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A STUDY OF DR. DOUGLAS SOUTHALL FREEMAN
ON THE ELECTIONS OF 1936 AND 1940

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of
History and Political Science
The University of Richmond

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Bachelor of Arts

by
Betty Sanford Molster
June 1955

PREFACE

Dr. Douglas Southall Freeman was the Virginia-born editor of The Richmond News Leader from 1915 to 1949. He is also widely known as the author of several historical works--notably a biography of R.E. Lee for which he received the Pulitzer Prize in 1934, Lee's Lieutenants, and a biography of George Washington which he had not quite finished at the time of his death in 1953.

This thesis is an attempt to discuss the views held by Dr. Freeman on the Presidential elections of 1936 and 1940. The only source of information used was his editorials during those two years. I have attempted to include all relevant remarks and ideas found in those editorials so that his total thinking on the elections be presented. The material was not gathered to fit into special topics but I took all material concerning the elections and then arranged it in the form presented here.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
PART I--THE 1936 ELECTION	
I. ROOSEVELT THE OBVIOUS DEMOCRATIC NOMINEE.....	1
II. STRUGGLE FOR THE REPUBLICAN NOMINATION.....	3
III. REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION.....	5
IV. DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION.....	9
V. LANDON AS A PERSON.....	12
VI. ROOSEVELT AS A PERSON.....	14
VII. FORCES FOR AND AGAINST ROOSEVELT.....	16
VIII. PROGRESS OF THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN.....	19
IX. THE REPUBLICAN CAMPAIGN.....	23
X. THE DEMOCRATIC CAMPAIGN.....	30
XI. PRINCIPAL ISSUES OF THE CAMPAIGN.....	34
XII. THIRD PARTY FORCES IN 1936.....	39
XIII. OUTCOME OF THE 1936 ELECTION.....	40
XIV. "MIDDLE OF THE ROAD".....	41
PART II--THE 1940 ELECTION	
I. THE DEMOCRATIC NOMINATION.....	44
II. THE REPUBLICAN NOMINATION.....	48
III. THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION.....	50
IV. THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION.....	52
V. PROGRESS OF THE CAMPAIGN.....	54

CHAPTER	PAGE
VI. THE REPUBLICAN CAMPAIGN.....	56
VII. THE DEMOCRATIC CAMPAIGN.....	59
VIII. THE MAJOR ISSUE.....	61
IX. OUTCOME OF THE ELECTION.....	62
X. CONCLUSION.....	63
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	66

PART I

CHAPTER I

ROOSEVELT THE OBVIOUS DEMOCRATIC NOMINEE

The 1936 election was the last thought in the minds of most Americans--save campaign chairmen and possible candidates--when Dr. Freeman wrote,

If Mr. Roosevelt lives he is almost certain of re-election. Those [Democrats] who oppose him would show greater wisdom were they to abandon even the form of campaign opposition and to concentrate their effort on the choice of a Congress that would not abdicate its constitutional prerogatives to the executive.

This is the running theme throughout Dr. Freeman's comments on the 1936 election--the inevitability of Mr. Roosevelt's re-election and the necessity of a strong Congress to balance the executive.

In February, Dr. Freeman expressed his belief that Mr. Roosevelt was certain to be the Democratic nominee-- "Increasing doubt of Mr. Roosevelt's re-election found expression in papers where the wish was father to the thought."² And in May--"Within his own party the President continues to have no rival for leadership"³ and "nothing has occurred to mar the outlook for his re-election."⁴ The

1. Editorial in the Richmond News Leader, January 29, 1936. All subsequent references to News Leader editorials will be given by date only.

2. February 8, 1936.

3. May 2, 1936.

4. May 23, 1936.

Virginia State Democratic Convention in the middle of June stated that "Virginia favors the President's re-nomination by the National Convention."⁵ Dr. Freeman agreed that Virginia was behind Roosevelt. His answer to the Herald-Tribune's suggestion that Byrd run in coalition with Landon against F.D.R. bears this out:

In fiscal matters, many of us are unwilling to go all the way with Mr. Roosevelt or to accept as inspired the dicta of some of the theorists he has brought into the administration. These Virginians are, however, farther from the view point of the Herald-Tribune than they are from that of the President.

Thus Dr. Freeman felt that the people of Virginia and Democrats in general were backers of Mr. Roosevelt and that he could not fail of re-nomination by the Democratic National Convention.

5. June 16, 1936.

6. June 2, 1936.

CHAPTER II

STRUGGLE FOR THE REPUBLICAN NOMINATION

In contrast to the Democrats, it was obvious from the beginning that the Republican ranks were far from united on who the Republican presidential nominee for the 1936 election would be. Senator Borah announced himself a candidate in early February but Dr. Freeman felt that he had little following. "It may well be that Mr. Borah's strength in the prairie states will not out last the first half-dozen ballots at Cleveland."⁷ In March Dr. Freeman said that Mr. Hoover gives the appearance that he will run.⁸ Mr. Hoover said that he "would fight the Roosevelt policies 'to the end'. He did not specify whose end."⁹ Other possible candidates were Governor Landon of Kansas, Senator Vandenberg and Colonel Frank Knox.

At the end of March Dr. Freeman wrote:

Republican prospects in the presidential campaign are so nearly hopeless that the G.O.P. nomination is worth no more now than first place on the Democratic ticket was in 1924. Who then¹⁰ is to be the candidate or more bluntly the goat?

And in April, "the Republicans seem no nearer agreement

7. April 15, 1936.

8. March 30, 1936.

9. February 15, 1936.

10. March 30, 1936.

on a candidate than they were a year ago."¹¹ By May the Republican ranks were still very much divided but "all the odds favor Landon. His nomination is as probable as his election is the reverse."¹² It was at the end of May that Mr. Hoover "eliminated himself from hopeless candidacy."¹³

With the Republican convention but a few days away, Dr. Freeman's opinion of the situation was:

As Governor Landon has won an increasing number of delegates, Colonel Frank Knox seems to have been eliminated and Senator Vandenberg appears to have been relegated to consideration as a possible nominee for vice-president.

11. April 4, 1936.

12. May 6, 1936.

13. May 23, 1936.

14. June 6, 1936.

CHAPTER III

REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION

Dr. Freeman's comment on the Republican National Convention on June the first was:

Almost anything can happen at the Republican National Convention which meets in Cleveland a week from tomorrow.

.....
The situation, from one point of view, is humiliating to the G.O.P. because it exhibits a poverty of leadership.¹⁵

On the same day he predicted that should Mr. Borah bolt the party as he threatened if the "champions of monopoly dominate the convention it would probably only play into the hands of Mr. Landon."¹⁶ And Dr. Freeman seems to agree with

the able newspaper observer, Charles R. Michael, [who] says that the bandwagon drive [for Landon] has been quickened by the fear that the dramatic appearance of Mr. Hoover on the floor at Cleveland might create a stampede to him.¹⁷

A further prediction by Dr. Freeman was expressed on June the sixth:

are
Prospects now[^] for the nomination of Governor Landon on an early ballot and for a platform that demands 1) a reduction in federal expenditure, 2) continuance of necessary relief with federal funds but under state control, 3) farm benefits of the type proposed under the old McNary-Haugen bill through export expenditures.¹⁸

15. June 1, 1936.

16. June 1, 1936.

17. June 5, 1936.

18. June 6, 1936.

The Republican National Convention opened in Cleveland on the eighth of June. Of the Keynote address Dr. Freeman wrote:

With the exception of the New Deal issue, Senator Steiwer's address might have been delivered at any time since 1880.

