
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”

The Master Speech Files, 1898, 1910-1945

**Series 2: “ You have nothing to fear but fear itself:” FDR
and the New Deal**

File No. 1356

1941 January 30

President's Birthday Broadcast

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT

JANUARY 30, 1941

My Friends in Every Part of the Land.

From the bottom of my heart I thank all of you -- every man and woman and child who has labored with my old friends, Basil O'Connor and Keith Morgan, in this great cause. And let me, at the outset, also give you my thanks in behalf of all those victims of infantile paralysis to whom this celebration tonight spells new hope and new courage.

Most of all, I am grateful to America -- for reaffirming at this hour America's humanity, America's active concern for its children. This is the eighth birthday in a row which all of you have made an occasion for joining hands in this national humanitarian effort.

I cannot say, as you can well understand, that this is for me a completely happy birthday. These are not completely happy days for any of us in the world. Shall

we say that American birthdays this year are being made at least happier than they would otherwise be because all of us are still living under a free peoples' philosophy?

It is not only that the lights of peace blaze in our great cities and glow in our towns and villages -- that laughter and music still ring out from coast to coast -- that we will return to safe beds tonight.

It is not that we feel no concern for the plight of free peoples elsewhere in the world; that we do not hope that they may continue the freedom of their governments and their ways of life in the days to come.

It is because we believe in and insist on the right of the helpless and the weak and the crippled everywhere to play their part in life -- and survive.

It is because we know instinctively that this right of the unfortunate comes under our free peoples' philosophy

from the bottom up and can never be imposed from the top down.

I do have satisfaction on this birthday of mine because of the fact that definite progress has been made in these past twenty years on a national scale in the fight against infantile paralysis. In a very broad but a very definite sense, this fight is a true part of the national defense of America.

I have always tried to remember that the particular problem of infantile paralysis does call for a truly national fight. We have it in every state of the union. We are at last organizing adequately to fight it.

We have had to face the necessity of uniting medical scientists and doctors and nurses and public health officers and the general public into a unique offensive -- and the battle year by year is gaining greater success.

The year-in, year-out campaign culminating on each January thirtieth has had the support of almost everyone --

from those who give large sums down to the school children
who contribute their pennies. Clearly, unquestionably, we
are winning the fight -- winning it, thanks to all of you.

And so, to all of you I give my own thanks for the
rarest birthday present of all -- the gift of your charity,
your kindness to each other and to the Nation.

Linton M. Pierce
Aug. 22nd 1919

HOLD FOR RELEASE
FOR THE PRESS

HOLD FOR RELEASE

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January 30, 1941

CONFIDENTIAL, UNTIL RELEASED

CAUTION: This address of the President to be delivered on the occasion of his birthday anniversary is for release in editions of all newspapers appearing on the streets ~~NOT LATER~~ than 11:24 P.M., E.S.T.

Care must be exercised to prevent premature publication.

STEPHEN DALEY
Secretary to the President

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ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT

Broadcast from the White House, when I am 81 years old
On the Occasion of his Birthday Anniversary,
January 30, 1941, 11:24 P.M., E.S.T.

MY FRIENDS IN EVERY PART OF THE LAND:

From the bottom of my heart I thank all of you -- every man, (and) women and child who has labored with my old friends, Basil O'Connor and Keith Morgan, in this great cause. And let me, at the outset, also give you my thanks in behalf of all those victims of infantile paralysis to whom this celebration tonight spells a new hope and a new courage.

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It is because we believe in and insist on the right of the helpless and the right of the weak and the right of the crippled everywhere to play their part in life -- and survive.

Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

~~NOT SENT TO BANCRA~~

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.

~~NOT SENT TO BANCRA~~
I tried to keep to my reading copy text
but I found it hard to follow when I tried to make out what they appear in the previously prepared reading copy text.

One section not in the original was a speech which followed right after the beginning referring to efforts to find a place to live in New York City.

Efforts were being made to find a place to live in New York City. One section was a speech which followed right after the beginning referring to efforts to find a place to live in New York City.

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We have had to face the necessity of uniting medical scientists and doctors and nurses and public health officers and the general public into a unique offensive -- and the battle year by year is gaining greater success.

This (The) year-in year-out campaign culminating on each January thirtieth has had, and still has, the support of almost everyone -- from those who give large sums down to the school children of the nation who contribute their pennies. Clearly, unquestionably, we are winning the fight -- winning it, thanks to all of you.

And so, to all of you I give my own thanks for the rarest birthday present of all -- the gift of your charity, the gift of your kindness to each other and to the Nation.

* * * * *

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

January 28, 1941

MEMO FOR DOROTHY JONES:

Mr. Hassett said to give this material to Grace or to you to give to the President. Mr. Hassett will not be able to come in tomorrow and perhaps not on Thursday.

There are some mistakes in dates in this material which I have marked.

M.W.

THE COMMITTEE FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE
PRESIDENT'S BIRTHDAY

For The National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis, Inc.

