream of events.

The craftsmanship of the organization is adequate to
give to the speech form and unity. The joints may be bald and rough hewn (there is no attempt made to polish or disguise transitions) but the speaker uses enough basic organizational devices to unify his speech and tie it together.

Long's transitions are obvious and straightforward; they cement the parts of his speech solidly together. Frequently they suggest the direction that the next part of the speech will take. The following is a good example: "Now since they have sallied forth with General Johnson to start this holy war on me, let us take a look at this NRA they opened around here..."

Other typical Long transitions are "So now, my friends, I come to the point where I must in a few sentences describe to you just what was the cause of our trouble..." We come to that plan of mine now..." "Now I come to the balance of the plan..." "Ladies and gentlemen, I am not going to detain you any more except to say this:"

There is little attempt to fit the transitions artistically into the fabric of the argument, but they are clear and easy to understand. Long uses enough transitions to give unity and coherence to his speech.

Over and over again, the Senator uses the device of repetition. He keeps repeating the basic appeal that everyone will be furnished with a home and the comforts of a home. Early in the speech he reiterates that no-one is to blame for the
The present situation but the Roosevelt administration. Repetition seems to have been one of the speaker's favorite techniques.

Long is skillful also in the use of climax. He does a particularly effective job of using climax in the development of the first part of the speech. Here he builds to several minor climaxes, culminating in a major climax to prove that the blame was with Roosevelt. In his conclusion he builds to a powerful climax to stress and emphasize the idea that his audience should write to him. Long makes able use of the device for emphasis in this speech, particularly devices of repetition and climax.

There is a great deal of restatement and reiteration and amplification of basic ideas within the speech, but clear cut definite summaries are hard to find. The technique of summary as a transition is little used. There is an element of summary in the conclusion, however, when Long says:

That is what is going on, the plight of America today, Ladies and gentlemen, and we are going on and on with the St. Vitus dance of the Roosevelt depression. More people unemployed, twenty-odd million people unemployed; the national debt up 29 to 30 billions of dollars, the plight becoming worse and worse as time goes on. The only relief in sight is to share our wealth.

It must be concluded that Long does not depend a great deal upon summaries to give his speech coherence.

In summary, the organization is simple and clear, certainly not polished. In a larger sense, the organization must be seen as growing out of the complexities of the
situation, viewed in this light Long evidences a good deal of rhetorical ability in the way he chooses and develops his materials.

**Development of Ideas**

Long uses a variety of materials in developing his ideas during the course of this speech. A good example of his use of evidence and logic is found in his development of the idea that there is a trend toward maldistribution of wealth in the United States. This is one of the least emotional sections of his speech. The argument is so straightforward that it can best be represented by a brief of the contention:

A. The trend toward the maldistribution of wealth is growing more and more pronounced, for

1. In 1910 there was three times as much wealth in the United States as in 1890, yet the mass of the people owned less in 1910 than in 1890.

2. This trend has continued, for

   (a) In 1916 a committee provided for by the Congress, reported 2 per cent of the people in the United States owned 69 per cent of the wealth. There was a middle class of 33 per cent who owned 35 per cent of the wealth.

   (b) "Alone one statistical line you can figure out a nation busting with wealth; along another statistical line, a bloated plutocracy -- 1 per cent of the population lording it over a starving horde with only a thin margin of merely well-to-do in between."

   (c) Today the conditions are worse than ever, for

   (1) in 1930 1 per cent of the people owned 60 per cent of the wealth.

   (2) It is estimated that today 75 per cent of the people in the United States do not own anything and that 4 per cent own 85 to 95 per cent of the wealth in the United States.
Today the middle class of 1916 has all but disappeared.

The logic of the argument is tightly knit and internally consistent. The speaker generalizes inductively from the evidence of statistics and authority that the trend has continued. From this generalization and statistics for conditions in 1910 he draws the larger inference that the trend toward mal-distribution of wealth is growing more and more pronounced.

Long cites specific sources for most of his evidence, though he does, at one point, use the general phrase "conservative statisticians." Critical listeners might question such a vague source but it probably was adequate evidence for much of his audience.

Sometimes Long develops an idea largely through emotional appeals, assertion, and connotative language. An example of this technique is furnished by the manner in which he presents the point that the people who control the wealth have selfishly caused the economic crises. He couches this section in highly connotative language. The argument consists largely of direct suggestion. Long asserts that "These big men cannot eat all the food...so they destroy it." To help prove this point Long uses an analogy. If the analogy were used to clarify an established argument it would be legitimate, but in this case the Senator uses it as evidence to support his argument. This use of analogy is logically weak since there
are not enough elements of similarity in the two situations to make it significant.

This is the argument as Long unfolds it. These big men cannot eat all the food, they cannot wear all the clothes, so they destroy it. They rot it up, they plow it up, they pour it in the river. They bring destruction to the acts of mankind to let humanity suffer, to let humanity go naked, to let humanity go homeless, so that nothing may occur that will do harm to their vanity and their greed. Like the dog in the manger, they command a wagon load of hay which the dog would not allow the cow to eat, though he could not eat it himself.

It is clear that in developing this idea Long depends almost entirely on heavily connotative language and assertion.

In developing his attack on the Administration Long proceeds deductively. He assumes the major premise that whoever has had the power to change conditions must assume the responsibility for the status quo. Inductively, arguing from authority, he then develops the minor premise that the status quo is intolerable. He assumes a second minor premise, namely that Roosevelt has had the power to change the status quo and the Senator then deduces from these three premises the conclusion that the Roosevelt administration is to blame for the intolerable conditions of the status quo. The logic of this argument is embellished by a variety of materials, including stories, analogies, and the use of humor and ridicule.245

245. The logic of Long’s argument is indicated by the following "If...then" sentence.
"If whoever has the power to change intolerable conditions is to blame if he does not do so, and if the present conditions are intolerable, and if Roosevelt has had the power to change present conditions, then Roosevelt is to blame for the present intolerable conditions."

Long seems to have been particularly fond of using analogy. After establishing his argument about the maldistribution of wealth by the use of statistics and authority the speaker restates the argument with what Baird calls a figurative analogy.246 That of the banquet where only a small portion of


When the comparisons are identified with agencies or objects so remotely related as to fall into obviously different order systems...To illustrate "The present system of declaring war by a vote of Congress is sound and strong like a trestle over which twenty trains have passed."

the people control all the food. Again in using the Hoover-Roosevelt-Depression stereotype the Senator first presents his argument through the use of the figurative analogy of the kitchen cabinets. Then he further develops the idea by use of a logical analogy. He compares the Roosevelt farm program with Hoover's, declares they are analogous, assumes that the Hoover program was bad, infers that the Roosevelt program is therefore also bad.

Another salient feature of Long's development of ideas is his use of stories, parables, examples, and illustrations.
From the early stories of a queen in a far away island, and the lady at the funeral, through the fable of David Crockett, and the examples of Ford and Rockefeller, this speech is full of these devices. A striking thing about these techniques is their pertinency. They all aid in establishing the point that the speaker is making; none are extraneous or irrelevant. At times they are used to clarify exposition, as is the case of the Ford and Rockefeller examples; again they are used to explain the argument and restate it; at still other times they are used as proof for a proposition that is only an assertion.

This use of stories aids Long in appealing to humor, makes his speech more concrete and interesting, and suggests the ideas he wants to communicate.

In so using stories Long is practicing sound persuasive speaking technique. Oliver points out that "Parables, analogies, examples, illustrations, allegories, and anecdotes have always been effective instruments of suggestion. Aesop, one of the first great moral teachers, impressed his truths indelibly upon the minds of men by means of his fables." 247


In supporting his ideas Long uses a good many different kinds of materials, all of them contributing appreciably to the point that he is making. The materials are handled in a simple
and clear manner and the Senator seems to be particularly adept at the use of humor, analogies and stories.

**Style**

In discussing a rhetorical point of view regarding style, Baird and Thonssen write, "According to this conception, style is neither a mysterious embellishment added to a speech nor a literary veneer superimposed upon it. Instead, it represents the way in which a language pattern is used, under a given set of conditions, (1) to make the ideas acceptable and (2) to get the response sought by the speaker." In amplification they say, "An effective style depends upon a speaker's having (1) an idea worth presenting, (2) an unmistakably clear conception of the idea, (3) a desire to communicate it, (4) a willingness to adapt to a particular set of circumstances, and (5) a master of the language adequate to express the idea in words." 248


Huey Long's style was functional. He was interested in results. By 1935, Huey Long's speech training was largely the result of door-to-door selling, auctioneering, court room speaking, and political stumping. His style was hammered out to make ideas acceptable and to get the response sought by the speaker. With millions of people on relief, Long's ideas
were worth presenting. Additional testimony to the worth of his ideas is gained from the impact he had on his time.249

249. Infra, p. 199-204

Long had an unmistakably clear conception of the ideas that he was trying to communicate. The skillful manner in which he attacks the Roosevelt administration early in his speech indicates that he knew very well what he was about.

Forrest Davis asked Huey Long in an interview, "As a boy were you ever shy? Did you like to speak pieces at school?" Long answered, "I can't remember back to a time when my mouth wasn't open whenever there was a chance to make a speech."250 This desire to communicate his ideas became a


Long trademark.

Long was usually willing to adapt to circumstances, when he felt it advisable he could be vulgar and emotional; if the circumstances required he could be coldly logical.251

251. Supra, p. 29-31

Long had an idea worth presenting, a clear conception of that idea, a powerful desire to communicate it, and a willingness to adapt to circumstances. The crucial question is; did Long have a mastery of language adequate to express the idea
in words that would make it acceptable to his audience and get the response that Long desired? To answer this question, keeping the audience in mind, an examination of Long's use of language seems pertinent. In this regard two aspects of Long's language usage will be considered, (1) the elements of clearness, (2) the elements of impressiveness.

Two things are to be kept in mind as the elements of clearness in Long's style are considered. They are the words he uses and the way he fits those words into sentences. In examining word usage; we will want to keep in mind appropriateness, currency, reputability, and intelligibility of the words, and variety and adequacy of the vocabulary.

The speaker's choice of words seems appropriate if we remember the audience that Long was addressing, and if we keep in mind the fact that he had fostered a reputation of himself as something of a shrewd uneducated humorist. Some of the words are used in unusual combination as when he says, "erstwhile deranged alphabet," but the great majority are simple concrete words, and many of the phrases are slang or colloquialisms. Only once or twice does he use words like "derange" and "satellites."

