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

Series 1: Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Political Ascension

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Syracuse, NY - Campaign Speech
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The great majority of people who are citizens but who were either born in other lands or whose parents were born in other lands were completely loyal during the War. I can bear witness to this because I saw it at first hand in the Navy Department, among our sailors in the North Sea, and among our troops on the fighting front. I saw it in Liberty Loan and Red Cross Drives at home, but with these people too the Republican Campaign Managers are seeking for the purpose of mere partisanship to encourage the support of organizations, the primary purpose of which is to put questions affecting other nations ahead of the big, vital questions affecting our own nation.

Republican Leaders are making open solicitation for the Italian-American vote by suggesting to them a divided allegiance - by placing the interest of a foreign land above the interest of the United States - by doing deliberately the things which Theodore Roosevelt gave the last years of his life to stamp out.

When the solidly American people of this Republic see the hyphen brought back into national affairs and witness the attempt to divide our people in the interest of foreign aspiration and allegiance, they may well beware.

Speaking for myself and for Governor Cox as well, I say quite frankly that - We want All American votes only.
I call upon Senator Harding and other Republican Leaders to repudiate hyphenated allegiance and hyphenated politics, and especially the organizations formed in his behalf with hyphenated names. These organizations have the effrontery to place the name of some other Country first and the name of America second.

I recognize that this is a political year, but at the same time it seems strange that we seem to have lost in part that spirit of American unity which consecrated our purpose during the great War. Let us paint again that picture which only two years ago thrilled us with pride - the picture of Liberty bearing fearlessly the American shield. Inscribed on that shield were the names of men of German, Italian, Irish, Slavish, Dutch and AngD-Saxon descent. Underneath was the simple epitaph - "Americans All".

I myself chance to be of Dutch descent. My people came from Holland nearly three centuries ago. Why should I vote in this coming election according to the way I think it will best help the people of Holland, instead of the way I think it will best help the people of the United States? If that is true about me, should it be no less true about other people of Dutch descent, whose ancestors came here one century ago or even only one generation ago? And if this is true about people of Dutch descent, should it not be equally true of people of any other descent? Every American, except full blooded Indians, came in his origin from some other Country.

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Contrast this with the statement of Senator Harding before the Veterans of the G.A.R, that the League of Nations is a "Stupendous Fraud". If it is a "stupendous fraud", why have thirty-nine nations of the World joined the League? Why was it that among those which have recently entered was Switzerland, a nation held up through history as the exemplification of the love of liberty and complete independence?

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Roosevelt charges play to alien vote.

Accuses Republican managers of appealing to elements not loyal during the war.

Cites Dierok's support.

Calls on Harding to repudiate hyphenated societies.

He asks only American vote.


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Scoring Senator Harding "for seeking the support of un-American element in the electorate" he charged that the reports of Senator Harding by men like George Sylvester Dierok is in evidence of the object to be gained.

The assembly room was thronged when Mr. Roosevelt and his party arrived. Sharing the rostrum with him were Miss Harriett May Mills, candidate for Secretary of the State of New York on the Democratic ticket, and Robert S. Marx, Superior Court Judge of Cincinnati, Ohiol, who is touring the country as a member of the Roosevelt party.

A noisy and prolonged demonstration followed the introduction of Mr. Roosevelt as the principal speaker of the evening.

He launched immediately into a denunciation of what he called "seeking votes by encouraging divided allegiance - placing the interest of foreign lands above that of the United States". "Republican leaders are making open solicitation of the Italian-American vote - doing deliberately things which Theodore Roosevelt gave the last years of his life to stamp out", he charged.

"When the solid American people of the Republic see the hyphen brought back into national affairs and witness the attempt to divide our people in the interest of foreign aspirations and allegiance, they may well beware".
"Speaking for myself and for Governor Cox as well, I say quite frankly that we want all American votes only". He demanded that Republican leaders abjure the support of voters whose Americanism was a secondary attribute only. "I call upon Senator Harding and other Republican leaders to repudiate the hyphenated elements and hyphen policies", said Mr. Roosevelt, "and especially the organization formed in his behalf with hyphenated names. These organizations have the effrontery to place the name of some other country first and the name of America second".

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"Contrast this with the statement of Senator Harding before the veterans of the G.A.R. that the League of Nations is a 'stupendous fraud'. If it is a 'stupendous fraud' why have 39 nations of the world joined the League; why was it that among those which have recently entered was Switzerland, a nation held up through history as the exemplification of the love of liberty and complete independence."

"The issue on the League and on the hyphen vote is becoming more and more definite as the days go by - Senator Harding opposed to the position taken by 39 other nations of the world. He is on record as repudiating his own vote in the United States Senate. He talks vaguely about International good-will - about some new effort to create some new associations. Nobody who is conversant with the war wearying of the world - no one who knows of the horrors and destruction of the present war - can have the temerity to suggest that the 39 nations now in the League will cast it aside and sit down on the orders of the United States government at a new peace table and try to work out some wholly undefined new plan".
In an address at Utica today before women of the Civic League
Mr. Roosevelt declared that Harding's plan for an international tribunal
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"The League of Nations, on the other hand," he said, "is a fence around the edge designed to prevent nations from tumbling off into the abyss of war".
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