

April 2014

The Journey of FDR's Public Image as the Democratic Dictator

Andrew Otton
University of Portland

Follow this and additional works at: <http://pilotscholars.up.edu/nwpassages>



Part of the [History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Otton, Andrew (2014) "The Journey of FDR's Public Image as the Democratic Dictator," *Northwest Passages*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 1 , Article 4.
Available at: <http://pilotscholars.up.edu/nwpassages/vol1/iss1/4>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the History at Pilot Scholars. It has been accepted for inclusion in Northwest Passages by an authorized administrator of Pilot Scholars. For more information, please contact library@up.edu.

THE JOURNEY OF FDR'S PUBLIC IMAGE AS THE DEMOCRATIC DICTATOR

■
BY ANDREW W. OTTON

Franklin Delano Roosevelt's (FDR) public image rose in his first term, fell in his second, and rebounded in his third. The essential focus of this paper is to examine how FDR portrayed himself to the public, as well as explain the tumultuous nature of his image over his three terms. This is significant, as other scholarship has overlooked this important part, leaving the understanding of FDR lacking. Other scholarship focuses mostly on policy and politics when concerned with FDR's speeches, specifically the fireside chats, and the potential societal, economic, cultural, etc. impact the speech might have had. Davis Houck is a good exception to that. He has a discussion of FDR trying to insert the traits of a dictator into his public image, which one will discuss later.¹ Even when looking at rhetoricians, many spend their time discussing the particular way FDR used language to be effectively persuasive. However, there is an exception to that in Mary Stuckey, who discusses how FDR combined his image and that of the government's.² Those two exceptions, which do discuss the way FDR portrayed himself, still only offer small pieces of information particular to one part of FDR's wide oratory. Houck focuses on FDR's first inaugural, and Stuckey's argues the definition of the "modern presidency," focusing on the persuasive language of FDR, the discussion of merged identities only being small and tangential.³ What is lacking is a discussion of FDR's personal motivations behind his speeches, something that could benefit all other academic work surrounding FDR. Others discuss political motivations through policy FDR wanted passed, but there is little discussion of how FDR used himself as a tool to convince the public. This paper will attempt to address that.

FDR's public image changed significantly across his first three terms, the early impetus for those changes beginning in his interregnum.

This paper will focus solely on speeches given by FDR himself, namely his first three inaugural addresses and a selection of his fire-side chats. In his first term, FDR attempted to establish a balanced image as the “democratic dictator” and that of the “people’s president.” In the second term FDR overestimated the political capital he created in his first term while establishing that image, leading him to tip the balance in favor of the democratic dictator half, which led to two significant political failures. Finally, in his third term FDR rebalanced his image between the democratic dictator and the “people’s president,” due in part to the failures in his second term and to the emergence of World War II.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt had little more than four months between the day of his election and the day of his inauguration to formulate an approach to the public. He had many things to consider in his approach, the obvious, and greatest, issue being the Great Depression. The infamous stock market crash of October 29, 1929, referred to as “Black Tuesday,” happened three years before FDR’s election, meaning the Great Depression had a great impact already: an estimated one-third of all workers lost their jobs, gross income from farming and agriculture halved, and banks foreclosed one thousand houses daily.⁴ All of those situations, which had developed in those short three years, posed problems that FDR would have to deal with directly.

In that four-month period, FDR accomplished very little in terms of fixing those problems, due in large part to the politics between himself and Herbert Hoover. FDR and his staff instead began planning for the unknown, as Adolf Berle, an aid to FDR, noted two days after the election in November 1932, “It must be remembered by March 4 next we may have anything on our hands from a recovery to a revolution.”⁵ FDR might not have known exactly what to do, but he had already decided the problem with the economy came from a domestic source, where Hoover argued an international one, essentially

the opposite of FDR.⁶ Raymond Moley, an early speechwriter and adviser to FDR, noted that FDR might have cooperated with Hoover during those four months if not for the fact that the issue was the economy. FDR disagreed so deeply that he refused to pollute his point of view by cooperating.⁷ Unfortunately, the key issue surrounding the two administrations was not something like foreign policy, upon which FDR agreed with Hoover.⁸

Luckily, FDR agreed with Hoover on foreign policy, as much of the world changed in those four months, specifically the rise of fascism, which would have effects far into FDR's presidency. Germany selected Adolf Hitler as their new Chancellor, and Japan announced that it would be leaving the League of Nations to continue its action towards capturing Manchuria.⁹ Interestingly, FDR had his inauguration March 4, 1933, and Hitler March 5, both dying within weeks of each other as well.¹⁰ Over the next twelve years, each man ran their respective countries, while despising one another and all they stood for.¹¹ This is important to note, as the further into FDR's presidency, the more the issue of Hitler arose. Hitler, and others like him such as Benito Mussolini, became for FDR one of the biggest threats to the United States as it directly challenged democracy, which FDR believed to be the foundation of the United States.

The roots of FDR's approach to his image began when he served as New York's governor from 1929 to 1932 in the form of "fireside chats." He came into office as governor in January of 1929, and in April he gave his first ever "fireside chat," where he then continued to give them periodically throughout his governorship and into his presidency.¹² A "fireside chat," was essentially a radio address FDR prepared in advance that focused on one topic. FDR used the chats as a way to inform the people about the situation related to that topic, and then to use as a platform to attempt to convince the public of the correct solution: his. That same basic formula continued throughout his presidency. Samuel Rosenman, an adviser and

speechwriter for FDR, who served with him from his governorship throughout his presidency, suggested that the fireside chats had a significant impact on FDR's success as governor. They appealed directly to the people, bypassing debates with other politicians or discussions with the media entirely.¹³ It made certain the fact that FDR fully controlled his message, and nobody could interpret what he said, changing his intended meaning.

By addressing the people directly himself, FDR could ensure that no journalist would misinterpret and inaccurately inform the public of his message — the way he portrayed himself to the people — allowing him to receive direct feedback from the people in the form of letters. Lawrence Levine and Cornelia Levine provide a collection of letters handpicked from, by their estimation, some fifteen to thirty million letters people sent to FDR over the course of his presidency.¹⁴ It is important to note that the Levines picked the pools of letters this paper uses, limiting the selection to only a couple of dozen at most per fireside chat.¹⁵ Those letters played an extremely important role throughout FDR's presidency, as FDR believed them a key aspect of serving as president. He firmly believed that because he paid so much attention to those letters, by receiving daily mail briefs and reading letters himself, he had the best knowledge of what the public actually thought.¹⁶ The letters had a more direct affect as well, as Samuel Rosenman noted instances where FDR reversed a policy decision, or acted on a policy much sooner, due to the reaction he received from letters.¹⁷ Leila A. Sussmann, a rhetorician, even goes as far to suggest that the letters had an essential role in FDR's decision to run for a fourth term.¹⁸

FDR's relationship with the media directly affected the way he approached the public. He had a poor relationship with the media, so he used the fireside chats to avoid the media entirely, appealing directly to the people. Other than the fireside chats and the letters FDR received, he interacted with the public mainly through the

White House correspondents. Betty Winfield discusses FDR's relationship with the correspondents essentially as FDR's attempt to control them. Winfield argues that FDR "wanted the White House correspondents to act as conveyor belts, stenographers, and accurate reporters of spot news from his perspective."¹⁹ He effectively wanted them to be nothing more than outlets to regurgitate his message, nothing more, meaning no independent interpretation of what he said that would then lead to misinformation. Winfield notes several instances of FDR both directing his control and voicing it: he would openly criticize the media for its common practice of reinterpretation, plant people to ask questions at press conferences, and he enacted the direct-quotation rule, which stated that the press could only quote FDR if the White House gave them the quote in writing.²⁰ FDR avoided those problems with his fireside chats, as Winfield notes, "with radio, FDR could be the news-gatherer, the reporter, as well as the editor."²¹ In other words, FDR had control of the information, nobody else. With his chats, FDR did not risk someone else either challenging or misinterpreting his message. Because of that, FDR made the media's only relevance the mediums they provided.

