



MIKE ELICSON/AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

America... for the people

“Democracy can thrive only when it enlists the devotion of those whom Lincoln called the common people. Democracy can hold that devotion only when it adequately respects their dignity by so ordering society as to assure to the masses of men and women reasonable security and hope for themselves and for their children.”

—Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1940

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America ... for the people

LINKING PAST AND PRESENT

Image: School children add prayers and messages to flag for victims of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

Sunday, September 30, 2001 • Columbus, Ohio

The power and glory of the American nation, as Roosevelt suggested in an acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention in 1940, rested on keeping a simple faith: that democratically elected governments must serve the “common people.”

Roosevelt’s charge for governments to keep faith with the common people echoed not just at home but across a war-torn world. All people, he would express later, were entitled to freedom from fear and want and freedom of expression and religion, and it was the government’s responsibility to ensure these freedoms. Roosevelt’s words were also a warning in a world where nation after nation was falling to dictators. Governments lost their way and their legitimacy when they failed to serve those they represented by protecting the freedoms entitled to all. Over sixty years later, his words remain as important as they are true.

—Michael B. Stoff, co-author, *The American Nation*

These Pearson Education Web sites provide instructional context to the events surrounding September 11th for teachers who are developing related lesson plans.

phschool.com/social_studies/special_report/index.html

blestarewe.com

pearsonlearning.com

teachervision.com



America . . . for the people

OBJECTIVES

- Describe the context in which Franklin D. Roosevelt spoke the words quoted on the poster and relate his words to today.
- Create a children’s book on the theme, “America . . . for the People.”

LESSON STRATEGY

Draw students’ attention to the image and quotation on the poster. Tell them that the quotation comes from Franklin D. Roosevelt’s acceptance speech at the Democratic national convention in 1940. The school children in Columbus, Ohio, shown in the picture are putting together a flag of prayers and messages for victims of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Have students use their textbooks to review key world events of 1940, including the growing strength of the Axis powers. Ask students to summarize the main idea and characterize the mood of Roosevelt’s speech. Then ask them to compare the main idea and mood to the situation in the United States today.

ADDITIONAL QUESTION

Gestures of support and patriotism, such as the one illustrated in the picture, took place all over the United States after the terrorist attacks. What feelings or ideas lead people to take such actions? What types of things did people in your community do in 2001?

ACTIVITY

Creating a Book Have students prepare a children’s book, entitled “America . . . for the People.” Students may choose to write a fictional story, a biography, or an inspirational essay on this theme. The book may include pictures that students find or draw and text that they quote or write. When the books are completed, you may want to share them with teachers in your local elementary school or have them displayed in your school library.