
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”
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Troy, NY - Campaign Speech

Extracts for Mr. Roosevelt's speech at Troy, N. Y., Monday night 9/20/20.

Each new utterance of Senator Harding serves to make clear to the American public the type of mind which his candidacy represents. Day by day the camouflage of patriotism with which his party managers have sought to clothe him is being shot away. Beginning the campaign with solemn pronouncement upon Americanism, Senator Harding is gradually descending to daily appeal to all the un-American and alien prejudice and passions in our land.

I have been in some 34 States of the Union in the last month, and everywhere I have seen the first hand evidence of the Republican leaders to arra; class against class, creed against creed, and nationality against national. Their campaign is unblushing in its duplicity. For instance, in centers where Americans of German descent predominate, such as Milwaukee, attempts are made to inflame the people by an appeal to vote against Governor Cox because it is alleged that President Wilson has been unfriendly to the German and that Senator Harding would help the interests of Germany and the German people. At the same moment this campaign is going on, another campaign is under way in New England, in centers where there are no people of German descent, where they are trying to get votes for Senator Harding on the allegation that Governor Cox was pro-German during the war.

Let me give another instance. In certain sections they are telling vote of German descent that the League of Nations will be harmful to Germany and advance the interests of France. Over in the New England mill towns, Republicans are telling voters of French or French-Canadian descent that the League of Nations will hurt France and advance the cause of Germany.

Dozens of other parallels have come to my attention. The Republican "Strategy Board" is seeking to win the Italian element and at the same time they have assured Jugo-Slavic leaders that the election of Senator Harding means the restoration of Fiume to the Jugo-Slavs.

The solidly American people of the nation must be awakened to the danger to us by the reintroduction into politics of the disloyal hyphen. The Harding slogan "America First" in the disclosures daily made should really

Even the ~~exact~~ exigencies of politics do not justify the Republican effort to divide the nation into racial factions. Unfortunately some of our people are not sufficiently capable of appreciating that the hints thrown out by the Republican managers of the Republican candidates as to how the United States will help various foreign peoples are not made in good faith. It is utterly wrong to play Germany against France and France against Germany just as it is to play Italy against Jugo-Slavia and the Jugo-Slavs against the Italians. What can any sensible Irishman believe Senator Harding will really do to advance the cause of Irish self-government, in case he is elected. The hollowness and trickery of these appeals must become evident, more than that they should discredit the Republican nominee.

Of course, everybody knows that during the war the great mass of Americans of foreign birth or recent foreign descent are and were wholly loyal. My experience in the Navy has brought this home to me on a thousand occasions. Men of German, French, Italian, Jugo-Slav, Irish and every other descent fought willingly and gladly side by side in the struggle, just as their families at home assisted in every way in the great struggle. They were and they are Americans first and I am convinced they will see through deceit and the attempt to stir up prejudices which have no basis of fact.

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