

November 4, 1940

[Section One]

FOR Speech File

RADIO ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT  
ELECTION EVE  
HYDE PARK  
NOVEMBER 4, 1940

MY FRIENDS:

Once more I am at my home in Hyde Park on election eve. As in 1936, I am speaking to you, not of partisan politics, but rather about the nation to which you and I, for ourselves and for our families, old and young, owe a very deep and precious allegiance.

Today, on re-reading what I said four years ago, I find these words, which might almost have been written this afternoon. I said:

"In some places in the world the tides are rushing against democracy. But our faith has not been unsettled. We believe in democracy because of our traditions. But we believe in it even more because of our experience".

My memory in public affairs goes back to the year 1910 when I first was a candidate for the State Senate from the district which includes this County of Dutchess and our neighboring Counties of Columbia and Putnam.



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From the Papers of  
Samuel I. Rosenman

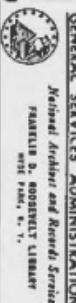
In the subsequent thirty years I have taken an interested part in every political campaign -- sometimes local, sometimes state and sometimes national -- sometimes as an elective official, sometimes as a candidate for office, and very often as a private citizen.

In almost every year of elections, I have seen one side or the other asking that the rascals of the opposition be turned out, or demanding that the rascals, then out, be kept from coming in.

In every campaign we have had our fill of glittering promises and our hysterical exaggeration of past records on the good side and on the bad side.

In later years we have listened to many comparisons that were couched in foreign terms -- terms of trans-oceanic dictatorships and strange new ideologies.

The final analysis of all of these elections of the more distant past, and the more recent past, is that the overwhelming majority of the voting public -- or at least of that portion of the voting public which is responsible for the result of elections -- decides through the ballot box the real vital question of the hour: "Whom do I want as my choice for President, or Governor, or Senator, or



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Representative or Member of the Legislature, or Supervisor,  
or County Commissioner during the coming term? As between  
two candidates or three candidates, which one shall I choose,  
not for the past term of office, but for the coming term of  
public service?

Therein lies the true and underlying strength of  
democracy.

The recurring elections — while free in most polling  
places in the United States — are thoroughly recognized  
as the greatest safeguard which the democratic form of  
government has. After each election is over we accept the  
result, and a small still voice then says: "That old  
American right to re-choose is the greatest security the  
American system ever had. As long as that is retained  
democracy will continue".

That still small voice will be with us as usual,  
for the dawn of election day is not far off. We will vote  
for many Governors and other state officers. We will vote  
for a House of Representatives and for one-third of the  
Senate, and we will vote for President and Vice President.



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That still small voice will be with us as usual, for the dawn of election day is not far off. We will vote for many Governors and other state officers. We will vote for a House of Representatives and for one-third of the Senate, and we will vote for President and Vice President.

that small still voice will cause us to decide whom we want to represent us, not in the past, but during the next term of their representative offices. Almost before we know it, that term or those terms will be up. And once again we shall be pleased with the right to express ourselves through the ballot again.

As I said at this time in 1936: "Here in the United States we have been a long time at the business of self-government. The longer we are at it the more certain we become that we can continue to govern ourselves, that progress is on the side of majority rule, that if mistakes are to be made we prefer to make them ourselves and to do our own correcting". .....The American citizen v.v. is a product of free institutions. His mind has been sharpened by the exercise of freedom. That is why I have no fear either of the threats of demagogues or the ambitions of dictators .....the important thing is the spirit in which Government will face problems as they come up".



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Once more in a Presidential year an increased number of Americans are eligible to vote. I trust that they will exercise that right -- or perhaps I should say that privilege.

"And when you go to the ballot box tomorrow, do not be afraid to vote as you think best for the kind of a world you want to have. There need be no strings on any of us in the polling place. ....In the polling booth we are all equals."

This election in its national aspect differs from the election of 1936 chiefly in the element of national safety projected upon this nation by the events which have taken place in another Hemisphere. Four years ago, and small and indistinct shadow had been cast upon us. That shadow grew longer until the creators of it were visible and drew nearer. Then we saw it darkly -- now face to face. Willy nilly our nation knows that it is a danger to our nation. The very life of our democracy hangs a little more in the balance than in all our one hundred and sixty-four years since the promulgation of the American Declaration of Independence.