.....
and for Senator Steiwer to make this kind of talk emphasizes the fact that the Republicans as yet have no new or constructive program to offer.¹⁹

Thus from the beginning the Republican Convention was a disappointment to Dr. Freeman--and to others. "The industrialists feel the convention is doing even less than could be expected of it." ²⁰ Dr. Freeman's quip that "the Cleveland Convention has one unique feature--it has spread political despair over hundreds of square miles of adjoining territory!" ²¹ was probably very nearly right. But in all seriousness Dr. Freeman was very much concerned with what he felt was the incapability of the Republican party.

If this is the best a great historic organization can do in criticism of a disputable policy [the New Deal], the party system in America has been brought low and representative government thereby has been rendered insecure.²²

I am sure there were few in this country who so deeply realized the far-reaching effects of a situation in which

19. June 10, 1936.

20. June 11, 1936.

21. June 11, 1936.

22. June 11, 1936.

one party is so much stronger than the other as Dr. Freeman did.

The nomination of Governor Landon as the Republican candidate for President in 1936 was a matter both of "geographical selection and of political elimination."²³ The hope of the G.O.P. lay in the middle west and the Prairie states so therefore they chose a candidate from that area. Dr. Freeman was not too critical of the Republican candidate for President, at first, but he was highly critical of the Republican platform from the very beginning. For Dr. Freeman felt that, although the Republicans denounced the New Deal in harshest terms, the platform accepted what he termed the Roosevelt Revolution. The platform accepted 1) alleviating the depression by pump-priming, 2) making the economic rights of the farmer equal to those of industrialists and city-dwellers, 3) government responsibility to help aged and unemployed, and 4) social security. Hence as Dr. Freeman saw it, "the Republican party accepts all the essential principles of the Revolution except that of higher taxation of wealth."²⁴ And Dr. Freeman found that the exemplars of American nationalism had become the avowed champions of states' rights and that the party was subordinating the interests of the East to those of the West.²⁵ Dr.

23. June 12, 1936.

24. June 12, 1936.

25. June 12, 1936.

Freeman could see no good in having the Republican party step out of character and become too much like the Democratic party. He wanted the parties distinct and unique as balancing forces one against the other.

CHAPTER IV

DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION

The Democratic National Convention opened in Philadelphia on June 23, 1936. There was no doubt as to the outcome of this convention.

The stage manager of that gathering, Jim Farley, explained yesterday that the adoption of a platform and the renomination of the President are routine matters and that the real aim of the convention is to spread the gospel of the New Deal by a series of radio addresses.²⁶

Hence, though there was little chance of any real excitement at the Convention, the Democrats hoped to use the occasion for education on Mr. Roosevelt's policies. The fact that there was no doubt as to who would be the Democratic nominee did not mean that the party was completely united.

"No frank person^{pretends} that the Democratic leaders or supporters are all of one mind" but "the patronage and the President's personality are the cement that hold the Democratic elements together."²⁷

But Dr. Freeman was aware that nothing would upset Mr. Roosevelt's chances and that "for 1936, all is well."²⁸

"The one probable controversy in the convention may revolve around the two-thirds rule"²⁹ --requiring a two-thirds majority for the nomination. Dr. Freeman felt

26. June 20, 1936.

27. June 23, 1936.

28. June 28, 1936.

29. June 23, 1936.

that nomination by a simple majority would result in the
 election of better men with less friction.³⁰

Dr. Freeman found that the platform of the Democratic party contemplated "a continuance of the present
 policy of the administration."³¹

Having conceded frankly that the platform is not free of bombast and bitterness, we believe we voice the sentiments of most Virginia Democrats when we say the platform is better than we expected it to be.³²

Dr. Freeman had written earlier, after the announcement of the Republican platform, that

the failure of the Republicans to advance any constructive program puts upon Democrats an immense responsibility. There is no more searching test of the wisdom of a great political party than the moderation it displays when it can not be challenged.³³

Dr. Freeman felt that the Democrats had, at least in part, met this test successfully.

The platform should be a serious matter to a party in Dr. Freeman's opinion. He discussed various planks of the Democratic platform--the determination of the Democrats to reduce the expense of the government, for instance. A major Democratic problem was the fact that they had enacted so many laws that had been declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court and in the platform they promised to stay within

30. June 23, 1936.

31. June 26, 1936.

32. June 26, 1936.

33. June 11, 1936.

the law or change it when it seemed best to do so. To this point Dr. Freeman spoke:

Certainly this newspaper will resist any attempt to change the whole framework of the Constitution and to upset the balance of power simply because a few beaurocrats can not do everything they want to do.³⁴

But Dr. Freeman ended with "We believe Southern Democrats will accept...the entire platform."³⁵

On the general subject of the New Deal Dr. Freeman said:

The basic principles of the New Deal were accepted in the Republican platform and now are reaffirmed in the Democratic declaration. This means that the Roosevelt revolution has been effected,³⁶

"The New Deal must go on--where else can it go?--but it has probably developed its worse aspects along with its best."³⁷ Thus we see that Dr. Freeman was not a 100%

New Dealer but was in general a backer of Mr. Roosevelt.

Dr. Freeman felt from the beginning that the outcome of the November election would undoubtedly be re-election for F.D.R.

Mr. Roosevelt faces [the Republican] platform and any ticket nominated on it with absolute confidence of victory. He relies on the normal Democratic strength, on the solid support of the South, on a personal popularity that far exceeds the popularity of the New Deal, on the vote of relief beneficiaries and on the army of Democrats appointed to office.³⁸

34. June 26, 1936.

35. June 26, 1936.

36. June 27, 1936.

37. June 26, 1936.

38. June 6, 1936.

CHAPTER V

LANDON AS A PERSON

Dr. Freeman was very disappointed that the Republican presidential candidate should so obviously be no match for Mr. Roosevelt. He would like to have seen a fire-ball of a statesman opposing F.D.R. in the campaign. But he had to admit that "Landon is, in short, 'a first-class second-class statesman!'"³⁹ borrowing Senator Glass's phrase. Dr. Freeman found little to dislike in Landon but only deplored the fact that he was not a more worthy candidate for President of the United States. He thought it in keeping with the mediocrity of the man that he claimed "traditional hobbies-- fishing and reading detective stories."⁴⁰ It was painful for Landon to make a speech and therefore the party chairman was determined "that Landon shall not expose himself to comparison with Mr. Roosevelt as a speaker,"⁴¹ and hence kept down the number of Landon's speeches to a minimum.

Due to the lack of admirable and inspiring qualities in Landon, "the Republicans will have to put more emphasis on the wisdom of their platform than the excellencies of their nominee."⁴² But Dr. Freeman found a lack of wisdom

39. June 12, 1936.

40. September 8, 1936.

41. August 18, 1936.

42. June 12, 1936.

in the Republican platform also so he was disappointed in the poor showing the Republicans showed promise of making in the 1936 presidential campaign.

CHAPTER VI

ROOSEVELT AS A PERSON

On the other hand, Dr. Freeman found many admirable and inspiring qualities in the Democratic nominee for President. His "As everyone knows, Mr. Roosevelt has one of the most attractive of personalities"⁴³ just about sums up Dr. Freeman's feeling on the subject of Mr. Roosevelt as a person.

When it comes to effective presentation, Mr. Roosevelt has an even larger advantage than that of his fine voice and his radio personality. He knows the secret of personal appeal.⁴⁴

After Roosevelt's trip to Richmond in July, Dr. Freeman wrote: "Whether or not you like his politics, you have to concede that the personality of the President is compelling," and "That gracious presence of his is an amazing asset."⁴⁵ Of Roosevelt's speech at Monticello on July the fourth, he wrote: "It was a noble deliverance worthy of the subject and of the place...."⁴⁶

But it would be wrong to convey the idea that Dr. Freeman was an unswerving idolizer of Mr. Roosevelt. On the contrary, he was able to see the good and bad in Mr. Roosevelt

43. June 12, 1936.

44. September 7, 1936.

45. July 6, 1936.

46. July 6, 1936.

just as he was able to see the good and bad in the New Deal and Democratic policy. "All of us know that our President is impulsive. More than once he has announced a policy before he had worked out any of the details."⁴⁷ But we can not escape the fact that Dr. Freeman, on the whole, admired F.D.R. and thought him an excellent speaker.

