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Book Review: Roosevelt's Purge, by Susan Dunn

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Dunn, Susan. **Roosevelt's purge: how FDR fought to change the Democratic Party.** Belknap, Harvard, 2010. 361p
ISBN 0674057171, \$27.95; ISBN 9780674057173, \$27.95.

Much has been written about Franklin D. Roosevelt's largely unsuccessful 1938 effort at party building and party purging. In 1936, the president won every state but two (Maine and Vermont) and won a 523-8 landslide Electoral College victory. Yet, after the 1936 victory, cleavages began to emerge in the FDR coalition, and in an attempt to revitalize his leadership prospects, FDR tried to purge errant Democrats from the party. Dunn (Williams College) does an excellent job of putting this purge attempt into historical as well as political context, and demonstrates that the method to FDR's madness can be seen in his effort to bring greater ideological consistency not only to the Democratic Party, but to the two-party system as well. Ironically, after the failed purge, some of Roosevelt's staunchest Democratic critics became allies when the politics of war replaced the politics of economic revival. Dunn's book is clearly argued and well written, and gives a glimpse of the inner workings of the Roosevelt White House and the Roosevelt mind. It sheds light on not only presidency studies but also the FDR era.

—M. A. Genovese, *Loyola Marymount University*

Summing Up: Highly recommended. General readers and undergraduate students.