It is important to note that when one refers to "FDR" one does not simply refer to the man, but FDR himself and his advisers, all of which played a significant role in crafting FDR's speeches. Therefore, when one does refer to "FDR," one should read it as "FDR and associates." The now infamous "Brain Trust" made up the key associates through which FDR worked. FDR used them to take an initial idea of his and refine it into a more structured and sound position.²² This is important to note, as much of the core discussion found in FDR's speeches began within the "Brain Trust." Therefore, any speech FDR gave came from not just merely an effort on his part, but borne out of a collective discussion including FDR and the "Brain Trust."

Just four months following his election victory in November of

1932, FDR gave his first speech to the public as president in his first inaugural address. From the outset, he gave the inaugural the purpose of outlining his agenda for the next four years, as well as outlining what his role would be. This is a common trait shared among his inaugurals, as one would guess would be similar to other presidents as well. On March 4, 1933, Hoover handed the reins of the presidency over to FDR. Immediately, FDR attempted to dispel two falsities in his first inaugural, both of which stem from his dreadful experience with Hoover throughout the 1932 election. Hoover's campaign constantly accused FDR of being a weak man, both physically, alluding to his disability, and politically, claiming he lacked experience.²³ Hoover's administration believed FDR so weak that Hoover and his aides spoke openly about wanting FDR as their opponent in the 1932 election because they believed FDR would be an easily defeated opponent.²⁴ Second, and equally as important, FDR also had to address the characteristics ascribed to the presidency during Hoover's "lame duck" period. Many, including Hoover's Secretary of State, described Hoover as pessimistic and out of touch, and because of Hoover's unpopularity, he needed a heavier than normal police escort in some cases.²⁵ FDR's reaction to Hoover established the balanced image and traits of both the "democratic dictator" and the seemingly incongruous "people's president."

Historians agree that FDR attempted to distance himself from Hoover in his first inaugural address as an active, optimistic, and authoritative president. Disagreements arise when discussing how much power FDR assumed for himself. Most, such as James MacGregor Burns and biographer Jean Edward Smith, discuss FDR's conflict between balancing his executive powers and that of the legislature — FDR creating power through influence over Congress.²⁶ One historian, Davis Houck, entertains the idea that FDR tried to balance the image of a dictator within a democracy, while discussing the relationship between the executive and the legislature.²⁷ Houck

includes notes from Raymond Moley, which state the early eight points FDR wanted to discuss in his first inaugural. Number six was "Dictatorship," and number seven was "No failure of Democracy."²⁸ It appears then that FDR struggled to combine the seemingly incongruous concepts of a dictator within a democracy. Specifically, he wanted the attributes and traits of a dictator applied to him, but within the realm of democracy, a "democratic dictator" in a sense — those traits being control, unquestionable leadership, and the fact that he as democratic dictator would be the one to lead the vision of the nation. Those qualities had an obvious contrast to the qualities attached to Hoover, which FDR wanted as he did not want one ounce of Hoover's pessimism to carry over into his presidency.

FDR crafted his image of the democratic dictator through his judgment on the balance of power between the three branches, specifically the legislative and executive. FDR spent most of the inaugural discussing what he planned to do as president to fix the crisis the U.S. found itself in at the time, but he did not discuss how he would do it until the end. The first step FDR took in instilling the traits of the democratic dictator in himself began cautiously:

It is hoped that the normal balance of executive and legislative authority may be wholly adequate to meet the unprecedented task before us. But it may be that an unprecedented demand and need for delayed action may call for temporary departure from that normal balance of public procedure.²⁹

With the nation as a whole at stake, FDR argued for a necessary, but temporary, suspension of the nation's delicate balance of power. One will see that essential tactic repeated in later chats as well. In many occasions, as one will see, FDR justified his actions as the democratic dictator by arguing for the sake of the nation, but he would always do so within the bounds of democracy. The "temporary" suspension served as a small means to a greater end, meaning the restoration of democracy to its previous state before the crisis. In other words, FDR

wanted to act outside the normal bounds of democracy so that he could then fix it.

FDR also acknowledged that if he saw democracy failing to accomplish what he believed necessary, he would attempt to correct it himself:

But in the event that the Congress shall fail... and in the event that the national emergency is still critical, I shall not evade the clear course of duty that will then confront me. I shall ask the Congress for... broad Executive power to wage a war against the emergency, as great as the power that would be given to me if we were in fact invaded by a foreign foe.³⁰

In other words, FDR wanted to assume a role like that of a dictator, as long as the democracy allowed it. This is where the “people’s president” comes into play. The traits attached to the “people’s president” in its purest form — if FDR only stood on that side of the balance — would mean that FDR had one lone duty to do what the nation willed, and that all his actions had to be for the people’s right to steer him in a certain direction. In other words, FDR had no hidden agenda. Even though FDR used clear language that he wanted to increase the power of the executive branch, he did so within the bounds of democracy. That is the essential interplay between the democratic dictator and the “people’s president.” FDR would act as the democratic dictator to suggest a means to an end, but would then say the people, or some other function of democracy like Congress, had the responsibility to accept or reject his suggestion to move forward. The small price people had to pay for the disruption in the balance of power held little importance to FDR if it meant fixing the crisis of the Great Depression.

FDR began his first term in his inaugural with the strong language associated with the democratic dictator, but soon turned to a more balanced approach by suggesting that he was no more than just an American like the rest of the public. Less than two weeks after his inaugural, FDR gave his first fireside chat as president on March 12.³¹

This chat on banking had more technical discussions than most, the intricacies of banking, but as the first fireside chat, it introduced important and common themes one will see in later chats. Buhite and Levy noticed the first theme, where FDR attempted to foster an idea of "us vs. them."³² FDR united the people generally, while at the same time blaming a small minority, a minority that he would craft in a way for all people to universally oppose. That effort served two purposes, to unite the people and include FDR himself in the "us" as well. The nation needed a concerted effort by all, including FDR, to defeat the troublesome minority, in this case "incompetent" and/or "dishonest" bankers.³³ FDR used personal language throughout to gain that effect, for example referring to the people as "my friends." The final line of the chat, "Together we cannot fail," likely best represents the sentiment.³⁴ As long as the United States stood together, meaning FDR and the people, they would be successful. The implication of that being failure would be the outcome if either side did not do their part, which meant that the people had to approve FDR's decisions.

Rhetorician Mary Stuckey helps further the image that FDR served the people as an equal to them, yet still with a different role. She discusses the idea that FDR used language to make the nation appear as a family, with FDR the fatherly figure.³⁵ The nation and each individual shared the same goal, but how each individual attained that goal differed. In FDR's case, that meant being the leader. In other words, FDR led the way while the people made sure he did not go outside the bounds of democracy. In addition to that, Stuckey argues that FDR's use of language to merge his and the government's identity making it indistinguishable from one another played a significant role in his success.³⁶ If the public approved of the government, they approved of FDR and vice versa. In other words, the public would attribute success anywhere in government to FDR due to the merged identities.

