

Tully Archive: FDR Papers

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Box 13; Folder = Speech Drafts: Armistice Day Address,
Boston, Massachusetts, November 11, 1930

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Armistice Day is becoming by custom an anniversary which celebrates the termination of the worlds greatest war and even more than that gives to us and the other nations of the world an opportunity in the review of the wars of the past to search our hearts and our minds on the ever present theme of human conflict. In my own life, though I have not reached the half century mark, I have witnessed two armed conflicts in which our own nation was engaged as well as a half dozen lesser combats ⁱⁿ which we Americans have taken part ~~in~~ on foreign shores. And in addition to this American participation in armed strife the rest of the world in this less than a half century has witnessed wars in every one of its continents ^{and} in all of its climes.

That ^{these past} twelve full years have ^{produced} ~~passed~~ for the world as a whole ~~with~~ fewer conflicts than ~~in~~ any ~~similar~~ ^{like} period is a matter for civilization to give thanks for, ^{Nevertheless,} but in spite of all of the brave resolves of twelve years ago we know to our sorrow that thirty millions of men even at this moment constitute the armed forces of the world. ~~and~~ We cannot yet say that the high purposes that followed that memorable November 11, 1918 have been even remotely attained.

Tonight, however, I shall ~~seek to~~ ^{not} speak of the physical conflict ^{known} as war but rather of war ^{within} within civilication itself which ^{continues} ~~is of moment~~ year in and year out in times of what we often erroneously call peace.

Of you, veterans of many far flung contests, who have upheld the honor and glory of our flag on many distant fields, because this is Armistice Day and because an armistice marks the first acknowledgment ^{of our mistakes by} ~~of~~ the vanquished ~~that they have lost~~, I want to ask your powerful aid in bringing about other armistices in these other wars in times of peace.

If it be true that peace has its victories no less than war, it also follows that what we call peaceful times, when guns are silent and military forces idle in their barracks, ^{are} ~~is~~ nevertheless the time of conflicts not fought with guns or material weapons, - conflicts wide ^{of} ~~of~~ front, pitiless, devastating and dangerous to the safety of the state. These are the wars where we who believe in progress, who believe in bettering the safety, security and happiness of every individual in the nation move forward in perpetual assault on the forces of conservatism, of selfishness, of greed and of entrenched tradition which belong to a past generation rather than to this 20th century of ours.

~~All~~ ^{of} you, at one time or another, have risked life itself for your country's honor or your country's safety. Where more certainly can I look for help in ending these wars of peace-time which also endanger your country's security and stop your country's advance?

First there is the warfare against the grim tradition that every man must look out for himself, that he must fight ^{against his fellow man} from the cradle to the grave, for his bread, for his livelihood, for everything that makes life worth living ~~against his fellowmen~~, no matter how handicapped by misfortune or circumstance, ^{and that he must wage this fight} without a helping hand from the state to aid him if he falters or to rescue him from absolute starvation if he fails. To the state he must give his allegiance, his life, even, if called in its defense, and a yearly tithe of all he earns. And yet, according to this ancient theory, from the state he must not look for help in case misfortune, utterly beyond his control, should overtake him in his declining years.

What I emphasize, what I plead recognition for, is the fact that in the thirty years of the 20th century more vital changes in the whole structure of civilization have taken place than in the three hundred years which went before. It is not so many generations ago, for example, that society accepted the motto of "the devil take the hindmost" and an equally ^{cruel} ~~determination~~ ^{through} of "the survival of the fittest" ^{In those days civilization was} wholly willing to let its old people who dropped out of the line of march lie in the ditch to die of starvation or exposure. Then came another era where at least the stragglers from

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Insert A.

PARENTS HOUSE
TELEPHONE 45
GROTON, MASS.

Another great war of practitioners is that which we are waging in behalf of mental and physical health. It is within our own lifetimes that science and education have made it possible not only to halve the rate of infant mortality, but even to lengthen the average span of life by many years. In our own generation we have undertaken the cure of mental ills and of epidemic disease.

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This particular war within our civilization is being won and we are approaching its armistice day because of the millions of men and women who recognize this ~~particular~~ new relationship of the state to the individual. ^{We understand at last that} ~~After all~~ these old people who have fallen on evil times have in their day given of their service, of their wages and of their support to the state itself.

