

"an all-powerful central government to which all men must look for security, guidance and assistance, and which, in turn, undertakes to control and direct the lives and destinies of all." The actions of the New Deal, Mills said, "abolish the sovereignty of the States. They make of a government of limited powers one of unlimited authority over the lives of us all. . . . We have to turn back many centuries to the days of absolute autocrats to find so great a power over the lives of millions of men lodged in the hands of a single fallible being." For Hoover the New Deal was "the most stupendous invasion of the whole spirit of Liberty that the nation has witnessed since the days of Colonial America." This "maelstrom of centralized order-giving," said David Lawrence, ". . . more strongly resembles the dictatorship of the Fascistic and Communist states of Europe than it does the American system."

How had this monstrous usurpation come about? As most of the conservative critics saw it, the means was the shrewd exploitation of the economic crisis by a collection of impractical intellectuals — "third rate college professors and unsuccessful welfare workers," in the words of Frank Kent — allied with a group of political bosses and an amiable but reckless President. Since Roosevelt in 1934 was still a little popular for direct attack, hostile fire concentrated at first on the brain trusters. The nation's "most immediate danger," said Eugene Meyer in the spring of 1934, lay in "the inexperience of the young intellectuals who are now apparently directing the policy of the administration." "The major policies of agriculture and foreign trade," said George Peek, "are in charge of men who have never earned their livings in industry, commerce, finance or farming." "If they are as a class competent to plan and run the business of the country," said the *Saturday Evening Post*, "then practical experience and training in industry have lost their meaning." This "coterie of visionaries," in Raoul Desvernine's phrase, was running wild, while "competence and enterprise," as Merle Thorpe complained in *Nation's Business*, "cool their heels in the anteroom of authority." The prominence of the college professor was particularly distressing. "Regardless of how we look at it," said another writer in *Nation's Business*, "the differences between the man of thought and the man of action seem fundamental and irreconcilable." "After all," said the