One can best see the assertion Stuckey makes, as well as the ideas of FDR's image from his first inaugural, when FDR discussed the second step of his plan to fix the banking crisis, "the legislation promptly and patriotically passed by the Congress confirming my proclamation and broadening my powers..."³⁷ It is not important to our question what FDR planned to do, but how he planned to do it. This quote offers some insight into the careful messages FDR crafted. First, the democratic dictator is present. FDR specifically said that Congress confirmed "my proclamation." He, nobody else, led it, but at the same time, he worked within the bounds of democracy by going through Congress. Including "my proclamation," is "my powers." He did not say the government's powers, the executive's powers, or the federal bureaucracies, but FDR himself. He left no question to who led the country, when he discussed the government's interests, lending to that idea Stuckey expressed about FDR merging his identity with that of the government. His actions and those of the governments came from the same source, FDR himself. This made the issues personal, helping the people look to FDR instead of some unknown bureaucracy whose name came in the form of an acronym.

Lawrence Levine and Cornelia Levine offer insight into the personal level FDR brought to his speeches in their analysis of letters sent to him at the White House. The some forty million people, which the Levines consider a conservative estimate, listened to that first chat and based on their analysis, the people heard, understood, and accepted FDR at his word.³⁸ In addition to their own analysis, they provide many letters that share that same sentiment of trust in FDR. Of the 37 letters the Levines' provided, the majority discuss their surprise at the intimate nature of the speech. One letter sums up the shared sentiment eloquently, that FDR "honored every home with a personal visit last night."³⁹ The people received much of what FDR had hoped, the intimate setting and trust in his new image, which would not have happened if they still saw him as the weak

man Hoover tried to impart on them in the 1932 election. The language of acceptance in the letters means that the people also accepted the "democratic dictator" as well, whether they knew it or not.

In another fireside chat given only a few months later in May of 1933, FDR evaluated the progress of his New Deal policies, which gave him the opportunity to further his success, and thereby the strength of his image, by essentially patting himself on the back. This speech and the following one discussed are unique in that they almost discuss FDR himself, or the government, exclusively, instead of a particular issue. With that in mind, this speech of self-evaluation became one where FDR justified his previous actions and policies. Now FDR had the opportunity to show success, where before he only discussed the potential for success. In the chat, FDR addressed the fear that his actions as president had put the balance of power between the three branches in danger, "The only thing that has been happening has been to designate the president of the United States as the agency to carry out certain of the purposes of the Congress."⁴⁰ Though it appeared that FDR gave a lot of credit to Congress and the democratic process, he still focused specifically on himself as the agent through which the government worked. Also, before FDR said this, he gave himself the credit for first giving the idea to Congress about appointing him as their agent. When discussing his plans and his worry that they may be too straining on democracy FDR said, "The Congress... fully understood this and gave me generous and intelligent support."⁴¹ By that, FDR meant the Congress recognized the need to give him more power and did it. In that light, it would appear again that it all came back to him. FDR created a complex web of his strong leadership and dictatorial qualities within the bounds of democracy. He effectively hid the stronger traits of the democratic dictator under the process of democracy and Congress. FDR did not want to be a dictator, but he wanted to be associated as one, which he did subtly and as letters will point out later, he did well.

The democratic dictator had a strong presence in this chat, but FDR also adhered greatly to the idea of the “people’s president” as well, keeping the balance intact. He did this by reinforcing the idea that he and the people share a symbiotic and interdependent relationship with one another. He already emphasized and incorporated himself as just another American in his “us vs. them” language, but here he expanded upon it to emphasize the idea of separate but equal. They shared a common goal, but the two parties had different responsibilities, meaning the people allowed and restricted FDR’s actions, and FDR acted as their agent within those bounds. He accomplished this by more than just thanking the public, but laying the reason for his successes at their feet, “To you, the people of this country, all of us in Washington... owe a profound debt of gratitude... Every ounce of strength, every resource at our command, we have devoted and we are devoting to the end of justifying your confidence.”⁴² FDR managed to meld the dictatorial qualities on one hand, and the democratic qualities of the “people’s president” on the other. He did this by reinforcing the idea of the “people’s president.” First, he gave the people a large part of the credit for his success as president so far. In a sense, FDR made them as important as himself. Second, he specifically said that every action he considered, as the representative of the whole government, attempted to justify “your confidence” — the people’s part in trusting him. FDR implied that without the people’s confidence in himself as president, the successes achieved so far would not have happened. In that same vein, FDR implied that he worked directly for the people, working toward their success.

When looking at letters sent to FDR after this fireside chat, the people accepted the idea of FDR as both a strong leader, a tool of the people, and felt that FDR had “justified their confidence.” Using the letters the Levines provide, it appears that nearly all completely took to the idea of FDR as a strong leader that they trusted one hundred percent. Though some disagree, the vast majority carried this senti-

ment.⁴³ One in particular bought into it so wonderfully FDR could not have dreamt up a better letter to send himself, "The dictatorship myth, woven so industriously about your excellency, was knocked over the fence on Sunday night."⁴⁴ The letter also discussed how FDR accomplished that in his chat by creating a partnership with the people and Congress, something the letter claimed to be incompatible with dictatorship. This suggests that at least one individual saw the dictatorial qualities, but under the weavings of democracy, where FDR turned them into the "people's president." This is an interesting letter for another reason as well, as it began to discuss criticisms of FDR that he addressed a year later in another fireside chat.

That fireside chat offered another opportunity for FDR to discuss and justify himself, only this time within the context that he defended himself against criticism. The chat marked the increase in push back against FDR's New Deal policies, which he gave in June of 1934, barely over a year after his inauguration. The timing of the chat was no coincidence, as that year congressional elections occurred.⁴⁵ The outcomes of those elections held incredible importance to FDR as they provided verifiable and undeniable evidence of the people's support of his policies, as well as himself. The seats won or lost told him of their support, as he said later in another speech that he saw himself as the "head of the Democratic Party," meaning he led the direction of their policies.⁴⁶ The outcomes of those elections help explain FDR's motivation as to why he chose to address his criticisms at that moment in time.

FDR defended himself and his policies by turning questions of criticism to the people, rather than himself, reinforcing the image of the "people's president." FDR spent much of the speech directly addressing some concerns about agriculture, infrastructure, and reform. Then he discussed whether the nation considered the progress so far as an improvement. Obviously, he could not quantifiably answer that, so he asked a few questions of the public, "Are you better

NORTHWEST PASSAGES

off than you were last year?... Is your faith in your own individual future more firmly grounded?... Have you as an individual paid too high a price for these gains?"⁴⁷ In other words, have FDR's policies worked to put the people in a better place, have they worked well enough for FDR to have their continued confidence, and did they personally sacrifice anything to have these gains? His approach here differed from his previous speeches, where he justified his actions through the successes of his policies on a national level. In this chat he placed his trust in the people as the "people's president" individually.