47. August 6, 1936.

CHAPTER VII

FORCES FOR AND AGAINST MR. ROOSEVELT

Dr. Freeman from time to time during the campaign would discuss various groups and individuals who came out for or against Roosevelt. He believed that, in general, the youth of the country was behind Mr. Roosevelt--and that this was seen in the fact that young newspapermen in Washington were in favor of Roosevelt whereas most of them over forty were not. ⁴⁸ When Mayor La Guardia came out for Roosevelt, Dr Freeman said, "This is a gain for the gentleman of the White House." ⁴⁹

When labor organizations began to come out for Roosevelt, the question arose as to whether organized labor should become partisan. Gompers and Green were always against such a move. Said Dr. Freeman:

Would we feel that it was desirable for a labor organization definitely to enter politics as a partisan?
.....
None of us can defend a weapon we would be unwilling to see in the hands of an opponent.⁵⁰

However, Mr. Roosevelt, of course, cordially welcomed the support of the United Mine Workers and other labor groups.

48. May 7, 1936.
49. September 5, 1936.
50. February 2, 1936.

Of the forces against Roosevelt discussed by Dr. Freeman in his editorials, one was Al Smith. With "the long expected attack on President Roosevelt by ex-Governor Al Smith of New York" came "political warfare of the bitterest sort."⁵¹ Later in the year Al Smith attended the executive committee of the Liberty League which "proclaimed 'non-partisan' war on the Roosevelt administration."⁵²

The anti-Roosevelt Democratic Convention engineered by Governor Talmadge of Georgia "created little talk except among those who magnify every attempt to discredit the President."⁵³

An effective attack on New Deal policies as inimical to business revival was made by A.P. Sloan Jr. in his powerful annual report as President of General Motors.⁵⁴

"Here in Virginia it is apparent that the fight against Roosevelt is to be conducted by the Jeffersonian Democrats and not by the G.O.P."⁵⁵ Dr. Freeman analyzed Jeffersonian Democracy and found that some of Jefferson's ideas would favor the New Deal and some would be against

51. February 1, 1936.

52. July 4, 1936.

53. February 1, 1936.

54. April 4, 1936.

55. September 23, 1936.

it. He called for these Jeffersonian Democrats to join
the ranks of the independents.⁵⁶

Thus we see that Dr. Freeman kept his readers informed on the various forces both for and against F.D.R.

56. September 23, 1936.

CHAPTER VIII

PROGRESS OF THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

Dr. Freeman also kept his readers up to date on the progress of the campaign--whether things were moving slowly or at a rapid pace. His prediction of February 14, 1936:

Already in this dark February weather, with the Presidential election still nearly nine months distant, Americans have had many evidences of in-temperate utterances. When late summer wears down the patience of men, the United States probably will be the theater of the most vituperative political contest it has staged since 1896, the year of the "free-silver" campaign.⁵⁷

did not prove to be completely accurate. For with the coming of August he was to write, "With the Presidential election distant only three months, apathy still is so deep that it puzzles the politicians."⁵⁸ The apathy of the people toward the election had somewhat the effect of slowing down the progress of the campaign. "The most remarkable aspect of the Presidential campaign thus far has been its dullness."⁵⁹ "American politics offered less interest this week than last, if that were possible. Speeches on either side were few and commonplace."⁶⁰

57. February 14, 1936.

58. August 1, 1936.

59. August 6, 1936.

60. August 15, 1936.

But the end of August saw a quickening in the pace of the Presidential campaign.

Our Presidential campaign got under way this week-- got under way slowly and not until the season when, in previous campaigns, public opinion usually was close to its final choice between Republican and Democratic candidates.⁶¹

But Dr. Freeman observed that Virginia was still less interested in politics than in vacations.⁶²

With the end of September at hand, "political maneuvers ...showed plainly that neither party considers the Presidential election won or lost."⁶³ By early October Dr. Freeman wrote, "The American people are lining up."⁶⁴

So far there had been little indication that this was to be "a vituperative political contest." But after whispers of Elliot Roosevelt's connection with Anthony Folker's sales promotion of planes to Russia, Dr. Freeman felt that "the political war in America has reached the stage where neither side is very careful of its choice of weapons."⁶⁵ But by the end of October Dr. Freeman wrote that this was "a Presidential campaign that thus far has developed less bitterness than had been anticipated"⁶⁶ and

61. August 29, 1936.

62. August 29, 1936.

63. September 26, 1936.

64. October 2, 1936.

65. October 8, 1936.

66. October 24, 1936.

"contrary to Mr. Farley's prediction this has not been
'the dirtiest campaign in American political history.'" ⁶⁷

That the campaign was slow even throughout August we have already seen. However, by October the pace had considerably quickened, until in the middle of the month Dr. Freeman wrote, "'To be let alone' might have been the plea of the American voter this week." ⁶⁸ And at the end of the month he wrote, "The volume of political news has... been entirely too great." ⁶⁹

As to how things were shaping up in respect to the prospects of the candidates we can follow this through Dr. Freeman's editorials. In general, Landon picked up in July, opinion was in flux in August, Landon picked up still more in September and in October it seemed that Roosevelt was ahead. ⁷⁰ But the forecasters did not agree, ⁷¹ even in October, on the probable outcome of the election. However, by the end of that month most people in the country were sure that Roosevelt would win. ⁷² An exception was the

67. October 29, 1936.

68. October 17, 1936.

69. October 29, 1936.

70. October 20, 1936.

71. October 12, 1936.

72. October 27, 1936.

Literary Digest Poll which showed in its final statistics 54.4 per cent. for Landon and only 40.9 per cent. for Roosevelt.⁷³ However on election day Dr. Freeman could write, "All nation-wide straw votes, save one, and all non-partisan newspaper forecasts of experience predict the re-election of Mr. Roosevelt today."⁷⁴

In summation we see that the Presidential campaign moved very slowly at first but was very active in the last two months. In general it can be said that the campaign was not the scene of too much abusive language. And we have seen that there was considerable question in the minds of some up until the last few weeks as to the outcome of the election. Said Dr. Freeman, Republicans and Democrats alike "have challenged the air in the most expensive and inclusive of American Presidential campaigns."⁷⁵

73. October 31, 1936.

74. November 3, 1936.

75. October 31, 1936.

CHAPTER IX

THE REPUBLICAN CAMPAIGN

We have gotten a general idea of the progress of the campaign and just how the Presidential nominees seemed to be doing at various stages, but to get the true picture we must go more deeply into each campaign.

In April the Republican professional council was chosen. This group was somewhat the Republican counterpart of Roosevelt's brain trust and was to lead in the formation of party policy and campaign strategy.

Could the economic cleavage between the two parties been more amazingly exhibited than in the choice of the men who are to form the new Republican professional council?

.....
It is not to be a brain trust though it may not be described as a no-brain trust, but it unabashedly represents conservatism in economics and moderation in social security.⁷⁶

However, Dr. Freeman stated that "the real strength of the campaign organization depends on Hamilton",⁷⁷ the Republican national chairman.

In early July Dr. Freeman wrote: "The Republican campaign is getting under way with many hitches and without much enthusiasm."⁷⁸ But in spite of this, two days later we see:

Dr. Daniel Starch, whose scientific figures we

76. April 10, 1936.

77. June 17, 1936.

78. July 11, 1936.

printed Saturday, is sustained by virtually all other commentators in saying that the last few weeks have witnessed a definite swing from Roosevelt to Landon.⁷⁹

However, he cautioned against concluding that present estimates were final.⁸⁰ He felt that, due to the similarity of the platforms, vote by tradition would be an important factor in the election.