Most of his words have little taint of the classroom. Such words and phrases as "in our own make-up," "they go gunning for me," "we managed to lick him," "vittles," "grub," "sack of goobers," "let Johnson slide out," are typical
and appropriate to the man.

One of the excellences of Long's style, considered functionally, is that it is composed almost entirely of words that are easy to understand so the transmission of meaning is almost effortless. It is difficult to find words in this speech that are not of common currency. When a word like "plutocracy" does crop up it is the result of a quotation from some other source. The number of abstruse words in this speech is so small that they hardly ever impede the clear transmission of meaning.

Because Long uses words and phrases that are in the everyday working vocabulary of his audience, frequently slang expressions, he does not always use words that are in good repute. This rather dominant characteristic of Long's language is illustrated by the following phrases culled from the speech; "to light out on those of us," "fixing up the vittles," "they opened up around here," "one slip...and he went to jail," "shoe shiner merchant," "they finally saddled him off," "ran the country into a mare's nest," "in other words these birds..."

Yet, despite the fact that these words and their usage in some of Long's phrases might be frowned upon by an English purist, considered functionally in the light of the audience and the speaker, they give to his style ethical overtones. As an element of indirect suggestion this characteristic of his
style must be considered. When during the course of his speech
the Senator mentions that "I am one of those who didn't have
an opportunity to secure a college education..." his audience
can believe him, and many can identify themselves with him.252

252. Oliver, Robert T., Psychology of Persuasive Speech,
p. 62.

These excerpts from Long's speech on the floor of
the Senate in March of 1935, indicate that Long
felt there was ethical appeal in this type of
language. Long said: "Mr. President, I am not
undertaking to answer the charge that I am
ignorant. It is true...I am an ignorant man. I
have had no college education...But the thing
that takes me far in politics is that I do not
have to color what comes into my mind and into
my heart. I say it unvarnished. I say it without veneer. I have not the learning to do other­wise...I know the hearts of the people because I
have not colored my own...I do not talk one way
back there in the hills of Louisiana and another
way out here in the Senate. I have one language.
Ignorant as it is, it is the universal language...Its simplicity gains pardon for my lack of letters
and education."

Because Long's words are current, and appropriate,
in the vocabulary of practically everyone in his audience,
they are intelligible.

There is no indication that Long is ever at a loss
for a word to express his ideas. Although he does not use a
large vocabulary, he varies his use of words skillfully. His
vocabulary contains a number of idiomatic and slang expressions
which give a flair to his rhetoric.
To sum up, the outstanding characteristic of Huey Long's word usage, is his choice of simple, current, immediately intelligible words. He frequently uses words that are not reputable, yet for the audience and the man they are appropriate, indeed there is a rude sort of commonness about his use of words that gives to his speech ethical overtones.

Huey Long's sentence structure is fundamentally simple and clear. Many sentences are short. "What do you call it? Is it government? Maybe so." "The only difference was in the sign." "They proceeded with the NRA." are some typical examples. Long uses all varieties of sentences, long as well as short, but when the sentences are longer they usually break into short phrases that carry the meaning nearly as well as short sentences. The preparation of the speech, presented in one of the longer sentences, illustrates this characteristic:

I will send you the credentials, I will send you the material, but get out and organize your friends; lets make the fight, lets make the politicians keep the promise that in this land of abundance none shall have too much, none shall have too little; in the land of too much to eat and too much to wear and too many homes to live in and too many automobiles to ride in, that we will see the blessings of this land given to us by God and by mankind, shall be reasonably shared by all our people.

The sentence structure has a definite extemporaneous and oral character so that often it does not read well. Sometimes the subject of the clause is assumed, as when Long says,
"with tear-dimmed eyes and hungry souls made to chant for this
New Deal." Other sentences lack the polish and tightness of
good literary productions as when Long says, "I make it to show
how often some of us imagine that we see great trouble being
done to us by some one at a distance, when in reality all it
may be is a fault in our own make-up." Still other sentences
seem poorly constructed. Possibly Long made the meaning
clearer by his delivery. Though these sentences lack literary
excellence they do communicate the idea. An example of this
type of sentence is, "It seems, then that soon this erst-while
deranged alphabet makes ready to appear at the funeral of the
NRA, likened to the colored lady in Mississippi who, at such
a funeral, asserted, 'I is the wife of these remains.'"

Long's sentence structure, to sum up, is simple to
understand. He uses many short sentences and often his longer
sentences break into shorter thought groups. There is an awk­
wardness of expression and a tendency to incomplete sentences
that gives to his diction an extemporaneous and oral flavor.
(This oral flavor is heightened by a liberal usage of personal
pronouns.) Divorced from the occasion and the audience that in­
spired the expression, Long's style is not likely to be con­
sidered a model of literature; considered functionally as a
tool of communication and an aid to gaining the acceptance of
his ideas, his sentence structure is good. It could be under­
stood by the least educated of his listeners, and though it
lacks polish and grammatical correctness it has the virtue of seeming to be the genuine oral talk of a man of the people.

The Louisiana Senator uses some devices to add elegance and impressiveness to his language. At no time during the speech does he make a clear out appeal to imagery. There are no word pictures or appeals to sensual imagery. While Long uses the extended comparison or analogy frequently and the concrete way he handles this device often calls to mind a picture, there are not many image provoking short figures in his speech. He calls General Johnson a "satellite" and labels the General's memoirs an "obituary." He mentions, "...the Roosevelt administration has sailed merrily along." and perhaps the most obvious and mixed of his figures,"...the light of truth from hurling their understanding letters against the dark canopy of the sky." The overall conclusion is that Long did not depend a great deal upon figures to lend impressiveness to his language.

The Senator uses rhythm, sometimes almost rhyme, as a means of enhancing his style. Thus Long says, "...while people begged for meat and bread to eat." "dole role." The most consistent device that Long uses is the parallel structure of phrases and sentences. The parallel structures and rhythm of the conclusion is outstanding.253

253. Supra. p. 147-151
is "They rot it up, they plow it up, they pour it in the river."

Thus what elegance and impressiveness the Senator's language possesses is gained largely through his use of parallel structure, rhythm, and analogy.

When Huey Long's language is considered as a functional unit operating in March of 1935, and when we fit the speaker, the audience, and the occasion into the picture we can conclude that his use of language was adequate to express his ideas in words that made them acceptable to his audience. Indeed it may well be said that his language usage went beyond the bare requirements of communication and actually aided the Louisianan in achieving the response that he desired.

Particularly appealing to the audience of the dispossessed was Long's choice of simple, current words, his frequent use of colloquial and slang phrases; his oral, idiomatic sentence structure with its clear effortless transmission of meaning. His listeners could believe that their spokesman was one of them. The style of Huey Long suggests an intimate natural uneducated man of the street. Just one of the folks.

**Persuasive Techniques**

This speech was preeminently a persuasive speech and all the materials that Long uses are designed to persuade and
actuate his audience. Keeping in mind that the entire speech could be analyzed as persuasion, it might be well to concentrate on its more salient persuasive aspects.

Indirect suggestion, says Robert Oliver, "...consists of implanting an idea in the mind of the listener without seeming to do so."254


Through the ethical overtones of his language usage, the pointed stories that he tells, the presumptions that he makes and the leading questions that he asks, Huey Long makes superior use of indirect suggestion. Though he does not use this technique frequently, several times in the speech Long presumes that his audience is with him. Particularly when referring to Roosevelt and his election to the presidency on a wealth sharing platform. Long presumes that Roosevelt was elected because a majority of the people were for Long's "Share Our Wealth" program. Again in the conclusion Long presumes that the people are with him when he asks them to make their elected officials share the wealth or elect someone to office who would.

Not frequently, but on several occasions, Long uses questions that suggest the ideas he is trying to get the audience to accept. Early in the speech he asks a leading
question when, in effect, he asks, "Do you think this chaotic program is original with Roosevelt?" Later when refuting the arguments of Brisbane and Johnson, Long asks, "Well, why make that untrue statement, Arthur Brisbane?" and again, "Why make such an untruthful statement as that, General Johnson?"

Another outstanding feature of this speech is Long's ability to dramatize his ideas and get the attention of his audience. According to Winans, "Persuasion is the process of inducing others to give fair, favorable, or undivided attention to propositions." Huey Long uses the methods of concreteness, conflict, familiar-unusual, humor, variety and the vital to good advantage to focus favorable attention on his proposal for "Share Our Wealth." Oliver maintains that "when a speaker concludes a passage of abstractness and generality with a concrete illustration it is as though he stepped from a dark room into the light." 255 Huey Long uses this technique well,


particularly in his expository passages. In explaining how he would cut down the large fortunes, Long first lays down his proposal in general terms and then explains it by the use of the two concrete examples of Ford and Rockefeller. Again, in explaining his proposals for education he talks in terms of "great institutions like Yale, Harvard, and Louisiana State University." And always when talking of wealth he talked in
terms of money, specific amounts of money, $5,000, $2,500, $165,000,000,000, to $175,000,000,000. These were terms his audience could understand; particularly the talk of a $5,000 homestead and an income of $2,500 a year.

The occasion gives Long the opportunity to appeal to the basic interest of his audience in conflict. Long does so throughout the speech. His first sentence mentions war. He talks in terms of the attack made on him in and out of congress. He mentions Hugh Johnson's attack on him and in emotional passages he points out that he is making the fight on the national level that he made in Louisiana.

Long realizes that his program is radical (unusual) but he attempts to make it familiar by pointing out that it is as old as the Bible and that it has been advocated by the Pilgrim fathers, and other familiar and revered people.

Long's use of humor is masterful. 256 It is effective


Long says in an interview, "When I'm makin' a political speech, I like to cut around the opposition with a joke. I put the truth in what I say and then I embellish it. I like to make it so funny that the other fellow, if he's in the audience, just can't help laughin' himself. One night in Alexandria I had an opponent and his wife right on a front seat. I set out to make them laugh. They held out for a long time, but finally I see the wife biting her lips to keep it back. Then I poured it on and pretty soon she was laughin' fit to be tied and the old fellow was red in the face tryin' to hold out."
in several ways: always it is pertinent as exemplified in the story of David Crockett; frequently, it is withering as it is when he blasts the NRA; and usually, it carries ethical appeal as when he attacks his opponents with it, or pokes fun at himself, as he does when he admits that he cannot understand the NRA codes.