The chat included the three primary tactics FDR used throughout his first term, the "people's president," the narrative of "us vs. them," and the democratic dictator. First, FDR utilized the idea of the "people's president" to again put himself on an equal level as the people. The questions themselves provide evidence of that. He could have turned to statistics to show how things had improved, which he had done in the previous chat, but instead turned to the individual to keep the idea of the "people's president" alive. Second, "us vs. them," which worked in tandem with the "people's president" for the purpose of incorporating himself within the public, so as not to be some separate unidentifiable entity. In this case, the "them" FDR targeted came in the form of what he called "doubting Thomases," who questioned him for their own personal interests, and not for the health of the nation, which FDR concerned himself with.⁴⁸ Finally, nearly the entire chat discussed whether FDR had overstepped his bounds to become a true dictator. FDR had every confidence that the people would resoundingly answer "no" he was not a dictator, when he asked them those questions.⁴⁹ Placing his confidence in the people helped both the democratic dictator and the "people's president." If they accepted his trust and answered the questions positively, they saw his actions as democratic dictator justifiable. The very nature of asking the questions took attention away from FDR and aided the idea of the "people's president."

The questions posed to the people bypassed the critics to be sure, but he concerned himself only with the public's acceptance of his image. Looking at the letters provided by the Levines, the people gave mixed reviews of the chat. In previous chats, one could see a swelling majority supporting FDR, but, it may be of worth to note that in other chats, the discussed successes related to an entire nation, where here FDR asked each individual. Not many gave agreeable answers one way or another, other than some definitively saying "yes," and some saying "no."⁵⁰ FDR targeted his questions in a way that would produce the individual results; the country had too many diverse people. However, the 1934 elections offered the true test of the public's agreeableness. The normal trend for midterm elections is for the president's party to lose some seats in Congress. FDR came off a massively successful 1932 election, which gave the Democratic Party massive majorities in both the House and Senate.⁵¹ In the 1934 election, the Democratic Party did not lose seats, but gained even more to give them a three to one majority in the House, and over two-thirds in the Senate.⁵² FDR got his answer loud and clear, what he had done worked, so far at least.

The 1936 election served as further confirmation of FDR's efforts in his first term, as the number of democrats in both the House and Senate increased even more.⁵³ The people seemed not only to have accepted his meticulously crafted image as a democratic dictator and "people's president," but embraced it. In the sense that FDR reacted to Hoover and Hoover's image in FDR's first term, now in his second, FDR reacted to his own image in his second term and second inaugural. In other words, now FDR reacted to what he had established as his image so far. The election of 1936 relieved FDR of any effect that may have lingered from Hoover, meaning FDR no longer worked from a negative image but his own self-created positive. One can define FDR's second term as his attempt to capitalize on that positive image he had spent the past four years creating. One may

see that as similar to his first term, as FDR reacted again to a previously created image attached to the presidency. In his first term, FDR had to craft his image under the assumption that he had to convince the public on not only an issue, but on his own ability, as in his first term the accusations from Hoover's campaign still had relevance. In his second term, FDR had an established and successful image, so now he had only to convince the public on an issue. FDR knew the people accepted his image at this point, so now in his second term he tested the limits of that acceptance. In other words, what could FDR get away with as the democratic dictator, which as one will see, not as much as he originally thought.

One will first notice throughout FDR's second term, that the prevalence of the democratic dictator far outshines the "people's president," compromising the balance FDR created in his first term. FDR first reminded the people of the image they had just affirmed in the 1936 election, "Our covenant with ourselves did not stop there. Instinctively we recognized... the need to find through government the instrument of our united purpose to solve for the individual the ever-rising problems of a complex civilization."⁵⁴ In the preceding paragraph, FDR described that covenant, and the imagery attached to the word "covenant," is of equality and shared vision, ideas encompassed by FDR's "people's president." While equality had a big part, FDR played an even more significant role as he defined the necessary "instrument of our united purpose" as the government itself, and as Stuckey suggested in a previous discussion, FDR merged the government's identity with his own. In essence, FDR himself became the instrument.⁵⁵ In other words, the unification he had discussed in his first term, that the United States all worked toward one goal, neither he nor the people more important, had vanished.

FDR mainly discussed poverty, which FDR said the government could solve by obtaining more power and responsibility, the essential goal of the democratic dictator:

Nearly all of us recognize that as intricacies of human relationships increase, so power to govern them also must increase... The essential democracy of our Nation and the safety of our people depend not upon the absence of power, but upon lodging it with those whom the people can change or continue at stated intervals...⁵⁶

FDR clearly stated that the government had to assume more and necessary power to fix the problems that plagued the nation, meaning the role of the democratic dictator increased with it. Then, not so subtly, he reminded the people that their will put him in place to assume that power, "the people can change or continue" with the person they gave the power. In terms of the democratic dictator, the dictatorial side increased in the sense of his assumed leadership. However, as before, FDR grounded the dictatorial side within democracy, as he left the decision and ultimate burden on the people to change what they disagree with. At this point in his second term, at the inauguration, FDR still gave attention to the "people's president," however, one will see that shift in the following discussed chats as FDR attempted to change the two other branches of government.

FDR did not clearly define what he meant by an increase in power in his inaugural address, however, he did hint at the next target of contention, the Supreme Court, as they risked halting the progress he pushed as democratic dictator. We have already seen FDR's contentions with Congress, now he added the Supreme Court as well. FDR essentially hinted at the fact that he would attempt to change one of the two remaining branches of government. In reference to the Court, FDR only said that the people "will insist that every agency of popular government use effective instruments to carry out their will."⁵⁷ Immediately those listening seemed to understand what FDR referenced, as Samuel Rosenman noted that he watched the Chief Justice when FDR delivered the line and he had "no doubt that the Chief Justice understood what the President meant..."⁵⁸ Kenneth Davis notes too that many members of the pub-

lic received the message and a debate about the effectiveness of the Supreme Court ensued soon afterward.⁵⁹

FDR's decision to take on the Supreme Court is the strongest showing of the democratic dictator, as evidenced in the coming fire-side chat. More broadly, FDR's contention came from those that disagreed with his interpretation of the Constitution. Rosenman noted FDR's thoughts on his second inaugural ceremonies:

When the Chief Justice read me the oath and came to the words 'support the Constitution of the United States' I felt like saying: 'Yes, but it's the Constitution as *I* understand it, flexible enough to meet any new problem of democracy — not the kind of Constitution your Court has raised up as barrier to progress and democracy.'⁶⁰

Congress worked well with the new seats won in the 1934 and 1936 elections, but the Supreme Court risked the potential progress that Congress could have. He as democratic dictator held the vision of the nation, leaving the Supreme Court as nothing more than a disagreeing minority group. The common trait among FDR's second term comes with the sentiment that things were the way "*he* understands it." In the first couple of years, how he understood the Supreme Court's role, in the last couple of years, how he understood Congress' role.

FDR began the chat on the Supreme Court by saying the court had risked and continued to risk the success of the nation so far, which the people had earned. That risk began when the Supreme Court nearly struck down the nullification of the gold clause, "Today's recovery proves how right that policy was. But when, almost two years later, it came before the Supreme Court its constitutionality was upheld only by a five-to-four vote."⁶¹ The entire chat reads as a heavy attack using the narrative of "us vs. them," the "them" in this case the Supreme Court. However, here it seemed most poignant as the Court not only risked progress now, but FDR asserted that they had risked past progress too. Essentially, FDR ac-

cused them of nearly halting progress to pull the nation out of the Great Depression.

