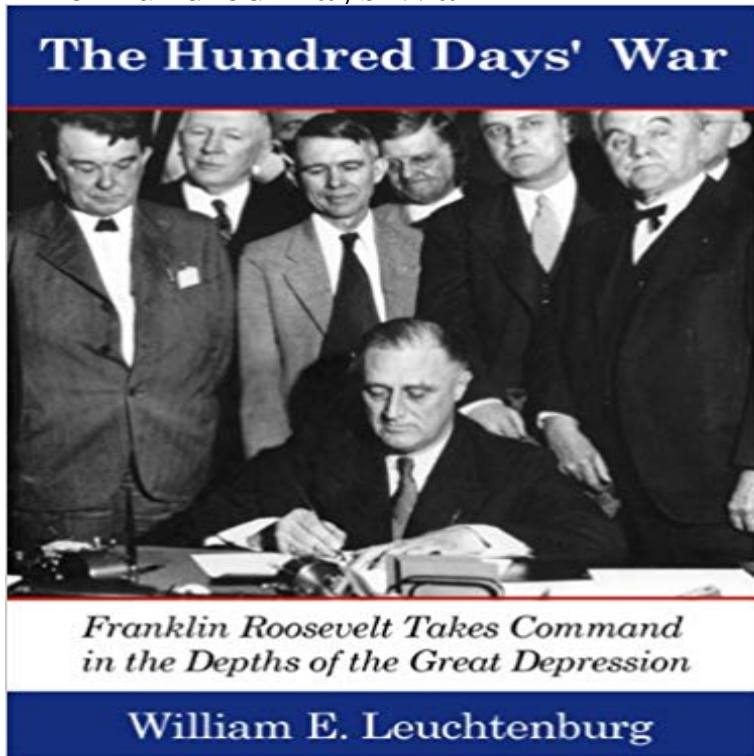


The Hundred Days War



William E. Leuchtenburg recounts how FDR battled the Great Depression with the most furious period of legislative activity in American history. --- After his victory in the 1932 presidential election, Franklin Roosevelt came to the White House in the midst of the greatest economic failure the country had ever experienced. Thirteen million--roughly 25 percent of the work force--were unemployed; perhaps as many as two million were wandering the country looking for work or adventure. Steel plants were operating at 12 percent capacity; in three years, industrial construction had fallen from \$949 million to \$74 million. In the big cities, the homeless lived on empty lots in communities of makeshift shacks, and scrounged for food. Children went hungry and were kept out of school because they had nothing to wear. I come home from the hill every night filled with gloom, one Washington correspondent noted. I see on street filthy, ragged, desperate-looking men, such as I have never seen before. By March 4, 1933, the day of Roosevelt's inauguration, thirty-eight states had closed their banks. That morning the New York Stock Exchange closed, the Kansas City Board of Trade suspended operation, and the Chicago Board of Trade shut its doors for the first time since 1848. The nation paused, waiting to hear what the new President would say. Soon they would see the most furious period of legislative activity in American history. ___ William E. Leuchtenburg is William Rand Kenan Jr. Professor Emeritus of History at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He studied at Cornell and Columbia, and taught for many years at Columbia before moving to Chapel Hill. His Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, from which this excerpt is taken, won both the Bancroft Prize and the Francis Parkman Prize in American history. His other books include *The Perils of Prosperity, 1914-1932*; *In the Shadow of FDR*; *The Supreme Court*

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