

---

**Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”**  
**The Master Speech Files, 1898, 1910-1945**

**Series 1: Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Political Ascension**

---

**File No. 302**

**1929 January 2**

**Speech to the Democratic State Committee**

# 302

### XIII

## ADDRESSES

Before Democratic State Committee, Albany, January 2, 1929

*Party Responsibility—Good Government—Development of Democratic Press*

FELLOW DEMOCRATS.—I have already addressed the people of the State of New York regardless of their party affiliations; and also the Legislature of the State of New York as required by the Constitution. It seems fitting on first entering into my new duties that I should also address you who, in one capacity or another, officially represent the Democratic party of this State. For your valiant support I am profoundly grateful. Nothing that I can do can adequately compensate for the time and energy and enthusiasm that you have given during the recent campaign. The confidence, however, which you showed in my ability to serve you in this high office perhaps I may be able to reward somewhat, but only if I constantly have your support and cooperation during the two years to come.

I have already pledged myself to consider and to act upon all public business with a single view as to what is good for the State, and without partisan consideration. And, first of all, I want to urge upon you, the representatives of the party in whose fundamental beliefs I have such abiding faith, also to support, and to bring others to support, all wise and just legislation, regardless of whether it originates with members of our own party or with those who differ in their conceptions of the fundamental principles of government. If anything which is for the good and for the progress of the State fails during this coming session because of partisan obstruction or because of a desire to obtain some fancied political advantage, let the responsibility for such failure rest on other shoulders than those who hold the Democratic faith.

Have no fear that our willingness to stand behind what is right and good will not be appreciated and remembered by all the voters of this State. If any doubt of this exists in your mind, I beg you to study recently published the table showing the steadily increasing Democratic vote in all those counties—so long regarded as Republican strongholds—that lie north of the great City of New York. This gain began in 1926, was continued in 1927, and was accelerated in 1928. It is no mere coincidence that this encouraging increase has followed a Republican policy of obstruction and of open defiance to the progressive measures of our great Governor, a policy which their own platform adopted last Fall, gives us hope to believe has been definitely and wisely abandoned.

However, to refuse to let partisan considerations stand in the way of our support of wise public measures should not in any way hamper our constant and untiring efforts, as individuals and as an organization, to make known to every voter in this commonwealth the great fundamental principles, the essential points of differences between the two major parties, and the reason for our belief that such differences are more than sufficient to warrant, for the good of our State and for the good of our nation, unceasing organized activity on our part to convince and to convert the voters to our standard.

If we do not really believe in our own party, if we repeat the Democratic creed with our lips, but hold it not in our hearts, we are hypocrites. If we do so believe, but make no effort to convince others of the soundness of our faith, we are cowards. And while we have had many harsh things said about us in the heat of political campaigns, our bitterest opponents have never called a Democrat a hypocrite or a coward. It is a moral duty upon all of us to spread the Democratic gospel. It is particularly our duty, beginning now, to proceed upon a far more efficient and organized program

of educational publicity than we have used in the past. Through publicity in the public press, through constant individual effort on the part of our State, county and district leaders, through frequent public meetings of Democratic organizations in every town and city of the State, at which those trained to speak can make clear our beliefs to gatherings of voters, irrespective of their party affiliations, and in all the many other ways which an organization can devise, we must work constantly for new converts to our cause.

The Democrats of this State are peculiarly handicapped outside of our great cities, and in many of those cities themselves, by the pitiful lack of a Democratic press. The more scattered the population of a district, the smaller the size of its towns and villages, the more important becomes the need of the daily or the weekly paper presenting our side of the case before the voters, for in great cities there is easy communication of ideas and a far more general discussion of political issues than is possible between widely separated hamlets or isolated farms. Science has given us a new method to reach the scattered individual rural homes, but not yet can it be boasted that every farmhouse has its radio, and a very large number of families in this State still depend for their news and political information on the paper which the rural carrier drops in the mail box just outside the gate.