Then there has been the war carried in our own day and generation in behalf of the physical safety and the health of our ^{working men and women} ~~workmen~~ and our children, and when we speak of this element of our ~~total~~ population we include ~~to~~ ^{of} necessity the great majority of all the people. The long battle for adequate compensation to those who are injured in industry, the long battle for decent factory conditions, the long battle against

child labor, the long battle to protect the ^{lives} ~~life~~ of the mothers of the state - on all of these fronts we have made and are making steady progress, and yet we have not pierced the final line of defense.

There is, furthermore, what is miscalled the war against crime; ~~for~~ it should be known by the better term of the war to prevent crime. In this conflict we ~~are~~ ~~in~~ face ~~of~~ great odds - we are only just beginning to make headway. At last the public conscience is being aroused to the fact that ~~severe~~ punishment ^{alone} does not cure crime - that while punishment may in many instances and in many circumstances be a deterrent of crime, crime itself is individual and those who are guilty of lawlessness must be thought of in the first instance as human beings and not as mere prison numbers. At last we realize that out of every hundred men and boys who go to prison ~~ninety percent~~ 90 or more return eventually to our communities to live in our midst again. During all these years many and probably most of these who return come out of prison more hardened, more criminally minded, more certain to go wrong than when they entered. Today we are beginning to learn that these prison conditions and their inevitable results are not ^{a necessity} ~~the necessary~~ thing and that by classification, ^{vocational training} segregation, education, useful occupation and parole

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Here again the struggle is of our own generation. The strides of science have made necessities of luxuries and have brought new services into our homes. The electricity which was the new found wonder of our fathers and mothers has become ^{the} house ^{hold} drudge, or to be more accurate, can

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Finally, I would say a word to you of another war which does not affect our bodies or our minds but affects very intimately the lives we ~~can~~ lead and the comfort and happiness, not only of our own, but of future generations. Here again the struggle is of our own generation. The strides of science have made necessities of luxuries and have brought new services into our homes. The electricity which was the new found wonder of our fathers and mothers has become ^{the} a house ^{hold} drudge, or to be more accurate, can

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Certain elements which enter into the daily needs of a people have long been recognized as bearing a character which differs from that of the ordinary ~~commodities~~ commodities of barter and trade. These are the group of services which we list under the broad heading of public utilities. In their essentials they are often monopolistic and the state, for many generations past, ^{had} recognized the distinction between them and the other products of industry. Today in this field of war two armies are drawn up - the one seeking to ~~protect~~ break down the distinctions between the utilities and the other forms of industry, seeking to free ^{the utilities} them from all limitations ^{of} as to profit for personal gain - and on the other side, ^{that} those of a more modern army which seeks the development and distribution of those utilities ^{at least cost} for the primary good of the great mass of the people who must have them if they are to maintain the standards of their neighbors and of the civilization of today. We of this newer army may well extend the motto - "Public ^{office} service is a public trust," to apply to the thought that public service ^{is a public trust} itself ~~includes the serving to the people of these commodities~~ of electricity and power and telephones.

If the electricity and power and telephones of our homes, if the transportation which takes us to and from our vocations have the character of a public necessity, then they must not be made the instrument of unreasonable profit to private individuals who numerically represent only a very small percentage of the users of the service

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This particular war will continue without question until general recognition is accorded to the fundamental principle - "That public service is a public trust." Considering how recently this conflict has begun, we have made I think greater progress than along the entire rest of the battle front, for I read the general verdict ~~of~~ ^{of} the public press that events of only a few days past have shown emphatically, in all parts of this country, that the people as a whole are determined to insist that the control of our government be placed in the hands of those who believe in the proper and fair regulation of our public utilities.

Twelve years ago there were lined up across the face of Europe a series of great armies. There were many battle fronts and many areas of conflict. Terrific drives and ~~severe~~ ^{severe} attacks were made from time to time against ~~individual~~ ^{isolated} points in this long line. It was not until the armies of which we were a part began a unified movement along the whole of the battle front that victory became a possibility.

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