**Franklin Roosevelt’s 3rd and 4th presidential term**

Franklin Roosevelt is best remembered for his New Deal politics and policies that allowed the United States to get out of the depression and put people back to work. The Democrats in the 1940 party nominating convention pushed for him to run for a third term. Only the failed Bull Moose campaign of Theodore Roosevelt was an attempt at the presidency at more than 7 years in office. Although Franklin Roosevelt is remembered as a great president and even has a new granite monument around the tidal basin opposite the Jefferson Memorial, there are several problems caused by his refusal to adhere to the principle established by George Washington of only two terms as president.

1. Washington was correct, after two terms, the President needs to change. FDR was the first and only president to serve more than two terms. Passed by Congress in 1947, and ratified by the states on February 27, 1951, the Twenty-Second Amendment limits an elected president to two terms in office, a total of eight years.
2. FDR was considered a weak, old isolationist president by Hitler, who felt that the United States was unwilling to support its European allies with forces in Europe. A stronger stance by the USA president may have discouraged the all-out World War II in Europe. Perhaps a more forward thinking president would have become more involved in the war at an earlier date. Later in the 1940 campaign, Roosevelt insisted that he was in the race to keep America out of war in Europe.
3. FDR was a racist. He did little to help the Jewish people headed for extermination in Europe. He did not let them emigrate to the United States, nor did he do anything to disrupt the systematic execution of Jews and other minority groups by the Hitler regime. Even with no evidence and a military finding that the Japanese were no threat to the United States, people of Japanese ancestry were sent to camp for the duration of the war. Meanwhile, in Hawaii, the Japanese immigrants formed a large percentage of the work force.
4. The Armed Forces were still mostly segregated in the war. No action was taken to fully integrate forces in the military. Civil rights in this country did not make much progress under his administration. The service structure was still based on tradition and seniority until the war started. The governmental structure allowed threats and information to be ignored allowing the Pearl Harbor attack to happen without adequate warning.
5. During the war, Roosevelt sided more with Stalin than Churchill. His meetings and treaty agreements allowed the Soviet Union to take over Eastern Europe and laid the basis for the cold war and conflicts after the war such as Korea. There was insufficient effort made to educate the Manhattan Project scientists about protection of the nuclear secrets there from Soviet espionage threat. This led to the terror of the McCarthy hearings in the Senate after the war where “Communist” leanings were felt to be equivalent to support for the Soviet Union.
6. During these terms as president, FDR had several health issues that reduced his time available and effectiveness to adequately perform the job of president. Fortunately, there were some excellent advisors available to help conduct the business of running the country. However, there was perhaps too much emphasis on winning the war, and not enough on preparing the country for a different world political situation after the war.

Ah, but the great unknown is whether someone else as president during this time would have done a better or worse job. Although there were many problems and issues with the 3rd and 4th FDR terms, it can be argued that at that time, he was a better choice for president than the opposition would have been. After all, World War II came to a dedicated and successful conclusion, and, for that, FDR is hailed for his leadership at that time. Even looking back, there does not appear to been a good alternate candidate at that time in history.