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J. O. Johnson

Once more I am in the quiet of my home in Hyde Park on the eve of Election Day. I wish to speak to you not of partisan politics but of the Nation of the United States of America to which we all owe such deep and precious allegiance.

As I sit here tonight with my mother and my wife, my children and my grandchildren, I think of all the other American families -- millions of families all through the land sitting in their own homes. They have eaten their evening meal in peace, they will be able to sleep in their homes tonight in peace. Tomorrow they will be free to go out to live their ordinary daily lives in peace - free to say and do what they wish, free to worship as they please. Tomorrow of all days they will be free to choose their own leaders who, when that choice has been made, become in turn only the instruments to carry out the will of all of the people.

And I cannot help but think of the families in other lands - millions of families - living in houses like our own. On some of these houses bombs of destruction may be dropping even as I speak to you. In those houses men, women and children - like you and me - are mourning the loss of those to whom violent death has come suddenly. They face hunger and cold. They face death for themselves at any moment dropping from the skies.

Across the seas life has gone underground.



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And I cannot help thinking of other nations of the world - nations which, like ours, had undertaken the ways of freedom and democracy and peace. I think of how in so many of them free government has perished from the earth.

Outside of this western hemisphere there are so few governments where people still have a free speech, free press and free elections - elections like the one which we shall hold tomorrow all through the United States.

My own personal participation in public affairs goes back as far as the year 1910, when I first became a candidate for the State Senate from this district which includes the three counties on the Hudson River.

In the thirty years which followed I have taken an active part in nearly every political campaign - sometimes local, sometimes state, and sometimes national. Sometimes this interest has been that of a candidate for office; sometimes as an elected official; and very often as a private citizen.

During nearly every one of these years there have been glittering promises as well as hysterical exaggeration and violent condemnation. Many irrelevant things have been said, many unimportant things have been emphasized. In recent years there has been much to



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Samuel L. Rosenberg, Jr.  
Secretary to the President

say about comparisons and contrasts with foreign kinds of government.

But out of all of the fuss buss of campaign talk, the question on which the overwhelming majority of the voting public finally pass judgment through the ballot box is simply this. Who do I think is the party candidate to act as President, Governor, Senator, Supervisor or County Commissioner during the next few years. It is that right, the right to determine for themselves who should be their own officers of government, that places in the hands of the people the most powerful safeguard which the democratic form of government has. The right to place in office and the right to turn them out of office, at definite, fixed certain dates of election, is the right which will keep a free people always free. Because all of the men whom the people of the United States will choose for their Assemblymen and Senators, their Supervisors, their Congressmen, their Governors, their President and their Vice President will almost, before they know it, have to submit again to the inalienable right of the people to choose again who should fill their places.

This right of the American people of a free periodic election was not easily acquired. It is a right which <sup>we</sup> will never give up. It is a right which every citizen of the United States should use every year. Dictators have forgotten - or never knew - the



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Samuel J. Rosenman

basis upon which democratic government is founded: that the opinion of all the people freely formed and freely expressed, without fear or coercion, is wiser than the opinion of any one man or any small group of men. We know that free speech, free press and free discussion can produce a public opinion wisely and in time. We have more faith in the collective opinion of all Americans than in the individual opinion of any American. It is the duty of every American to express tomorrow his part in that great collective opinion which is so much of our strength. Your will is a part of the great will of America. Your voice is a part of the great voice of America. If you do not vote you diminish the volume of our national voice.

Some of us have taken our right to vote too freely and too much for granted. They do not realize how much each vote has had to do with the making of the United States of the present, how much it will have to do with the making of the United States of the future. They do not realize that good citizenship cannot come by mandate overnight. It comes from exercising the privileges of citizenship, the privilege of discussion about government problems, the privilege of reading about them and reflecting about them. The privilege of making up their own minds.

One of the most heartening aspects of American life is the



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increased interest year by year in matters of government, in public  
affairs, national and international.



