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

Series 3: “The Four Freedoms” and FDR in World War II

File No. 1542

1944 October 12

Address Accepting the Four Freedoms Award

RADIO ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT
ACCEPTING FOUR FREEDOMS AWARD
THE WHITE HOUSE
OCTOBER 12, 1944

PRESIDENT ANTONINI, SENATOR WAGNER, MEMBERS AND GUESTS OF
THE ITALIAN AMERICAN LABOR COUNCIL:

For over twenty years we in America have watched with anxious eyes the steps taken by the Fascist gangsters to enslave the Italian people. The Italian people were thrown into an alliance they detested. They were ordered, against their will, to fight on the side of their traditional enemies against their traditional friends.

Mussolini, the would-be Caesar, underestimated the will of his people. Large numbers of them were brave enough to rally to our ranks. As part of the Allied Armies, and behind the German lines, they have carried on our common fight for liberty.

The American army -- including thousands of Americans of Italian descent -- entered Italy not as conquerors -- but as liberators. Their objective is military, not political. When that military objective is accomplished -- and much of it has not yet been accomplished -- the Italian people will be free to work out their own destiny, under a government of their own choosing.

The act of the Attorney General -- removing the status of enemy alien from Italians -- has been justified by their corresponding effort to help us wage war.

Of course, the people of Italy have suffered terribly and it will not be humanly possible to take wholly adequate measures to relieve all suffering until Germany has been finally and decisively defeated. But the United Nations are determined that every possible measure be taken to aid the Italian people directly, and to give them an opportunity to help themselves.

The civilian administration has been fully discussed by me with the British Prime Minister. The British Government is agreed that as the problem is great -- so also is our responsibility to help.

The mails have been opened for letters to the liberated provinces. Facilities are now available for small remittances of funds from this country to individuals in Italy for their individual support. Shipments of food and clothing have been delivered. Normal life is being gradually introduced. We are taking every step possible to permit the early sending of individual packages by Americans to their loved ones in Italy. Our objective is to restore all avenues of trade, commerce, and industry, and the free exercise of religion, at the earliest possible moment.

I am deeply grateful therefore for this award. It represents your appreciation both of the problems and the efforts of the American government.

The Charter from which this award takes its name --
the Four Freedoms -- is a firm bond between the great
peace-loving nations of the world. To the people of Italy
we have pledged our help -- and we will keep the faith!

Orig. reading w/ly

Franklin D. Roosevelt

ADDRESS of the President

On The Occasion Of His Acceptance Of The
Four Freedoms Award, In Behalf Of The Italian-American
Labor Council

Columbus Day, October 12, 1944

Broadcast Nationally From The White House
8.25 p.m., e.w.t.

President Antonini, Senator Wagner, Members and
Guests of the Italian American Labor Council:

For over twenty years we in America have watched with anxious eyes the steps taken by the Fascist gangsters to enslave the Italian people. The Italian people were thrown into an alliance which they detested. They were ordered, against their will, to fight on the side of their traditional enemies against their traditional friends.

Mussolini, the would-be Caesar, under-estimated the will of his people. Large numbers of them were brave enough to rally to our ranks. And as part of the Allied Armies, and behind the German lines, they have carried on our common fight for liberty.

The American army -- including thousands of Americans of Italian descent -- entered Italy not as conquerors -- but as liberators. Their objective is military, not political. When that military objective is accomplished -- and much of it has not yet been accomplished -- the Italian people will be free to work out their own destiny, under a government of their own choosing.

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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.

status of enemy alien from Italians -- has been justified by their corresponding effort to help us wage war.

Of course, the people of Italy have suffered terribly and it will not be humanly possible this winter to take wholly adequate measures to relieve all suffering until Germany has been finally and decisively defeated. But the United Nations are determined that every possible measure be taken to aid the Italian people directly, and to give them an opportunity to help themselves.

The civilian administration has been fully discussed by me with the British Prime Minister. The British government is agreed that as the problem is great -- so also is our responsibility to help.

For example, the mails have been opened for letters to the liberated provinces. Facilities are now available for small remittances of funds from this country to individuals in Italy for their individual support. Shipments of food and clothing have been delivered, and much more is on the way. Normal life is being gradually introduced. We are taking every step possible to permit the early sending of individual packages by Americans to their loved ones and relatives in Italy. Our objective is to restore all avenues of trade and commerce and industry, and the free exercise of religion, at the earliest possible moment.