Variety is another technique that Long uses well, particularly in the development of his first major point. Never is he serious, humorous, or matter-of-fact for long periods at a time. Always he mixes humor, with his serious appeals; he mixes his matter-of-fact exposition with ethical and emotional materials. He builds to climaxes but never sustains them for long periods of time, (with the exception of his final climax at the end.) He skillfully varies his words, his sentences, the mood, and the materials of the speech.

Long's appeals throughout the speech, but particularly in the latter half are vital and personal. He painstakingly points out over and over again how his program would affect every member of his audience who owns less than $5,000 worth of property. He makes it clear to them that this program is a personal matter, vital to their self interest. In joining his "Share Our Wealth" movement they have a stake in an automobile, a home, a radio, and a minimum income of $2,500 a year.
This speech is a good example of a speaker focusing the audience's attention upon his proposal. Of particular effectiveness in this regard was Long's use of humor, conflict, concreteness and the vital.
Chapter V

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SPEECH

Role in Long's Campaign for Presidency

To this point Huey Long's speech of March 7, 1935 has been considered as growing out of a complex set of factors. The attempt has been made to explain the speech in terms of Huey Long, molded by his environment and his experiences, bringing a certain set of aptitudes and attitudes to the national scene in the years 1932-1935, a Huey Long that found the political and economic climate of those years hospitable to his unique talents. Long's reaction to that political and economic climate was more concretely examined in relation to his strategy for achieving the presidency, and all these factors were then integrated to explain why the speech unfolded in the particular and unique way it did. The foregoing chapters have been designed to show how the speech grew as an organism from all these impinging factors, how Long pulled by certain circumstances, driven by certain motives chose and selected his materials, ordered and delivered them in the way he did. But this is not the complete story of the speech. Just as it grew out of the stream of events, so now, in turn, it became a force imposing pressure on the future trend of history. To complete the analysis of the speech it now becomes necessary to attempt a sketch of the results of the speech and to assay
to some extent how great its influence was.

Long's speech had far reaching effects in two areas, (1) in regard to Long's personal ambition, the fulfilment of his strategy, and (2) in regard to the evaluation that others made of Long's candidacy for presidency, particularly the Roosevelt administration. This second area involves a consideration of what Thonssen and Baird refer to as the "societal point of view." They say, "The societal point of view provides...the proper approach to the study of effectiveness. According to this conception, the success of oratory must be evaluated in terms not of the speaker alone, but of the larger social sphere within which he functions."257


In a certain superficial sense Huey Long provided the speech critic with a rigorous yardstick to measure the effectiveness of this speech when he concluded with the plea "Write to me." Oliver says of this type of speech, "...the speaker is asking for more than agreement with his views; he is requesting that such agreement be made explicit in the precise kind of action which he requests. In this respect, the speech to activate is susceptible to the most rigorous of all tests of effectiveness."258

258. Oliver, Persuasive Speaking, p. 177.
Some indication of how effective Long's plea was is found in the Unofficial Observer:

Once a week, on the average, for the last several months, Huey has had to get a new filing case, for letters or for card-indices of his supporters. After Hugh Johnson's vitriolic radio attack on him...Long had to increase his stenographic and clerical staff to twenty-one on the day shift and fourteen on the night shift, and his private secretary, Earle J. Christenberry, was brought close to a nervous breakdown.259


Forrest Davis gives some more concrete evidence:

By noon, Huey's office had six hundred telegrams, twenty-four long distance telephone calls; only four of which, his secretary announced, "panned the Senator." His mail, which had been running higher than that of any other Senator, reached a total of 31,875 pieces on the 9th and averaged 22,400 a day for three weeks according to the count of his staff.260


Long seems to have been successful in getting his audience to write to him, and measured by this rigorous (though superficial) criteria the speech must be adjudged as a powerful persuasive performance. All these letters, of course, furnished addresses for the "Share Our Wealth Society's" card files, thus contributing to building Long's national political machine, and thus furthering Long's basis purpose in this speech.

Another aspect of Long's strategy was his prestige
campaign to help transform himself into a serious candidate for the Presidency. In this regard, too, the speech was certainly successful. The first reaction to General Johnson's speech had been one of satisfaction that someone had finally taken the rostrum against Long. Typical of newspaper comment was Arthur Krock in the New York Times, "Administration Senators who have feared to breathe a word against the Louisiana dictator and the radio priest are unhesitatingly saying that Johnson's speech was epochal, like Senator Glass' in the 1932 campaign." 261 But following Long's speech


the views of observers changed. Their comments reflected the fact that Long's prestige campaign and the skillful strategy reflected in this speech were successful in making of him, almost overnight, a serious candidate for the Presidency. "The capital was aware today," the United Press reported from Washington on March 8, "That the first shout of the 1936 Presidential campaign was echoing over the nation from the lips of candidate Long." 262 The New York Times summing up the "News of the Week in Review," said, "...the nation was permitted to enjoy a gorgeous rumpus...but the passage between

the General and the Senator was more than a trading of hard words. It put before the nation in clear outlines a conflict that is shaping up as a paramount issue in the next presidential election." 263


Turner Catledge writing in the New York Times said of Long,

His own aggressiveness, a bit of fate...the assault of a political foe have made of Huey Long during the past week the challenge of American politics. As late as one week ago today...(Long) might well have been written down as a bumptious clown seeking mainly personal attention... But at this date, one week later, there is a strong feeling, at least here in Washington, that the "Kingfish" may have to be taken seriously..." 264


Ernest K. Lindley...writing in the Herald Tribune said: 'With the fading of the first flush of satisfaction that men have stepped forward to trade blow for blow with Senator Huey P. Long, there arose today a strong feeling among some of the shrewder politicians in Washington that the political prestige of the Kingfish has been substantially increased by the developments of the last few days..." 265


Forrest Davis writing with the perspective of several months judged,

Hugh Johnson's flanking movement produced a number of
consequences affecting Long: nearly all of them propitious. When the epithet!oal General — linking Long, the administration baiter, with the powerful Coughlin, whose telegraph lobby helped defeat the world court, for the first time turned the full tide of his picturesque dialectic against the Kingfish, he focused national interest on Huey and his one-man 'war'. Johnson was inflating share-our-wealth into proportions it conceivably never would have had without the general's aid.266


Raymond Swing was so impressed by the results of the Johnson-Long-Coughlin exchange that late in March 1935 he wrote an article for Nation magazine entitled "The Build-Up of Long and Coughlin," and pointed out, "Three months ago one would have considered it impossible that so soon Huey Long would be getting a solid page in the Herald Tribune and a national hook-up of every station on the NBC." 267


It would seem that in the light of Long's purposes that the speech was eminently successful. The evidence would indicate that Long himself was impressed by the success of the speech, and Long can well be considered one of the shrewdest political observers of his day. Raymond Moley pointed this out when he wrote; "The distinctions between things as they are and things as they may be or might be or ought to be sometimes grow blurred. Possibly this is what Huey Long
meant when he said to me, "Roosevelt ain't smart." Whatever may have been Huey's public inaccuracies and exaggerations, he never deceived himself."268 In this regard it is interesting


to note the change in the tone of Long's radio addresses after the March 7 speech. On May 2, 1935, he delivered a radio speech called "St. Vitus Dance Government," over NBC. In this speech Long's attack was directed against Roosevelt personally. He ridiculed, he sneered, he called names; the emphasis was on emotional appeal. His last major radio address delivered in July of 1935 was even stronger, a blistering personal attack on President Roosevelt. As a specimen of argumentum ad hominem this speech compares favorably with General Johnson's speech of March 4. Apparently after the March radio speech Long decided that his audiences were friendly enough to him and his cause that he could use strongly emotional appeals and direct and acid attacks on President Roosevelt.

*Its Measurable Effects On The Course Of Events*

But more important to the future trend of events was the change that this speech helped bring in the attitudes of other observers, particularly among the leaders of the
Roosevelt administration. For as the leaders of the government became more and more impressed with Long as a political threat they began to embark on new governmental policies which had an effect on the larger social program for which Long was arguing. Insofar, then, as this speech contributed to the change in attitude among political observers as regards Long's growing strength, it exerted a pull on the trend of events. Indeed, since the speech might well be considered as the point where in many peoples' thinking, Long changed from a bizarre clown to a serious political threat, it can be said to have contributed measurably to the change in administration policies.

Some indication of the way the administration leaders reacted to Long's growing strength is furnished by Raymond Moley who writes, "In the early spring of 1935 the Democratic leaders began to get an acute attack of jitters about the apparently growing political strength of the Kingfish...By late March the Kingfish was threatening to campaign in states other than Louisiana for "Share the Wealth" candidates. By April the Democratic high command not only expected him to defeat Senator Joseph T. Robinson of Arkansas and Senator Pat Harrison of Mississippi...but was chewing its mustaches over statistics purporting to show that he could make himself political master of the whole, vast Lower Mississippi Valley...
who knew where Huey, who was promising his followers a
"guaranteed" income of $2,500 a year, would end?"269 Further

269. Moley, Raymond, After Seven Years, p. 305.

amplification of these statistics is to be found in Jim
Farley's book Behind the Ballots; Farley writes:

Anxious not to be caught napping and desiring an
accurate picture of conditions, the Democratic National
Committee conducted a secret poll...to find out if Huey's
sales talks for his "share the wealth" program were
attracting many customers. The results of that poll...
were surprising in many ways. It indicated that, running
on a third party ticket, Long would be able to poll be-
tween 3,000,000 to 4,000,000 votes for the Presidency.
The poll demonstrated also that Huey was doing fairly
well at making himself a national figure. His probable
support was not confined to Louisiana and near-by states.
On the contrary, he had about as much following in the
North as in the South...While we realized that polls are
often inaccurate and that conditions could change per-
ceptible before the election...the size of the Long vote
made him a formidable factor...It was easy to conceive
a situation whereby Long, by polling more than 3,000,000
votes might have the balance of power in the 1936 election
...the poll indicated that he would command upward of
100,000 votes in New York State, a pivotal state in any
national election;270