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I am thinking what I said four years ago on election eve:

"When you and I stand in line tomorrow for our turn at the polls we will stand in a line which reaches back across the entire history of our nation.

"Washington stood in that line and Jefferson and Jackson and Lincoln. And in later days Cleveland stood there and Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson. All these -- in their day -- waited their turn to vote. And rubbing elbows with them -- their voting equals -- is a long succession of American citizens whose names are not known to history but who, by their vote, helped to make history."

That line has grown longer each year. And each year those who stood in line had new and different problems. Times changed; frontiers were expanded; new machinery, new inventions sprung from the brains of men and created new perplexities. New policies from abroad came to plague them. Through it all, of course, has been the underlying, never-changing problem of how best to preserve democracy, how best to make it serve the needs of human beings. American people have always been able to find the answer to that same question at different times in their life.

For they know that their duty as citizens does not end when they have cast their ballot. They know that they must always be vigilant, that they must always continue to work for democracy. The American people and the cause of democracy owe a great deal to those hundreds of thousands of people who have worked in an honorable way on each side in this campaign. I know that after tomorrow they will all continue to cooperate in the service of democracy, to think about it, to write about it, to offer constructive suggestions to their President and to the other public officials



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S. L. Johnson  
JO Adams  
FBI Laboratory

of America about it, to come to show constant interest and vigilance  
about it.

And so when you go to vote tomorrow your sole thought should  
be to vote your best judgment on the candidate who you think would provide  
the kind of world you want most to have. In the polling place you need  
have no cause to be influenced by fear, threats or intimidation. No one  
will know how you vote. No one will be able either to punish or to reward  
you for your vote, and do not pay any attention to any one who tries to  
tell you the contrary. I have said before and I repeat -- in the polling  
place you need have no cause to be influenced by fear, threats or  
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Once more I am in the quiet of my home in Hyde Park on the eve of Election Day. I wish to speak to you not of partisan politics but of the Nation, the United States of America, to which we all owe such deep and precious allegiance.

As I sit here tonight with my own family, I think of all the other American families — millions of families all through the land — sitting in their own homes. They have eaten their supper in peace, they will be able to sleep in their homes tonight in peace. Tomorrow they will be free to go out to live their ordinary lives in peace — free to say and do what they wish, free to worship as they please. Tomorrow of all days they will be free to choose their own leaders who, when that choice has been made, become in turn only the instruments to carry out the will of all of the people.

And I cannot help but think of the families in other lands — millions of families — living in houses like our own. On some of these homes, bombs of destruction may be dropping even as I speak to you.

Across the seas life has gone underground. We all think God that we have stayed out of war and live in peace.

Tomorrow I shall cast my vote here in my own country, where members of my family have been voting as free Americans for a hundred years and more.



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West Park, New York

From the Papers of  
F. D. Roosevelt  
S. E. Rosenman

In this community, as in every community in our nation, friends and neighbors will gather together around the polling place.

They will discuss the State of the nation, the weather, and the prospect for their favorite football team. They will discuss this present political campaign. Some will wear buttons proclaiming their allegiance to one candidate or another. And there will be a few warm arguments.

But when you and I step into the voting booth, we can proudly say: "I am an American, and this vote I am casting is the exercise of my highest privilege and my most solemn duty to my country."

We vote as free men, impelled only by the urgings of our own wisdom and our own conscience, acknowledging at this moment the control over us of no authority but our God.

In our polling places are no storm troopers or secret police to look over our shoulders as we mark a ballot.

My own personal participation in public affairs goes back as far as the year 1910, when I first became a candidate for the State Senate from this district on the Hudson River.

In the thirty years which followed, I have taken an active part in nearly every political campaign - local, state, and national.



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My interest has been that of a candidate for office; a public official;  
and a private citizen.

In every political campaign, the question on which we all  
finally pass judgment through the ballot box is simply this. "Who  
do I think is the candidate best qualified to act as President, Governor,  
Senator, Supervisor or County Commissioner during the next few years?"

It is that right, the right to determine for themselves who  
should be their own officers of government, that provides for the  
people the most powerful safeguard of the democratic form of government.  
The right to place men in office, and the right to turn them out of  
office, at definite, fixed dates of election, is the right which will  
keep a free people always free.