While both the imagery of both the democratic dictator and “people’s president” played a role in this chat, the dictatorial aspect received more attention from FDR. He described the branches of government as a team of three horses, the people holding the leads directing the team.⁶² FDR said that two of those, Congress and the Executive, pulled in the same direction, while the third, the Supreme Court, went their separate way. That they went against the will of the people. This imagery suggests democracy inherently as a team working together, but it appeared that the people could not direct the third horse back on course. FDR suggested in his inaugural that the best instrument to fulfill the nation’s needs would be himself, “It is my purpose to restore that balance. You who know me will accept my solemn assurance that in a world in which democracy is under attack, I seek to make American democracy succeed.”⁶³ He presented an interesting and obvious dichotomy between democracy and dictator. The ultimate goal he voiced was to be the “people’s president,” a defender and upholder of democracy, yet the means to get there came from FDR himself. In other words, FDR wanted the people to leave that instrument to one man, to FDR. Also, FDR reminded the people of what they had just accepted and elected when he said: “you who know me.” FDR relied on his past efforts of establishing his image to make this attack on the Supreme Court and his increased emphasis on his dictatorial qualities justified, instead of balancing his image itself within his speech.

The people decidedly rejected the new direction FDR took with his image when he emphasized the democratic dictator far more than the “people’s president.” He received mixed letters, ranging from, “They can call you a Dictator if they want to, but if you are a DICTATOR then power to you,” to a letter with a poem entitled “Franklinstein 1937” detailing how the people created a monster and

would let it run rampant.⁶⁴ Those come from letters provided by the Levines, but it is difficult to get an accurate measure of public response. Davis asserts that “a flood of approving letters and telegrams poured” into the White House after this fireside chat.⁶⁵ However, even if that is the case, one cannot verify it without analyzing the thousands of letters sent in. Davis concedes the fact that public opinion remained relatively unchanged. He cites Gallup polls that noted a rise from just 41 percent to 45 percent in favor of FDR’s plan. FDR might as well have considered that no effect at all. He may have received many letters showing support, but the polls and the then failure of his plan are evidence of the lack of support.⁶⁶

FDR’s failure against the Supreme Court shook his confidence to the point that he disregarded any discussion of “us” and focused solely on “me.” Rosenman noted, when discussing the Court-packing plan, that FDR “felt very confident — almost ‘cocky’ — that he would win, and was in no mood for compromise.”⁶⁷ FDR no longer had confidence at that level, leading him to make all issues personal, changing the “us vs. them” tactic into “me vs. them.” FDR emphasized “me” since the 1936 election, as one can see in a conversation FDR had with Raymond Moley, a speechwriter, in 1936, “There’s one issue in this campaign... and people must be either *for me* or *against me*.”⁶⁸ It seems as though FDR placed greater emphasis on the people’s acceptance of him as the democratic dictator, and he attempted to capitalize on that with the Supreme Court. The failure undoubtedly linked that chat with this next one.

The “me vs. them” mentality amplified in the 1938 Congressional elections, including the emphasis on the democratic dictator, as FDR saw Congress’ rejection of his proposal towards the Supreme Court as a rejection of himself. Rosenman asserts FDR reacted to his failure with the Supreme Court leading to what is now known as “Purging the Democratic Party.”⁶⁹ FDR could not place blame on the Supreme Court, but on the Congress that failed to pass the opinion FDR had

put forth. It appeared that of those three horses, he lost control of two. He believed up until that point that he had control, more or less, of Congress, as his party had the overwhelming majority in both the Senate and House. In tandem with that, FDR saw himself as the head of the Democratic Party, separate from just president and saw it as his duty to direct their liberal agenda and profess its strengths.⁷⁰ As that leader of constructing and pushing the will of the Democratic Party, he saw their refusal to support his plan for the Supreme Court as a rejection of the Democratic Party's platform, of which many ran their election on in 1936.⁷¹ In FDR's eyes, if they rejected the platform, they rejected him as well.

FDR did not discredit the Congress for what it had accomplished, but criticized it for not doing more, specifically for not doing more to help him further his influence as democratic dictator. FDR first discussed the fact that the Congress had done nothing to aid the executive branch's attempt to reorganize itself.⁷² He referenced a bill introduced the previous year that would have expanded the power and responsibilities of the executive branch.⁷³ In other words, the Congress had halted his progress in expanding his power through the image of the democratic dictator. FDR saw the situation as so dire and so extreme that he likened his current situation then in 1938 to that of Lincoln. Reusing the term of "Copperheads," FDR claimed that never before, except during Lincoln's presidency, had there been such a concerted effort to stop progress.⁷⁴ Where in Lincoln's day the "Copperheads" wanted to stop progress in reuniting the nation, the "Copperheads" in 1938 wanted to stop FDR's progress at pushing his liberal ideas. They attacked FDR personally in an attempt to stop his efforts. His problem with the Supreme Court had now carried over to the Congress.

FDR consistently used the imagery attached to the "people's president" to justify the imagery and actions attached to the democratic dictator. FDR functioned as the tool to fix the problem of Congress,

which differed, positively to him, from his issue with the Supreme Court because he had at least some control of the process. In the case of the Democratic Party and Congress, he saw himself as separate from his presidency as the Party leader, as mentioned earlier. He would be the agent, on his own volition, to involve himself in the Congressional elections, "As the head of the Democratic party... I feel that I have every right to speak in those few instances where there may be a clear-cut issue between candidates for a Democratic nomination..."⁷⁵ FDR as democratic dictator spoke those lines. While he did take care to attempt to separate himself as the president taking this action by referring to himself as the head of the Democratic Party, FDR could not possibly believe the people would see any difference. By virtue of his position, he resigned to the fact that every action he took involved his presidency.

With his actions as democratic dictator established, FDR tempered those actions with the recognition that ultimately the people would decide and he would not do anything to jeopardize that. While his actions would have an effect, FDR said he knew "that neither in the summer primaries nor in the November elections will the American voters fail to spot the candidates whose ideas have given out."⁷⁶ It is an interesting confession, as FDR recognized that no matter what he did, short of violating the Constitution or changing it, he had no say in the ultimate decision. Again, as with the Supreme Court, FDR bet his image against what he wanted, believing it to be both strong and worth enough for the people to be both attached to it and accept what he said. FDR, as Dunn says, was "eager to exploit the precious capital of his prestige and the popular New Deal."⁷⁷ That capital had already taken a huge hit with the Supreme Court, and he had to use what he had left if he wanted to protect his ability to get what he wanted. Up until that point, the Congress almost served as an extension of his presidency, and without it, FDR would not be able to progress at the rate he would have liked.

The public reacted similarly here as they did to FDR's attempt with the Supreme Court, rejecting the fact that he had tipped the balance between the democratic dictator and "people's president" in favor of the democratic dictator. Many letters voiced their surprise at FDR's attempted reach. The Levines provided a dozen or so letters, and only a few actually spoke to agreement with FDR. Of those that disagreed, they shared sentiment similar to this, "Don't let us down by using such a tactic so characteristic of the fascist-minded as Red-baiting."⁷⁸ The letters accused FDR of using cheap political tactics to gain votes in his favor. This seems to be another case, as with the Supreme Court, of FDR overestimating his political capital and what he could do with it. While the letters responded in that way, the Levines note that many elections that FDR involved himself and, especially those he involved himself most in, failed to go in FDR's favor.⁷⁹ The people chose to reelect those that FDR had deemed unfit for his Democratic Party.

FDR continued from his first term into the second with the narrative of both the democratic dictator and the "people's president," but failed to use them to the best of his ability. He overestimated the political capital gained by the narrative he created in his first term, which he believed the 1936 election confirmed, and attempted to expand the image of the democratic dictator while not compensating for its counterweight, the imagery of the "people's president." One might then assume that FDR would like to turn away from that image of the democratic dictator, or at least alter it in a way to be more favorable. While he did not take that action in his second term, FDR changed drastically in his third. It is difficult to determine whether the major failures in his second term had a great effect on that change; however, change still happened and in a major way.