270. Farley, James, Behind The Ballots, pp. 249-250.

The Manchester Guardian Weekly's Washington corre-
respondent reflected the impact that Long's dramatic answer to
General Johnson had made on political circles in a dispatch
which read:

Astonishing as it may seem, many shrewd observers now
believe that, because of Mr. Long, President Roosevelt
may fail to obtain re-election when he stands again next year. It is now certain that Mr. Long himself will stand as the candidate of the new Radical party and equally certain that he will carry several Southern states.271


Raymond Moley furnishes us with an example of how this growing respect for Huey Long's political strength affected Roosevelt policies:

...the situation might not have become explosive, but for Huey Long and the Supreme Court...F.D.R. began to doubt whether Huey's followers could be weaned away by logical argument. Perhaps it would be necessary to woo some of Long's support by making a counter offer. One evening in midspring F.D.R. actually used the phrase "steal Long's thunder" in conversation with me and two other friends.272

272. Moley, Raymond, After Seven Years, pp. 304-305.

Moley then goes on to sketch the disagreement that Roosevelt had with the supreme court and the storm of criticism that resulted, he writes:

It was at that point that the two impulses -- the impulse to strike back at his critics and the impulse to "steal Long's thunder" -- flowed together and crystallized. He remembered something -- a scheme that had come from the treasury back in February...on a June night in 1935 the President showed Felix Frankfurter and myself a draft message from the Treasury recommending the taxation of "unwieldy and unnecessary corporate surpluses," a heavy inheritance and gift tax, a sharp increase in surtaxes on incomes above $50,000 and a graduated corporation-income tax...This was the "soak-the-rich" scheme -- designed to embarrass and annoy a few wealthy individuals, win the support of the "Share-the Wealth" adherents. 273
Another factor that swung Franklin to the left was the picaresque rampage of Senator Huey Long of Louisiana. Long was a shameless demagogue...He appealed to the wild unthinking radical fringe, and was just the type to make himself a dictator if he could. He was making alarming progress even among the saner left wing elements. Some of his program was sensible, and Roosevelt decided to adopt those portions of it. As Franklin put it, 'Maybe we'd better try to steal some of Huey's thunder.' 274

Dixon Wecter, writing the history of the great depression in 1948 claimed that "Whatever evil they did, these salesmen of panaceas, even the most cold-blooded and cynical of them helped in their fashion to hasten the adoption of social security." 275

"He (Long) forced the Roosevelt Administration to the left," wrote Harnett Kane in 1941, "to the adoption of more and more liberal measures to meet his threat. The National Youth Administration, some observant critics declared at the time, was the result of Huey's pressure...The administrations' movements towards increased income taxes in the higher brackets were interpreted as answers to Long demands." 276
The Unofficial Observer saw in Long,

...a constructive factor to our national life and a valuable adjunct to the New Deal...without Long, without Coughlin, without political and social and economic dissent in the air, Roosevelt would find it extremely difficult, if not altogether impossible to move forward...

It is the thunder on the left which produced political change...277


Raymond Moley writing of 27 Masters of Politics in 1949 with some fourteen years of perspective, took a broader and more sinister view of Long's influence on society.

Moley judges: "The Long threat profoundly affected the course of Roosevelt's policies in 1935."

"It cannot entirely be coincidence that the whole direction and philosophy of the New Deal changed at about the time when Long went to his gaudy grave. Roosevelt, Wallace, Hopkins and others had become Kingfish disciples to a degree they probably never realized." The second New Deal starting about 1935 differed from the first Moley maintains, the second, "...sought political power by the simple process of redistributing the existing wealth under the guise of social justice and uplift by law. That drift swept through state and local governments...It opened the gates of power to those whose only qualification was a promise...It swept on and has reached great altitude...in the election of Truman...It has bent men, like Robert A. Taft...to pay for their place by rival promises...For all this Huey Long must bear a heavy responsibility." 278


Long's growing prestige, and the growing respect in which his political power came to be held in the spring and summer of 1935 exerted a pressure toward the left on the trend
of governmental policies. This pressure hastened the adoption of social security, old age pensions, and higher tax scales. In contributing measurably to this growing prestige of Long's, in making of him a presidential threat, the Speech of March 7, 1935 exerted a strong and measurable pressure on the trend of events.
Chapter VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study was made in an attempt to explain a speech in terms of the various factors that went into its development. The speech has been viewed as an organism growing out of a complex of factors, the whole situation involving: the speaker with his drives and talents, the general political and economic climate with its ramifications in regard to the audience, and the reaction of the speaker's opponents. These factors have been examined in an attempt to explain Long's campaign for the presidency, why that campaign involved the strategy it did, and how Huey Long's speech of March 7, 1935 grew logically from that campaign strategy. To follow the speech to its logical conclusion we have then considered the influence of the speech upon Long's campaign for the presidency and in turn the influence of that campaign on the larger sphere of the political complex of the time.

Two major elements fused together to form the speech. They were Huey Long with his unique set of abilities and the political and economic climate in the years from 1932-1935.

Huey Long came onto the national political scene a product of his heredity and his environment. From his radical Winn parish background with its strong religious emphasis he gained a sincere belief in the need for sharing the wealth.
His own battle to secure an education seems to have served to preoccupy him in later years with the problems of education. By heredity Long was endowed with superior intelligence and an incredible memory. His early political experiences combined with his natural predispositions to make him an extremely vindicative and ambitious man. His ambition and vindicativeness in turn drove him to the adoption of a cynical political code of ethics that condoned the use of any means to reach the desired end. Long's rapid rise against great odds in Louisiana politics was aided by his persuasiveness, color, and charm, but perhaps more important than any of these was his ability as a political tactician. As a young politician, Huey Long had to battle hard for survival, and he learned rapidly; time and time again he outmarshalled the forces of opposition in his native state. This ability, combined with his willingness to use every weapon at his disposal in a political campaign, made of him, as he moved onto the national political scene, an extremely dangerous opponent.

The years from 1932 to 1935 were years of adjustment after the tremendous economic transformations that took place following 1929. When the stock market broke in 1929, the wheels of industry ground to a virtual stop, unemployment with its accompanying hardships rose to unprecedented heights, and across the entire country banks failed in large numbers. This
Industrial crises, added to a depressed agricultural economy, radically altered the political and economic scene in the United States. The Hoover administration, identified in the popular mind with the depression, was swept out of office by the New Deal of Franklin Roosevelt. The early years of the new administration saw the federal government moving with vigor to establish programs of relief and reform. Through the agencies PWA, FERA, CWA, and WPA relief was administered to the unemployed. The AAA was established to help the distressed farmers; the NRA was designed to put industry on its feet. These New Deal programs were rapidly instituted and had in the first few months of operation a good deal of popular support. But through the years from 1933 to 1934 drought struck the great plains and turned it into a dust bowl. The popularity of the relief program, the AAA, and the NRA began to wane, and criticism of the various administration measures began to mount.

By March of 1935 the great depression was nearly six years old. The New Deal, after a vigorous and dramatic start, had begun to stall. Unemployment was still disappointing high, the AAA had run into an unforeseen and devastating drought, the NRA had become unpopular in many quarters, huge reservoirs of unrest that had been building up since the early thirties began to reveal themselves in mushrooming radical movements like Father Coughlin's Legion of Social Justice and Dr. Townsend's Old Age Pension Plan.
Sensing the political potential of these reservoirs of unrest, Long moved with characteristic vigor. Always highly ambitious for the presidency he reacted to these conditions by launching a serious bid for that office during the winter of 1934-1935. As usual his strategy was comprehensive, adaptive, and clever; it involved the building up of a political following in the form of "Share Our Wealth" societies and a prestige campaign to overcome some of the unfavorable publicity that he had been receiving. A large part of his strategy hinged on what seems to have been the Senator's decision that President Roosevelt's popularity was a major stumbling block to his own ambition. To overcome this hurdle Long began to attack the Roosevelt administration.

During the late winter and early spring of 1935 Long stepped up his offensive both in the Senate and over the radio networks. Then in April and March, the Louisiana Senator began to make the headlines in sensational fashion with a vicious attack upon Roosevelt's campaign manager, Postmaster General James A. Farley.

It was at this point that General Hugh Johnson, speaking over a coast to coast network lashed out in a vitriolic speech against both the Louisiana Senator and Father Charles E. Coughlin. Johnson's speech set Huey Long off to an even greater series of pyrotechnics in the senate of the United States, and in the days from the 4th to the 7th of March Long received a
build up for his radio address in practically every newspaper in the land.

Superficial observers felt that Long, who was notorious for his ability at name calling and vituperation, would give the General a tongue lashing when he stepped before the microphone on the night of March 7th. Instead the Louisianan followed a course that seems much more logical in light of his demonstrated ability as a political strategist, and the plan that he had mapped to make himself president. He took advantage of the build up he had received in the press to adapt this speech to his overall strategy. Faced with opportunity at a large new audience, the Senator, instead of lambasting Johnson, attempted in his forty-five minute address to attack and discredit Franklin Roosevelt, establish his own prestige, and plead for members for his personal political movement, "Share Our Wealth."

Long had the reputation of being a skillful and persuasive public speaker. The way he rose to this challenging occasion, as revealed by an analysis of the speech, indicates that he was indeed an effective performer. The Senator carried out his strategy in the speech by, attacking President Roosevelt, analyzing the causes of economic distress, and carefully explaining his "Share Our Wealth" program. Most important in regard to Long's general strategy was the attack on the New
Deal and his use of ethical proof to establish his prestige.

To discredit President Roosevelt, Long used the Hoover-Roosevelt-Depression stereotype, hoping to link Roosevelt with former President Hoover and the depression. In addition, the speaker censured and ridiculed the NRA, the AAA, and the relief agencies. The attack was skillfully handled, beginning with a gentle good-natured chiding in the form of the David Crocket story early in the speech, growing more intense with the ridicule of the NRA, and becoming strong and direct before the Senator launched his analysis of the maldistribution of wealth.

Huey Long's sallies were concrete and dramatic. Skillfully he found the weakest chinks in the administration armor. His criticisms were shrewd and telling -- usually they were plausible, frequently they were couched in connotative language, and often they were liberally interwoven with materials designed to increase the prestige of the speaker. It was such skillful attacks as this one that developed for the Senator the reputation of being one of the ablest of the New Deal's critics.