I am deeply grateful, therefore, for this award. It represents your appreciation both of the problems and the efforts of the American Government.

The Charter from which this award takes its name -- the Four Freedoms -- is a firm bond between the great peace-loving nations of the world, among which we count Italy. To the people of Italy we have pledged our help -- and we will keep the faith!

HOLD FOR RELEASE

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HOLD FOR RELEASE

OCTOBER 12, 1944

CAUTION: The following address of the President, to be delivered at the White House before the Chiefs of the Diplomatic Missions from the other American Republics on the occasion of Columbus Day, MUST BE HELD IN CONFIDENCE until released.

NOTE: Release to editions of all newspapers appearing on the streets NOT EARLIER THAN 4:00 o'clock, P.M., E.T.T., October 12, 1944. The same release also applies to radio announcers and news commentators.

CARE MUST BE EXERCISED TO PREVENT PREMATURE PUBLICATION.

STEPHEN EARLY
Secretary to the President

Today -- the birthday of the new world -- the peoples of the American Republics join in paying tribute to the courage and vision of Christopher Columbus, whose name we honor and whose adventurous spirit we perpetuate.

The survival of that spirit is more important than ever, at this time when we are fighting a world war, and when we are building the solid, durable foundations for future world peace.

The little fleet with which Columbus first crossed the ocean took ten weeks for the voyage. The crews of the three ships totalled approximately ninety men.

Today -- every day -- many times that number of men and many tons of cargo are carried across the ocean by air in a few hours. And by sea transport, an entire division of some fifteen thousand men can be sent across the Atlantic in one ship in one week.

When we remember the rapid development of aviation since the last war we can look ahead to the coming years, and know that all the airways across all the seas will be constant lines of communication and commerce.

Thus the margin between the Old World and the New -- as we have been used to calling the hemispheres -- becomes constantly narrower. This means that if we do not now take effective measures to prevent another World War and if there were to be a Third World War, the lands of the Western Hemisphere would be as vulnerable to attack from Europe and Asia as were the Island of Crete and the Philippine Islands five years ago.

It is a significant fact that today in Italy -- the homeland of Columbus -- forces from many parts of this hemisphere and from many distant parts of the civilized world are fighting for freedom against the German threat of mediaeval tyranny.

Serving in the Allied Armies in Italy are men from the forty-eight United States, from the United Kingdom of Great Britain, and the Republic of France. There are also strong, well trained, well equipped forces from Brazil; there are units from Puerto Rico; there are Greeks and there are Poles who have distinguished themselves in bitter fighting at Cassino and Ancona and Rimini; there are gallant men from Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa, and India; there are combat teams composed of Americans of Japanese ancestry who came from Hawaii -- all providing an effective answer to the false Nazi claims of "Nordic superiority".

And there are also Italians bravely fighting for the liberation of their country. They are fighting in the Allied Armies, and they are fighting in the underground forces behind the German lines.

If the spirit of Columbus hovers over his native land today, we can be sure that he rejoices in the varied nature of the Allied forces. For he was one of the truly great internationalists of all time.

During the past century, many millions of Italians have come to the Western Hemisphere seeking freedom and opportunity. In Italy there is hardly a town or village that does not contain families who have blood ties with the New World. This is one of the many reasons why the forces of liberation have been welcomed so cordially by the Italian people after twenty-two years of fascism.

The Fascists and the Nazis sought to deceive and to divide the American Republics. They tried not only through propaganda from across the seas, but also through agents, spies and Fifth Columnists, operating all over the Western Hemisphere. But they failed. The American Republics were not deceived by their protestations of peace and friendship; they were not intimidated by their threats.

The people of the United States will never forget how the other American Republics, acting in accord with their pledges of solidarity, rallied to our common defense when the continent was violated by Axis treachery in an attack on this country. At that time Axis armies were still unchecked, and even the stark threat of an invasion from Dakar hung over our heads.

We have maintained the solidarity of the governments of all the American Republics -- except one. And the people of all of the Republics will have the opportunity to share in the achievement of the common victory.