How far, in this situation, will the result be affected by the indisputable fact that the Republicans normally constitute a majority of the American electorate? Will the Republicans who voted for Roosevelt in 1932, in protest against the feeble inaction of Mr. Hoover, return to their old allegiance now that the Republicans have adopted what the leaders insist is a progressive policy? That is a much more serious consideration than the Democratic leaders are willing publicly to admit.⁸¹

Considering this factor to be serious, Dr. Freeman was inclined not to be too critical of those who prophesied that Landon would win the election, but he was unwilling to consider this a foregone conclusion in July.

There is much criticism of Landon and the Republican party during the campaign in Dr. Freeman's editorials.

We were much disappointed in Mr. Landon's [acceptance] speech.

.....

The address could be epitomized in one sentence: If American voters will return the Republican party to power, it will administer the New Deal more economically and with regard for the rights of the states.⁸²

79. July 13, 1936.

80. July 13, 1936.

81. July 13, 1936.

82. July 24, 1936.

This newspaper has not been impressed by the Republican nominee. He seems to us to have failed lamentably to propose anything more than a expensive dilution of his opponent's policy.⁸³

Dr. Freeman found much to be desired in the speaking ability of Mr. Landon as I have indicated earlier. He criticized the material of the speeches as well as the technique of delivery.

Governor Landon's Pittsburg speech discloses one of the definite weaknesses of the Republican campaign-- a lack of thorough preparation on the part of the nominee. Mr. Landon spoke at some length on Civil Service reform, but he failed to exhibit any real knowledge of the subject.

.....
As in his address Saturday evening on foreign affairs, his treatment of the topic was wholly superficial.⁸⁴

But Dr. Freeman did not arbitrarily criticize the Republican candidate. He quickly gave credit when credit was due and would have liked to have been able to do so more often.

Every Independent who deserves the name will concede, we suspect, that Mr. Landon made a good speech at Portland Saturday night.

.....
He is learning.⁸⁵

He was also quick to acknowledge that the inferior position of the Republican party in this campaign was not due only

83. September 21, 1936.

84. September 28, 1936.

85. August 14, 1936.

to the weaknesses in the candidate and platform. "No, the Republicans can not accuse their leaders of undue error nor say that the fault is with their stars. The explanation is to be found in Democratic advantage."⁸⁶

As to the actual plan in the Republican campaign we can get the general structure of it from Dr. Freeman's editorials.

Mr. Landon intends to challenge the Roosevelt regime on broad principles.

.....
To do this, he is rephrasing in the vernacular Mr. Hoover's appeal to "rugged individualism".⁸⁷

Another element in Republican tactics:

[Landon] had to create in the public mind the idea that he was a straight-thinking, plain man of action. [The Republicans wanted to win back the lower classes of society and therefore] it was decided that the best means to do this was to start with a few speeches on fundamentals...and then strike out at the specific failures of the administration.⁸⁸

Landon's speeches covered a fairly wide variety of topics. One major policy that he discussed several times was financial matters. Dr. Freeman's comment on one of his speeches on taxes was:

He was right both in what he said about the taxes a poor man has to pay and in what he said in denunciation of the preposterous tax on reserves imposed by the present Congress.⁸⁹

Toward the end of October when the Republicans were trying

86. November 3, 1936.

87. August 24, 1936.

88. August 27, 1936.

89. August 27, 1936.

to stir up a scare about the financial set up under Roosevelt, Dr. Freeman wrote, "This time it seems that the Republicans intend to employ 'boo tactics' in an effort to create a fear complex in the minds of the voters."⁹⁰ We see that Landon's main theme on the subject of finance was "excoriating the waste of the Roosevelt administration and what he termed its 'open and impudent use of public money for political purposes.'"⁹¹

Of Landon's handling of another important topic, we read, "His speech^{was} on the prospective foreign policy of the Republicans, a policy which he epitomized as that of minding your own business."⁹² And on another subject, "Mr. Landon went beyond the platform and promised to give direct cash benefits to farmers while new methods of agricultural relief were being perfected."⁹³ And on the topic of labor, "His appeal to labor was summarized in the statement that the working man had the right to join or not to join any type of union he pleased."⁹⁴ On the subject of monopoly which Landon opposed:

He admitted that big business on occasion had gotten out of hand and had to be curbed.

90. October 23, 1936.

91. October 31, 1936.

92. October 31, 1936.

93. September 14, 1936.

94. July 25, 1936.

.....
 Here [in Landon's opposition to monopoly] we have an example of the manner in which aggressive liberalism of an intellectual type forces a conservative party to give ground.⁹⁵

Hence in this campaign we see that Landon does not stand by traditional Republican policies - protection of big business, for instance - as staunchly as Republican candidates in the past had done. We are again made aware of the fact that the dividing line between the two parties and their policies is not very clearly drawn.

The prospects of Landon's winning the election in November varied throughout the campaign as we have seen earlier. In September, the Literary Digest Poll, with eight states reporting, showed that Landon had 60 per cent. of the straw ballots.⁹⁶ In October Dr. Freeman reported that a Republican had said, "Like a man about to embark upon matrimony, I hope for the best but fear the worst."⁹⁷ And later that month he wrote, "The Republicans, in the judgment of most newspaper observers, are engaged in a losing fight,"⁹⁸ and that for Republican papers "despair has deepened into something that approaches resignation."⁹⁹

But rather than concentrate solely on the Presidential

95. September 14, 1936.

96. September 12, 1936.

97. October 13, 1936.

98. October 17, 1936.

99. October 27, 1936.

race which Dr. Freeman thought was lost to the Republicans from the beginning, he felt the campaign should have emphasized the congressional elections. The failure to do this was the greatest mistake of the Republican campaign in Dr. Freeman's estimation. ¹⁰⁰ He would like to have seen the G.O.P. live up to their prediction that

[it] will reduce the Democratic majority in the House to the point where, with the assistance of conservative Democrats, it will thwart what it styles a Mr. Roosevelt's "radical legislation,"¹⁰¹

but he felt at the end that the Republicans had not even done a half-way job of trying to effect this.

100. October 27, 1936.

101. August 1, 1936.

CHAPTER X

THE DEMOCRATIC CAMPAIGN

"Mr. Farley seems confident of Democratic victory and as far as surface indications run, he has reason for that state of mind."¹⁰² This statement may be said to be the theme of the Democratic campaign and of Dr. Freeman's opinion of the campaign. Throughout the months before November it became more and more clear that Mr. Roosevelt would be re-elected to his second term.

Dr. Freeman felt from the beginning that "nothing is likely to happen that will throw the vote of a single Southern state into the Republican column."¹⁰³ However, he qualified that statement with:

All signs point to a definite revolt, political and economic, on the part of businessmen. Unless there is a definite turn to conservatism on the part of Mr. Roosevelt--a turn that now seems improbable--we expect to see more businessmen in the South vote against him than ever voted against a regular Democratic nominee for the Presidency.¹⁰⁴

As to the chance that Virginia Democrats would not back Mr. Roosevelt, Dr. Freeman felt that there was little reason to believe that this would happen.

We know that Senator Glass and thousands of other Virginia Democrats consider that the administration

102. July 11, 1936.

103. July 22, 1936.

104. July 22, 1936.

has been wrong in many of its tactics but right in its strategy--right in many of the things that it wanted to do but wrong in the way it went about doing them.¹⁰⁵

Virginia, along with the rest of the South, would stick with Roosevelt because of his policies of which they approved.

We Southerners may not fully succeed but, all in all, we believe we have a better chance of keeping the Democratic party from going too far than of getting the Republican party to go far enough.¹⁰⁶

Mr. Roosevelt's decision not to make any political speeches until October was adhered to. But in "non-political" speeches and official acts as President he furthered the cause of the Democratic campaign considerably.