Long's second issue, which involved an analysis of the maldistribution of wealth in the United States, was characteristic in language and logic of most of his speeches. It amounted to almost a commonplace that the Louisianan had memorized and which he would inject at opportune times into most of his radio speeches.
The Senator, while he took great pains to carefully attack President Roosevelt, gave the most emphasis in this speech to a clear exposition of his "Share Our Wealth" plan. Before proceeding to an explanation of the plan proper the Senator, characteristically, put the weight of authority behind his position. He linked his cause with many great names and in doing so came very near to indulging in the fallacy of substituting authority for argument.

The plan, as unfolded in this speech, was part of the Senator's overall strategy. It served as the basis of his appeal not only in this speech but also for his entire campaign for "Share Our Wealth." As a forensic weapon the plan was well forged. Indeed, it is difficult to keep from the conclusion that the plan was drafted with the audience in mind, designed as a persuasive device primarily rather than as a proposed course of action. It was so constructed that it seemed plausible (some of the principles involved proved sound enough to be subsequently adopted). It identified wealth with money thus it was easy for Long to explain his plan in concrete terms of dollars and cents. He could talk of splitting a billion dollar fortune into five thousand dollar homestead allotments. To attack the plan, the Senator's critics had to divorce money from wealth and this made their criticisms abstract and abstruse. Finally Long's plan was designed to have a wide appeal,
especially with the restless groups such as the aged, the unemployed, and the farmers. Indeed, it was aimed at everyone who was making less than 2,500 dollars a year. This appeal was solidly based upon self interest. Long answered for his audience the question, "What's in this for me?" He assured his listeners that his plan could furnish each of them with a home, a radio, an automobile, and a minimum income of 2,500 dollars a year.

One of the salient features of the presentation of this plan was the speaker's ability to dramatize his proposals and make them seem real and personal to the members of his audience. This he did by explaining his plan in simple and concrete terms, usually in terms of dollars, cents, automobiles and radios. Frequently he clarified the more difficult aspects of his plan by means of well developed examples. Long apparently was not overestimating the understanding of his audience. The plan was not complex. Its simplicity made of it a very effective persuasive device. It was something like a cleverly drafted debate case, designed to win debates rather than as a course of action. This same simplicity, however advantageous it was in a public speaking situation, would have made the plan impractical if implemented as outlined. Long might have been able to put his schemes into effect, but of themselves they could not have produced the benefits that
he claimed they would. There is some indication that Senator Long realized the limitations of the plan he used in his public speeches, and that he was actually drafting broader and more comprehensive plans designed to achieve the goals that he had set forth. If this was actually the case, if Huey Long had one plan to present in his speeches because it was plausible, simple and easy to understand, and another program that he planned to put into effect if he ever came into power, then as a rhetorical critic we must question if such practices are to be condoned. Indeed, they seem censorable on the grounds that the audience was not allowed to judge the plan on its true merits, and perhaps without a complete awareness of the ramifications involved in the more comprehensive plan.

This, then, is the general outlines of the way Long proceeded in developing his speech and fitting it into his political campaign. In conception, this development was shrewd and is evidence of Long's ability as a political strategist. To judge Long, the speaker, however, it is necessary further, to examine how well he used the tools of rhetoric to implement his strategy. As the Senator spoke on the night of March 7, 1935, he gave evidence of rhetorical skill sufficient to clothe his political strategy in appropriate speech form.

Senator Long followed an organizational pattern in developing his ideas that most effectively achieved his purposes.
Because he did so, the organization of the speech, considered out of context, might seem disjointed and unnatural, but when it is fitted into its historical background and into the more specific events involved in Long's campaign for the presidency, the plan of arranging the speech around first an attack on the administration and then the traditional problem and solution order, becomes understandable and the structure stands out as an organic entity growing out of the unfolding stream of events. The organization was simple and clear, certainly not polished. While, Long did not use many summaries there are enough transitions and devices of emphasis to give the speech form and unity. The joints may have been bald and rough hewn but the speaker used enough basic organizational devices to tie his speech together.

In supporting his ideas the Speaker used a variety of materials, all of which contributed appreciably to the point he was making. The materials were handled in a simple and clear manner. The Senator seems to have been particularly fond of and adept in the use of humor, analogies, and stories.

When Huey Long's language is considered as a functional unit operating in March of 1935, we can conclude that his command of the language was adequate to express his ideas in words that made them acceptable to his audience. Indeed it may well be said that his language usage went beyond the bare requirements of communication and actually aided the Louisianan in achieving
the response that he desired.

Particularly appealing to the audience of the dispossessed must have been Long's choice of simple current words, his frequent use of colloquial and slang phrases, his oral, idiomatic sentence structure with its clear effortless transmission of meaning. His listeners could believe that their spokesman was one of them. The style of Huey Long suggests the man, an intimate natural uneducated man of the street.

One of the important persuasive elements of this speech was the speaker's ability to use attention-getting devices. He varied his materials, dramatized his ideas, shifted from humor to emotional climax in a skillful way that focused the audience's attention upon his proposals.

Thus, we can conclude that in addition to being a skillful political strategist Huey Long was capable in matters pertaining to the craft of speechmaking. He evidences an ability to rise to the occasion, organize his materials clearly, develop his ideas carefully and fully, and express his thoughts in appropriate and clear language.

If we judge the speech strictly by the criterion of giving effectiveness to the speaker, and fulfilling the demands that Long's strategy placed upon it, the speech can be judged as effective, and the speaker can be evaluated as a skilled operator, for the effects of the speech measurably furthered the Senator's campaign for the Presidency. Following the
speech Long's prestige increased, he gained many new converts to his "Share Our Wealth" society, and his attack on the administration was effective enough to cause the Roosevelt forces to worry about the political damage that Long was causing.

This speech was, of course, not the only cause of the growing success of Long's campaign, but if we can judge by contemporary newspaper and periodical comment it marked a very definite turning point in the evaluation that political observers made of the Louisiana's presidential possibilities. Huey Long was skilled enough in the techniques of persuasion to do an excellent job of rising to this speaking occasion that fitted in so nicely with his political strategy. This speech might well be viewed as another weapon in Long's arsenal of attack, a forensic weapon that Long handled with telling effect.

Some further generalizations from the study seem warranted. Originally the question of the unique features of a demagogue's speaking was raised. The analysis of Long's speaking practices as exemplified in this speech, points to no outstanding difference between his speaking and the speaking of other effective speakers. The Senator generally used techniques and followed rhetorical principles that have been traditional in rhetorical theory. Such speaking traits as clear organization, language that is concrete and simple to understand, ideas developed through a variety of materials and proofs, liberal use of humor, ridicule, stories, and
analogies have all been recognized by speech theorists and used by effective speakers for many years. Huey Long did perhaps differ slightly from many speakers in that his style of speaking was strongly marked with his personality. But even here he points up the old adage that style is the man.

It would seem that the uniqueness of demagoguery lies outside the sphere of what might be called the craftsmanship of speechmaking. Since the speech was soundly constructed we must search for the elements of demagoguery within the character of the speaker. Sincerity is sometimes suggested as a criteria for the evaluation of speeches and a speaker's character. Huey Long seems to have had a sincere desire to alleviate the lot of the underprivileged. He seems to have convinced himself that their cause and his personal ambition were closely tied together and that what furthered one would further the other. Therefore, we can hardly charge Long with being insincere.

Long does, however, exhibit weaknesses in character in regard to his personal motivation. There was a vindictive streak in Huey Long that at times caused him to use his authority to avenge personal grievances, but more important than this quality was his driving ambition. This will to succeed; to win, caused him to adopt a political code of ethics that involved winning at all costs and in turn resulted in using methods that were violent, high-handed, and arbitrary.
Such an ethical code could justify the speaker’s using any technique to achieve results, for example using two "Share Our Wealth" plans, one oratorical and one functional, could be justified within this ethical system.

Insofar as we can generalize from a single speech, then, it might be said that Huey Long was a man speaking well, but if we are to adopt Quintilian's ideal criteria for the orator, namely that of a good man speaking well, we must conclude that while Huey Long was skilled in the art of speaking well, because of certain weaknesses of character we cannot classify him as a good man speaking well. We cannot call him an orator by Quintilian's standards. Perhaps, in the final analysis the difference between demagogue and orator is a difference of ethics.

One other point might well be made. Huey Long’s speech of March 7, 1935, by helping to make of Long a serious threat for the presidency, seems to have exerted a definite pull on the future trend of events, particularly on the policies of the Roosevelt administration. Indeed President Roosevelt himself is purported to have talked of "Stealing Long’s thunder." Many observers feel that Long’s growing strength served to drive the administration further to the left and speeded the adoption of such programs as social security and old age pensions. In this regard the speech seems to be a specific example to bolster the generalization that Thonssen and Baird
make when they write,

With the tremendous improvements in communication facilities especially in radio, able speakers exercise an influence, or at least a potential influence, over audiences the size and complexity of which would have seemed fantastically absurd fifty or a hundred years ago. 279

APPENDIX

"Following is the text of the address on "Our Blundering Government and Its Spokesman -- Hugh Johnson," by Senator Long over a coast to coast network of the National Broadcasting company as transcribed stenographically by representatives of the National Broadcasting Company"

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It has been publicly announced that the White House orders of the Roosevelt administration have declared a war.

The lately lamented, pampered ex-Crown Prince, General Hugh S. Johnson, one of those satellites loaned by Wall Street to run the government, and who at the end of his control over and dismissal from the ill-fated NRA pronounced it as a dead dodo - this Mr. Johnson was apparently selected in this White House charge begun on last Monday night.

The Johnson speech was followed by a fluster and flurry on behalf of the administration by spellbinders in and out of Congress. In a far-away island when a queen dies her first favorite is done the honor to be buried alive with her.

The funeral procession of the NRA, another one of these New Deal schisms and isms, is about ready to take place. It is said that General Johnson's speech of Monday night to attack me was delivered on the eve of the announcing the publication of his own obituary in the Red Book Magazine.

It seems, then, that soon this erstwhile deranged alphabet makes ready to appear at the funeral of NRA, likened to the colored lady in Mississippi who, at such a funeral, asserted, "I is the wife of these remains."

