
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. 1577

1945 April 13

Draft of Jefferson Day Dinner Speech
(last undelivered speech)

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

April 18, 1945.

MEMORANDUM FOR HON. AUGUSTUS GIEGENGACK:

Would your be good enough
to have a box made for this and have
it marked as follows:

F.D.R. Draft of Jefferson Day Dinner
Speech - April 13, 1945.

Audrey Turner

RADIO ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT

JEFFERSON DAY DINNER

APRIL 13, 1945.

Americans are gathered together this evening in communities all over the country to pay tribute to the living memory of Thomas Jefferson -- one of the greatest of all democrats; and I want to make it clear that I am spelling that word "democrats" with a small "d".

I wish I had the power, just for this evening, to be present at all of these gatherings.

In this historic year, more than ever before, we do well to consider the character of Thomas Jefferson as an American citizen of the world.

As Minister to France, then as our first Secretary of State and as our third President, Jefferson was instrumental in the establishment of the United States as a vital factor in international affairs.

It was he who first sent our Navy into far distant waters to defend our rights. And the promulgation of the Monroe Doctrine was the logical development of Jefferson's far-seeing foreign policy.

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Today we have learned in the agony of war that great power involves great responsibility. Today we can no more escape the consequences of German and Japanese aggression than could we avoid the consequences of attacks by the Barbary Corsairs a century and a half before.

We, as Americans, do not choose to deny our responsibility.

Nor, do we intend to abandon our determination that, within the lives of our children and our children's children, there will not be a third world war.

We seek peace -- enduring peace. More than an end to war, we want an end to the beginnings of all wars -- yes, an end to this brutal, inhuman and thoroughly impractical method of settling the differences between governments.

The once powerful, malignant Nazi state is crumbling. The Japanese war lords are receiving, in their own home-land, the retribution for which they asked when they attacked Pearl Harbor.

But the mere conquest of our enemies is not enough.

We must go on to do all in our power to conquer the doubts and the fears, the ignorance and the greed, which made this horror possible.

Thomas Jefferson, himself a distinguished scientist, once spoke of "the brotherly spirit of Science, which unites into one family all its votaries of whatever grade, and however widely dispersed throughout the different quarters of the globe."

Today, science has brought all the different quarters of the globe so close together that it is impossible to isolate them one from another.

Today we are faced with the preeminent fact that, if civilization is to survive, we must cultivate the science of human relationships -- the ability of all peoples, of all kinds, to live together and work together, in the same world, at peace.

Let me assure you that my hand is the steadier for the work that is to be done, that I move more firmly into the task, knowing that you -- millions and millions of you -- are joined with me in the resolve to make this work endure.

The work, my friends, is peace. More than an end of this war -- an end to the beginnings of all wars. Yes, an end, forever, to this impractical, unrealistic settlement of the differences

between governments by the mass killing of peoples.

Today, as we move against the terrible scourge of war -- as we go forward toward the greatest contribution that any generation of human beings can make in this world -- the contribution of lasting peace, I ask you to keep up your faith. I measure the sound, solid achievement that can be made at this time by the straight-edge of your own confidence and your resolve. And to you, and to all Americans who dedicate themselves with us to the making of an abiding peace, I say:

The only limit to our realization of tomorrow will be our doubts of today. Let us move forward with strong and active faith.

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Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

THE LAST ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT
Prepared For Delivery Over The Radio
At The Jefferson Day Dinner
April 13, 1945

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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.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES
WILL DELIVER A SPEECH TO THE CONGRESS
TOMORROW MORNING AT 10 O'CLOCK
IN THE ROYAL BOX

...and to the people of the United States
-- one of the greatest of all
...and I want to say to you that I am speaking to you
...I wish I had the power, just for this evening, to be
...present at all of these gatherings.
...in this magnificent town, more than ever before, we do
...will no longer be the speaker of the hour, but we will be
...of the world.
...to the United States, then as our first responsibility
...State and as our first responsibility, I believe we must
...the establishment of the United States as a world power in
...international affairs.
...It was we who first gave our boys and girls for distant
...waters to defend our rights. And the preservation of the house
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...foreign policy.
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...to build is playing a tremendous part in the battle for the
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JEFFERSON DAY DINNER

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
April 10, 1945

MEMORANDUM FOR HONORABLE WILLIAM D. HASSETT

Dear Bill:

I am enclosing two drafts of the President's speech Friday night. One is by Bob Sherwood and one by me.

You will note that the first paragraphs of both Bob's and mine are the same. Bob salvaged that much out of the version prepared by the Democratic National Committee and I have embodied them as my own first paragraphs as well.

