

World War II and Its Background: Research Materials at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library and Policies Concerning Their Use¹

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Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

I THINK it is fair to say that archivists are generally regarded by historians as estimable fellows who unfortunately have chosen to follow a dull, albeit useful, occupation. Perhaps part of the explanation for this attitude is that when archivists are asked to read papers at historical meetings they are usually invited to describe collections of manuscripts, and there are few techniques better calculated to bring a glaze to the eyes of a listening audience than the reading of a lengthy paper devoted to bibliography or a listing and description of research materials.

It will be the purpose of this paper, therefore, to attempt only to say some things about the materials at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library that will be of general usefulness to those whose interests lie in the field of World War II and its background and to clear up a few widely prevalent misunderstandings. These misunderstandings have their origin in the fact, as I am constantly being reminded, that Roosevelt was different. The nature of this difference may be partially illustrated by the fairly close relationship that the library has necessarily maintained for the past few years with the Historical Division of the Department of State, especially that section which is engaged in the preparation of the *Foreign Relations* series.

That division feels that full and free access by the State Department to the personal papers of Franklin D. Roosevelt is vital to the adequate documentation of the diplomacy of the Roosevelt period, and we at the library have exerted every effort to be of as much help to the *Foreign Relations* group as possible. But during the course of the visits of *Foreign Relations* staff members to the

¹ Paper read at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association in Chicago, Dec. 29, 1953, by Herman Kahn, Director, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

library, I frequently succumb to the temptation to tease them a little.

"How does it happen," I ask, "that it is only in the case of Franklin D. Roosevelt that you find it vital to make use of presidential papers in the preparation of *Foreign Relations*? How does it happen that you were able to get out such excellent volumes for all the years covering the administrations of Theodore Roosevelt, Taft, Wilson,² Harding, Coolidge, Hoover, not to mention earlier Presidents, without having had access to the personal papers of those men? You go to considerable effort and expense to make full use of the papers of Franklin D. Roosevelt. How is it that you were not equally insistent on making use of papers of his predecessors?"

To this they usually reply with an apologetic but knowing smile — "Oh," they say, sagely, "it is true that we did not make much use of the papers of earlier Presidents in our compilations, but *Roosevelt is different*."

This soft impeachment can hardly be denied. It is true, of course, that Roosevelt was different, in many respects, from his immediate predecessors in the White House. For historians, not the least of these differences are those affecting his papers and what has happened to them. These differences affecting his papers may be summed up under four headings, as follows:

1. Franklin D. Roosevelt's papers are immensely greater in volume than those of any of his predecessors, not only because of the length of his tenure and the tremendous expansion of the powers of the Presidency during the Roosevelt period, but also because of Roosevelt's working habits as President.
2. Unlike the fate of the papers of his predecessors, the Roosevelt papers became the property of the Federal Government almost immediately upon his death.
3. The Roosevelt papers were the first and are thus far the only body of presidential papers to be administered by the National Archives.
4. Most of Roosevelt's papers were made generally available for research purposes only 5 years after he left office, which in his case also happened to be 5 years after his death.

These four unprecedented factors affecting the Roosevelt papers, taken together, are the basic cause of the misunderstandings, the most widely prevalent of which is that the papers are official records of the Federal Government. This is not the case. None of

² After this paper was read, Dr. E. R. Perkins of the Historical Division of the Department of State called to my attention that the personal papers of Woodrow Wilson were examined in connection with the compilation of the *Foreign Relations* volumes covering the Paris Peace Conference of 1919.

the factors cited above can possibly have operated to transmute what is by law and custom in this country a collection of personal papers into a body of official archives. In other words, despite the circumstances recited above, the relationship of the National Archives to the Roosevelt papers is essentially a fiduciary one and is pretty much the same as that, let us say, of the Adams Family Trust towards the papers of John and John Quincy Adams. The fact that the National Archives has chosen to adopt a policy of generosity with respect to access to them does not in any way affect their intrinsic character as personal papers.

This means that there are great legal, procedural, and technical differences between the status and use made of these papers and those of official archives. This point is emphasized here because an understanding of the fact that none of the manuscript materials in the Roosevelt Library are, legally speaking, official records makes an important difference to scholars who wish to make use of them.

I think though, that when our friends from the State Department tell us that Roosevelt was "different," it is not these considerations that they have in mind, so much as one other. Roosevelt, they say, in many respects acted as his own Secretary of State. Hence for the period of his Presidency many papers that would normally have found their way to the State Department files came to rest, instead, among the personal papers of the President.

