

Hoover Path Seen Easier If He Had Been Elected As Democratic Candidate

But Fate Determined He Had To Run As
Republican Or Not At All In 1928

By CHARLES P. STEWART
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WASHINGTON.—It was an
unkind fate which placed Herbert
Hoover in the White House, dur-
ing the period of perhaps the
greatest stress America has ex-
perienced, as the Democratic head
of a Republican administration.

The speaker was an individ-
ual high in public life of G. O.
P. faith and re-
putedly a trusted
presidential ad-
viser.

"Had it been
possible," he con-
tinued, "for Mr.
Hoover to enter
on his present
office under Dem-
ocratic auspices,
though he would have encountered
many difficulties, he at least
would have been in a position to
meet them unqualifiedly in his
own fashion. Partisan necessity
to compromise between Demo-
cratic beliefs of his own and the
Republican policies to which his
election committed him has been
his, almost hopeless, handicap
throughout the current depres-
sion.

"Unavoidably this has meant
an unsatisfactory program—an-
satisfactory to himself; unsatis-
factory to Democrats, who natu-
rally have attacked it bitterly;
both as a matter of principle and
of politics; unsatisfactory to Re-
publicans, who, as naturally, have
defended it half-heartedly."

"AS A DEMOCRATIC candi-
date," pointed out the critic I am
quoting, "Mr. Hoover could not
imagine have been so identified
with the idea of assured prosper-
ity as Republican spokesmanship
exceeded in identifying him with
it between the G. O. P. con-
vention and election day; there-
fore the contrast between promise
and realization would not have
been so appalling."

"As a Democratic president he
could have thrown his whole
strength into his fight with hard
times."

"Democrats would have been
100 percent his defenders.
Republicans doubtless would
have howled, but their fault-finding
would have been discounted as
largely political. His party would
have been denounced, certainly,
but not so much himself personally.
As a Democrat, even now
he could go down in history as a
sinner, without discredit; as a
Republican he must succeed
himself or recognize that the
country has repudiated him."

DEMOCRATS may jeer all
they please at the Hooverian
phrase, "Rugged individualism."
Nevertheless, individualism is
the keynote of the Jefferson phil-
osophy. Alexander Hamilton was
the founder of the creed of regu-
lation of the masses under cap-
able leadership; in other words,
plenty of government—the less of
which the better, according to the
author of the declaration of in-
dependence.

Herbert Hoover wrote a little
book soon after the war (it was
published in 1928) called "Ameri-
can Individualism."
First editions of it are said to
command a premium now. I have
one.

It was given to me by George
Adams, at that time private sec-
retary to Mr. Hoover, in the lat-
ter's post as head of the com-
merce department.

GEORGE assured me that this
small volume (it consists of only
72, 7 by 4 1/2 inches, wide-margined
pages of 8-point type) summed
up his "chief's" political and eco-
nomic views in a nutshell.

I read "American Individual-
ism" and then I showed it to a
number of Democratic members
of congress (both houses), who
are deeply versed in their party's
lore, and with one accord they
testified that the bulk of it (in a
few passages Mr. Hoover does in-
clude a trifle Hamiltonian toward
disturb of the masses) is as sound
Democracy as Thomas Jefferson
ever wrote of. Andrew Jackson
ever swore to—"by the eternal."

From Mr. Hoover's book I drew
various conclusions, and, checking
them with the conclusions of per-
sons who are much in contact
with him, I believe them to be
fairly accurate.

For example, "welfare," as the
expression is currently used, in
connection with such combina-
tions as "welfare worker," is a
subject in which all his intimates
agree that the president is im-
mensely interested.

I had guessed as much from his
book. In it he says:
"The days of the pioneer are
not over. There are continents
of welfare of which we have
penetrated only the coastal plain."

ECONOMICS, from all ac-
counts, absolutely is paramount
with him.

"American Individualism"
would indicate this also. To the
chapter (the longest in the book)
on "Economic Phases" of "Ameri-
can Individualism" the author de-
votes 16 pages.

The chapter begins:
"That high and increasing
standards of living and comfort
should be the first of considera-
tions in public mind and in gov-
ernment needs no apology."

In short—
"Prosperity."
That is to say, the thing upon

which he places the highest value
Mr. Hoover has had the least of in
his administration, and from
those who know him very well, I
gather that it would be impossible
to over-estimate the extent of his
disappointment in this respect or
the strength of his desire to see at
least a measure of better times
restored while he is yet in office.

THE PRESIDENT'S acquaint-
ance are exceedingly chary of
admitting that Mr. Hoover is
somewhat material in his concepts
of prosperity and "welfare," but
I notice that his chapter on the
"Spiritual Phases" of "American
Individualism" is the shortest in
the volume—5 1/2 pages, as com-
pared with 16 on economics.

In respect to length, "Political
Phases"—15 pages—is the second
chapter in importance in the pre-
sidential booklet.
It is not political in the aver-
age politician's sense, either.

Rather, it is another chapter on
economics.
"To curb the forces in business
which would destroy equality of
opportunity and yet to maintain
the initiative and creative facul-
ties of our people," writes Mr.
Hoover, "are the twin objects we
must attain."

"Real Jeffersonian doctrine,"
said a veteran Democrat to whom
I read this sentence.
"To preserve the former (equal-
ity of opportunity) we must regu-
late that type of activity," I con-
tinued, reading, "that would domi-
nate. To preserve the latter (in-
dividual initiative) the govern-
ment must keep out of production
and distribution of commodities
and services."

"He means Muscle Shoals," ex-
claimed my Democratic friend
(who hails from the Tennessee
river region), flushing hotly.

BUT the essence of the book is
this:
"He is," says Mr. Hoover, "an
unashamed individualist."
"But let me also say," he adds,
"that I am an American individualist."

And he explains this, employ-
ing the only italics in the volume,
what he means by an "American
individualist."

"Our individualism differs from
all others because it embraces
the great ideal of opportunity; we
build our society upon the attain-
ment of the individual, we shall
safeguard to every individual an
equality of opportunity to take
that position in the community to
which his intelligence, character,
ability and ambition entitle him;
that we keep the social solution
free from frozen strata of classes;
that we shall stimulate effort of
each individual to achievement;
that through an enlarging sense
of responsibility and understand-
ing we shall assist him to this at-
tainment; who he in turn must
stand up to the emery wheel of
competition."

"BUT MR. HOOVER," con-
cluded the critic whom I quoted
in the first instance, "couldn't run
in 1928 as a Democrat."
"He had been too long identi-
fied with a Republican adminis-
tration."

Even if he could have had the
Democratic nomination, the
chances were too strongly against
his election. It was not a Demo-
cratic year. That was patent.

"It was a choice between being
no president at all and being a
Republican-elected president,
whatever his personal ideas."
"With normal times it might
not greatly have mattered."

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That is to say, the thing upon

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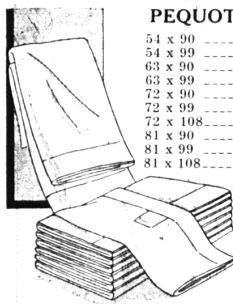
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