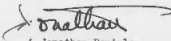
As I told you on the phone, I am a little hesitant about presenting my own draft, but I felt that Bob's was a little diffuse and it seemed to me that the story of Jefferson and Isaac Roosevelt was admirably suited for a short speech like this one. I must point out to you and the President, however, that Archie MacLeish wants to leave Great-great-grandfather Isaac for the speech at the San Francisco Conference. I think it fits better here in a speech which, in a sense, is a speech "within the family", but, I believe, it could be referred to again without loss of effect in the San Francisco speech. However, in the event that the President wants to save this material for San Francisco, I am also attaching a rough draft of his proposed speech on that occasion which MacLeish has given me using this story of Isaac R. on page 7.

Merely for the files on this speech I am also enclosing copy of the draft prepared by someone at the Democratic National Committee. I am sure it is not suitable.

If I can help any further in this matter, I will be happy if you will let me know. Also, I will appreciate it if you will let me have the copy for release by teletype as soon as it is available.

Incidentally, the Sherwood version runs to 610 words and the Daniels version runs to 599 words.

The quotation from Jefferson in the Daniels version comes from a letter from Jefferson to Alexander Donald, written in Paris on February 7, 1788, and is to be found in the Works of Jefferson, Volume VI, page 425.


Jonathan Daniels

JEFFERSON DAY

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I have spoken to my doctor, Ross McIntyre, about my inability to be in more than one spot at a time, but he tells me the condition is chronic. There is nothing he can do about it.

In this historic year, more than ever before, we do well to consider the character of Thomas Jefferson, and at such a time I would like to talk tonight about both Mr. Jefferson and my own great-great-grandfather. I think they make a good combination for our consideration now. One taught us the meaning and beginnings of our democracy and one was just a citizen - hard-working, patriotic, prosperous-enough - who left no long shadow across history.

The important thing is that both lived in a victorious America which discovered that victory was only a beginning.

It was a time when men in a confederation, which had been sufficiently strong to hold them together in war, were arguing in

division about a greater union which - in unity and security - could hold for them the full meaning of their victory. They came in no calm conversation to our Constitution. It was born in invective, vituperation, pamphleteering and plain politics.

Those who argued against the Constitution were not all fools. They had fears and reasons for fears. Mr. Jefferson, whose genius was eternal hostility toward every form of tyranny, shared them. He thought the absence of a Bill of Rights was a serious defect in the document. But the one thing that he feared more than the flaw was the possibility of failure. "I wish with all my soul," he wrote, "that the nine first conventions may accept the Constitution, because this will secure to us the good it contains, which I think great and important. But I equally wish that the four latest conventions, whichever they be, may refuse to accede to it, till a declaration of rights be annexed."

So far as I know Isaac Roosevelt left no such statement. But he was one of a small group of delegates in the New York State Convention, where ratification seemed lost, who proposed ratification by New York "in full faith and confidence" that the first Congress to meet under the Constitution would submit to the States a bill of rights.

That confidence won - and you know that that confidence was fulfilled. Indeed, it is the essence of America that it is forever being fulfilled.

Men and women do not gather in America in Jefferson's name tonight merely to counsel with the past. No men could gather in Jefferson's name in fear of the future. In our times we can praise the

great Jefferson in understanding that our problems are no less than those which men beside him, below his greatness, men like Isaac Roosevelt, met in his times.

We can remember that it was "faith and confidence" that made America a nation, that has sustained it and advanced it.

We can be sure that in another hour of victory we can only help to build a unity strong enough to hold the meaning of our victory, if we hold to the faith and the confidence which are at once our hope and our heritage in this hour.

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FIRST DRAFT

RADIO ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT

JEFFERSON DAY DINNER

APRIL 13, 1945.

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* DATE April 9, 1945

To Jonathan Daniels

From **ROBERT E. SHERWOOD**

Herewith is a draft for Jefferson Day, together with the previous draft which you referred to me.

It was my understanding that the speech was to be only about five minutes and, therefore, this draft is approximately 650 words.

The quotation from Thomas Jefferson, about "the brotherly spirit of Science", is from the article on Jefferson in the "Dictionary of American Biography".

NRS.

Encl. (2)

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^{FO. 107}
A We are part of the vast Allied force - a force composed of flesh and blood and steel and spirit - which is today destroying the makers of war, the breeders of hatred, in Europe and in Asia.

A In Jefferson's time, our Navy consisted largely of one warship - the gallant U.S.S. "Constitution" - "Old Ironsides".

Today that Navy is able to operate powerfully along the very seacoasts of Japan and, at the same time, across the ^{Atlantic} ~~ocean~~ and ~~in the Indian Ocean~~ and all ^{of} the Seven Seas.

Within two weeks from now, the eyes of the whole civilized world will be looking toward an American city - San Francisco - where new world history is to be made.