I would not put it in quite this way. I would say rather, that like many executives who have a deep relish for their work and are on top of their jobs, Roosevelt actually tried to give personal supervision to all of the agencies under him; and the extent to which he was able to do this, up to the last few years of his life, is truly astonishing.

This enjoyment that Roosevelt received from running things in every nook and cranny of the Government, together with his immense appetite for detail, naturally produced a much greater flow of paper between him and the executive departments than had been the case with preceding Presidents. It is to be doubted that, comparatively, the personal supervision he gave to the State Department was any closer, or that his personal intervention in its business was any greater, than his supervision of and intervention into the affairs of a good many other departments. It probably only *seems* greater because, alone among the departments, the State Department maintains a permanent corps of historians to analyze and publish selections from its records, and this inevitably brings out the zeal with which Roosevelt oversaw the Department's

work. If there were similar close study of the files of most other departments, I am quite certain they would reveal no less interest by Roosevelt in their work.³

Still another aspect of Roosevelt's character that has enriched his personal papers was his habit of encouraging huge numbers of people to write directly to him about governmental policies and problems, including foreign affairs. This habit did indeed have a different effect on the work of the State Department from the effect on that of other departments, for among the persons whom Roosevelt encouraged to write directly to him were our ambassadors and ministers abroad. Not only were many of these men old personal friends of President Roosevelt, but his attitude toward them and his conception of their relationship to him harked back to the historical conception of the ambassador as the personal representative abroad of the Chief Executive. It must certainly have been true of many of our diplomatic representatives in the Roosevelt period that they did not know who their boss was — the President or the Secretary of State. Or, rather, they did know who thought he was their boss, and many of these men made a habit of reporting directly to the President in lengthy personal letters. It is sometimes felt by the State Department that in other times these letters would have gone into the Department's official files, rather than into the President's files. But in other times most of these letters would never have been written at all, as a situation favorable to the writing of lengthy, frank, gossipy, informal letters to the President by our diplomatic representatives abroad simply has not existed in most administrations. Some of these letters Roosevelt did send to the Secretary of State to note and return, but many never left the White House.

When one adds to this large personal correspondence with our formal diplomatic emissaries abroad Roosevelt's well-known habit of sending abroad special emissaries to carry out particular assignments, the sources of the State Department's concern become even more apparent. Its files have frequently remained completely innocent of any record of the work of these men, inasmuch as they usually reported only to the President. And as the world crisis deepened in the years after 1937, Roosevelt tended more and more to take important matters (especially those relating to Western Europe) into his own hands. It is for these reasons that the Roosevelt Library has felt that full and close cooperation in making

³ The index to the Army's recently published volume entitled *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1941-1942*, by Maurice Matloff and Edwin M. Snell contains 409 separate entries under the name of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

the Roosevelt papers available to the Department of State is not only desirable but essential to the State Department's program of documentary publication for the Roosevelt period. And the fact that it is the existence of the Roosevelt Library that makes possible this close cooperation is a factor that should not be lost sight of in any consideration of the problem of the proper method of dealing with presidential papers.

It will be obvious from these facts that the personal papers of Franklin D. Roosevelt must be used by anyone studying the diplomacy of the Roosevelt period. Of course, it was not very many years ago that when historians spoke of the background or origins of a war one assumed that they were speaking *only* of diplomatic history. Today there is very little in domestic affairs, as well as external affairs, that can be omitted from studies of this kind. Analyses of social and economic conditions, of public opinion and pressure groups, and of factionalism and rivalries in national legislative bodies have come to play an important part in our attempts to understand the total complex of causes that produced the conflict. The attention devoted by Langer and Gleason to the work of the William Allen White Committee and the recent study by Wayne S. Cole of the America First group are examples of the importance that we now attach to public opinion and the work of pressure groups in the prewar period.⁴

Given this broad definition, there is, of course, very little in the Roosevelt papers that does not contribute in one way or another to the general understanding of factors involved in the immediate prewar situation. Roosevelt was immensely sensitive to public opinion, and his papers are filled with huge quantities of raw material for the study of developing public opinion on the war issue and of relations with and attitudes toward pressure groups and their leaders.