The announcement that President Roosevelt, if re-elected, intends to ask Congress for a far-reaching reorganization of the administrative structure of the Federal Government is news that may have a better political effect than the most ingenious campaign speech.¹⁰⁷

But with the coming of October, Mr. Roosevelt "began a long speaking campaign that [took] him as far west as the Rockies."¹⁰⁸ Even as Mr. Roosevelt was beginning Dr. Freeman wrote, "The odds, in our opinion, favor Roosevelt but in the Congressional campaign there is, as yet, no perceptible trend."¹⁰⁹ It was this Congressional campaign that Dr. Freeman felt was so vital and deserved more attention than it got. By the end of October there was little doubt but

105. August 26, 1936.

106. September 21, 1936.

107. September 10, 1936.

108. October 10, 1936.

109. October 12, 1936.

what Roosevelt would win the election--there only remained to be seen by how much he would defeat Landon. The fact that all were so sure of Roosevelt's victory led to Dr. Freeman's statement that, "This 'band-wagon psychology' may be playing a tremendous part in swelling Mr. Roosevelt's plurality."¹¹⁰

On the general subject of Mr. Roosevelt's tactics in the campaign we find Dr. Freeman writing:

His speeches have, in the main, been aggressive rather than defensive and have dwelt more on the distress from which the administration saved the nation than on the policies to be pursued hereafter.¹¹¹

And Dr. Freeman believed that Roosevelt "is exhibiting a personal popularity and a strength much greater than that of the New Deal, of the Democratic Committee and of the Democratic Congress combined."¹¹² But in spite of this fact, Dr. Freeman did not think that the President should "actively take the stump and campaign for re-election."¹¹³

Of the several notable contentions of the President during the campaign were "his determination not to increase taxes and his willingness to keep politics out of business if business would keep out of politics,"¹¹⁴ "his pledge of adherence to the policy of equal opportunity and social justice,"¹¹⁵ and his belief that "economic class advantage must be ended in America."¹¹⁶ It is this last belief, among

110. October 27, 1936. 111. October 17, 1936.

112. September 11, 1936. 113. September 30, 1936.

114. October 24, 1936. 115. October 31, 1936.

116. October 2, 1936.

others, that caused much criticism of Roosevelt as a radical. Indeed many radicals supported Roosevelt because there was no one else even slightly in sentiment with them. Dr. Freeman felt that Roosevelt was doing enough that radicals wanted to keep a radical party from finding strength. ¹¹⁷ On this subject Dr. Freeman wrote:

This newspaper subscribes-- and believes the majority of its readers subscribe-- to the closing sentiments of Mr. Roosevelt's speech last evening--"In the words of the great essayist, 'The voice of great events is proclaiming to us, Reform if you would preserve.' I am that kind of a conservative because I am that kind of a liberal."¹¹⁸

Thus we see the general aspects of the Democratic campaign. In comparison with the Republican campaign, it was a campaign of more confident men with a better candidate and a platform that promised to carry on the popular reforms of the past four years. Roosevelt's "brain trust" was an experienced group who knew always what the next step in the campaign was to be whereas Landon's advisors were not as surely on a definite path. "Most non-partisan newspaper observers agree that the Democratic campaign strategy was definitely superior to that of the Republicans."¹¹⁹

117. September 21, 1936.

118. September, 30, 1936.

119. October 31, 1936.

CHAPTER XI

PRINCIPAL ISSUES OF THE CAMPAIGN

To Dr. Freeman, the basic issue of the campaign was "whether Roosevelt or Landon is better able and more disposed to maintain the balance of the economic advantage once it has been restored."¹²⁰ In 1936 this was the main consideration in men's minds. However, there are several more specific issues which were important in the campaign.

One issue may be called the financial problem. In October Landon "promised anew to balance the Federal budget, if elected, within less than four years. The way to do this, he said, was to establish an efficient administration and to end present extravagance and waste."¹²¹ However, Dr. Freeman saw little to support in such a vague method of public expenditure. "Landon denounced New Deal relief as a public scandal,"¹²² but months earlier Dr. Freeman had written "Few people whose support is worth having begrudge a single dollar spent on direct relief,"¹²³ and therefore he saw little to fear in Landon's statement. Another financial policy of Roosevelt's was attacked by Landon--the Social

120. October 2, 1936.

121. October 10, 1936.

122. October 17, 1936.

123. February 12, 1936.

Security Act of 1935 which he called, "unjust, unworkable, stupidly drafted, and wastefully financed."¹²⁴ He felt that any kind of unemployment insurance should be worked out by the states--another of his states' rights opinions--and not by the Federal government. As to old age pensions, he proposed: "Our plan will be on a pay-as-you-go basis with the result that we will know year by year what our pensions are costing us."¹²⁵ Landon also attacked the reciprocal tariff agreements of the Roosevelt administration--in the northwest where the sentiment against them was the strongest.¹²⁶

Another major issue in the election was farm policy--both candidates "angling avidly for the farmer's vote."¹²⁷ Landon's speech in September "was spread, so to speak, to catch all the agrarian vote and not to scare off any element."¹²⁸ In his farm speeches, "you would have thought that nobody but the farmer has suffered during the depression."¹²⁹ However, when it came to making a commitment on concrete farm policy, Landon's speech was criticized by Dr. Freeman: "Where it was vague it was not understandable and where it was specific it proposed little more than a shifting in the order of the three A's."¹³⁰ Therefore, "as his lieutenants

124. October 3, 1936. 125. October 3, 1936.

126. September 25, 1936. 127. September 23, 1936.

128. September 26, 1936. 129. September 23, 1936.

130. September 23, 1936.

feared, his [addresses] lost much of [their] force because [they] coincided with so much that Mr. Roosevelt had already said."¹³¹ So it was again a case of lack of originality on the part of the Republicans in constructing policy and this was a disappointment to Dr. Freeman. His conclusion on the subject of farm policy was: "Neither doctor has prescribed anything more than a vague compound of hopes and sedatives and pain killers. There is no great difference between their remedies...."¹³²

Another major issue in the campaign was the depression. Landon time and time again hurled accusations at the Democratic administration for the ways in which it had sought to alleviate depression problems. But Dr. Freeman wrote: "The country is as surely on the upgrade today as it was on the downgrade four years ago. America is emerging with no major change in the structure of government."¹³³ That Dr. Freeman, on the whole, admired Democratic policy in bringing the U.S. out of the depression is true but on several specific points he disagreed with Roosevelt. Roosevelt, in April, proposed to stimulate employment by 1) an increase in purchasing power, 2) stringent child labor laws, 3) retirement of the majority of people at approximately 65 years of age, and 4) a reduction of the work week. "He proclaimed an ideal

131. September 26, 1936. 132. September 23, 1936.

133. September 21, 1936.

but his approach to it is ... not practical." ¹³⁴ "He argued that his task is to meet the condition without regard to the reason for it. There are some of us who hold to precisely the opposite view." ¹³⁵ "Only disappointment waits us if we think there is a quick and sure recovery by treatment that disregards causes and realities." ¹³⁶ And Dr. Freeman agreed with Dr. H. Parker Willis, editor of the Journal of Commerce, when he said the President was wrong to assume that industry could absorb an appreciable part of the present unemployed. ¹³⁷ Hence we see that Dr. Freeman disagreed with some of Roosevelt's depression policies as they had been put into practice or announced as future policy.

Communism also was an issue in this 1936 campaign. Many, including Mr. Hearst, charged that the Democrats had Red support. In answer to this Mr. Early said, "The President does not want and does not welcome the vote or support of any individual or group taking orders from alien sources." ¹³⁸ The Republican tactics of scaring the population into believing that Roosevelt harbored Red support brought forth this remark from Dr. Freeman: "What would be more natural than for the Democratic party, charged with sheltering Reds, to answer that the Republicans are financed by Facists?" ¹³⁹ Said Dr.