The bonds that unite the American Republics into a community of good neighbors must remain strong. We have not labored long and faithfully to build in this New World a system of international security and cooperation -- merely to let it be dissipated in any period of post-war indifference. Within the framework of the world organization of the United Nations, which the governments and people of the American Republics are helping to establish, the inter-American system can and must play a strong and vital role.

Secretary Hull has told me of the conversations he has had with representatives of our sister Republics concerning the formation of a world security organization. We have received important and valuable expressions of views from several of these governments. I know that Secretary Hull, and Under Secretary Stettinius who led the United States delegation at Dumbarton Oaks, are looking forward to further exchanges of views with our Good Neighbors before the meeting of the general conference to establish the world organization. We must press forward to bring into existence this world organization to maintain peace and security. There is no time to lose.

It is our objective to establish the solid foundations of the peace organization without further delay, and without waiting for the end of hostilities. There must, of course, be time for discussion by all the peace-loving nations -- large and small. Substantial progress has already been made, and it must be continued as rapidly as possible.

Like the Constitution of the United States itself, the Charter of the United Nations must not be static and inflexible,

but must be adaptable to the changing conditions of progress -- social, economic, and political -- all over the world.

In approaching the great problems of the future -- the future which we shall share in common with all the free peoples of this earth -- we shall do well to remember that we are the inheritors of the tradition of Christopher Columbus, the Navigator who ventured across uncharted seas.

When Columbus was about to set forth in the summer of 1492 he wrote: "Above all it is very important that I forget sleep, and labor much at navigation, because it is necessary".

We shall require the same determination, the same devotion, as we steer our course through the great age of exploration and discovery which lies before us.

SPEECH OF THE PRESIDENT
ACCEPTING FOUR FREEDOMS AWARD

October 12, 1944

My friends:

For over twenty years we in America have watched with anxious eyes the steps taken by the Fascist gangsters to enslave the Italian people. The Italian people were thrown into an alliance they detested. They were ordered, against their will to fight on the side of their traditional enemies against their traditional friends.

Mussolini, the ~~dictator~~ ^{would-be} Caesar, underestimated the will of his people. Large numbers of them were brave enough to rally to our ranks. As part of the Allied armies, and behind the German lines, they have carried on our common fight for liberty.

The American Army -- including thousands of Americans of Italian descent -- entered Italy not as conquerors - but as liberators. Their objective is military, not political. When that military objective is accomplished -- and much of it has not yet been accomplished -- the Italian people will be free to work out their own destiny, under a government of their own choosing.

The act of the Attorney General -- removing the status of enemy alien from Italians -- has been justified by their corresponding effort to help us wage war.

Of course, the people of Italy have suffered terribly and it will not be ^{humanely} possible to take wholly adequate measures to relieve all suffering until Germany has been finally and decisively defeated.

But the United Nations are determined that every possible measure be taken to aid the Italian people directly, and to give them an opportunity to help themselves.

The civilian administration has been fully discussed by me with the British Prime Minister. The British Government ^{is} agreed that as the problem is great -- so also is our responsibility to help.

The mails have been opened for letters to the liberated provinces. *Facilities are now available for small remittances of funds for this and other purposes.* Shipments of food and clothing have been delivered. Normal life is being gradually introduced. We are taking every step possible ^{from this country} to permit the early sending of individual packages by Americans to their loved ones in Italy. Our objective is to restore all avenues of trade, commerce, and industry *and the free exercise of religion,* at the earliest possible moment.

I am deeply grateful therefore for this award. It represents your appreciation both of the problems and the efforts of the American government.

The Charter from which this award takes its name -- the Four Freedoms -- is a firm bond between the great peace-loving nations of the world. To the people of Italy we have pledged our help -- and we will keep the faith!

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SPIRIT OF THE PRESIDENT
ACCEPTING FOUR FREEDOMS AWARDS

October 12, 1944

For over twenty years we in America have watched with anxious eyes the steps taken by the Fascist gangsters to enslave the Italian people. The Italian people were thrown into an alliance they detested. They were ordered, against their will, to fight on the side of their traditional enemies against their traditional friends.