I want to urge upon you more careful study of the method by which we as an organization can encourage and strengthen our Democratic press, and I want to urge on each one of you, as individuals, to support your nearest Democratic publication. If the Republican paper is larger, if its news is more varied, if its features are more interesting, it is because it has a larger clientele of subscribers and advertisers to pay the bill. That is your fault, and not by any means the fault of those who so tirelessly and bravely struggle against what is sometimes almost overwhelming odds to keep the local Democratic paper on its financial feet. If you do not, as readers, subscribe to your Democratic organ, if you do not, as business men, give it your advertising support, you are failing in your duty as sincerely convinced Democrats, to help elect those, who believe as you believe, to executive positions, locally, statewide or national, where they can direct the course of our governmental machinery, from its lowest unit to the Capitol itself along the road which we, as Democrats, are profoundly convinced is the right path and the wisest way for the future of our nation.

Of course, I realize that there are too many localities where there is no Democratic paper whatever, places where one of the local sheets, utterly controlled and obedient to the Republican organization, hoists the fair ensign "Independent" at its masthead in the hope of luring Democrats to subscribe in the belief that their party side of public questions will be given a fair show. I have the most profound contempt for such publications. Their ethics are those of the pirate who flies a neutral flag and hides the "Jolly Roger" in the locker in order to lure the unsuspecting merchantmen within range of the guns.

For the really independent paper that fairly presents both sides in matters political and throws its editorial influence to that party which it thinks most deserving of support on the issue involved, I have an equally profound respect and admiration. Indeed, we should be deeply grateful to the truly independent papers of the State, for almost invariably they have stood for progress, and their powerful influence was the most potent single factor in arousing the voters of this State to the necessity of standing behind the forward-looking program of Governor Smith. But the class of papers to which I refer are a very different breed; we may search vainly in their columns for news favorable to the Democratic party, and what is worse, you will find political news not only suppressed but twisted, distorted and unfairly presented, which is an unspeakable crime against the ethics of all true newspapers.

In such cases there is but one of two things to be done, either to go down in our own pockets and provide the necessary support for a really Democratic paper of our own; or else, when this is practically impossible, to arouse all the papers' Democratic subscribers to demand, by letters and by personal interviews, either that our party be treated fairly or that the paper cease

to solicit subscriptions on the ground that it is independent and non-partisan in its presentation of news. If all the Democrats in these districts get together and as a matter of party pride and party duty agreed, by advertising and subscriptions, to support a Democratic paper, and to stand loyally by it during its struggling infancy, it would be possible to establish and maintain a surprisingly large number of rural Democratic papers, through which we could educate the voters in these areas.

We must also have, as an organization, an efficient publicity service of our own. We must not expect the rural editor to be able to keep in close touch with the progress of our party at Albany or at Washington, or to be able by some kind of intuition to understand fully what important Democratic achievements and policies have been deliberately misrepresented or suppressed by a partisan Republican press.

So far as this State is concerned, you, as the State organization, must immediately set about to provide the Democrats, the Republicans and the independent voters of this State with fair and accurate information of the State's business, and of the reasons for the stand we, as a party, will take on this issue or the other, as it comes up from time to time.

To do this, adequate financial resources will be necessary, and that is the second thing which we must now proceed to provide through a systematic and continuously operating financial organization.

We must do more than rely on a few good friends of the party. It is not only unfair to these men to make them carry all our burden, but it results in an apathy on the part of our whole organization and in a lack of interest among our rank and file. The inclination to set back and let others provide the ways and means invariably goes hand in hand with an inclination to let others do the actual work as well. The man who gives to his party will have a deeper interest and will take a more active part in his party's progress, although the amount of his contribution seems small beside the sums of those better able to contribute. Remember, not all the money in the world by itself can arouse party spirit and enthusiasm among the voters, no matter how lavishly it may be spent.

I am convinced that under intelligent leadership we can create a source of steady income from many people of modest means which will be ample to carry out the program of constant publicity I now advocate.

I feel that the enthusiasm aroused in our party over our great Governor as our national candidate has spurred our organization to a new enthusiasm, to a new willingness to follow his example of service to his party, as it has not been stirred for many years past. The very fact that you are here tonight from all parts of the State shows this wonderfully awakened interest, and how his great example and his unselfish devotion to our cause has led all of us to be somewhat ashamed of our own indifference and lack of party interest.

Let us take advantage of this new enthusiasm to go forward until the time will come again when we can not only elect State officers but also a majority of our Legislature. I say this advisedly, because I believe in party responsibility, and am confident that the State will have more progressive and efficient government, if the Legislature and the Governor hold the same beliefs.