I shall undertake to cover my main subject and make answer to these gentlemen in the course of this speech. It will serve no useful purpose to our distressed people for me to call my opponents more bitter names than they called me.
Even were I able, I have not the time to present my side of
the argument and match them in profanity.

What is the trouble with this administration of Mr.
Roosevelt and of Mr. Johnson, Mr. Farley, Mr. Astor and all
their spoilers and spellbinders?

They think that Huey Long is the cause of all their
worry. They go gunning for me, but am I the cause of their
misery? Well, they are like old David Crockett, who went out
to hunt a possum in the top of the tree, going from limb to
limb, so he shot, but he missed. He looked again and he saw
the possum. He fired a second time and missed again. Soon he
discovered that it was not a possum that he saw at all in the
top of that tree; it was a louse in his own eyebrow.

I do not make this illustration to discredit to any of
these distinguished gentlemen; I make it to show how often some
of us imagine that we see great trouble being done to us by
some one at a distance, when in reality all it may be is a fault
in our own make-up. And so is this the case of Mr. Roosevelt
or Mr. Farley or Mr. Johnson and of others undertaking to
derange the situation today.

The trouble with the Roosevelt administration is that
when their schemes and isms have failed these things I told them
not to do, and voted not to do, that they think it will help
them to light out on those of us who warned them in the be­
ginning that the tangled messes and experiments would not work.

The Roosevelt administration has had its way for two
years. They have been allowed to set up or knock down anything
and everybody. There was one difference between Roosevelt and
Hoover. Hoover could not get the Congress to carry out the
schemes he wanted to try, because we managed to lick him on a
roll call in the United States Senate time after time when he
had both the Democratic and the Republican leaders trying to
put them over.

But it is different with Mr. Roosevelt. He got his
plans through Congress, but on cold analysis, they were found
to be the same things Hoover tried to pass and failed the year
before. The kitchen Cabinet that sat in to advise Hoover was
not different from the kitchen Cabinet which advises Roosevelt.
Many of the persons are the same. Many more of those in
Roosevelt's kitchen Cabinet are of the same men or set of men
who furnished employees to sit in the kitchen Cabinet to advise
Mr. Hoover.
Maybe you see a little change in the men waiting on the tables in the dining room, but back in the kitchen, the same set of old cooks are back there fixing up the vittles and the grub for us that cooked up that mess under Hoover. There has never even been a change in the seasoning.

Now do you think this Roosevelt plan for plowing up cotton, corn and wheat, and for pouring milk in the river and for destroying and burying the hogs and cattle by the millions, all while the people starve to death and go naked, do you think these plans were the original ideas of this Roosevelt administration?

If you do, you are wrong. The whole idea of that kind of thing first came from Hoover's administration. Don't you remember when Mr. Hoover proposed to plow up every fourth row of cotton? We laughed him to scorn, and so we beat Mr. Hoover on his plan, but when Mr. Roosevelt started on his plan, it was not to plow up every fourth row of cotton, it was to plow up every third row of cotton. He went Mr. Hoover one-twelth better.

So it has been, while millions have starved and gone naked and while babies have cried and died wanting milk; so it has been while people begged for meat and bread to eat. Mr. Roosevelt's administration has sailed merrily along, plowing under and destroying the things to eat and wear, with tear-dimmed eyes and hungry souls made to chant for this New Deal so that even their starvation dole is not taken away from them, and meanwhile the food and clothes craved by humanity for their bodies and souls go to destruction and ruin.

What do you call it? Is it government? Maybe so. It looks more like the St. Vitus dance to me.

Now since they have sallied forth with General Johnson to start this holy war on me, let us take a look at this NRA they opened up around here about two years ago. They had parades and fascist signs, just like Hitler and Mussolini. They started the dictatorship to regiment business and labor much more than any known in Germany and Italy.

The only difference was in the sign. Mussolini's sign for a fascist was a black shirt. Germany's sign of the fascist was a swastika. So in America they side-tracked the Stars and Stripes, and the sign of the Blue Eagle was used instead for the NRA.
They proceeded with the NRA. Everything from a peanut stand to a powerhouse had to have a separate book of rules and laws to regulate what they did. If the peanut stand started to sell a sack of goobers, they had to be careful to go through the rule book. One slip of the man and he went to jail.

One fellow pressed a pair of pants and went to jail because he charged 5 cents less than the price set up in the rule book. So they wrote their NRA rule books, code laws and so forth, and got up over 900.

One would be as thick as an unabridged dictionary and as confused as the study of the stars. It would take forty lawyers to tell a shoe shiner merchant how to operate and be sure he didn't go to jail. Some people come to me for advice as a lawyer on trying to run their business. I took several days and couldn't understand it myself. The only thing I could tell them was it couldn't be much worse in jail than it was out of jail with that kind of thing going on in the country, and so to go on and do the best they could.

The whole thing of Mr. Roosevelt as run under General Johnson became such a national scandal that Roosevelt had to let Johnson slide out as a scapegoat. I am told that the day the general had to go, when they waited just as long as they could wait on him, he wanted to issue a blistering statement against Mr. Roosevelt but they finally saddled him off because they didn't know but what Wall Street might want to lead him to some other President in the future, so he left without.

It was under this NRA and the other funny alphabetical combinations that followed it that we ran the whole country into a mare's nest. The Farleys and Johnsons combed the land with agents, inspectors, supervisors, detectives, secretaries, assistants, and so forth, all of them armed with the power to arrest anybody and send them to jail if they found them not living up to some one of the rules in those 900 catalogues they had out. One man, whose case reached the Supreme Court of the United States, I understand, pleaded guilty because he didn't know what it was about, and when it got to the United States Supreme Court, it was turned loose because they couldn't even find the rule book he was supposed to be guided by.

Now it is with the PWA, WRA, GINS and every other flimsy combination that the country finds its affairs in business where no one can recognize it. More men are now out of work than ever. The debt of the United States has gone up
ten billion more dollars. There is starvation; there is homelessness; there is misery on every hand and corner. But mind you, in the meantime, Mr. Roosevelt has had his way. He is one man that can't blame any of his troubles on Huey Long. He has had his way.

Down in my part of the country, if any man has the measles he blames that on me; but there is one man that can't blame anything on anybody but himself and that is Mr. Franklin De-La-No-Roose-velt.

And now on top of that, they ordered a war on me because nearly four years ago I told Hoover's crowd, it won't do, and because three years ago I told Roosevelt and his crowd, it won't do. In other words, they are in a rage at Huey Long because I have had to say "I told you so."

I was not overstating the conditions now prevailing in this country. In the words of these gentlemen, they have confessed all that I now say or ever have said. Mr. Roosevelt and Mrs. Roosevelt too, have lately bewailed the fact that food, clothes and shelter have not been provided for the people. Even this General Hugh S. Johnson has said in his speech of this last Monday night that there are 80,000,000 babies in America who are badly hurt or wrecked by this depression. He, of course, includes us all in that classification of babies.

Mr. Harry Hopkins, who runs the relief work, says the dole roll has risen now to 22,375,000 people, the highest it has ever been. And now what is there for the Roosevelt crowd to do but to admit the facts and admit further that they are now in their third year making matters worse instead of better.

No one is to blame except them for what is going on when they have had their way, and they couldn't change the thing in two years. It is now worse than ever, and if they haven't been able to do any good in the way they have been going for two years, how can any one expect any good of them for the next two years to come? God save us two more years of the disaster we have had under that gang.

When this condition of distress and suffering among so many of our people began to develop in the Hoover administration, we knew what was the trouble, and what we would have to do to correct it.

I was one of the first men to say publicly. Mr.
Page 232 was not present in thesis.
Roosevelt followed in my track a few months later, and said the same thing—we said that all of our trouble and woe was due to the fact that too few of our people owned too much of our wealth.

We said that in our land we've too much to eat and too much to wear, and too many houses to live in; too many automobiles to be sold— that the only trouble was that the people suffered in the land of abundance because too few controlled the money and the wealth, and too many people did not have money which would buy the things they needed for life and comfort.

So I said to the people of the United States in my speeches, which I delivered in the United States Senate and over the radio in the early part of 1932, that the only way by which we could restore to reasonable life and comfort was to limit the size of the big men's fortune and guarantee some minimum to the fortune and comfort of the little man's family.

I said then as I have said since that it was inhuman to have goods rot, cotton and wool going to waste, houses empty, and at the same time to have millions of our people starving, our people naked, our people homeless, because they could not buy the things which other men had and for which these other men had no use.

So we convinced Mr. Franklin Delano Roosevelt that it was necessary that he announce and promise to the American people that in the event he was elected President of the United States he would pull down the size of the big man's fortune and guarantee something to every family, enough to do away with all poverty, and to give employment to those who were able to work and an education to the children born into the world.

Mr. Roosevelt made those promises. He made them before he was nominated in the Chicago convention, he made them again before he was elected in November, and he went so far as to re-make those promises a day or two after he was inaugurated President of the United States, and I was one authorized to say so, and I thought for a day or two after he took oath as President that maybe he was going through with his promises.

But no heart has ever been so saddened, no person's ambition was ever so blighted as was mine when I came to the realization that the President of the United States was not going to undertake what he said he would do, and what I knew to be necessary if the people of America were ever saved from calamity and misery.
So now, my friends, I come to the point where I must in a few sentences describe to you just what was the cause of our trouble which became so serious in 1929 and which has been worse ever since.

The wealth in the United States was three times as much in 1910 as it was in 1890, and yet the masses of our people owned less in 1910 than they did in 1890. In the year 1916 the condition had become so bad that a committee provided for by the Congress of the United States reported that 2 percent of the people of the United States owned 60 percent of the wealth in the country, and that 65 percent of the people owned less than 5 percent of the wealth. This report showed, however, that there was a middle class, some 33 percent of the people who owned 35 percent of the wealth.

This report went on to say that the trouble with the American people at that time was that too much of the wealth was in the hands of too few of the people and recommended that something be done to correct the evil condition then existing.

It was at about the same time in 1916 that many of our leading publications in America began to deplore the fact that so few people owned so much and that so many people owned so little. Among those commenting upon that deplorable situation of that day and time was the Saturday Evening Post:

"Along one statistical line you can figure out a nation busting with wealth; along another statistical line, a bloated plutocracy."

They said that of America, a bloated plutocracy — "1 percent of the population lording it over a starving horde with only a thin margin of merely well-to-do in between."