This right of a free periodic election was not easily  
acquired. It is a right which we will never surrender.

Dictators have forgotten - or never knew - the basis upon  
which democratic government is founded: that the opinion of all the  
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Samuel I. Higinson  
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opinion of all Americans than in the individual opinion of any one American. It is the duty of every American to express tomorrow his part in that great collective opinion which forms so much of our strength.

Your will is a part of the great will of America. Your voice is a part of the great voice of America. If you do not vote, you diminish the volume of our national voice.

"Then you and I stand in line tomorrow for our turn at the polls we will stand in a line which reaches back across the entire history of our nation.

"Washington stood in that line and Jefferson and Jackson and Lincoln. And in later days Cleveland stood there and Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson. All these — in their day — waited their turn to vote. And rubbing elbows with them — their voting equals — is a long succession of American citizens whose names are not known to history but who, by their vote, helped to make history."

I think that the greatest evidence of our spiritual health today lies in our common awareness of our responsibilities as individual men and women.

In the past twenty years the number of those who exercise the right to vote in national elections has been almost doubled. There is every indication that the number of votes cast tomorrow will be by far the greatest in our history.



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Samuel I. Rosenman

That is the proof - if proof be needed - of the vitality of our democracy.

Our obligation to our country does not end with the casting of our votes.

Every one of us has a continuing responsibility for the government which we have chosen.

Democracy is not just a word, to be shouted at political rallies and then put back into the dictionary after election day.



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The service of democracy must be something much more than mere lip service.

Democracy is a living thing - a human thing - compounded of brains and muscles and heart and soul. Democracy is every man and woman who loves freedom and serves the cause of freedom.

Last Saturday night, in Cleveland, I said that freedom of speech is of no use to the man who has nothing to say - that freedom of worship is of no use to the man who has lost his God. And tonight I should like to add that a free election is of no use to the man who is too indifferent to vote.

The American people and the cause of democracy owe a great deal to the very many people who have worked in an honorable way on each side in this campaign. I know that after tomorrow they will all continue to cooperate in the service of democracy, to think about it, talk about it, and to work for it.

Tomorrow you will decide for yourselves how the government of your country is to be run during the next four years and by whom.

After the ballots are all in, the real rulers of this country will have spoken.

The day after tomorrow, the United States of America will still



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be united.

Argument among us will continue. That is as it should be. We are free citizens - not brow-beaten slaves. But there can be no arguments about the essential fact that in our desire to remain at peace by defending our democracy, we are one nation and one people.

On this election eve, we all have in our hearts and minds a prayer for the dignity and integrity and peace of our country.

As your President, I believe that you will find it fitting that I read to you an old prayer which asks the guidance of God for our nation:

"Mighty God, who hast given us this good land  
for our heritage; We humbly beseech thee that we may  
always prove ourselves a people mindful of thy favor  
and glad to do thy will. Bless our land with honour-  
able industry, sound learning, and pure manners. Save  
us from violence, discord, and confusion; from pride  
and arrogancy, and from every evil way. Defend our  
liberties, and fashion into one united people the multi-  
tudes brought hither out of many kindreds and tongues.



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Endue with the spirit of wisdom those to whom in thy  
Name we entrust the authority of government, that there  
may be justice and peace at home, and that, through  
obedience to thy law, we may show forth thy praise  
among the nations of the earth. In the time of pros-  
perity, fill our hearts with thankfulness, and in the  
day of trouble, suffer not our trust in thee to fail;

Amen."

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and Park, N. Y.

From the Papers of  
Samuel I. Rosenman

Once more I am in the quiet of my home in Hyde Park on the eve of Election Day. I wish to speak to you not of partisan politics but of the Nation of the United States of America to which we all owe such deep and precious allegiance.

As I sit here tonight with <sup>own family</sup>  
~~my mother and my wife, my children~~  
~~A~~

and my grandchildren, I think of all the other American families -- millions of families all through the land -- sitting in their own homes. They have eaten their supper in peace, they will be able to sleep in their homes tonight in peace. Tomorrow they will be free to go out to live their ordinary daily lives in peace -- free to say and do what they wish, free to worship as they please. Tomorrow of all days they will be free to choose their own leaders who, when that choice has been made, become in turn only the instruments to carry out the will of all of the people.