The White House papers also contain great masses of illuminating material on problems related to economic mobilization, civilian defense, conscription, rationing, lend-lease, psychological warfare, relations with organized labor, the maintenance of civil liberties, the maintenance of civilian morale, and many similar subjects. Two points should, however, be emphasized about this material. The first is that although these papers are of the highest importance in studying any one of these or related problems, almost never is the White House material sufficient to stand by itself. The papers

⁴ William L. Langer and S. Everett Gleason, *The Challenge to Isolation, 1937-1940* (New York, 1952); Wayne S. Cole, *America First; the Battle Against Intervention, 1940-1941* (Madison, 1953).

of the President reflect in each case only those aspects of problems and programs that came to the attention of the White House. If a program functioned smoothly and with little difficulty, there is likely to be comparatively little concerning its operations in the presidential papers. In every case, it should be emphasized, the great body of detailed information concerning operations of a wartime program is to be found in the files of the agency itself, which usually are now in the National Archives. The President's papers can ordinarily be used only to fill out the material found in those files and to help in settling crucial points that cannot be settled from the agency's own files. An example of this type of use of the White House papers is that made by Jack Peltason in his study of the reconversion controversy. Mr. Peltason was able to use the White House papers to throw important light on the background of the decision to remove Donald Nelson as head of the War Production Board. There was naturally comparatively little in the papers of the War Production Board itself on that story.⁵

It should also be emphasized that the Roosevelt papers, having originally been organized as ordinary current files, do not lend themselves easily to research purposes. On almost any of the subjects mentioned above it is still necessary for the student to go through large quantities of irrelevant material in order to make certain that he has seen everything in the papers that bears on his subject. As time permits, however, the staff of the library is making cross-sectional indexes and otherwise rationalizing the organization of the papers, so that their use for research purposes is gradually becoming more feasible and less time-consuming.

It is important that mention should also be made of what the White House papers do not contain. One type of request frequently received at the library is for information concerning a conversation between the President and a particular individual who visited the White House. The library does have records which show whom the President saw from day to day and who were his guests at the White House. It was, however, a point of conscious policy with Roosevelt not to make a record of his conversations, and only very rarely is it possible to find in his papers a verbatim record of a conversation or even any general indication of the nature of a conversation. This is just as true of telephone conversations as it is of face-to-face talk, despite a widespread notion to the con-

⁵ Jack Peltason, *The Reconversion Controversy*, published in *Public Administration and Policy Development*, edited by Harold Stein (New York, 1952).

trary. This fact is always bad news for those who hope that we may be able to play back for them a complete transcript of every word uttered by Roosevelt or by others in Roosevelt's presence. It is often disappointing to those many persons who are now interested in what has become known as the decision-making process. Scores of people have recently become interested in the process by which Presidents or others in positions of power make up their minds, and hope to find in a President's papers materials that will give them a complete understanding of how a man's mind worked in deciding to undertake a particular course of action. But such materials are almost invariably scanty and frequently nonexistent.

Perhaps it will be worthwhile at this point to present a slightly more detailed discussion of those materials that fall within the scope of interest of the more orthodox type of diplomatic historian; that is, papers directly concerning the problems of foreign relations. In general these classes of papers may be broken down into four categories, though it should be emphasized that the categories do not represent actual physical groupings in the files. One can only, rather, give a general conception of the main types of materials to be found. These are as follows.

First, there is correspondence with heads of foreign states. There is a considerable amount of this in the Roosevelt papers, especially correspondence with royalty, for Roosevelt unquestionably shared with many of his fellow-Americans their weakness for crowned heads. It should be said, however, that although the letters received by Roosevelt from monarchs, presidents, and prime ministers are frequently detailed and illuminating, his replies were rarely more than formal and friendly acknowledgments. He was, in fact, careful almost always to have such replies drafted by the Department of State, though the original correspondence has remained among Roosevelt's own papers.⁶

A second category, which has already been mentioned and explained, is Roosevelt's correspondence with our diplomats abroad, both special representatives and those occupying formal diplomatic

⁶ It may be mentioned at this point that Harry Elmer Barnes has several times published a statement to the effect that the letters exchanged between President Franklin D. Roosevelt and King George VI are among "the most extreme top secrets" that are "carefully guarded at Hyde Park," and that no one is permitted to see. (Cf. his "Revisionism and the Historical Blackout," in *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace*, edited by Harry Elmer Barnes, Caldwell, Idaho, 1953, p. 16.) Why Dr. Barnes attaches such great importance to this particular correspondence I cannot say, but it is proper to mention here that all of the correspondence that passed between Franklin D. Roosevelt and King George VI has been open for use by any historian who cares to see it since the day that the Roosevelt papers were opened for use.

status. This type of material is of course much more voluminous for some individuals than for others. Josephus Daniels, for instance, who was an old political associate and personal friend of Roosevelt's, as well as an assiduous correspondent, wrote literally hundreds of pages of personal communications from his post in Mexico City. Much of this had little bearing on our relations with Mexico but was comment on the passing scene. Others wrote lengthy personal letters that were confined to observations about the nations in which they were stationed.