Close quotation from the Saturday Evening Post.

And it was, as the Saturday Evening Post and a committee appointed by Congress said, a deplorable thing back in 1916 when it was found that 2 percent of the people owned twice as much of the wealth of this country as all of the balance of the people put together, and that 65 percent of all of our people owned practically nothing.

But what did we do to correct that condition? Instead of moving to take these big fortunes from the top and spreading them among the suffering people at the bottom, financial masses of America moved in to take complete charge of the government.
for fear that our lawmakers might do something along that line.

And as a result, fourteen years after the report of 1916, the Federal Trade Commission made a study to see how the wealth of this land was distributed. And did they find it was still as bad as it was in 1916? They found it worse. They found that 1 per cent of the people owned 60 per cent of the wealth.

And as a result of foreclosures of mortgages and bankruptcies, which began to happen during the last years, it is the estimate of the conservative statisticians that 75 per cent of the people in the United States don't own anything today, that is, not even enough to pay their debts, and that 4 per cent of the people, or maybe less than 4 per cent of the people, own from 85 to 95 per cent of all the wealth in the United States.

Remember, in 1916 there was a middle class, 33 percent of the people who owned 35 percent of the wealth. That middle class is practically gone today; it no longer exists. They have dropped into the ranks of the poor. The thriving man of independent business standing is fast fading. The corner grocery store is becoming a thing of the past. Concentrated chain and merchandise stores and chain banking systems have laid waste to all middle men opportunity.

That thin margin of merely well to do in between, which the Saturday Evening Post mentioned on Sept. 23, 1916, is no longer thin. No, it is dwindled to no margin at all at this late date. Those suffering on the bottom and the few lords at the top are all that is left. There is no middle class. Lords at the top; masses at the bottom.

It became apparent that the billionaires and multimillionaires began to squeeze out the common, ordinary millionaire. In other words, the whales began to eat up the goggle-eyes after they had taken all the minnows in the catch, closing in and taking their properties and wrecking their business.

And so we arrived, and we are still there at the place in abundant America where we have everything for which a human heart can pray. The hundreds of millions, or, as General Johnson says, the eighty millions of our people, are crying in misery for want of the things which they need for life, notwithstanding the fact that the country has had and can have, more than the entire human race can consume.
One hundred and twenty-five million people of America have seated themselves at the barbecue table to eat the products which have been given to them by their Lord and Creator. There is provided by the Almighty what it takes for all of them to eat. Yea, more.

There has been provided for the people of America who have been called to this barbecue table more than is needed for all to eat, but the financial masses of America have taken off of the barbecue table 90 per cent of the food placed thereon by the Lord, even before the feast began. And there is left on that table for 125,000,000 people about what is needed for the 10,000,000. In other words, there is not enough to feed one out of twelve.

What has become of the balance of these victuals placed on the table by the Lord for the use of us all? They are in the hands of the Morgans, the Rockefellers, the Mellons, the Baruchs, the Bakers, the Astors, the Vanderbilts, 600 families at the most, either possessing or controlling the entire 90 per cent of all that is in America.

These big men cannot eat all the food, they cannot wear all the clothes, so they destroy it. They rot it up, they plow it up, they pour it in the river. They bring destruction to the acts of mankind to let humanity suffer, to let humanity go naked, to let humanity go homeless, so that nothing may occur that will do harm to their vanity and to their greed. Like the dog in the manger, they command a wagon load of hay which the dog would not allow the cow to eat, though he could not eat it himself.

So now, ladies and gentlemen, I introduce again, for fear that there are some who have just tuned in and do not know who is talking. This is Huey P. Long, United States Senator from Louisiana, talking over a National Broadcasting Company hookup, from Washington, D.C.

We come to that plan of mine, now, for which I have been so recently and roundly condemned and denounced by the Roosevelt administration and by such men as Mr. Farley and Mr. Robinson and General Hugh S. Johnson, and other spellers and speakers and spoilers.

It is for the redistribution of wealth and for guaranteeing comfort and convenience to all humanity out of this abundance in our country. I hope none will be horror-
stricken when they hear me say that we must limit the size of the big men's fortunes in order to guarantee a minimum of fortune, life and comfort to the little man, but if you are horror-stricken at my mention of that fact, think first that such is the declaration on which Mr. Roosevelt rode into nomination and election to President of the United States.

While my urgings are declared by some to be the ravings of a madman and, by such men as General Johnson, as insincere bait for a pied piper, if you will listen to me you will find that it is stating the law handed down by God to man.

You will find that it was the exact provision of the contract and law of the Pilgrim Fathers who landed at Plymouth in 1620. Now, just for the benefit of some of these gentlemen, I am going to read you from the contract of those Pilgrim Fathers who landed at Plymouth in 1620. I am reading you from the contract of those Pilgrim Fathers: "Paragraph 5; That at the end of the seventh year, the capital and profits, that the houses, lands, goods, and chattels be equally divided betwixt the adventurers and planters. When done, every man shall be free from any debt or detriment concerning this adventure."

In other words these birds who are undertaking to tell you of the bad things I have done and am advocating, they have failed to note that I not only have the Bible back of me, but that this nation was founded by the Pilgrim Fathers not to do just what I said, but to go and do all the balance, divide up equally every seventh year and cancel out all debts, and they had the authority of the Bible for doing that. On the other hand mine does not go near so far, but it will save this country as the Pilgrims intended it should be saved.

You will find that what I am advocating is the cornerstone on which nearly every religion since the beginning of man has been founded. You will find that it was urged by Lord Bacon, by Milton, by Shakespeare in England; by Socrates, by Plato, by Diogenes and the other wisest of the philosophers of ancient Greece; by Pope Pius XI in the Vatican; by the world's greatest inventor, Marconi, in Italy; Daniel Webster, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Abraham Lincoln, Andrew Jackson, William Jennings Bryan and Theodore Roosevelt in the United States, as well as by nearly all of the thousands of great men whose names are mentioned in history, and the only great man who ever dared forth to dispute these things from the Bible down is this marvelous General Hugh S. Johnson, who labels himself a
soldier and a lawyer.

He is a great soldier though he never smelt powder or heard a cap snap, and a great lawyer though he never tried a lawsuit, and I will not be willing to transact business on the lines that everybody else must be forgotten whom I follow, and if I should follow in such footsteps as was arranged for the combination of an alphabetical proposition.

The principle that I am advocating, that I will give you in detail in a minute, that principle was not only the mainspring of the Roosevelt nomination and election but in the closing speech of Herbert Hoover at the Madison Square Garden in November 1932, even Hoover said: "My conception of America is a land where men and women may work in liberty, where they may enjoy the advantages of wealth, not concentrated in the hands of the few but diffused through the lives of all."

So there you have it, ladies and gentlemen; both Hoover and Roosevelt swallowed the Huey Long doctrine and never made one single complaint before the election occurred on Nov. 8, 1932.

Now I come to give you again that plan, taken from these leaders of all times and from the Bible, for the sponsoring of which I have been labeled by American men as a madman and pied piper and demagogue, so I give you that plan of our Share Our Wealth Society.

I propose, first, that every big fortune will be cut down immediately. We will cut that down by a capital levy tax to where no one will own more than a few millions of dollars. As a matter of fact, no one can own a fortune in excess of three or four millions of dollars, just between you and me, and I think that is too much. But we figure we can allow that size of a fortune and give prosperity to all the people, even though it is done.

I propose that the surplus of all the big fortunes above a few millions to any one person at the most, go into the United States ownership. Now, how would we get all these surplus fortunes into the United States Treasury, Mr. Johnson wants to know. Well, now, if he will listen, he won't have any trouble finding out. It is not hard to do. We would do it by making every one sell what he owned. No. We would send every one a questionnaire, just like they did during the war, when they were taking us over there to make the world safe for
democracy so that they might come back here and make America safe for autocracy.

On that questionnaire the man to whom it was sent would list the properties he owned, lands, the houses, stocks and bonds, factories and patents; every man would place an appraisal on his property which the government would review and maybe change. On that appraisal the big fortune holder would say out of what property he would retain the few millions allowed to him, the balance to go to the United States.

Let's say that Mr. Henry Ford should show that he owned all the stock of the Ford Motor Company and that it is worth $2,000,000,000, we will say. He would claim, say $4,000,000 dollars of the Ford stock, but $1,996,000,000 would go to the United States.

Say the Rockefeller Foundation was listed at $10,000,000,000 in oil stocks, bank stocks, money and store-houses. Each Rockefeller would say whether he wanted his limit in the money, oil or bank stock, but about $9,900,000,000 would be left and that would go to the United States Government.

And so in this way, this Government of the United States would come into the possession of about two-fifths of the wealth which on normal values would be worth from $165,000,000,000 to $175,000,000,000.

Then we would turn to the inventories of the 25,000,000 families of America and all those showing properties and moneys clear of debt that were above the $5,000 and up to the limit of a few millions. We wouldn't draw down a fortune that wasn't bigger than a few millions, and if a man had over $5,000 then he would have his guaranteed minimum. But those showing less than $5,000 for the family, free of debt, would be added to; so that every family would start life again with homestead possession of at least a home and the comforts needed for a home, including such things as a radio and an automobile.

Those things would go to every family as a homestead not to be sold either for debts or for taxes or even by consent of the owner except the government would allow it, and then only on condition that the court hold it, that is, hold the money that was received for it, to be spent for the purpose of buying another home and the comforts thereof.
Such would mean that the $165,000,000,000 or more taken from the big fortunes would have about $100,000,000,000 of it used to provide everybody with the comforts of home. The government might have to issue warrants for claim and location, or even currency to be retired from such property as it was claimed, but all that is a detail not impractical to get these homes into the hands of the people.

So America would start again with millionaires, but with no multi-millionaires or billionaires; we would start with some poor, but they wouldn't be so poor that they wouldn't have the comforts of life. The lowest a man could go would not take away his home and the home comforts from him.

America, however, would still have a $65,000,000,000 balance after providing these homes. Now what do we do with that? Wait a minute and I will tell you.

Next we propose, Second: That after homes and comforts of homes have been set up for the families of the country, that we turn our attention to the children and to the youth of the land, providing first for their education and training.