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April 13

My friends:

Knowing that you are gathered tonight in cities, in towns, from one end of the country to the other, to give expression to your loyalty, I wish that I had the power, just for an evening, of being in a thousand places at once.

I, too, feel the old need of a homecoming, the old urge to show up among the folks, and to take pride with you in the fact that we are Democrats.

I have spoken to my doctor about my inability to be in more than one spot at a time, but he tells me the condition is chronic. There is nothing he can do about it.

But I am with you in heart. And in these times of trial, this greatest of all tests of men and the leaders of men, of nations and the community of nations -- up to this decisive hour I know that you have stood, and you stand now, most loyally side by side with me.

Let me tell you that I am strengthened by that knowledge. Let me

~~tell you that I am strengthened by that knowledge.~~ Let me assure you that my hand is the steadier for the work that is to be done, that I move more firmly into the task, knowing that you -- millions and millions of you -- are joined with me in the resolve to make this work endure. B

The work, my friends, is peace. More than an end of this war -- an end to the beginnings of all wars. Yes, an end, forever, to this impractical, unrealistic settlement of the differences between governments by the mass killing of peoples.

Even as I speak these words, I can hear, in my mind's ear, an old, old chorus. You have heard it too. You will hear more of it as we go forward with the work at hand.

It is the chorus coming from the defeatists, the cynics, the perfectionists -- all the world's sad aggregation of timid souls who tell us, for one reason or another, it can't be done.

They have been afraid to come along with us as we approached this task of destiny. And they will shrink, they will pull back and try to pull us back with them, as we get further into it.

Oh yes, they will agree, war is horrible. War is hell.

And yet, in their pale, anaemic minds there is a kind of worship

of this same horror of war. They tell us there can be no end to it. They endow it with immortality. They certify it to us as the ultimate fate of mankind on earth.

Now, you and I don't stand in such awe and adoration. We don't think war deserves it.

You and I are not willing to concede that we were put here on earth for no better purpose. And from here on, the wars that would come if we let them would leave precious few of us to argue to the contrary!

You and I call war stupidity -- not plain stupidity, but enormous, brutal stupidity, ~~but enormous, brutal stupidity~~, a crime that makes no more sense to its perpetrator than it does to its victim.

Well, today that cult of the faint-hearted, the credo of those cringing adorers of a criminal precedent, is on its way out. And in a span of time as far back as history goes, that is something new under the sun.

To me there is no greater hope for humanity, there is no better sign in the world of our time, than the fact that this abject worship of war has become -- for the first time -- a minority belief. We have struck

boldly forward in the inner world of our thinking, in the world that we project for our kind, and we have discovered that that world is not flat.

True, if there are new corporals who will want to become rulers of the earth, we cannot legislate wild fancies out of their minds. And if there are other impractical dreamers who must indulge themselves in their private nightmares — the pipedream that war is inevitable — we cannot pass laws abridging the freedom to dream.

But we can and we will stop these murderous hallucinations from reaching us. We can and we will keep them confined to the dream-world of would-be conquerors and of the defeatists who are their accessories before the fact. We can stop them from wrecking the lives of sane, sound, peace-loving, practical humanity. This we can do. And this we will do.

I say "we", for I know that I am only one in many millions who share this belief and are so resolved. We have had it proved abundantly to us in America that our people, whether Democrats or Republicans, want to strike boldly against the threat of war. They have demanded a sane, practical end to it. And they have their feet on the ground.

To this I can add — for I have seen it just as abundantly in my

recent travels -- that the other peoples of the world will be with us every step of the way. The thin-blooded timid souls who are now in a minority in our country are also in a minority in the world.

I remember saying, once upon a time in the long, long ago when I was a freshman, that the only thing our people had to fear was fear itself. We were in fear then of economic collapse. We struck back boldly against that fear, and we overcame it.

Today, as we move against ~~an even more~~ ^{the} terrible scourge, ~~and as~~ ^{of war}
we go forward towards the greatest contribution that any generation of human beings can make in this world -- the contribution of lasting peace, ~~and that little admonition of thirteen years ago comes back to me.~~

I ask you to keep up your faith. I measure the sound, solid achievement that can be made at this time by the straight-edge of your own confidence and your resolve. And to you, and to all Americans who dedicate themselves with us to the making of an abiding peace, I say:

The only limit to our realization of tomorrow will be our ~~doubts~~
~~of today.~~ ^{doubts of today. Let us move forward}
^{with strong and active faith.}

RADIO ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT

JEFFERSON DAY DINNER

APRIL 13, 1945.

Americans are gathered together this evening in communities all over the country to pay tribute to the living memory of Thomas Jefferson -- one of the greatest of all democrats; and I want to make it dear that I am spelling that word "democrats" with a small "d".

I wish I had the power, just for this evening, to be present at all of these gatherings.