---

EDITORS: The following speech of Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt at the dinner following the meeting of the Democratic State Committee at Albany, Wednesday evening, January 2, 1929, is hereby released when delivered unless otherwise ordered by wire. It must not be quoted from, referred to, or commented upon in any manner prior to that time.

FELLOW DEMOCRATS:

I have already addressed the whole people of the State of New York regardless of their party affiliations; and also the Legislature of the State of New York as required by the Constitution. It seems fitting on first entering into my new duties that I should also address you who, in one capacity or another officially represent the Democratic party of this State. for your valiant support I am profoundly grateful. Nothing that I can do can adequately repay the time and energy and enthusiasm that you have given during the recent campaign. The confidence, however, which you showed in my ability to serve you in this high office I may perhaps reward somewhat, but only if I constantly have your support and advice during the two years to come.

I have already pledged myself to consider and to act upon all public business with a single view as to what is good for the State, and without partisan consideration. And, first of all, I want to urge upon you, the representatives of the Party in whose fundamental beliefs I have such abiding faith, also to support, and to bring others to support, all wise and just legislation, regardless of whether it originates with members of our own party or with those who differ in their conceptions of the fundamental principles of government. If anything which is for the good and for the progress of the State fails during this coming session because of partisan obstruction or because of a desire to obtain some fancied political advantage, let the responsibility for such failure rest on other shoulders than those who hold the Democratic faith.

Have no fear that our willingness to stand behind what is right and good will not be appreciated and remembered by all the voters of this State. If any doubt of this exists in your mind, I beg you to study the table recently published showing the steadily increasing Democratic vote in all those counties - so long regarded as Republican strongholds - that lie north of the great city of New

York. This gain began in 1926, was continued in 1927, and was accelerated in 1928. It is no mere coincidence that this encouraging increase has followed a Republican policy of obstruction and of open defiance to the progressive measures of our great Governor - a policy which their own platform last fall gives us hope to believe, has been definitely and wisely abandoned.

However, to refuse to let partisan considerations stand in the way of our support of wise public measures should not in any way hamper our constant and untiring efforts, as individuals, and as an organization, to make known to every voter in this commonwealth the great fundamental principles, the essential points of differences, between the two major parties, and the reason for our belief that such differences are more than sufficient to warrant, for the good of our State and for the good of our nation, unceasing organized activity on our part to convince and to convert the voters to our standard.

If we do not really believe in our own Party, if we repeat the Democratic creed with our lips but hold it not in our hearts, we are hypocrites. If we do so believe but make no effort to convince others of the soundness of our faith, we are cowards. And while we have had many harsh things said about us in the heat of political campaigns, our bitterest opponents have never called a Democrat a hypocrite or a coward. It is a moral duty upon all of us to spread the Democratic gospel, it is particularly our duty, beginning now, to proceed upon a far more efficient and organized program of educational publicity than we have used in the past. Through publicity in the public press, through constant individual effort on the part of our State, County and District leaders, through frequent public meetings of Democratic organizations in every town and city of the State, at which those trained to speak can make clear our beliefs to gatherings of voters, irrespective of their party affiliations, and in all the many other ways which an organization can devise we must work constantly for new converts to our cause.

The Democrats of this State are peculiarly handicapped outside of our great cities, and in many of those cities themselves, by the pitiful lack of a Democratic press. The more scattered the population of a district, the smaller the size of its towns and villages, the more important becomes the need of the daily or the weekly paper putting our side of the case before the voters, for in great cities there is easy communication of ideas and a far more general discussion of political issues than is possible between widely separated hamlets or isolated farms. Science has given us a new method to reach the scattered individual rural homes, but not yet can it be boasted that every farmhouse has its radio, and a very large number of families in this State still depend for their news and political information on the paper which the rural carrier drops in the mail box just outside the gate.