We would not have to worry about the problem of child labor, because the very first thing which we would place in front of every child would be not only a comfortable home during his early years, but the opportunity for education and training, not only through the grammar school and the high school, but through college, and to include vocational and professional training for every child.

If necessary, that would include the living cost of that child while he attended college if there wasn't a college close enough for him to live at home and conveniently attend it, and that would be the case with many of those living in rural areas, and we would have to pay their living cost while they went away to college.

We now have an educational system, and in States like Louisiana, which has the best one, school books are furnished free to every child and transportation is given free by bus to every student. However far he may live from a schoolhouse in Louisiana, they take him in a bus and take him until he graduates from high school, but when it comes to a matter of college education, except in a few cases the right to a college education is determined by the financial ability of the father and mother to pay for the cost of the college education.
It doesn't make any difference how brilliant a boy or girl may be, that doesn't give them the right to a college education in America today. The only thing that gives them a right to a college education is having parents with enough money to pay their expenses away from home to go to school.

Now, General Hugh S. Johnson says I am indeed a very smart demagogue. He says I am a wise and dangerous menace. Well, wise as he says I am, and smart as he says I am, and I oughtn't to be made to deny that; with all that credit given to me, I am one of those who didn't have the opportunity to secure a college education or training.

We propose that the right to education and extent of education will be determined and gauged not so much by the ability of the parents to pay money but the mental ability of a child to absorb the learning in a college. This should appear to General Johnson, who has said I am a smart man, and since I had not enjoyed the learning and college training which my planning would provide for others, I might not have fallen into the class of a demagogue that he now claims me to be.

Remember, after providing for everyone to have a home, we have sixty-five billion dollars that will lie in the hands of the United States. We will use a large part of it immediately to expand particularly the colleges and universities of the country.

You wouldn't know the great institutions like Yale, Harvard, and Louisiana State University. Get ready for a surprise. College enrollments would multiply 1,000 per cent. We would immediately call in the engineers, architects, professors and scholars of learning, send out a hurry call, because the problem of providing college education would start a fusillade of employment which might make it immediately impossible for us to shorten the hours of labor even as we contemplate in the brilliance of our program.

And how happy the youth of this land would be tomorrow morning if they knew instantly that their right to a home and the comforts of home and to complete college and professional training and education were assured to every one of them. I know how happy they would be, because I know how I would have felt had such a message been delivered to my door.

I cannot deliver that promise to the youth of this land tonight, but I am doing my part. I am standing the blows,
I am hearing the charges hurled from the four quarters of the country. It is the same fight which has been made against me in Louisiana when I was undertaking to provide the free school books, the free buses, the cheap university facilities and things of that kind to educate the youth of that State. It is the same blare which I heard when I was undertaking to provide for the sick and afflicted in Louisiana, where they are provided for as nowhere else in the whole world.

When the youth of this land, however, realize what is meant and what is contemplated in the "Share our Wealth" program, that it means an absolute, complete training, and educational training for them, regardless of their financial billings—gate and profanity, all the Farleys and Johnsons in America can't prevent the light of truth from hurling their understanding letters against the dark canopy of the sky.

When we have landed at a place where homes and comforts are provided for all families and complete education and training for all young men and women has been furnished, the next problem is to have an income to sustain our people thereafter.

How shall that be arranged? Well, here is what we propose. We will shorten the hours of labor by law, so much as may be necessary, so that none will be worked too long and there will be none unemployed. We will cut the hours of toil to thirty hours a week, and maybe less.

We will cut the working year to eleven months of the year and have a month's vacation, and maybe less than eleven months, if it is necessary.

If our great improvement programs show we need more labor than we have, we will have to lengthen the hours as the convenience and circumstances require. One year it might be thirty hours; another year it might be twenty-eight, another year it might be thirty-two hours a week. At all events, the hours for production would be gauged to meet the market for consumption.

We will need all our machinery for many years because we have much improvement to do. The more use that we make of machinery the less toil will be required of our people.

Now a minimum earning would be established for every person with a family to support. It would be such a living on which one already owning a home could maintain a family in comfort, of not less than around $2,500 a year to every family.

And now, by reason of false statements made particularly
by Arthur Brisbane and General Hugh S. Johnson, I must make answer to show that there is more than enough in this country and more than enough raised and made every year to do what I propose.

Arthur Brisbane says that I am proposing to give every person $15,000 for a home and its comforts, and he says that that would mean that the United States would have to be worth over a trillion dollars to do it.

Well, why make that untrue statement, Arthur Brisbane? You know that is not so. I do not propose any home and comfort at $15,000 to each person. It is proposed by our plan, a minimum of $5,000 to every family, which would be less than $125,000,000,000 and that is less than one-third of this nation’s wealth in normal times, when it is at least $400,000,000,000.

General Johnson says that my proposal is for $5,000 guaranteed earning to each family every year, which, he says, would cost from four to five hundred millions of dollars per year, which he says, is four times more than our whole national income has ever been.

Why make such an untruthful statement as that, General Johnson? Must you turn and be a false witness in order to make that kind of a point? I do not propose $5,000 to each family as an income every year, as the guaranteed minimum. I propose a minimum of from $2,000 to $2,500 to each family after they have had their home and the comforts furnished to them. For 25,000,000 families that minimum income per family would require from $50,000,000,000 to $60,000,000,000 per year.

In the prosperous days, we have had already nearly double that income, that has already been made in some years. That would allow plenty of excess for the fortunes and excess incomes of the financially affluent, but with the unheard of prosperity which we will have if all of our people could buy what they need our national income would be doubled.

Now let’s see if I am trying to give too much. There is a letter from that eminent writer of Wall Street, writing in these books and these statistics, who says that there would be an income of $10,000 to every family if there was a fair distribution and everybody was allowed to work.

Well, now, if that is true, and this is the gentleman
writing in the Hearst papers and in the Wall Street Journal, Mr. Bascom, and his figures are accepted by them all, why are they quarreling when I am only guaranteeing a minimum of $2,500, just one-fourth as much as they say would be available?

Why doesn't Mr. Brisbane get together with his other men that has got working for him, or that rather, he may be working for? Now I come to the balance of the plan.

We propose, No. 4, that agriculture production will be cared for in the manner specified in the Bible. We would plow up no crops; we would burn no corn and throw no milk in the river; shoot no hogs and slaughter no cattle to rot. We would raise all the cotton we needed, and if we raised more, we would store the surplus in the government warehouses for the next year.

If we got to where we had more than twelve months' supply of any crop, then we wouldn't raise any crop the next year, and that would be the year we would put on the government and state public works in that territory, widening roads and providing for floods, extending the power lines into the rural areas.

And, if we had any time left, some of us who have grown old would go back to school and learn some of the things we forgot since we became grown, and maybe learn some of the things they didn't know anything about when we were young and able to go to school.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am not going to detain you any more, except to say this: We propose to provide, after we have given to everybody homes and comforts of a home, an old-age pension to every one above 60, who would not only have their homes and home comforts but a sufficient revenue to maintain them in a reasonable state of decency and respect during the declining days of their life.

We also include in our program that we will not quibble about the soldiers' bonus and the obligations which our government owes to the soldiers of our wars, but that we will discharge that obligation and care for them completely.

Now, my friends, this is our program of the "Share our Wealth" society. This country cannot continue to go as it is at this time. There is such misery as ought to reach the heart of every man; and it is doing more than that, it is reaching up
into the very functions of all the life of nearly every man in
this country. I have letters before me and they come to my
office by the hundreds and by the thousands and they describe
conditions more pitiful than there have ever been.

Here is a letter from the centre of the cotton section,
where more cotton is raised than any other place in America.
Here is a woman in the cotton country. They won't allow this
woman and her children to raise cotton. She is begging me to
send whatever old clothes I may be able to spare, so she can
cut them up and make clothes for her people. They won't allow
the woman to raise cotton and she hasn't any money to buy
clothes.

I have a letter from Little Rock, Ark. Here is a
poor woman trying to get something to do; she wants to work
herself. She says: "I can't make a living. I wanted to get a
job where I could be at home when the boy comes from school,
and I do want to finish him at school. He is in the eighth
A grade. God will surely bless you if you will help me get a
job. I have no money to live on. Sincerely."

That is just a letter from a mother.

Here is a letter from a poor nigger down in our country.
They are no worse off there than anywhere else. He says:
"Extreme distress and actual hunger, suffering, but not only
myself but my wife and child, compel me to make this most
urgent appeal to you for some help, because I have been out of
employment most of the time for the past two or three years.
Could get only a little work now and then, and less than
four weeks all last year by the CWA. Now I have exhausted all
sources of employment or help. I decided I would have to ask
you to help us, myself and little family in this time of extreme
hunger and actual distress. I pray you, Mr. Long, do help me
now. James Stuart."

I am not reading you all this letter of this poor
colored person. It would appeal to anybody. I want to say
this: He is in Louisiana; I can't help him all that I would
like to, but I will help every one of these white and colored
people to some extent in my State. I can't help them much,
but I am undertaking to make the fight here that will relieve
that poverty.

Here is another letter from a poor woman and she says
this: "We do not have shoes and clothing to keep us warm, You
go to the ERA office to ask for help. They look at you slant-eyed,
just as good as to say; "What sort of a creature are you and what zoo did you escape from?" The office helper is always well dressed and drives good cars, while we are hungry and naked."

That is what is going on, the plight of America today, ladies and gentlemen, and we are going on and on with the St. Vitus dance of the Roosevelt depression. More people unemployed; twenty-odd million people unemployed; the national debt up to 29 to 30 billions of dollars, the plight becoming worse and worse as time goes on. The only relief that we have in sight is to Share our Wealth.

Won't you write me tonight? Won't you write me tomorrow? Won't you organize a "Share our Wealth" society? If you want a copy of my speech, write to me. If you want the statistics to prove anything I have said, write to me. Organize a "Share our Wealth" society in your community; write to me, Huey P. Long, United States Senate, Washington, D. C.

I will send you the credentials, I will send you the material, but get out and organize your friends; let's make the fight, let's make the politicians keep the promises or vote somebody into the office that will keep the promise that in this land of abundance none shall have too much, none shall have too little; in the land of too much to eat and too much to wear and too many homes to live in, and too many automobiles to ride in, that we will see the blessings of this land given to us by God and by mankind, shall be reasonably shared by all our people.

I thank you!
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