

## Editorial

### *Let's remember FDR*

The fact that President Clinton has spoken about the great respect which he has for Franklin Delano Roosevelt pretty much guaranteed that the British would take an acerbic attitude toward Roosevelt. The so-called special relationship between Britain and the United States, supposedly forged during World War II, is fast withering away, and President Roosevelt has become the target of British revisionist history, which seeks to portray the American President as greedily taking advantage of a weakened Britain.

The truth is that the *special relationship* actually became a reality under the Truman presidency. Roosevelt's successor was no match for the wily British nor their representatives in the United States such as Averell Harriman. Roosevelt was no friend of the British Empire, but he recognized the importance of collaborating with Winston Churchill in order to ensure the defeat of Hitler. He expected to live long enough to dictate the direction in which the postwar world would be shaped.

Roosevelt despised the British Empire and all that for which it stood. The world which Roosevelt hoped to bring into being would have stripped the British Empire of its power, and would not have allowed the reemergence of French imperialism, either.

Horrified by the evidence of Harry Truman's subservience to British policy, in 1946 Roosevelt's son, Elliott, wrote *As He Saw It*, which documents FDR's clear-sighted rejection of British imperialism. In the book, Elliott documents this through his report on a series of conversations between himself and his father.

For example, in 1943 Elliott accompanied his father at the Teheran Summit, and at that time FDR told his son how he intended to shape the postwar world. Elliott reports him saying: "When we've won the war, I will work with all my might and main to see to it that the United States is not wheedled into the position of accepting any plan that will further France's imperialistic ambitions, or that will aid or abet the British Empire in its imperial ambitions."

Now, on Sunday, April 16, the infamous Clinton-basher, Ambrose Evans-Pritchard, took the occasion of

the 50th anniversary of Roosevelt's death on April 12, 1945, to attack the great wartime American President, to whom the ungrateful British aristocracy owe their very existence today. He chooses to attack the New Deal, because it failed to rescue the U.S. economy from the depression of the 1930s. While it is the case that only the start-up of the war rescued the U.S. economy, the same was true in spades for the United Kingdom.

Yet Evans-Pritchard seeks to compare the U.S. and British pre-war economies to the advantage of the British! Having brazenly asserted this big lie, he then attributes Britain's supposed success to free-market economy. It is well to remember how viciously the oligarchy of their day attacked Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, whom they looked at as traitors to their patrician class. This was not because Roosevelt believed in government intervention in order to get the economy on its feet, but because Roosevelt was committed to giving the unemployed some protection from the abject poverty to which the Depression had subjected them and their families. These are precisely the policies which the neo-conservatives in the United States and the Thatcherites in Britain wish to do away with, by virtually eliminating all social benefits.

On May 27, 1941, in a radio address to the nation, President Roosevelt proclaimed an unlimited national emergency. At this time, he stated America's commitment to what was essentially a Bill of Rights for all mankind. He stated this six months before the bombing of Pearl Harbor: "We will not accept a Hitler-dominated world. And we will not accept a world, like the postwar [World War I] world of the 1920s, in which the seeds of Hitlerism can again be planted and allowed to grow.

"We will accept only a world consecrated to freedom of speech and expression—freedom of every person to worship God in his own way—freedom from want—and freedom from terror." These became known as the Four Freedoms, and they were the rallying cry for men and women everywhere who were fighting fascism. This is the Roosevelt whom we remember, and whom the British hate.