

Address by

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Criminality

at the

ROOSEVELT COMMEMORATIVE CEREMONY

on the first anniversary of the

President's death

April 12, 1946

in the

Smetana Hall of the Representation Building,
City of Prague
Czechoslovakia

Mr. President, Mr. Foreign Minister, Lord Mayor, and
friends who meet in memory of President Roosevelt.

It is an honor and privilege to speak to the people of
Czechoslovakia who desire to meet in respect for Franklin
Delano Roosevelt. It is the anniversary of a sad day in the
lives of all of us who were permitted to serve under him in
his government. I could tell you, if I were more gifted, of
his kindness toward us and his thoughtfulness of the men
about him. I could tell you of the fatherly interest he
took in the young men whom he brought into public life, and
I could speak very feelingly of his unfailing charity toward
our mistakes. His attitude toward us was more nearly that

of an indulgent parent than that of an exacting chief.

Today is also a sad anniversary in the history of the struggle of human freedom. This man is missed and mourned wherever men suffer oppression, privation or injustice. He was temperamentally on the side of those who suffered wrongs. From the very beginning he instinctively knew that there was no basis upon which the democracies of the world could bargain with Hitler. He instinctively understood that Naziism was the evil thing with which there could be no compromise. The planned barbarities of that system offended his sense of justice.

President Roosevelt was a firm friend and admirer of Czechoslovakia. It is a gracious act, deeply appreciated by the American people, that President Benes and Foreign Minister Masaryk out of regard for their old friendship for him and his deep sympathy with them, have come tonight to this memorial meeting.

President Roosevelt's sympathy and his understanding was always with the people of this country during their hours under the Nazi yoke. One of his great interests was that the war criminals who had overrun this and other countries and inflicted such barbaric treatment on the inhabitants should be identified and punished - not because of mere vengeance, but chiefly because he felt that punishment was one way that repetition of this sort of thing could be prevented or made less likely. Because his feeling and determination was shared by President Truman, I was sent to Europe; and that

gives me the opportunity to be here tonight.

I shall not speak of the fate of the Nazi war criminals on trial at Nuremberg. The guilt and punishment, of course, is for the court to judge and not for me. But I would like to remind you of something that impressed me strongly as we have proceeded with the trial at Nuremberg. I speak of it because it concerns the attitude of the German people and the future dealing with them in the interests of the peace of Europe. I have yet to hear one of these men say that he regretted he had a part in starting the war. Their only regret is at losing it. Not one sign of contrition or reform has appeared, either in public testimony or private interrogation of the 21 men in the dock. Not one of them has condemned the persecution of the Jews or of the Church - they have only sought to evade personal responsibilities. Not one has condemned the creation of concentration camps; indeed, Goering testified they are useful and necessary. Not one has indicated that if he were free and able he would not do the same thing over again. From their testimony it is apparent that they would expect the support of most of the German people in the same program again. The testimony of Hermann Goering is the strongest argument I yet have seen that Nazism is unregenerate and virulent, and he himself says only the sternest measure can succeed with the German people. This practical fact shown up at the Nuremberg trial must not be overlooked in dealing with the German problem.

The world councils which must deal with these problems

will miss the presence of Franklin D. Roosevelt. He was a great man - a man, as Mr. Masaryk has pointed out, disciplined by illness. He never lost courage; never for one moment in the darkest hours of the war was there a doubt in his mind of the outcome. And there were some dark hours on our side of the Atlantic too. President Roosevelt had the precious gift of inspiring the courage of others. When he died, the victory for which he had struggled was in sight. He was one of the casualties of the war.

But if he is no longer among us, we can still take courage from his example when dark days face us. We must remember that right has a strength of its own. No end will justify wrong as a means; instead, wrong means will defeat the best of ends. There is a right and a wrong about the conduct of men and of nations that is not merely a matter of expediency, and the man or the people which ceases to make justice its standard of conduct is lost.

Many ideas and institutions that we thought were good and perhaps served well in their time have been rendered obsolete by the war. Much that we have known will pass away. There will be many changes in all our countries. But we must never forget that right dealing is never outmoded, justice is never obsolete, true democracy is vindicated by the victory. We can face these things and face our problems as he faced his - with courage and belief in the

triumph of freedom from arbitrary power and of justice
between man and man. We must live in the spirit of the
poet who said:

"Though all we know depart

The old commandments stand.

In courage keep your hearts,

In strength lift up your hand."