A third category of important material is Roosevelt's correspondence with the officials in the departments. Strong and steady streams of memoranda flowed in both directions between the White House and the State Department about foreign problems of many kinds. Frequently officials in the Department would send to the President personal letters from friends abroad which they believed he would be interested in. These, or copies of them, often remain in the White House files. It should be noted also that the President's equally voluminous correspondence with other departments such as War, Navy, and Interior sometimes had a bearing on diplomatic problems and must be examined by persons interested in the diplomacy of the period.

Finally, there is the immense and important correspondence that Roosevelt carried on with private citizens on every manner of subject, including foreign relations. It is interesting to note that he was frequently more frank and detailed in giving his views on some situation abroad when writing a personal letter to an old friend than when communicating with the State Department or a diplomatic officer. Thus one often is better able to learn what Roosevelt really thought from what he said in reply to some third cousin or fairly obscure private citizen whom he had once known in business in New York City than from what he said to the Secretary of State or our ambassadors. These letters to private individuals are to a large extent found in a file of 9,000 folders, arranged only by name of the correspondent. Until recently there was no way of getting at correspondence on a particular subject in these folders, inasmuch as one had only the names of the correspondents as a guide in trying to use them. Recently, however, the library has completed a monumental subject index to these 9,000 folders, and this index takes one directly to any comments on any subject wherever it may be found in this particular group of letters. Thus large amounts of new information on foreign affairs as well as many other subjects have been opened up. It is no longer necessary

to go through all of the 9,000 folders if you wish to know what prominent private citizens were writing to Roosevelt about, let us say, the Russo-Finnish War, and what Roosevelt said to them in reply.

All these classes of papers reflecting the White House interest in and effect on the conduct of foreign affairs are to be found in the main body of the Roosevelt papers for the entire period of 1933 to 1945. In addition, however, there is a special collection of files, the creation of which had an important effect on the nature of the Roosevelt papers for the war period. There was established in the White House in January 1942 an agency of the Presidential Office known as the Map Room. This so-called Map Room was intended to be a military information center and communication office for the President. The material filed there consisted of all messages sent or received by the President or his immediate staff concerning the conduct of the war and our relations with our allies, and documents sent to the White House by the War or Navy Departments for the President's information. It should be said that the bulk of the material in these files consists of copies of reports of combat operations received from the Defense Department and from the various war theaters. Hence, other copies of these reports and messages are to be found in the files of the Defense Department. In addition, however, the Map Room papers contain most of President Roosevelt's communications with the heads of other states concerning war matters during the period 1942-45, as well as with the special emissaries he sent abroad on war missions. Naturally, these are of immense importance. The basic consideration with which we must grapple with respect to these, as well as to certain other presidential papers, is that all messages passing through the Map Room were automatically classified as secret or top secret, regardless of their content. The habit to which Washington succumbed during the war of putting security restrictions on communications of all types affected the White House as well as the departments. It is a heritage that archivists and historians will perforce have to wrestle with for many years to come.

A recent and most promising development in this field is the promulgation by President Eisenhower in November 1953 of Executive Order 10501. This order promises to make the declassification of security-classified information a simpler and easier matter than it has been hitherto, and steps are now being taken to avail ourselves of the possibilities for more liberal action in this

regard. Even more important, perhaps, is the hope the order holds out for us that in the future no papers will be given security classification unless there are overriding and bona fide reasons for so classifying them.