And I cannot help but think of the families in other lands -- millions of families -- living in homes like our own. On some of these homes, bombs of destruction may be dropping even as I speak to you. In many of those houses men, women and children -- like you and me -- are mourning the loss of those to whom violent death has come suddenly. They face hunger and cold. They face death for themselves at any



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Samuel I. Rosenman

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Tomorrow I shall cast my vote here in my own country, where  
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In this community, as in every community in our nation, friends  
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They will discuss the state of the Nation, the weather and the  
prospect for their favorite football team.

They will discuss the present political campaign. Some will  
wear buttons proclaiming their allegiance to one candidate or another.  
There will probably be a few hot arguments.

But when you and I step into the voting booth, we can say:  
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Because all of the men whom the people of the United States will choose  
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We vote as free men, impelled only by the urgings of our own wisdom and our own conscience, acknowledging at this moment the control over us of no authority but our God.

In our polling places are no storm troopers or secret police to look over our shoulders as we mark a ballot which contains nothing but the one humiliating word: "Yes".

This right of the American people of a free periodic election was not easily acquired. It is a right which we will never give up. It is a right which every citizen of the United States should use every year. Dictators have forgotten - or never knew - the basis upon which democratic government is founded: that the opinion of all the people freely formed and freely expressed, without fear or coercion, is wiser than the opinion of any one man or any small group of men. We know that free speech, free press and free discussion can produce a public opinion wisely and in time. We have more faith in the collective opinion of all Americans than in the individual opinion of any American.

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of our strength. Your will is a part of the great will of America.

Your voice is a part of the great voice of America. If you do not vote you diminish the volume of our national voice.

"When you and I stand in line tomorrow for our turn at the polls we will stand in a line which reaches back across the entire history of our nation.

"Washington stood in that line and Jefferson and Jackson and Lincoln. And in later days Cleveland stood there and Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson. All these - in their day - waited their turn to vote. And rubbing elbows with them -- their voting equals -- is a long succession of American citizens whose names are not known to history but who, by their vote, helped to make history."

Our obligation to our country -- our democracy, our republic -- does not end when we have cast our vote.

Every one of us has a continuing responsibility for the government which we have chosen. The consciousness of that responsibility and the exercise of it are necessary to the survival and the triumph of the democratic faith.

Democracy is not just a word - to be shouted at political rallies and then put back into the dictionary after election day.



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From the Papers of  
Samuel I. Rosenman

The service of democracy must be something much more than  
mere lip service.

Democracy is a living thing - a human thing - compounded of  
brains and muscles and heart and soul. Democracy is every man and woman  
who loves freedom and serves the cause of freedom - in the churches and  
the schools, in the factories and on the farms, in the crowded streets  
of the cities or in the loneliness of the plains and the mountains.

I think that the greatest evidence of our spiritual health  
today lies in our common awareness of our responsibilities as individual  
men and women.

In the past twenty years the percentage of those who exercise  
the right to vote in national elections has been almost doubled. There  
is every indication that the number of votes cast will be by far the  
greatest in our history.

That is the proof - if proof be needed - of the vitality of  
our democracy.

On last Saturday night, in Cleveland, I said that freedom of  
speech is of no use to the man who has nothing to say - that freedom  
of worship is of no use to the man who has lost his God. And tonight  
I should like to add that a free election is of no use to the man who



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is too lazy or too indifferent to vote.

The American people and the cause of democracy owe a great deal to those hundreds of thousands of people who have worked in an honorable way on each side in this campaign. I know that after tomorrow they will all continue to cooperate in the service of democracy, to think about it, to write about it.

Tomorrow you will decide for yourselves how the government of your country is to be run during the next four years and by whom.

The day after tomorrow, when the results are known, the United States of America will still be united.

Argument among us will continue. That is as it should be. We are free citizens - not brow-beaten slaves. But there can be no arguments about the essential fact that in our desire to remain at peace by defending our freedom we are one nation and one people.