In his third term, FDR changed the way he justified his actions as the "people's president" away from solely the United States to include the whole world. In his first and second terms, FDR focused

much of his attention on domestic issues, but he instead focused on international issues in his third term. One should note that this does not mean FDR abandoned domestic issues, as one will see in the fireside chat discussed later about coal miners striking. That change defined his third term. Before, in his first and second terms, FDR justified all his actions, end goals, and actions as necessary for the preservation of the United States. In his third term, however, FDR changed that end goal to the preservation of democracy. While FDR admitted democracy's preservation to be important for the United States as well, the United States only found itself as an implication in the far larger goal of preserving democracy in the entire world. While taking the entire world under his wing, FDR attempted to return balance back to his image and relationship with the people as both the democratic dictator and "people's president" that he had established previously in his first term.

FDR began restoring the balance jeopardized in his second term in his third inaugural, which contained no significant trace of the democratic dictator. He reduced his image so far, the speech contained only one instance where FDR spoke about himself by using first person language. The speech surrounded that one lone instance of "I" with FDR's use of "we." The use of "I" came where FDR said that he hoped the last few fruitful years, the years after the Great Depression, had removed people's great attachment to materialism.⁸⁰ That formed an integral part to democracy for FDR as for someone to wholly accept democracy, they had to reject greed and materialism otherwise they could not totally engross themselves in a common cause, which democracy needed. FDR said so in this inaugural, "We know [democracy] cannot die — because it is built on... an enterprise undertaken and carried through by the expression of a free majority."⁸¹ Democracy needed a concerted and collective effort by all, including everyone, even himself. As mentioned earlier, FDR used "we" instead of "I" throughout his entire address. He either

spoke of “we know” or “the nation knows.” That language connected FDR and the people, something essential to the “people’s president.” That rounds out the essential theme of the inaugural: democracy thrived, however, external forces now threatened it, and the American people, out of a collective desire, had to come to democracy’s defense for the sake of men and freedom everywhere.⁸²

World War II began September of 1939, and with it the rise of fascism, communism, and others, which may help explain FDR’s near total rejection of the democratic dictator when he gave his inaugural a little over a year later.⁸³ FDR did not then begin to spout the importance of democracy in his third term, but one has seen that before, as FDR always appealed to the function of democracy as the final decision of what should happen, regardless of his personal belief. In every speech, he clearly stated the importance of democracy and his faith in the American people to use it correctly. The situation differed in his third term as now FDR had an identifiable group to point out as threatening democracy. In his first two terms, internal exploitations threatened democracy’s integrity, where now in his third an outside group stated they wanted to remove democracy in any form and replace it with their decidedly undemocratic systems.⁸⁴ In the first two terms, democracy itself still functioned, albeit poorly, in his third, those outside forces wanted to destroy it entirely. Therefore, even if in his inaugural FDR intended to turn away from the image of the democratic dictator for the time being, the events of World War II heightened his response, likely leading to the greater focus FDR gave to discussing democracy.

FDR returned to a more balanced image, like in his first term, beginning with a chat given after the attack on Pearl Harbor, which discussed the threats to democracy, allowing FDR to present himself as the agent to quell the threat for the people, and the world’s, sake. He first turned back to using the “us vs. them” tactic. It came in a different form than one previously saw, “Powerful and resourceful

gangsters have banded together to make war upon the whole human race.”⁸⁵ The “us” included the “whole human race,” whereas before it only referred to the American people. The “gangsters” attacked democracy, an inherent trait to human nature; therefore, the attack included the entire globe.⁸⁶ The “them” changed drastically as well. The purpose remained similar, to single out a group to lay blame on, but FDR’s approach to how he did it changed. He gave the outside attackers a far more deleterious image than he had given others in previous chats, referring to them as not just immoral or greedy but as “gangsters.” The group’s composition had changed drastically from previous chats as well. In his other chats, FDR targeted small sects of society, but now he contended with whole countries like Germany and Japan. One could argue those countries represented only a small sect of the world, but one cannot deny that the scale of FDR’s targeting had far larger implications than any time before. Always though, as one will see, FDR placed the American people at the heart of his efforts. However, FDR undoubtedly included the entire free world in his discussion. In a way, FDR laid far more responsibility at the feet of the people than ever before, as before a single nation was at stake — now the freedom of the world.⁸⁷

Within that framework of a clear, “us vs. them,” FDR returned to the images of himself, and the relationship he had with the people that he established in his first term, meaning that he returned to the balanced image between democratic dictator and “people’s president.” FDR had no doubt the government had to dictate the people to the best course of action in this time and reminded each individual of their duty to follow that direction, as to do so would be to protect democracy. With that said, FDR did not completely separate himself from the people as he specifically said in many occasions something similar to this, “the whole future of this nation — depend[s] upon the manner in which each and every one of us fulfills his obligation to our country.”⁸⁸ All people of the United States shared that effort; each

assigned a set of roles to follow to ensure the future of the nation. While FDR names specifically the “nation,” meaning the United States, he undoubtedly included the entire world, as he had made clear earlier the situation put all nations at risk.

FDR always made it clear that the government, including himself, and the people had separate functions, but never rejected the image of the “people’s president,” as he created a dialogue of trust between the two parties working toward the same goal. Remembering what Stuckey says about FDR merging the identity of the government within himself, one can see the interaction between the two parts of FDR’s self-created image. FDR described a relationship of trust between the two parties, the people and the government, where the people held the ultimate power, “The government will put its trust in the... American people,” and if the people disagree with the government they “have every right to say so,” but FDR did not think “any American has any doubt of our ability to administer proper punishment...”⁸⁹ Again, FDR claimed himself, as the government, to be the tool the people chose to mete out justice. And as seen many times before, FDR reminded the people that they had the ability to rescind that choice, but ultimately, FDR had every confidence they would allow him to continue down his path. In essence, that example provides the perfect balance between democratic dictator and “people’s president.” FDR clearly had control of the direction the nation would go in, but at the same time, the people could show their disagreement and remove FDR — if they truly wanted to. The “people’s president” shines through when FDR conveyed his belief that the people have their trust in him anyway. In other words, he trusted them to trust him.

The people welcomed FDR’s attempt to rebalance his image, as many wrote accepting messages to the White House using similar language that FDR had used in his speech.⁹⁰ Of the twelve letters provided by the Levines, only one had something inherently negative to

NORTHWEST PASSAGES

say about FDR's speech, which expressed outrage about the fact that FDR gave no information to the particulars about the attack on Pearl Harbor.⁹¹ All of the other letters expressed positive reactions, many returning similar language that FDR used, "Your great speech last night prompts me to write to you and say how much I trust you..." and "I want you to know that your wish is our command."⁹² Another letter even detailed how when she listened to the speech, it sounded as if her father spoke to her and not the president, which points to what Stuckey discusses about how FDR gave himself a paternal role as leader of the government.⁹³ The people trusted FDR as the people's president and gave him the authority of the democratic dictator. FDR effectively persuaded them as he reestablished his image and easily transitioned the people from domestic to international issues, both of which had key roles in the protection of democracy.