134. April 14, 1936. 135. April 14, 1936.

136. April 14, 1936. 137. March 20, 1936.

138. September 26, 1936. 139. September 22, 1936.

Freeman on Roosevelt's policy toward Communism: "Some of the President's critics would arrest a man after he becomes a Communist. Mr. Roosevelt would employ him at a living wage to keep him from being a Communist."¹⁴⁰

Roosevelt, for his part, seeks to prevent revolution, not by combating it, but by removing all justification for it. As the campaign ends..., we are more convinced than ever we have been that ROOSEVELT IS RIGHT."¹⁴¹
his

Thus Dr. Freeman was behind Roosevelt on a policy against Communism and wrote also that, "the Republican platform is no answer to Communism; Republican leadership no bulwark against it."¹⁴²

140. September 30, 1936. 141. November 2, 1936.

142. November 2, 1936.

CHAPTER XII

THIRD PARTY FORCES IN 1936

Third parties have seldom been significant in Presidential elections and they were not so in this 1936 election. However, some mention of the third party forces should be made.

There was Father Coughlin and his Union Party which had a far-left policy, and the Townsendites who were slightly more radical than New Dealers. They tried to pose as Democrats or Republicans in Congressional elections rather than as third party members. These two groups with Smith, a Long lieutenant from Louisiana, united behind Lemke as candidate for President. Dr. Freeman's remarks on this union were:

It is easy enough to say, of course, that the new triple alliance of crack-pot economists will fall by its own weight.

.....
Who knows? In these topsy turvy times the next turn of the wheel may find so vast a congeries of economic radicals on the Left that Democrats and Republicans will have to make common cause against them.¹⁴³

However, neither this nor any other third party group has yet shown sufficient strength to bring about such a union.

143. July 17, 1936.

CHAPTER XIII

OUTCOME OF THE 1936 ELECTION

The election on November 3, 1936, proved to be a landslide to Roosevelt. Landon received only eight electoral votes--five in Maine and three in Vermont. "It is a triumph such as no candidate for re-election ever has won since the organization of American parties."¹⁴⁴

Dr. Freeman wrote, "We confess a deep emotional satisfaction at the result."¹⁴⁵ And he said that Roosevelt's aim was to

make science and wealth serve the multitude and not a class. It is because we believe the re-election of Mr. Roosevelt brings us a step nearer to that final goal of government, social justice, that we rejoice today.¹⁴⁶

144. November 4, 1936.

145. November 4, 1936.

146. November 4, 1936.

CHAPTER XIV

"MIDDLE OF THE ROAD"

"The best possible result of the campaign would be for each candidate to pull the other back into the middle of the road."¹⁴⁷ As we have seen throughout the preceeding chapters, Dr. Freeman did not want one party to greatly outweigh the other. He wanted a Republican minority large enough to keep the Democrats on their toes and to temper radical policies.

... though die-hards will consider the remark party treason, it is very desirable that the clumsy, overwhelming Democratic majority in the House of Representatives should be reduced by at least 60%.¹⁴⁸

The clearer the difference between Republicans and Democrats and the closer the outcome of the election, the less the danger of the triumph of an extreme policy.

.....
It is the duty of the Republicans to see that liberalism does not become revolutionary.¹⁴⁹

These remarks show that Dr. Freeman felt that representative government and the American "way of life" could best be preserved by a balance between the two major parties.

However, he saw that

The trend of all great political parties is slowly to the left. Yet in every land there is a definite

147. September 14, 1936. 148. October 27, 1936.

149. June 8, 1936.

place for a conservative party to represent the type of mind that distrusts change. Were the G.O.P. to [become liberal] it would abandon its very reason for existence.¹⁵⁰

Dr. Freeman's desire for a balance of power between the two parties to insure a middle of the road policy-- though he actually wanted it to be a progressive road-- must have caused him to be disappointed in the Republican showing in the election. However, his editorial on the day after the election showed genuine satisfaction in the outcome. His belief in a two-party system with both parties strong enough to put the brakes on each other remained, nevertheless, a strong factor in his political thinking.

PART II

CHAPTER I

THE DEMOCRATIC NOMINATION

Throughout the study of the Presidential election of 1940 we will notice differences between this election and that of 1936. One of the first differences that we notice is that the outcome of the choosing of the Democratic nominee was not so predictable as in 1936. We saw that in 1936 there had been little doubt that anyone but President Roosevelt would be the Democratic nominee. However, this is not the case in 1940--there were many forces against Roosevelt's renomination.

When Jim Farley called to order the Democratic National Committee today the presidential campaign of 1940 opened, but in circumstances as confusing for Democrats as any that have existed since the later years of Grover Cleveland's second administration.¹⁵¹

Roosevelt's most formidable opponent was John Nance Garner of Texas whom Mr. Roosevelt did not want to see get the nomination. Jim Farley also entered his name in the race for nomination.

But let us look at Roosevelt's position in this race for the Democratic nomination. Roosevelt did not announce his decision to run until July. In the months before, there was much speculation as to his intentions but he made it clear

¹⁵¹. February 5, 1940.

that only an announcement from him on the subject would be valid.¹⁵² The idea that he would run for a third term was

most prevalent after he left his name on the Illinois primary ballot¹⁵³ and after the new invasion in Europe in May.¹⁵⁴ But there were times when Democrats, for some

reason or other, felt that Roosevelt would not run again.¹⁵⁵

In spite of these shiftings in opinions, it was generally agreed that if the President wanted the nomination, it was his for the taking. Most people felt that "nothing can now stop the President from becoming the party nominee except his own decision not to run."¹⁵⁶ While the Democrats were

changing their minds periodically as to whether Roosevelt would run, "the Republicans showed by their Lincoln Day speeches that they think Mr. Roosevelt may be a candidate in November."¹⁵⁷

Many Democrats felt that if Mr. Roosevelt should choose not to run for office again he would "appoint" his successor--and many of these Democrats believed he would choose Cordell Hull. There were also those who thought that should Roosevelt choose to run himself, he would have Mr. Hull for his Vice-President.¹⁵⁸ Dr. Freeman's reaction to that idea was:

In no case, it seems to us, should Mr. Hull be named

152. February 10, 1940. 153. March 2, 1940.

154. May 18, 1940. 155. March 30, 1940.

156. March 2, 1940. 157. February 14, 1940.

158. July 5, 1940.

as the candidate for Vice-President. His experience and his special capacity will be thrown away as presiding officer of the Senate.¹⁵⁹

Dr. Freeman would rather see him as President or Secretary of State, and in early July he wrote that there was an even chance that Mr. Roosevelt would endorse Cordell Hull
¹⁶⁰
for President.

There were many Democrats in the country who did not want to see Roosevelt give up the reins. In February, a third term movement was begun in New Jersey and it continued to boost Roosevelt for nomination and then for election in November.

However, there were many forces which turned against Roosevelt in 1940. John L. Lewis, blaming the chronic depression on the New Deal, became anti-Roosevelt and tried to swing labor with him.
¹⁶¹ Virginia anti-Roosevelt Democrats were against him because they were against a
¹⁶² third term. The third term was the main opposition ¹⁹² Congressmen had to signing a petition asking Roosevelt to
¹⁶³ run again. And it was mainly because of the third term that Dr. Freeman withheld endorsement of Mr. Roosevelt for so long.

