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

Series 1: Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Political Ascension

File No. 165

1920 September 14

Springfield, MA - Campaign Speech

EXTRACTS FROM SPEECH OF HON. F.D. ROOSEVELT
SPRINGFIELD, MASS., SEPT. 14, 1920

Springfield has long been the home of intelligent thought, and as a community has shown in many ways a constructive spirit of good citizenship and has pointed the way to many other American cities. I feel certain that the people of Springfield will, in the heat of the present political campaign, be able to discriminate between truth and fiction. More than this, they will be able to discriminate between those candidates on the one hand who speak in high sounding words and sweeping generalities, and those on the other hand who speak with directness and give facts.

There is at the present time a very general attempt to discredit the Wilson Administration and to gloss over the work of the present Republican Congress. It seems to be written in our history that at some period in the lives of all of our great men they have been made the peculiar object of concerted attack and vilification.

It was true of Washington both during the Revolution when a combination was formed to supplant and disgrace him, and later toward the close of his second term as President when he became the object ~~out~~ of the bitterest slander and abuse ever heaped on the head of a great Nation.

It was true of Thomas Jefferson, who while President was accused of fraud, of robbery, and of Un-Americanism.

It was true of Andrew Jackson, who was charged with being an autocrat and was attacked throughout the Nation by a cabal of political henchmen.

It was true of Lincoln himself. Many men are still alive who can remember the ridicule and the mockery of the patient man in the White House. He was called a usurper, a traitor, and a tyrant. One of his own party accused him of treachery.

It was true of Cleveland, and it was true of Roosevelt. Even Senator Harding's own paper in 1912 called Theodore Roosevelt an Aaron Burr and a Benedict Arnold.

We are witnessing today a similar phenomenon in the Nation. A concerted, partisan plan is being carried out to discredit the President of the United States in every possible way.

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Month after month this campaign of criticism has gone on. In fact, the Republican campaign, as they are waging it today, narrows down to charge after charge that President Wilson is an autocrat and that his administration has been marked by extravagant waste, though no specific examples are cited to prove them. In fact, there is so little that is constructive in their campaign that one wonders how long the people are going to be satisfied with criticizing words and nothing else. The theory of Senator Harding seems to be that the Presidency itself should be a kind of cheap clerkship to carry out the policies announced by a syndicate or coterie of old line party leaders.

As I recall history most of our great deeds have been brought about by executive leaders, by the Presidents who were not tools of Congress but were true leaders of the nation who so truly interpreted the needs and wishes of the people that they were supported in their great tasks. Washington would not have lead us to victory in

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