FDR furthered that balanced image when he addressed the nation in another fireside chat in May of 1943 about striking coal miners. This chat offers unique insight into FDR's third term as it addressed a particular domestic group, the only fireside chat to do so of the fifteen he gave in his third term. Other chats discussed domestic issues, but they served as a way to inform the people of the war situation at home and abroad. This chat related directly to the war effort, but in a different way, as it discussed the risk of progress to the war. FDR showed his commitment to this new goal established in his third term of protecting democracy, as he would not even let a domestic threat go by. In doing so FDR offered a far more telling sign of his commitment to protecting democracy, as when targeting a domestic issue, as one saw in his second term, he risked the balance he had struck with the people. In the previous chat, and the inaugural before it, one could see that FDR put the people on a level playing field so they could collectively work toward his proposed end goal. Singling out a group could risk that balance, if FDR let the democratic dictator imagery tip the scales again. The chat differed from others

in another way as well, because the issue did not matter. The chat served only to further FDR's rebalanced image, as before he gave the chat, the miners indicated they would go back to work, but FDR decided to go through with the speech anyway.⁹⁴ That gave FDR an enormous advantage, as he already knew the outcome to be decided, where the people might only assume that FDR's speech had convinced the mines to go back to work.

FDR also returned to the tact of using the traits of the "people's president to justify his actions as democratic dictator. FDR opened the chat by praising the American people for all the progress so far in the war effort. Following that, FDR condemned the miners, comparing their strike to that of the international threats, "This tremendous forward movement of the United States and the United Nations cannot be stopped by our enemies. And equally, it must not be hampered by any one individual or by the leaders of any one group here back home."⁹⁵ The miners had the potential to harm the war effort as much as the international groups. In other words, they threatened a crucial part of democracy, the collectivity of the nation. Then, in an interesting move, FDR used the traits of the democratic dictator to restore further balance with the "people's president." FDR said that the government had done all it could do to fix the problem, through things like wage fixing, but even they could only give the problem limited attention due to the war effort.⁹⁶ FDR interfered with the miners the most when he ordered the government to take over the mines, but the government could go no farther, meaning the people had to sort out the situation.⁹⁷ FDR turned the "us vs. them" strategy on its head. Before, he used it to gain the people's support in his solution, now he used it to give his support to the people. He put his trust in the American people to do the right thing by heeding "the clear call to duty..." and marching "shoulder to shoulder with our armed forces to victory."⁹⁸ FDR continued the mutual relationship with the people, implicating they served equal importance to those serving in

the military. In other words, he had confidence he would receive their trust back.

The letters the Levines provide offer no indication of whether the people received FDR's new balanced image in this chat or not. However, Buhite and Levy offer some kind of indication to the outcome in their brief introduction to the fireside chat. They portray the issue of the striking miners as a quarrel between FDR and a man named John L. Lewis, who led the United Mine Workers at the time. Buhite and Levy contest that the chat led to Lewis' ultimate loss to Roosevelt over the strike issue, as soon after FDR gave his chat, polls indicated "Lewis was one of the most hated men in America."⁹⁹ The chat's ultimate goal served to boost FDR's popularity essentially, as the issue was resolved before he gave the chat. Being able to defeat a major labor leader, it appears as though FDR garnered a reasonable amount of support.

FDR's balanced image in his third term serves as evidence to the fact that he learned from the mistakes he committed in his second term. World War II also played a significant role in how FDR approached his image as well. This made FDR's third term closely resemble his first, by creating the concurrence of his two seemingly separate images. They only differed in the separate means they served to fulfill to allow FDR to achieve whichever goal he wanted at the time. As in his first term, FDR returned to the tactic of using the democratic dictator as the agent through which the government would act, but then used the traits of the "people's president" to justify those actions. FDR had an easier time pointing to the "people's president" in his third term though, as he had created an end goal of democracy. At its very core, the idea of the "people's president" served to protect the idea of democracy; FDR turned to that reason for why what he proposed should happen. Coupled with the fact that in every speech FDR turned to the public and said he trusted them to choose the right path, to decide democratically the correct course of

action, he had created a powerful counterweight for the actions he proposed as democratic dictator.

The journey explained here through FDR's image in his first three terms as president help to explain how FDR changed what it meant to be president and how he left a lasting legacy that still affects the United States today. In his first two terms, FDR had clear end goals in mind on specific policy issues, but in his third he concerned himself only with democracy, unaware of what the policies looked like. This forced FDR to have to adhere to the image he created far more than before, as his persuasion came almost entirely from the image he created. Specific policies grounded the first two terms with which he could use to persuade the public. In other words, FDR ultimately had something to fall back on besides just his image to persuade the public. His third term differed in that FDR did not necessarily have a particular issue to fall back on, as World War II defined the entire term as the sole issue, meaning that the people consistently looked specifically to FDR as an authoritative figure to lead the defense of democracy. Everything he discussed had to do with the war effort in some way. One can define FDR's first term as the rise of the balanced image of the democratic dictator and "people's president," his second as a rejection of that balance in favor of the democratic dictator, and third as the return and rebound to accepting the balanced image, where one sees it more completely than any other time he served as president. That journey and ultimate end result of balanced imagery proposed by FDR serve as a significant part in his lasting legacy, as many attribute the way we understand the presidency today to FDR's actions as president.

NOTES

¹ Davis W. Houck, *FDR and Fear Itself: The First Inaugural Address* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2002), 61.

²Mary E. Stuckey, "FDR, the Rhetoric of Vision, and the Creation of a National Synoptic State" *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 98 no. 3, (Jul 2012), 307-308, 310.

³*Ibid.*, 297-298.

⁴ Jean Edward Smith, *FDR* (New York: Random House, 2007), 289-290.

⁵ David M. Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 117.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 290, 106-107; see also Conrad Black, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt: Champion of Freedom* (New York: Public Affairs, 2003), 264-267.

⁷ David M. Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear*, 107.

⁸ Jean Edward Smith, *FDR*, 291.

⁹ David M. Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear*, 104-105.

¹⁰ Conrad Black, *Champion of Freedom*, 258.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 258-259.

¹² Jean Edward Smith, *FDR*, 238.

¹³ Samuel I. Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1952), 38-39.

¹⁴ Lawrence W. Levine and Cornelia R. Levine, *The People and the President: America's Conversation with FDR* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), ix-xii.

¹⁵ It is difficult, then, to accurately assess the provided selection as an accurate representation of the public's reaction to any particular speech. Instead, one is often left accepting the Levines' analysis of the letters as they analyzed far more than the letters they provide.

¹⁶ Lawrence Levine and Cornelia Levine, *The People and the President*, 10.

¹⁷ Samuel Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 165-168, an example of FDR reversing his decision to pursue Chicago lawlessness; see also 195-198, where FDR received such a positive reaction to advocating advanced military preparedness that he addressed Congress much earlier than he would have without the reaction.

¹⁸ Leila A. Sussmann, "FDR and the White House Mail," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 20 no. 1, (Spring 1956), 11.

¹⁹ Betty Houchin Winfield, *FDR and the News Media* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 231.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 40-42; 30; 35; see also Graham J. White, *FDR and the Press* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 132-133, where FDR publically attacked a Chicago newspaper editor that criticized one of his inaugurals as empty, dull, and simple, which the editor argued could be a sign of the coming term.

²¹ Betty Winfield, *FDR and the News Media*, 104.

²² Jean Edward Smith, *FDR*, 262-263.

²³ Davis W. Houck, *FDR and Fear Itself*, 102.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 50-51.