Up to this point our discussion has concerned itself entirely with the papers of Franklin D. Roosevelt. All of you know that these are not the only papers in the Roosevelt Library. In fact, despite their great bulk, they now constitute less than 65 percent of the library's manuscript holdings. For the purposes of those interested in World War II and its background, the three most important other groups are the papers of Harry Hopkins, Henry Morgenthau, Jr., and John G. Winant. The papers of Harry Hopkins were deposited in the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library some time after Robert Sherwood had been given access to them by Mr. Hopkins' widow. Sherwood's book, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, is of course largely based on the Hopkins papers, and anyone who knows the book knows how rich a source the papers are. For a variety of reasons, however, these papers for the war period are still not open for research purposes. Again the most important reason is that a large percentage of the papers is security-classified. Though we hope to be able to put them in a usable condition and to do the necessary screening and arrangement before too long, it can only be said at the present time that the problem of declassification, together with the regrettable physical condition of the papers when they were received by the library, make it highly unwise to try to open them for research use.

The so-called diaries of Henry Morgenthau, Jr., comprising some 900 bound volumes covering the period 1933-45, are not diaries in any real sense. They are, rather, a detailed record of his conferences and his telephone conversations, and copies of important documents that went across his desk. Because of the role of the Treasury in prewar and wartime procurement, economic mobilization, financing, and international monetary arrangements, this material has been of great value to those scholars who have been permitted to use it. As is usual in such cases, however, the Morgenthau papers were given to the library with the stipulation that access to them is to be granted only on the written authorization of the donor. Hence the matter of access to the Morgenthau diaries lies in the discretion of Mr. Morgenthau. The same conditions hold true for the Winant papers, which the Winant family has only recently given the library authority to open, arrange, and label. This work has just been begun. Other large groups of per-

sonal papers of importance for the war period are those of Charles W. Taussig, Herbert C. Pell, and the late Senator Elbert D. Thomas. The conditions governing the use of these groups will be outlined to anyone having an interest in them.

The question that is at once asked about the Roosevelt papers by all interested persons is, quite naturally, "Who is allowed to use this material, and how much of it is he allowed to use?" The policy of the Roosevelt Library with respect to who is allowed to use the papers is quite simple and may be briefly stated. Anyone may use the Roosevelt papers who is qualified to do research work, has in mind a specific subject that he wishes to investigate, and is genuinely serious about doing it. In short, there is no screening of persons who make application to use the Roosevelt papers, except to the extent of making certain that they know how to do research, and that they have a definite and worth-while purpose in mind in coming to the library.

As for the second point, that is, what papers students are allowed to use, it may be said at once that the great bulk of the Roosevelt papers are open for research. That was the purpose of the establishment of the Roosevelt Library, and there would not be much point in its existence if this were not the case. At the same time, it was obvious when the library was being planned that donors of papers would wish to place certain restrictions on their use. This is no more than common sense and is taken for granted in connection with the research use of all recent manuscripts and archives. In the case of the Roosevelt papers, the donor — that is, Franklin D. Roosevelt — in 1943 established a committee to which he entrusted the power to screen out and temporarily restrict the use of those materials that it would be improper to make available for research use for varying periods of years, depending on the nature of the documents. The committee, which was to undertake this task only in case President Roosevelt himself did not live to undertake it, originally consisted of Judge Samuel I. Rosenman, Harry L. Hopkins, and Grace G. Tully. By 1947, which is the year in which most of the Roosevelt papers came into the actual physical custody of the library, Mr. Hopkins had died.

After considerable discussion as to the manner in which this problem was to be handled the committee established eight categories or classes of materials which were to be kept sealed for the time being. There is no need to list here all of these eight categories, most of which cover such things as correspondence concerning patronage and papers dealing with family, financial, and per-

sonal affairs of named individuals. The category having the most immediate interest to historians is that which was defined as "papers containing information the release of which would be prejudicial to the maintenance of friendly relations with foreign states." In thus defining this class of material, the committee was expressing its feeling that the policies of the State Department with respect to the availability of its files concerning diplomatic relations with foreign states in the recent period should also be followed with respect to the Roosevelt papers that concern foreign relations.

From what has just been said, it will be apparent that in one respect the Roosevelt Library has departed from the practice usually followed by custodians of manuscripts of very recent origin. The general practice with respect to the use of recent papers is to screen the applicants and to permit a selected few to have access to papers, subject to a review of their notes or their manuscripts. At the Roosevelt Library those papers that are open, constituting about 85 percent of the total, are open on a basis of absolutely equal accessibility to all qualified persons. There is no review of searcher's notes or finished manuscripts except that the library does offer advice in connection with the thorny problems of literary property rights that inevitably arise in connection with the use of recent letters.