56 EAST 42nd STREET • NEW YORK CITY • MURRAY HILL 2-9020

January 27, 1941

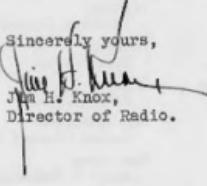
Mr. William Hassett,
Executive Offices,
The White House,
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Hassett,

At Mr. Keith Morgan's directions I am enclosing a short script which has been planned for the President's use on the broadcast scheduled for the night of Thursday, January 30, 1941.

I have not sent it in the accepted finished script form because there are undoubtedly some changes that you will want to make.

Sincerely yours,


Jim H. Knox,
Director of Radio.

JHK/p
Enclosure

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

KEITH MORGAN, National Chairman

*JOSEPH M. SCHENCK, National Vice-Chairman
D. WALKER WEAR, Assistant National Chairman*

GEORGE E. ALLEN , <i>Chairman, Mile of Dimes</i>	GRANTLAND RICE , <i>Chairman, Sports Council</i>
EDDIE CANTOR , <i>Chairman, March of Dimes of the Air</i>	JAMES A. FARLEY , <i>Chairman, Sports Events Committee</i>
NEVILLE MILLER , <i>Chairman National Radio Advisory Committee</i>	NICHOLAS M. SCHENCK , <i>Chairman Motion Picture Theatres Committee</i>
GEORGE W. JOHNSTONE , <i>Chairman, Radio Committee</i>	BOB CONSIDINE , <i>Vice-Chairman, Sports Committee</i>
GENERAL R. E. WOOD , <i>National Retail Committee</i>	JOHN J. PELLEY , <i>American Railroads Committee</i>
<i>National Labor Committee</i>	WILLIAM GREEN , <i>President, AFL</i> PHILIP MURRAY , <i>President, C.I.O.</i>

S T A T E C H A I R M E N

Alabama L. D. Rouse	Maine Mayor Paul A. Dundas	Pennsylvania Mayor Cornelius D. Scully
Arizona Terence A. Carson	Maryland Senator George L. Radcliffe	Rhode Island Dr. Edward F. Carroll
Arkansas Governor Homer M. Adkins	Massachusetts P. A. O'Connell	South Carolina Dr. Frank C. Owens
California Joseph M. Schenck	Michigan Abner E. Larned	South Dakota Mrs. P. L. Crowley
George W. Baker, Jr. <i>Director of Organization</i>	Minnesota Arthur D. Reynolds	Tennessee Arthur E. Carpenter
Colorado Mayor Ben F. Stapleton	Mississippi Dr. Felix J. Underwood	Texas William L. Clayton
Connecticut Thomas S. Smith	Missouri Robert T. Hensley	<i>George Waverley Briggs Vice-Chairman</i>
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George E. Allen	New Hampshire General Charles F. Bowen	Washington Emil Sick
Richmond B. Keech <i>Director of Organization</i>	New Jersey Joseph F. Fitzgerald	West Virginia Patrick D. Koontz
Florida Chester B. Treadway	New Mexico Mayor Clyde Tingley	Wisconsin Byron B. Conway
Georgia Ellis Arnall	New York Colonel D. Walker Wear	Wyoming Gilbert O. Hailey
Idaho Mrs. John E. Hayes	North Carolina Dr. Julian S. Miller	Alaska Governor Ernest Gruening
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Indiana Dan F. Stiver	Ohio Dr. J. H. J. Upham	Hawaii Governor Joseph P. Poindexter
Iowa Charles D. Huston	J. E. Troutman <i>Director of Organization</i>	Philippines High Commissioner Francis B. Sayre
Kansas Louis Levand	Oklahoma Robert S. Kerr	Puerto Rico Governor Jose Miguel Gallardo
Kentucky Judge J. J. Kavanagh	Oregon Dr. Elaf T. Hedlund	Virgin Islands Governor Lawrence W. Cramer
Louisiana R. McLean Jeter		

Thanks from the bottom of my heart to all of you -- to every man, woman and child who has labored with my old friends, Basil O'Connor and Keith Morgan, in this great cause for the children of America. Let me say thanks, too -- at the very outset -- in behalf of all those victims of Infantile Paralysis to whom this celebration tonight spells new hope, new faith and new courage.

And again thanks --for those who will be singled out as victims of Infantile Paralysis during the coming year. To them, your pennies, dimes and dollars will bring expert care and treatment and every possible aid to recovery.

But most of all --thanks to America...for reaffirming at this hour its humanity, its militant concern for the least fortunate of its children, its capacity for concerted action when the need is great.
*incorrect -
first celebration
held Jan 20, 1934*
For nine years now, all of you have made my birthday the occasion for joining hands in this great cause.

It is not possible for me to say tonight, as in former years, that this is a completely happy birthday. These are not happy days for any of us in the world.

And yet, this is more than a happy birthday -- it is an occasion that brings me far greater satisfaction of another kind than any birthday I have ever known.

Tonight as the lights of peace blaze in the great cities and glow in the towns and villages ... and as laughter and music rings out from Maine to California and from Florida to the Northwest ... there is abundant reason for us all to be grateful for the present and confident of our future.

America is gay tonight ... not with unconcern for the plight of free peoples elsewhere in the world, ... but as an expression of a free peoples' philosophy which says that it is the responsibility of the strong to care for the weak and helpless.