²⁵ Jean Edward Smith, *FDR*, 285-287.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 302-303; see also James MacGregor Burns, *Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1956), 164.

²⁷ Houck, *FDR and Fear Itself*, 63.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 61.

²⁹ Franklin D. Roosevelt, "First Inaugural Address" *bartleby.com*, <http://www.bartleby.com/124/pres49.html>, para. 20.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, para. 22.

³¹ Russell D. Buhite and David W. Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010), 12.

³² *Ibid.*, xviii.

³³ Franklin D. Roosevelt, "The Banking Crisis," in *FDR's Fireside Chats*, eds. Russell D.

Buhite and David W. Levy (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010), 16.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 17.

³⁵Mary Stuckey, "Rhetoric of Vision," 311.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 307-308, 310.

³⁷ Franklin D. Roosevelt, "The Banking Crisis," 13.

³⁸ Lawrence Levine and Cornelia Levine, *The People and the President*, 34-35.

³⁹ Mr. and Mrs. F.B. Graham, personal letter to Franklin D. Roosevelt, March 13, 1933, in *The People and the President: America's Conversation with FDR*, eds. Lawrence W. Levine and Cornelia R. Levine (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), 36.

⁴⁰ Franklin D. Roosevelt, "The New Deal's First Two Months," in *FDR's Fireside Chats*, eds. Russell D. Buhite and David W. Levy (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010), 21.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 20.

⁴²*Ibid.*, 27.

⁴³ Lawrence Levine and Cornelia Levine, *The People and the President*, 67-77.

⁴⁴ James J. Dunn, personal letter to Franklin D. Roosevelt, May 16, 1933, in *The People and the President: America's Conversation with FDR*, eds. Lawrence W. Levine and Cornelia R. Levine (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), 68.

⁴⁵ Russell D. Buhite and David W. Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 45-46.

⁴⁶ Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Purging the Democratic Party," in *FDR's Fireside Chats*, eds. Russell D. Buhite and David W. Levy (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010), 134.

⁴⁷ Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Answering the Critics," in *FDR's Fireside Chats*, eds. Russell D. Buhite and David W. Levy (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010), 48-49.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 49.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 49.

⁵⁰ Lawrence Levine and Cornelia Levine, *The People and the President*, 97-107.

⁵¹ Jean Edward Smith, *FDR*, 287.

⁵²*Ibid.*, 349.

⁵³*Ibid.*, 374.

⁵⁴ Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Second Inaugural Address" *bartleby.com*, <http://www.bartleby.com/124/pres50.html>, para. 2.

⁵⁵ Mary Stuckey, "Rhetoric of Vision," 307-308, 310.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, para. 8.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, para 31.

⁵⁸ Samuel Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 144.

⁵⁹ Kenneth S. Davis, *FDR: Into the Storm 1937-1940* (New York: Random House, 1993), 42-47.

⁶⁰ Samuel Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 144.

⁶¹ The nullification of the gold clause was important to FDR's actions with the Banking Crisis, which his first fireside chat covered. It forced privately owned gold, specifically from the banks, to be surrendered to the federal government in return for U.S. dollars; see also Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Defending the Plan to 'Pack' the Supreme Court," in *FDR's Fireside Chats*, eds. Russell D. Buhite and David W. Levy (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010), 85.

⁶²*Ibid.*, 86.

⁶³*Ibid.*, 95.

⁶⁴ Eugene S. Simmons, personal letter to Franklin D. Roosevelt, March 17, 1937, in *The*

NORTH WEST PASSAGES

People and the President: America's Conversation with FDR, eds. Lawrence W. Levine and Cornelia R. Levine (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), 177; see also Erwin Clarkson Garrett, personal letter to Franklin D. Roosevelt, in *The People and the President: America's Conversation with FDR*, eds. Lawrence W. Levine and Cornelia R. Levine (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), 184-185.

⁶⁵Kenneth Davis, *Into the Storm*, 75.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 95-96.

⁶⁷Samuel Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 160.

⁶⁸Susan Dunn, *Roosevelt's Purge* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010), 29.

⁶⁹Samuel Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 178; historians agree as well, see: Dunn, *Roosevelt's Purge*, 29; see also: Jean Edward Smith, *FDR*, 411.

⁷⁰Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Purging the Democratic Party," 134.

⁷¹Samuel Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 178-179; see also, Dunn, *Roosevelt's Purge*, 29-30.

⁷²Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Purging the Democratic Party," 126.

⁷³Russell D. Buhite and David W. Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 126 n. 2.

⁷⁴Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Purging the Democratic Party," 130.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, 134.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, 135.

⁷⁷Susan Dunn, *Roosevelt's Purge*, 30.

⁷⁸Timothy Burr and Mary Burr, personal letter to Franklin D. Roosevelt, June 24, 1938, in *The People and the President: America's Conversation with FDR*, eds. Lawrence W. Levine and Cornelia R. Levine (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), 261.

⁷⁹Lawrence W. Levine and Cornelia R. Levine, *The People and the President*, 255-256.

⁸⁰Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Third Inaugural Address" *bartleby.com*, <http://www.bartleby.com/124/pres51.html>, para. 10.

⁸¹*Ibid.*, para. 15.

⁸²*Ibid.*, para. 34-38.

⁸³Jean Edward Smith, 434.

⁸⁴Samuel Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 269. Rosenman notes that FDR's initial motivation was due mainly to the rise of the Nazis. FDR believed their actions were an attack on democracy.

⁸⁵Franklin D. Roosevelt, "War with Japan," in *FDR's Fireside Chats*, eds. Russell D. Buhite and David W. Levy (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010), 134.

⁸⁶Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Third Inaugural Address," para. 24.

⁸⁷Samuel Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 313, "The war was not about Pearl Harbor; it involved matters more fundamental than Pearl Harbor; it involved civilization itself."

⁸⁸Franklin D. Roosevelt, "War with Japan," 201.

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, 200, 201, 204.

⁹⁰Kenneth S. Davis, *FDR: The War President 1940-1943* (New York: Random House, 2000), 349.

⁹¹J. T. Dahlstrom and N. N. Quinn, personal letter to Franklin D. Roosevelt, December 9, 1941, in *The People and the President: America's Conversation with FDR*, eds. Lawrence W. Levine and Cornelia R. Levine (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), 405.

⁹²James W. Densford, personal letter to Franklin D. Roosevelt, December 10, 1941, in *The People and the President: America's Conversation with FDR*, eds. Lawrence W.

THE JOURNEY OF FDR'S PUBLIC IMAGE

Levine and Cornelia R. Levine (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), 401; see also Marilyn Schissel, personal letter to Franklin D. Roosevelt, December 10, 1941, in *The People and the President: America's Conversation with FDR*, eds. Lawrence W. Levine and Cornelia R. Levine (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), 402.

⁹³ Mamie O. Tew, personal letter to Franklin D. Roosevelt, December 10, 1941, in *The People and the President: America's Conversation with FDR*, eds. Lawrence W. Levine and Cornelia R. Levine (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), 403-404; see also, Mary E. Stuckey, 307-308.

⁹⁴ Samuel Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt*, 380.

⁹⁵ Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Dealing with Striking Coal Miners," in *FDR's Fireside Chats*, eds. Russell D. Buhite and David W. Levy (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010), 251; see also 253, "There can be no one among us — no one faction — powerful enough to interrupt the forward march of our people to victory."

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 254-255.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 252-253.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 256.

⁹⁹ Russell D. Buhite and David W. Levy, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 250.