
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”
The Master Speech Files, 1898, 1910-1945

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1920 September 2

Portland, ME - Campaign Speech

For President
JAMES M. COX

HEADQUARTERS Franklin D. Roosevelt

For Vice-President
FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

GRAND CENTRAL PALACE
NEW YORK

Portland, Maine, Sept. 2, 1920.

One of the most unfortunate effects of political campaigns is the tendency on the part of partisan speakers to arrogate to their own party the credit for everything good and to assign to the other party the blame for everything that has not been satisfactory. I say this with reference to a certain type of speaker which exists in all parties.

It is exemplified, for instance, by the suggestion that people should vote the Democratic ticket this year on the ground that Thomas Jefferson was the great founder of the principles of the Democratic Party, and that they should vote the Republican ticket this year because under the conditions which existed in 1860, Abram Lincoln was elected President as a Republican.

It is exemplified by some who claim that one party or the other was responsible for the winning of the great war in which we took part in 1917 and 1918.

That kind of campaign talk may have been useful in days in this country when partisanship ran high, when Fourth of July oratory and wild statements were the rule of the day. I firmly believe, however, that blind partisanship is rapidly disappearing, especially now that the women of America have been accorded the franchise. Most men and women will vote this Autumn not because of the position their grandfather took or because of the fact that such and such a man was a member of such and such a party in bygone days. They will vote with

the realization that the question at issue is the Government of the United States during the coming four years. They will draw a comparison between the platforms of the parties and the pledges and speeches of the nominees. Further than this, they will look into the public records of the nominees themselves, and determine which are best fitted to carry the country forward for another four years. Still further, they will look at the methods by which the candidates were nominated and they will examine into the question of whether the candidates, when elected, will act as leaders or whether they will act as the mouthpiece of other forces, open or hidden, standing behind them.

In the same way, the voters are more apt than ever before to read history truly. They will agree, I firmly believe, ~~with~~ that the part of America in the great war was a national part, that the war was not won by Democrats or Republicans, but that when the crisis came men and women of all parties joined forces with the sole determination of bringing the war to a victorious conclusion. In line with this, my experience thus far in the campaign leads me to state with certainty that the men and women who vote in the coming election will remember that in that great war we had a purpose far greater than that of a mere military victory, that we entered it with the high moral purpose of making a recurrence of a world-wide cataclysm impossible. This is why the issue ^{is} ~~is against~~ the League of Nations as against no League of Nations or some ~~other~~ ^{substitute} wholly indefinite will appear clear "to the Am. people".

Portland, Maine, Sept. 2, 1930.

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American people.

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Portland, Maine, Sept. 3, 1920.

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