

February 15, 1937

[Foreign Language Division]

FOR Speech File

1036

INFORMAL, IMPROVISED REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
to the members of the Foreign Language Division
of the National Democratic Committee
Executive Offices of the White House
February 15, 1936, 2.00 P.M.

As you all know, I am very, very grateful for all the work you did in the campaign and especially grateful for the work you are doing after the campaign.

Before I was first elected in 1932 a genealogist thought the time had come to look at my ancestry and he went back to various grandparents and great grandparents and found that I had in me the blood of eleven different nations. After all, as time goes on in this country of ours, there are going to be more and more people in future generations who will descend from eleven or more different nations. That is the strength of the United States. Whether one's ancestors came over a hundred years ago or two hundred years ago or in the last week -- that is what makes the strength of the nation and it is working out very successfully.

I am glad that your chairman has spoken about Democracy because it always seems to me that Democracy, which we spell with a big "D," meaning the party, is about the best assurance to this country that it will survive as a democracy, spelled with a small "d."

On my trip down to South America, the one thing that impressed me more than anything else when I went through the ports of Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires, all these people were saying, "Viva el Democracy." It was not "Viva Roosevelt" or "Vive United States" or anything else, it was "Viva el Democracy." Why? It was because they thought we people up here had made democracy. And, during the last four years, we

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This is a transcript made by the White House stenographer from his shorthand notes taken at the time the speech was made. Underlining indicates words extemporaneously added to the previously prepared reading copy text. Words in parentheses are words that were omitted when the speech was delivered, though they appear in the previously prepared reading copy text.

have made the Democratic Government work and solve some of the modern problems.

That is why, in spite of what some editors say, I am inclined to think that the Democratic Party in this country gives greater assurance of the survival of the Democratic constitutional form of Government than any other party. That is why we are very proud to call ourselves Democrats. In other words, what we are trying to do is to make it possible to attain the ends of modern government without going to some other form of government, such as dictatorship or communism or anything else. And I think that most of the foreign groups in this country understand that if anything better than some of the people who have been here for two or three hundred years. They know what some of the dangers are because they have come from countries which have faced the dangers of other forms of government. That is why, in the future, I feel that this country can feel very safe in relying on the foreign language group, particularly the people who have come here more recently because they have from their own personal experience a greater appreciation and faith in the American form of government than any other. That is why you people have something to contribute, not only from the point of view of politicians but from the point of view of every section of the country, because your experience and your knowledge of what has happened and is happening in other countries will be of value as an educational factor that will make itself felt to our children and grandchildren for a great many years to come.

I am glad you came and I hope to see you all tonight for the dinner.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

2/15/37

Remarks by the President and the
spokesman for the Foreign Language Division
brought in by Mr. L. W. Robert, Jr., at
two PM, February 15, 1936.