In this historic year, more than ever before, we do well to consider the character of Thomas Jefferson as an American citizen of the world.

As Minister to France, then as our first Secretary of State and as our third President, Jefferson was instrumental in the establishment of the United States as a vital factor in international affairs.

It was he who first sent our Navy into far distant waters to defend our rights. And the promulgation of the Monroe Doctrine was the logical development of Jefferson's far-seeing foreign policy.

Today this nation which Jefferson helped so greatly to build is playing a tremendous part in the battle for the rights of man all over the world.

Today we are part of the vast Allied force -- a force composed of flesh and blood and steel and spirit -- which is today destroying the makers of war, the breeders of hatred, in Europe and in Asia.

In Jefferson's time our Navy consisted of only a handful of frigates headed by the gallant U.S.S. CONSTITUTION -- "OLD IRONSIDES" -- but that tiny Navy taught nations across the Atlantic that piracy in the Mediterranean -- acts of aggression against peaceful commerce and the enslavement of their crews was one of those things which, among neighbors, simply was not

Today we have learned in the agony of war that great power involves great responsibility. Today we can no more escape the consequences of German and Japanese aggression than could we avoid the consequences of attacks by the Barbary Corsairs a century and a half before.

We, as Americans, do not choose to deny our responsibility.

Nor, do we intend to abandon our determination that, within the lives of our children and our children's children, there will not be a third world war.

We seek peace -- enduring peace. More than an end to war, we want an end to the beginnings of all wars -- yes, an end to this brutal, inhuman and thoroughly impractical method of settling the differences between governments.

The once powerful, malignant Nazi state is crumbling. The Japanese war lords are receiving, in their own home-land, the retribution for which they asked when they attacked Pearl Harbor.

But the mere conquest of our enemies is not enough.

We must go on to do all in our power to conquer the doubts and the fears, the ignorance and the greed, which made this horror possible.

Thomas Jefferson, himself a distinguished scientist, once spoke of "the brotherly spirit of Science, which unites into one family all its votaries of whatever grade, and however widely dispersed throughout the different quarters of the globe."

Today, science has brought all the different quarters of the globe so close together that it is impossible to isolate them one from another.

Today we are faced with the preeminent fact that, if civilization is to survive, we must cultivate the science of human relationships -- the ability of all peoples, of all kinds, to live together and work together, in the same world, at peace.

Let me assure you that my hand is the steadier for the work that is to be done, that I move more firmly into the task, knowing that you -- millions and millions of you -- are joined with me in the resolve to make this work endure.

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UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

HOME OF FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE
HYDE PARK, NEW YORK

April 12, 1951

Today is the sixth anniversary of the death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, April 12, 1945 and the fifth anniversary of the opening of his home to the public.

At the time of his death, Mr. Roosevelt was preparing his speech for the annual observance of Thomas Jefferson's birthday, April 13. In the spirit of this anniversary, the National Park Service and the National Archives and Records Service wish to present you with this facsimile copy of the text of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's last and undelivered speech.

AUG 7 - 1951

Mr. C. F. Palmer
Chairman
Franklin D. Roosevelt Warm
Springs Memorial Commission
Palmer Building
Atlanta, Georgia

Dear Mr. Palmer:

This is in reply to the inquiry you made some time ago concerning the provenance of the version of the Jefferson Day address that we have on display in this Library and the general circumstances surrounding the drafting of that speech.

There are enclosed photostatic copies of several of the drafts in our files that throw some light on this matter. From these photostats it appears probable that the carbon copy version containing the handwritten insertion by President Roosevelt -- "Let us move forward with strong and active faith" was prepared at the Democratic National Committee headquarters and typed in that office.

It appears that three separate drafts of this speech were prepared by persons other than Franklin D. Roosevelt, as follows:

1. The draft on display in the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library. This draft is probably the one referred to by Jonathan Daniels in his memorandum of April 10, 1945 as "the version prepared by the Democratic National Committee ...". Parts of this draft were incorporated in the text that was finally agreed on. The author of this draft is not known to us.
2. A draft prepared by Robert E. Sherwood that was forwarded by Mr. Sherwood to Jonathan Daniels on April 9, 1945. More use was made of the Sherwood draft than of the draft that seems to have been prepared by the Democratic National Committee.
3. A draft by Jonathan Daniels. This draft was not

Mr. C. F. Palmer

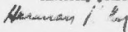
2.

used in the final version, except for the first three or four sentences.

As you will see from the enclosed photostats, President Roosevelt apparently prepared the so-called "First Draft" from the three versions listed above. This so-called "First Draft" was in reality the final version of the speech in the form in which he would have delivered it had he lived, as is shown by the fact that he had it typed up in final form.

It is hoped that this information will be of some help.

Sincerely yours,



Herman Kahn
Director

Enclosures

HK:mvm