I want to urge upon you more careful study of the method by which we as an organization can encourage and strengthen our Democratic press, and I want to urge on each one of you, as individuals, to support your nearest Democratic publication. If the Republican paper is larger, if its news is more varied, if its features are more interesting - it is because it has a larger clientele of subscribers and advertisers to pay the bill. That is your fault, not of those who so tirelessly and bravely struggle against what is sometimes almost overwhelming odds to keep the local Democratic paper on its financial feet. If you do not, as readers, subscribe to your Democratic organ, if you do not, as business men, give it your advertising support, you are failing in your duty as sincerely convinced Democrats, to help elect those who believe as you believe to executive positions - locally, state-wide or national - where they can direct the course of our governmental machinery, from its lowest unit to the Capitol itself along the road which we as Democrats are profoundly convinced is the right path and the wisest way for the future of our nation.

(Insert A.)  
XXXXXXXXXX

Of course, I realize that there are too many localities where there is no democratic paper whatever, places where one of the local sheets, utterly controlled and obedient to the republican organization, hoists the fair ensign "Independent" at its masthead in the hope of luring democrats to subscribe in the belief that their party side of public questions will be given a fair show. I have the most profound contempt for such publications. Their ethics are those of the pirate who flies a neutral flag and hides the "Jolly Roger" in the locker in order to lure the unsuspecting merchantment within range of the guns.

For the really independent paper, that fairly presents both sides in matters political and throws its editorial influence to that party which it thinks most deserving of support on the issue involved, I have an equally profound respect and admiration. Indeed, we should be deeply grateful to the truly independent papers of the State, for almost invariably have they stood for progress, and their powerful influence was the most potent single factor in arousing the voters of this state to the necessity of standing behind the forward looking program of Governor Smith. But the class of papers to which I refer are a very different breed; we may search vainly in their columns for news favorable to the Democratic party, and what is worse you will find political news not only suppressed but twisted, distorted and unfairly presented, which is an unspeakable crime against the ethics of all true newspapers.

In such cases there is but one of two things to be done - either to go down in our own pockets and provide the necessary support for a really democratic paper of our own; or else, when this is practically impossible, to arouse all the papers' democratic <sup>subscribers</sup> ~~alliances~~ to demand, by letters and by personal interviews, either that our party be treated fairly or that the paper ceases to solicit subscriptions on the ground that it is independent and non-partisan in its presentation of news. If all the democrats in these districts get together and as a matter of party pride and party duty, agreed, by advertising and subscriptions, to support a democratic sheet, and to

... its struggling infancy, it would be possible



We must also have, as an organization, an efficient publicity service of our own. We must not expect the rural editor to be able to keep in close touch with the progress of our Party at Albany or at Washington, or to be able by some kind of intuition to understand fully what important Democratic achievements and policies have been deliberately misrepresented or suppressed by a partisan Republican press.

So far as this State is concerned, you as the State organization must immediately set about to provide the Democrats, the Republicans and the independent voters of this State with fair and accurate information of the State's business, and of the reasons for the stand we as a Party will take on this issue or the other, as it comes up from time to time.

To do this, of course, requires adequate financial resources and that is the second thing which we must now proceed to provide through a systematic and continuously operating financial organization.

We must do more than rely on a few good friends of the Party. It is not only unfair to these men to make them carry all our burden, but it results in an apathy on the part of our whole organization and in a lack of interest among our rank and file. The inclination to sit back and let others provide for the ways and means invariably goes hand in hand with an inclination to let others do the actual work as well. The man who gives to his party will have a deeper interest and will take a more active part in his party's progress, although the amount of his contribution seems small beside the sums of those more able to contribute. Remember, not all the money in the world by itself can arouse Party spirit and enthusiasm among the voters, no matter how lavishly it may be spent.

I am convinced that under intelligent leadership we can create a source of steady income from many people of modest means which will be ample to carry out the program of constant publicity which I now advocate.

I feel that the enthusiasm aroused in our Party over our great Governor as our national candidate has spurred our organization to a new enthusiasm, to a new willingness to follow his example of service to his Party, as it has not been stirred for many years past. The very fact that you are here tonight from all parts of the State shows this wonderfully awakened interest, and how his great example and his unselfish devotion to our cause has led all of us to be somewhat ashamed of our own slothness and lack of Party interest.

Let us take advantage of this new enthusiasm to go forward until the time will again come when we can not only elect State officers but also a majority of our Legislature. I say this advisedly because I believe in party responsibility, and am confident that the State will have more progressive and efficient government if the Legislature and the Governor hold the same beliefs.