I think that we should get Dr. Freeman's ideas on the

159. July 5, 1940. 160. July 3, 1940.

161. June 22, 1940. 162. October 18, 1940.

163. July 12, 1940.

re-nomination and re-election of Mr. Roosevelt straight right from the first though many of them were not expressed until after the National Convention. "This newspaper confesses itself in no wise enthusiastic for a third term for any man at any time."¹⁶⁴ And Dr. Freeman also felt that "unhappy changes in the President's appearance during the last year show that the strain of office is telling on him."¹⁶⁵ And he did not like to see the party tie its fortunes to one individual.¹⁶⁶ For these three reasons he hoped to see another candidate win the Democratic nomination--though he never stated who his choice would be. But in July he wrote:

For our part, we consider the two-term precedent sound and its abandonment dangerous, but the foreign situation is such that we don't think the U.S. can afford to substitute its national defense to its acceptance of or its antipathy for a third term.¹⁶⁷

Thus Dr. Freeman finally came to the conclusion that if Roosevelt could best prepare for national defense and best manage the ticklish situations in foreign affairs, then he should be re-elected. It was basically these problems in foreign affairs that determined Mr. Roosevelt's decision to run for the Democratic nomination for the third time.

164. September 19, 1940. 165. July 5, 1940.

166. July 15, 1940. 167. July 18, 1940.

CHAPTER II

THE REPUBLICAN NOMINATION

The race for the Republican nomination in 1940 was more competitive and the outcome more doubtful than had been the case in 1936. At the start of the race the major contenders were Thomas E. Dewey of New York, Senator Arthur Vandenburg of Michigan, Senator Robert Taft of Ohio, and we mention might only the dark horse, Wendell Willkie of Indiana. Early in the contest Dewey began to win over Vandenburg even in the middle west and he emerged as the most popular of the Republican candidates by April. "Presidential primaries this week led, perhaps too soon, to a widespread belief that the choice of the people in November would lie between Mr. Dewey and Mr. Roosevelt." ¹⁶⁸ However, a "Stop-Dewey" campaign soon arose and the leading contender for his place was Wendell L. Willkie. ¹⁶⁹ Willkie began to gain on Dewey as world events called more and more for a man with a broad understanding of American foreign policy--one of Dewey's weakest spots. ¹⁷⁰ As the opening of the Republican National Convention drew near, Dr. Freeman wrote:

It is to be admitted that Dewey's personality was less appealing as it was better known, but fundamentally

168. April 13, 1940. 169. April 27, 1940.

170. May 18, 1940.

the German offensive was responsible for the slow demolition of Dewey's carefully built political fortifications.171

When the Willkie movement was only a "wish and a hope",¹⁷²

Dr. Freeman wrote:

The heavily backed Republican candidates have yet to prove that in personal dynamics and intellectual power they can be compared with that sleekest of dark horses--Wendell L. Willkie.

.....
 What Republican candidate has there been in recent history who has the proven executive ability of Willkie, the keen mind for understanding social and economic problems and the striking literary aptitude?173

As we have seen, Willkie slowly but surely gained on Dewey and in late June the Gallup poll showed this gain to considerable,¹⁷⁴ but in the week before the Convention opening there was still much speculation over who the Republican nominee would be.

171. June 28, 1940. 172. April 23, 1940.

173. April 23, 1940. 174. June 22, 1940.

CHAPTER III

THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION

The Republican National Convention opened in Philadelphia on June 24, 1940. Willkie was nominated on the sixth ballot.

There had been no dramatic announcement by any boss, fresh from a smoke filled room, that he had decided to throw his block of votes to Willkie. Instead the delegates had responded in crescendo to the overwhelming enthusiasm of the amateurs who were chanting "We Want Willkie".¹⁷⁵

The party platform of 1940 was similar to that of 1936 in regard to domestic policy--"the Republicans reiterate their violent dislike of the Democratic administration, but they propose no basic change in the institutions set up by the New Deal."¹⁷⁶ "On foreign affairs, the most vital issue, the party declares that America must engage in no war except in defense of the Monroe Doctrine."¹⁷⁷ Dr. Freeman felt that "Keep out of war with Willkie seems at the moment the one non-interventionist slogan that might appeal to the country."¹⁷⁸ On the whole, Dr. Freeman branded the platform "vague and conciliatory"¹⁷⁹ for the purpose of soliciting votes.

In evaluating the Republican candidate for President in 1940, Dr. Freeman found more to admire in Willkie than he

175. June 29, 1940. 176. June 29, 1940.

177. June 29, 1940. 178. June 26, 1940.

179. June 29, 1940.

had in Landon in 1936. He liked Willkie's "frank, simple and friendly manner."¹⁸⁰ He found the main reason for not electing Willkie to be his lack of thorough knowledge of foreign affairs, but Republican leaders presented Willkie to the public as "a two-fisted, hard-hitting man who could cope with Roosevelt in a political campaign or with Germany in a war."¹⁸¹

180. July 3, 1940.

181. June 28, 1940.

CHAPTER IV

THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION

The Democratic National Convention opened in Chicago on July 15, 1940 and Roosevelt was chosen on the first ballot. Dr. Freeman wrote that there was a lack of sponteneity there because most of the delegates had no real enthusiasm for a third term.¹⁸² In fact he wrote, "The Convention was a flop--run by a small, inner coterie."¹⁸³ But Dr. Freeman did not lay the blame directly on Roosevelt.

He [Roosevelt] is absolutely sincere in his belief that he yielded to pleas that he break the two term precedent because of three things--the continuing crises [in Europe], the assertion by many supporters that he was the only Democrat who could keep the party in power, and the argument that if he conscripted the service of others for national defense he could not withhold his own.¹⁸⁴

In comparing the two party platforms Dr. Freeman wrote, "Honest campaigners will discover no material difference between the party declarations on foreign policy."¹⁸⁵ Both parties stressed "the need for increased armed forces to protect the nation and its outposts."¹⁸⁶ On domestic matters, the platforms were very similar also except that the Republicans favored state administration of relief where the Democrats favored Federal administration and the Demo-

182. July 17, 1940. 183. July 19, 1940.

184. July 19, 1940. 185. July 18, 1940.

186. July 20, 1940.

crats "expressed their usual opposition to barriers to trade [where] the Republicans promised tariff protection to agriculture, labor and industry."¹⁸⁷

On the result of the nomination of Roosevelt, Dr. Freeman wrote: "Bolters from the Democratic party have been vocal but not especially numerous since the convention nominated Mr. Roosevelt for a third term."¹⁸⁸

187. July 20, 1940.

188. July 27, 1940.

CHAPTER V

PROGRESS OF THE CAMPAIGN

Dr. Freeman did not report as fully on the progress of the campaign in 1940 as he had in 1936 because foreign affairs absorbed so much interest and were the subject of so many editorials. It wasn't until the end of August that he could write, "Political controversy has been in crescendo all this week."¹⁸⁹

The first Gallup Poll in early August showed Willkie out ahead of Roosevelt,¹⁹⁰ and in the last part of September Gallup said, "Mr. Willkie is not so weak as Governor Landon was at the corresponding date in 1936."¹⁹¹

In early September, Dr. Freeman wrote, "America's Presidential campaign has suffered in public interest because of the nations absorption in the international crisis precipitated by the Treaty of Berlin."¹⁹² However, sufficient interest was maintained in the campaign until election day for Dr. Freeman to be able to speak of "the noisy Presidential campaign."¹⁹³ And just before election day he wrote, "The race is much closer now than it was four years ago."¹⁹⁴

Thus we see that in comparison to the campaign of 1936 this campaign attracted less attention but had the public

189. August 31, 1940. 190. August 5, 1940.

191. September 27, 1940. 192. October 5, 1940.

193. November 2, 1940. 194. November 2, 1940.

been more free to follow it, the closeness of the race would have probably made the 1940 campaign a most exciting one.