Having said so much, we meet the next question: "Why withhold anything? What good reasons can there be for not making all the papers available to all who want to see them?" We may pass over without comment what may seem to be the ingratitude of those who — having in the past frequently seen a President's papers scattered to the four corners of the country, or having had to wait anywhere from 30 to 100 years for access to them — now only express annoyance that, when a President's papers are made available only 5 years after the close of his term of office, a fraction of them is still withheld. The fact that this question is raised at all seems to be an indication that historians in this country have never consciously faced up to the full implications, for their techniques and research methods, of the current fashion of attempting to write definitive histories of what happened in the very recent past.

When the subject of this session was first broached, it was suggested to the chairman of the program committee that it would be regrettable if the session were to be devoted entirely to a description of World War II research materials without some description and discussion of problems and policies with respect to *giving access*

to these materials. It is important for the historian to understand the problems that confront custodians of such materials in making them available for research purposes as well as to have a knowledge of the nature of the materials themselves. At the Roosevelt Library, engaged as we have been in the unprecedented experiment of allowing the public to use a President's personal papers within a few years after his leaving office, we have of necessity been forced to do some hard thinking about the old seminar maxims concerning the historian's duty or even his right to examine all of the records. These rules, laid down by our textbooks in historiography, were admirably calculated to produce good historical writing about the events of a generation or more than a generation ago, but it should be obvious that to attempt to apply them to the documentation of yesterday's events is unrealistic in certain respects. It has recently been said in many places that if a President is to have the benefit of full, honest, and courageous advice from the men around him, a minimum condition of his receiving such advice is assurance to his advisers and conferees that what is said to the President today will not be published tomorrow, or even next week or next year. The surest and most effective way of drying up that full documentation which all historians desire and on which the writing of good history depends is to lead high public officials to believe that what they put in writing today will be public property in a few months or a few years.

In a paper read at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association last year⁷ an eminent American historian quoted a memorandum of Franklin D. Roosevelt to Secretary Hull in which Roosevelt had made the remark that four people cannot be conversationally frank with each other if somebody is taking down notes for future publication. Said our historian of this memorandum, "This attitude of government officials must be overcome if history is ever to be adequately written." It might better have been said, "If this attitude by government officials is ever to be overcome, we must assure them that there will be no unseemly violations of the confidentiality of their conversations and messages."

It has recently been pointed out how deeply disturbed Aristide Briand was when he learned in 1930 that Stresemann's papers were shortly to be published. Stresemann had died in 1929. Briand told the German Ambassador in Paris in February 1930 that he found

⁷ Howard K. Beale, "The Professional Historian; His Theory and His Practice," in *Pacific Historical Review*, August 1953.

the proposed publication of Stresemann's papers so quickly very disturbing. He said he had conducted his personal conversations with Stresemann on a level of utmost confidence and frankness, and might have said some things that he would not care to see published. "If such a policy is to be followed hereafter," he said, "no statesman would ever dare to speak frankly with a representative of a foreign power. And certainly," said Briand, "this would not be in the interest of mankind."⁸

This, of course, is exactly the point that Roosevelt had in mind in the above-mentioned memorandum. Try as they will, historians will never persuade high public officials that the first and most important responsibility of statesmen is to produce rich, full documentation in order that good history may be written. Documentation will remain a byproduct of statesmanship and will never become an end in itself. The quality of this byproduct will be high only if we are able to allay the fears felt about its use by such men as Briand and Roosevelt.

This is, of course, a big subject and one that cannot be fully developed here. It has been introduced into this discussion only because it has seemed that historians have not been, as they should be, taking thought as to the meaning for their work and for the development of historical research in this country of the fast-growing trend toward the writing of the history of the very recent past. It is because of the fact that the opening for research use of the Roosevelt papers only 5 years after he left office is in so many respects completely unprecedented that we at the Roosevelt Library have become conscious of this lack. Certainly there are no easy solutions to this problem, but certainly it is one that deserves the best thought and closest study that the historical profession can give to it. It is not enough merely to press for free access to all archives and records, wherever they exist, as soon as they have come into existence. New policies and new standards in connection with the use of such archives and records are needed, or historians will inevitably encounter a growing resistance and hostility that can in the long run only be harmful to the cause of historical research. It is to be hoped that this association will play a leading role in assisting in the development of policies in respect to this matter that will be helpful and adequate for the needs of the historical profession.

⁸ Felix E. Hirsch, "Stresemann in Historical Perspective," in *Review of Politics*, July 1953, p. 361.