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The mails have been opened for letters to the liberated provinces. Shipments of food and clothing have been delivered. Normal life is being gradually introduced. We are taking every step possible soon to permit the early sending of individual packages by Americans to their loved ones in Italy. Our objective is to restore all avenues of trade, commerce, and industry ^{and the free exercise of religion} at the earliest possible moment.

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ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT
October 12, 1944

Today -- the birthday of the new world -- the peoples of the American Republics join in paying tribute to the courage and vision of Christopher Columbus whose name we honor and whose adventurous spirit we perpetuate throughout the Western Hemisphere.

The survival of that spirit is more important than ever, ~~is it~~ at this time when we are fighting a world war, and when we are building the solid, durable foundations for future world peace.

The little fleet with which Columbus first crossed the ocean took ten weeks for the voyage. ^{some of the} The ~~largest ships carried more or less~~ ^{captured ships carried more or less} ~~approximately 50 men.~~

Today -- every day -- many times that number of men and many tons of cargo are carried across the ocean by air in a few hours.

And by sea transport, an entire division of some 15,000 men can be sent across the Atlantic in one ship in one week.

When we remember the rapid development of aviation since the last war we can look ahead to the coming years, and know that all the ^{aircraft} ~~airways~~ across all the seas will be solid lines of communication and commerce.



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WASHINGTON, D. C.

From the Papers of
Harry L. Hopkins

ROUGH DRAFT

- 2 -

Thus the margin between the Old World and the New — as we have been used to calling the hemispheres — becomes constantly narrower. This means that if we do not now take effective measures to prevent another World War and if there were to be a Third World War, the lands of the Western Hemisphere would be as vulnerable to attack from Europe and Asia as were the Island of Crete and the Philippine Islands ^{five} years ago.

It is a significant fact that today in Italy — the homeland of Columbus — forces from many parts of this hemisphere and from many distant parts of the civilized world are fighting for freedom against the German threat of nefarious tyranny.

Serving in the 5th and 8th Armies ^{in Italy} under General Alexander, General Mack and General Lucas are men from the forty-eight United States, from the United Kingdom of Great Britain, and the Republic of France. There are also strong, well trained, well equipped forces from Brazil; there are units from Puerto Rico; there are Greeks and there are Poles who have distinguished themselves in bitter fighting at Cassino and Ancona and Rimini; there are gallant men from Canada, ^{and} New Zealand ^{and} South Africa, and India; there are combat teams composed of Americans of Japanese



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Michael Ardison and Kenneth Sander
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From the papers of
Harry L. Hopkins

SECOND DRAFT

- 3 -

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SECOND DRAFT

- 4 -

Republics were not deceived by their pretensions of peace and friendship; they were not intimidated by their threats.

We have maintained the solidarity of all the American republics — except one. *The Republic of Haiti* ~~with good reason for~~
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The bonds that unite the American republics into a community of good neighbors must remain strong. We have not labored long and faithfully to build in this New World a system of international security and cooperation — merely to let it be dissipated in any period of post-war indifference. Within the framework of the world organization of United Nations, which the governments and people of the American Republics are helping to establish, the inter-American system can and must play a strong and vital role.

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Harry L. Hopkins

SECOND DRAFT

- 5 -

United States delegation at Dumbarton Oaks, are looking forward to further exchanges of views with our Good Neighbors before the meeting of the general conference to establish the world organization. We must press forward to bring into existence this world organization to maintain peace and security for all freedom-loving nations, large and small. There is no time to lose. We must not again miss the tide (Incident A)

In approaching the great problems of the future -- the future which we shall share in common with all the free peoples of this earth -- we shall do well to remember that we are the inheritors of the tradition of Christopher Columbus, the navigator who ventured across uncharted seas.

When Columbus was about to set forth in the summer of 1492 he wrote: "Above all it is very important that I forget sleep, and labor much at navigation, because it is necessary."

We shall require the same determination, the same devotion, as we steer our course through the great age of exploration and discovery which lies before us.



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Like the Constitution of the United States itself, the Charter of the United Nations must not be a static inflexible charter, but must be adaptable ^{*The*} to changing ^{*of progress*} conditions -- social, economic, and political -- all over the world.



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Mr. Hopkins:

This is insert A and should follow the word "tide" on page five of the draft just sent you.