After the ballots are all in, the real rulers of this country will have spoken. Neither that temporary agent of the people, the President, nor the lawmakers in Congress, nor the two together determine the basic policies of the United States. Still less does any private group, however powerful, nor any leader, however pretentious. There is only one sovereign in our democracy -- the anonymous voter.



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Because I have prayed for guidance, because you have prayed for your country, and because most of you will exercise your franchise tomorrow, with a thought for your country in your hearts and minds, I, your President, believe that you will find it fitting that I read to you an old prayer which asks the guidance of God for our nation:

"Almighty God, who hast given us this good land for our heritage; We humbly beseech thee that we may always prove ourselves a people mindful of thy favour and glad to do thy will. Bless our land with honourable industry, sound learning, and pure manners. Save us from violence, discord, and confusion; from pride and arrogancy, and from every evil way. Defend our liberties, and fashion into one united people the multitudes brought hither out of many kindreds and tongues. Endue with the spirit of wisdom those to whom in thy Name we entrust the authority of government, that there may be justice and peace at home, and that, through obedience to thy law, we may show forth thy praise among the nations of the earth. In the time of prosperity, fill our hearts with thankfulness, and in the day of trouble, suffer not our trust in thee to fail; all which we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."



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Once more I am in the quiet of my home in Hyde Park on the eve of Election Day. I wish to speak to you not of partisan politics but of the Nation, the United States of America, to which we all owe such deep and precious allegiance.

As I sit here tonight with my mother and my wife, my children and my grandchildren, I think of all the other American families -- millions of families all through the land -- sitting in their own homes. They have eaten their supper in peace, they will be able to sleep in their homes tonight in peace. Tomorrow they will be free to go out to live their ordinary daily lives in peace -- free to say and do what they wish, free to worship as they please. Tomorrow of all days they will be free to choose their own leaders who, when that choice has been made, become in turn only the instruments to carry out the will of all of the people.

And I cannot help but think of the families in other lands -- millions of families -- living in homes like our own. On some of these homes, bombs of destruction may be dropping even as I speak to you.

Across the seas life has gone underground. We all thank God that we have stayed out of war and live in peace.



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Samuel I. Rosenman

Tomorrow I shall cast my vote here in my own county, where members of my family have been voting as free Americans for a hundred years and more.

In this community, as in every community in our nation, friends and neighbors will gather together around the polling place.

They will discuss the state of the nation, the weather, and the prospect for their favorite football team. They will discuss this present political campaign. Some will wear buttons proclaiming their allegiance to one candidate or another. There will surely be a few hot arguments.

But when you and I step into the voting booth, we can proudly say: "I am an American, and this vote I am casting is the exercise of my highest privilege and my most solemn duty to my country."

We vote as free men, impelled only by the urgings of our own wisdom and our own conscience, acknowledging at this moment the control over us of no authority but our God.

In our polling places are no storm troopers or secret police to look over our shoulders as we mark a ballot which contains nothing but the one humiliating word: "Yes".

My own personal participation in public affairs goes back as far as the year 1910, when I first became a candidate for the

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State Senate from this district on the Hudson River.

In the thirty years which followed, I have taken an active part in nearly every political campaign - local, state, and national. My interest has been that of a candidate for office; a public official; and a private citizen.

In every political campaign, the question on which we all finally pass judgment through the ballot box is simply this. "Who do I think is the candidate best qualified to act as President, Governor, Senator, Supervisor or County Commissioner during the next few years?"

It is that right, the right to determine for themselves who should be their own officers of government, that provides for the people the most powerful safeguard of the democratic form of government. The right to place men in office, and the right to turn them out of office, at definite, fixed dates of election, is the right which will keep a free people always free.

This right of a free periodic election was not easily acquired. It is a right which we will never give up.

Dictators have forgotten - or never knew - the basis upon which democratic government is founded: that the opinion of all the



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people, freely formed and freely expressed, without fear or  
coercion, is wiser than the opinion of any one man or any  
small group of men.

We know that free speech, free press and free discussion can produce a public opinion wisely and in time. We have more faith in the collective opinion of all Americans than in the individual opinion of any American. It is the duty of every American to express tomorrow his part in that great collective opinion which forms so much



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