CHAPTER VI

THE REPUBLICAN CAMPAIGN

When Willkie, after receiving the Republican nomination, began his campaign for President with his acceptance speech he had an excellent opportunity, for the people were waiting to hear what his proposals and ideas would be. However, Dr. Freeman wrote that "he did not ^{offer} any material departure from the New Deal or any new, constructive proposal."¹⁹⁵ Dr. Freeman was again disappointed to find that the Republican candidate for President did not have a distinctly different set of policies.

At best his [Willkie's] assertion is that he who has never navigated a ship is a better pilot than the man on the bridge. [He] must do more than capitalize on the desire for a change; he must justify it.¹⁹⁶

As for foreign policy, Willkie offered little that was original throughout the campaign--"Where he was explicit, he was in agreement with Mr. Roosevelt. Where he was dissident, he was vague."¹⁹⁷ "Many independent observers think that Mr. Willkie had little to say and delayed too long in saying it."¹⁹⁸ Dr. Freeman found that "Mr. Willkie's most original statement was the challenge to the President to

195. August 19, 1940. 196. August 19, 1940.

197. August 19, 1940. 198. September 20, 1940.

debate campaign issues on a public platform",¹⁹⁹ but nothing come of this because the President was too busy to participate in such a plan.

To some voters of an independent mind, the most remarkable aspect of the Willkie campaign has been the steady and progressive loss of enthusiasm on the part of many who were full of faith in the Republican candidate six weeks ago.²⁰⁰

This was written in September as was, "The surprising drop in Mr. Willkie's support, as reported in the newest Gallup survey, may reflect bad political strategy."²⁰¹ And Dr. Freeman felt that the smallness of the majority by which Maine went Republican indicated that Willkie was not as strong as the party leaders thought.²⁰² But in spite of these discouraging signs, the Republican candidate was not without considerable support. "A veteran newspaper man said: I meet very, very few business men who are not going to vote for Willkie." And there was an unmistakable shift of the mid-west to Willkie in October.²⁰⁴ Also, "the various physical attacks on Mr. Willkie by cowards and cranks have won him a surprising number of sympathizers."²⁰⁵ Another sign that the Willkie campaign was effective was that New York City seemed to tend toward Willkie in late October but the movement was too late to effect a majority there.²⁰⁶

199. August 24, 1940. 200. September 27, 1940.

201. September 20, 1940. 202. September 10, 1940.

203. October 9, 1940. 204. October 21, 1940.

205. October 16, 1940. 206. October 23, 1940.

Mr. Willkie's issues against Roosevelt were the third term, that the housing program was bogged down, that the defense program was inadequate, that Mr. Roosevelt would lead the country into war, and that the Roosevelt administration had done an excess of spending.²⁰⁷

In the 1936 campaign Dr. Freeman had hoped to see the Republicans win a large number of seats in Congress. This desire is not present in the 1940 editorials for "nothing more surely would confuse the national defense and muddle Federal diplomacy than to have a President of one political faith and Congress of the other."²⁰⁸ Dr. Freeman was remembering 1918.

207. November 2, 1940

208. September 11, 1940.

CHAPTER VII

THE DEMOCRATIC CAMPAIGN

If Roosevelt had reason to stay out of the campaign until the last minute in 1936, he had even more reason to do the same in 1940. Mr. Wallace, the Democratic nominee for Vice-President, countered Willkie's attacks against the Democrats.

While some Democrats thought the Vice-Presidential candidate had no alternative to a blow for blow battle with Mr. Willkie, many others thought the temper of Mr. Wallace too provocative and some of his statements too extreme.²⁰⁹

While Wallace was answering Willkie, the few speeches Roosevelt made indicated that he intended to rely on his record.²¹⁰

"It is for peace I have labored; and it is for peace I shall labor all the days of my life"²¹¹ was his answer to those who cried that he would carry the country to war, and Dr. Freeman²¹² believed that his record proved what he asserted. Dr.

Freeman also believed that Roosevelt was one of the first to realize the danger in Europe and to desire preparedness. He enumerated twenty things the President had done since Hitler's rise to power to oppose Nazism and protect the United States and then wrote:

When these things are given their fullest valuation

209. October 5, 1940. 210. October 26, 1940.

211. October 24, 1940. 212. October 24, 1940.

and every other short-coming is added to them, the balance on the account of national defense is overwhelmingly to the credit of President Roosevelt. For that reason, the News Leader believes he should be re-elected. In the effort that lies ahead, be it for the maintenance of a hazardous peace or for the prosecution of a war to defend American institutions, we believe he is the best qualified man the nation can hope to name as its leader.²¹³

Dr. Freeman therefore went on record as being for the re-election of President Roosevelt and expressed confidence, though not nearly as much as in 1936, that he would be re-elected.

213. October 17, 1940.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MAJOR ISSUE

As we have seen in the preceeding chapters, Dr. Freeman did not come out in support of Roosevelt until late in the campaign and it was his belief that Mr. Roosevelt could best administer the national defense that brought him to his final decision. This national defense was the issue of the campaign.

Traditional party preference, old allegiance, a sound record in other respects--these are destined to mean little in the campaign of 1940 when set against the supreme, the overwhelming issue of national defense.²¹⁴

"Have we oversimplified the election by making national defense the supreme, all inclusive issue? We do not think so."²¹⁵

Since national defense was the major issue, how the candidates stood on this issue was all-important. Dr. Freeman felt that neither candidate would take the country into war willingly and "the average fair minded man knows that the country will be safe either in the hands of F.R. or W. Willkie."²¹⁶ The day before the election he wrote, "For the conduct of the national defense, at a time of extreme danger, procure the ablest, best qualified leader--by voting tomorrow for Roosevelt."²¹⁷

214. July 16, 1940. 215. November 4, 1940.

216. October 28, 1940. 217. November 4, 1940.

CHAPTER IX

OUTCOME OF THE ELECTION

In the Presidential election of 1936, Roosevelt had gotten all but eight electoral votes and carried all but two states. In the 1940 election he carried all but ten states and received all but eighty-two electoral votes. His popularity was considerably less than in 1936 but the election nevertheless showed "national approval of the Roosevelt-Hull foreign policy,"²¹⁸ since that was the major issue in the election. Dr. Freeman also saw in the outcome²¹⁹ "a tremendous personal victory that must be used well...."

218. November 6, 1940.

219. November 6, 1940.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, from this survey of the elections of 1936 and 1940 through the News Leader editorials, we see that Dr. Freeman was a "Roosevelt man." However, he was not in complete agreement with Roosevelt on all issues and can not be accused of backing him arbitrarily. He was discerning and selective in his study of politics and was not hesitant in proclaiming that he was in disagreement with Democratic policy on certain points. He could look at the political situation with the "independent mind" he so often wrote of and did not give his readers a totally one sided view of the campaigns.

That he was not a "150 % New Dealer" is seen best in his desire for a strong conservative party to hold the liberal party in balance. He was a liberal himself and wanted politics and government to proceed along a progressive path but it was his profound belief that it was for the best interest of the nation that the liberal party be tempered by a conservative party. This, I believe, was one of Dr. Freeman's cardinal beliefs.

In dealing with these two elections we have seen many differences between them. The election of 1936 was not crowded out of the news by other issues and hence we

get a fairly detail account of it in Dr. Freeman's editorials. And there was no one all consuming issue in the 1936 election and therefore we covered several important issues. However, in 1940, the Presidential campaign was crowded out of the news by the foreign developments and the progress of the first year of World War II, so we do not find so detail an account of the campaign. And in 1940 there was one major issue, as we have seen, and hence we did not have so much material in this area as we did in 1936.

I think these two years, 1936 and 1940, were excellent ones for a study of presidential campaigns through Dr. Freeman's editorials. In 1936, we were able to get way down into the election and campaign and obtain a fairly complete knowledge of the workings and the personnel of the election. In 1940, we were able to study a most vital and determining election and it proved to be an excellent campaign year for comparison with the campaign of 1936.

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