

# **The Life Of Frances Perkins: FDR's Secretary Of Labor And Her Moral Conscience**

Frances Perkins, a remarkable woman of her time, served as the Secretary of Labor under President Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration. Throughout her tenure, Perkins played a pivotal role in implementing vital labor reforms and shaping social policies that advanced the well-being of American workers. Her unwavering dedication to social justice and strong moral conscience left an indelible mark on the history of the United States.

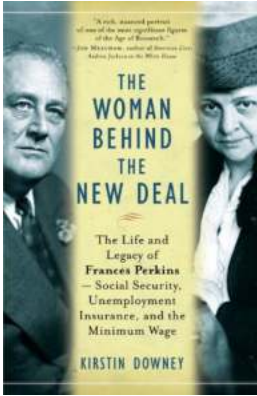
## **Early Life and Education**

Born in Boston, Massachusetts, on April 10, 1880, Perkins grew up in a society deeply divided by economic disparity. Witnessing the struggles faced by workers during the Gilded Age fostered her strong commitment to alleviate labor-related injustices. Perkins attended Mount Holyoke College and later pursued a master's degree in social work at Columbia University, where she developed a deep understanding of social conditions and economic inequalities plaguing the country.

## **The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire**

One pivotal event that fanned the flames of Perkins' passion for labor reform was the tragic Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire of 1911. This devastating incident claimed the lives of 146 garment workers, mostly young immigrant women. Shocked by the callous disregard for worker safety, Perkins became determined to transform the working conditions and rights of laborers across the nation.

**The Woman Behind the New Deal: The Life of  
Frances Perkins, FDR'S Secretary of Labor and**



## His Moral Conscience by Kirstin Downey (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 5442 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 641 pages
X-Ray	: Enabled



With her strong moral conscience urging her forward, she joined forces with prominent Socialists of the time and fought tirelessly for comprehensive labor legislation, which would eventually be implemented during FDR's New Deal era.

### **The Appointment as Secretary of Labor**

In 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt, recognizing Perkins' unparalleled dedication and expertise in labor matters, appointed her as the first female Secretary of Labor. This appointment marked a significant milestone in American history and gave Perkins a platform to advocate for social reform on a national level.

Perkins' commitment to improving the lives of workers was evident from the start. She championed for minimum wage laws, shorter working hours, and safer working conditions. Moreover, she played a crucial role in the establishment of unemployment insurance and the Social Security Act, both of which provided a safety net for American citizens during times of economic hardship.

### **The Legacy of Frances Perkins**

Frances Perkins' unwavering dedication to labor reform eventually shaped the modern workplace. Her immense contributions cannot be overstated, and her wisdom and tenacity continue to inspire future generations of activists and policymakers.

In recognition of her remarkable achievements, Perkins has been honored with numerous accolades throughout history. In 1980, she became the first woman to have her portrait hung in the U.S. Department of Labor. In addition, Perkins' legacy is proudly carried forward by institutions such as the Frances Perkins Center, which aims to educate and empower individuals to champion social and economic justice.

## **The Importance of Moral Conscience in Public Service**

Frances Perkins' exemplary career serves as a powerful reminder of the significance of having a moral conscience in public service. Her unwavering commitment to improving the lives of others, especially the most vulnerable, set a high standard for public officials.

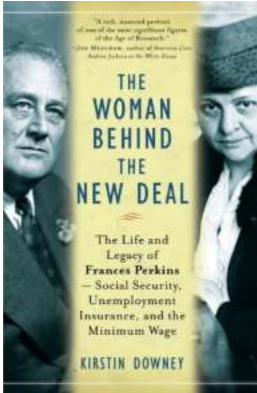
Perkins recognized that good governance should always prioritize the well-being of the people it serves. Her tireless advocacy for workers' rights and dignity stemmed from her deeply-held moral principles.

In today's world, where social and economic inequalities persist, the life and work of Frances Perkins serve as a beacon of hope. Her story encourages us to question the status quo and to strive for a more just and equitable society.

## **In**

Frances Perkins' life and work as Franklin D. Roosevelt's Secretary of Labor shaped the landscape of labor rights in America. Through her unwavering

dedication and moral conscience, she fought passionately for workers' rights and social justice. Her legacy continues to resonate, reminding us of the importance of championing the rights of the vulnerable and creating a more equitable society for all.



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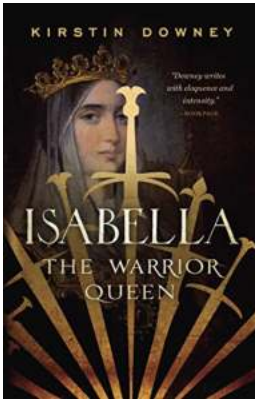
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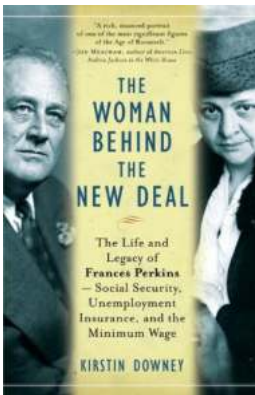
“Kirstin Downey’s lively, substantive and—dare I say—inspiring new biography of Perkins . . . not only illuminates Perkins’ career but also deepens the known contradictions of Roosevelt’s character.” —Maureen Corrigan, NPR Fresh Air

One of Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s closest friends and the first female secretary of labor, Perkins capitalized on the president’s political savvy and popularity to enact most of the Depression-era programs that are today considered essential parts of the country’s social safety network.



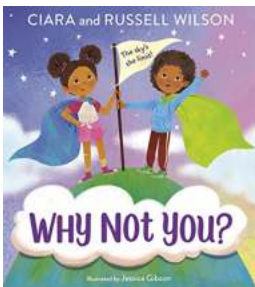
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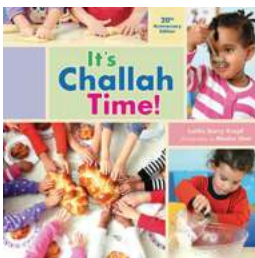
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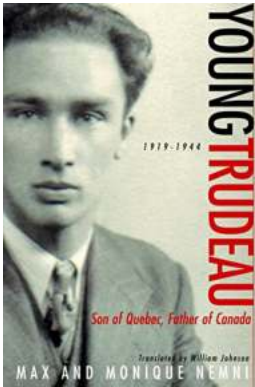
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