There is another philosophy spreading in the world which denies that responsibility ... which denies the weak even the right to survive.

Tonight, as America goes to parties so that afflicted children may walk again, we are declaring our faith in our philosophy.

These are some of the broad implications behind the birthday parties you are giving me this evening which makes this birthday the most deeply satisfying of all my life. There is cause for no less satisfaction in the splendid progress that has been made in the Fight Against Infantile Paralysis. Each year has widened the front on which we are attacking this crippling enemy of our children and young people until today we may claim a true national defense against it.

When we began this fight back in 1926 with the establishment of the Georgia Warm Springs Foundation, there was no organized effort being made against the disease.

And for many years after 1926, there was no way in which the great mass of people could participate in the Fight. But in 1933, when the first celebration of the President's Birthday was proposed to me, I saw an opportunity for everyone to take part.

That very year, there were more than four thousand birthday parties and celebrations which raised thousands of dollars. The next year, the plan won even greater support and so on in the years that followed until in 1938, it was possible for me to ask to coordinate the Fight by establishing the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis.

Thus, for the first time in medical history the cruel and costly disease was singled out for a unique offensive in which medical scientists, doctors, nurses, public health officers and the general public were united. Now it was possible for all the people to join in Fighting an enemy which threatened all the people.

Again this year, there was notable progress -- not only in the work accomplished by the National Foundation but in the Campaign for funds to carry on the Fight in 1941. There were more activities and more people participating in them. In the 'March of Dimes', the 'Mile O Dimes', and the filling of Coin Collectors and Birthday Cards, the planning of parties and celebrations and benefits, the Campaign had the support of everyone -- from those who gave large sums down to

the school children who contributed their pennies.

And so to all of you, let me express the thanks of those you have
eisted -- and my own thanks again for the rarest birthday present
of all -- the gift of your charity and kindness to each other.

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT

JANUARY 30, 1941

From the bottom of my heart I thank all of you -- every man and woman and child who has labored with my old friends, Basil O'Connor and Keith Morgan, in this great cause, ~~for the children of America~~. And let me, at the outset, also give you my thanks in behalf of all those victims of infantile paralysis to whom this celebration tonight spells new hope and new courage.

~~[And, in anticipation I am grateful to all of you in behalf of those (children) who, in the light of present circumstances, will be singled out, unfortunately, as victims of infantile paralysis during the coming year. To them your pennies and dimes and dollars will mean much in bringing more expert care and treatment, more aid to recovery.]~~

Most of all, I am grateful to America -- for re-affirming at this hour America's humanity, America's active concern for ~~the health of~~ its children.

This is the eighth birthday in a row ~~in~~ which all of you have made an occasion for joining hands in this ~~National Humanitarian effort~~
~~great cause~~.

I cannot say, as you can well understand, that this is for me a completely happy birthday. These are not completely happy days for any of us in the world. Shall we say that American birthdays this year are being made at least happier than they would otherwise be because all of us are still living under a free peoples' philosophy?

It is not ~~possible~~ that the lights of peace blaze in our great cities and glow in our towns and villages -- that laughter and music still ring out from coast to coast -- ~~and~~ that we ~~will~~ return to safe beds tonight.

It is not that we feel no concern for the plight of free peoples elsewhere in the world, ~~and~~ that we do not hope that they may continue the freedom of their governments and their ways of life in the days to come.

It is because we believe in and insist on the right of the helpless and the weak and the crippled ~~everywhere~~ to play their part in life and survive.

It is because we know instinctively that this right of the unfortunate comes under our free peoples' philosophy from the bottom up and can never be imposed from the top down.

I do have satisfaction on this birthday of mine because of the fact that definite progress has been made in these past twenty years on a national scale in the fight against infantile paralysis. In a very broad but a very definite sense, this fight is a true part of the national defense of America.

[It was twenty years ago last Autumn that I personally had a great opportunity to learn the national geography and the national problems of our land. It was not just because I traveled extensively -- into, I think, forty-two ~~nineteen~~ states out of the forty-eight -- it was because on those many journeys I came better to know the widespread and interrelated scope of all kinds of national problems.

That is one reason [I have always tried to remember that the particular problem of infantile paralysis call#⁴⁶⁷⁵ for a truly national fight. We have it in every state of the union. We ~~are~~ ^{are at first} ~~have~~ ^{now} organized adequately to fight it.

We have had to face the necessity of uniting medical scientists and doctors and nurses and public health officers and the general public into a unique offensive -- and the battle year by year is gaining greater success.

The year-in, year-out campaign culminating on each January thirtieth has had the support of almost everyone -- from those who ~~gave~~ ^{give} large sums down to the school children who contribute~~d~~ their pennies. Clearly, unquestionably, we are winning the fight -- winning it, thanks to all of you.

And so, to all of you I give my own thanks for the rarest birthday present of all -- the gift of your charity, your kindness to each other and to the Nation.

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ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT

JANUARY 30, 1941

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Mrs. Clare STATEMENTS FILE

HOLD FOR RELEASE
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January 30, 1941

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