Franklin D. Roosevelt — "The Great Communicator"
The Master Speech Files, 1898, 1910-1945
Series 1: Franklin D. Roosevelt's Political Ascension

File No. 201

1920 October 7

Denver, CO - Campaign Speech
I am delighted to read of Chairman Will Hays' prophecy in regard to how the States west of the Mississippi would go in the November election. I might have been somewhat concerned if Mr. Hays had confined his prophecy to those states which could normally be placed in the doubtful column, but when Mr. Hays went on to talk about the State of Texas going Republican, he took away any political value from his prophecy and made it merely one of the foolish yarns which belong to the silly season of politics.

I often wonder if it does much good politically to claim everything in sight. For instance, no impartial observer would even mention Texas as a possibility in the Republican column, and at the same time impartial observers have spoken of every other State west of the Mississippi as being in the doubtful column with the exception of Louisiana and Arkansas.

I myself have visited only Missouri, Kansas and Colorado on this trip, but I certainly believe that it is a significant fact that literally hundreds of Republicans and Independents have come to me and told me that on the great issue of the League of Nations they propose to vote the Democratic Ticket. They understand that this is the only way in which they can register their approval of our entrance into the League. As every day goes by, I receive more support of this kind.

People who talk about landslides and about overwhelming victories in every State of the Union do so either to bolster up their own hopes or with the deliberate intention of trying to deceive the voters. It is on a par with the well-known method of conducting crooked straw ballots for the purpose of having it appear that there is a tremendous swing in the direction desired. This kind of campaign is also on a par with the deliberate attempts to present only mixed side of a question and to refuse any kind of publicity to the other side. Luckily, the American voter sees
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I want merely to make one prophecy in regard to the balance of this campaign. You will find that the Republican managers will use every possible effort to divert your attention from the issue of the League of Nations. The Republicans will continue to talk generalities in the same way that Senator Beveridge did here last night. They will continue to make misrepresentations and will bring out, in all probability, new and trumped up charges to take the thoughts of the voters away from the principal question to be decided at this Election. Personally, I have sufficient faith in the men and women of this Country to believe that they will see through these political hoax, and that they will not allow themselves to be led astray.

I want to call particular attention to a flood of pamphlets which is now being sent out from the Republican Headquarters. The Republicans are fortunate in having a campaign fund large enough to enable the sending out of pamphlets. The Democratic campaign fund is, as is usual with the Democratic Party, so low that Democratic literature has to be kept down to a minimum, but I am glad that we have not even the temptation of sending out such pamphlets as I have seen emanating from Mr. Will Hays' office. I can only characterize them as "clumsy lies".

Senator Beveridge is evidently suggesting, in a confused and hazy way which should excite the admiration of even that "master of words without meaning", Senator Harding, a policy forgetting Christianity, civilization, progress of the whole world, honesty, good faith and any of the other things which distinguish us from savages - an undefined "America Only" policy. If his involved rhetoric means that he believes we should consider the interests of our own nation from the standpoint of a man who loves his Nation even more than he loves his party, I hope to see
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If the Republican leaders, blocking everything in their pique, had only been half as anxious to keep America from being made the laughing stock of the World through their performances as they now become lest we be made a "dupe", we would not have the present League of Nations issue in this campaign.

But it would be silly for me to go further into the oration of my friend, Senator Beveridge. He is a great orator—one who can bring his crowd to their feet with enthusiasm over their patriotism and the wonderful things for which our Flag stands. His is the kind of speech which produces the enthusiasm of the moment, but not the deep thinking which lasts through many days.

I would be among the first to agree that the majority of Republicans, by that I mean the rank and file of the party, are just as patriotic as the rank and file of the Democratic Party. All of us love our Country and want to see her continue the march of progress. So too most people in public life, whether they be Democrats or Republicans, have a sincere regard for doing their duty.
It is true, on the other hand, that there has been a small element in our political life which has been in constant opposition to progress, and this element has usually been found in close association with the individuals and corporations who are in politics for purely selfish ends. There is a distinct connection between the reactionary element and the corporations which seek to own city governments or State governments, and also with the individuals who, in the past, have sought to purchase seats in the Senate of the United States itself by the mere use of money and without regard to whether they were fitted for the position or not.
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If the Republican leaders, blocking everything in their pique, had only been half as anxious to keep America from being made the laughing stock of the world through their performances as they now become lest we be made a "dupe", we would not have the present League of Nations issue in this campaign.

But it would be silly for me to go further into the eulogy of my friend, Senator Beveridge. He is a great orator - one who can bring his crowd to their feet with enthusiasm over their patriotism and the wonderful things for which our Flag stands. His is the kind of speech which produces the enthusiasm of the moment, but not the deep thinking which lasts through many days.

I would be among the first to agree that the majority of Republicans, by that I mean the rank and file of this party, are just as patriotic as the rank and file of the Democratic Party. All of us love our Country and want to see her continue the march of progress. So too most people in public life, whether they be Democrats or Republicans, have a sincere regard for doing their duty.
It is true, on the other hand, that there has been a small element in our political life which has been in constant opposition to progress, and this element has usually been found in close association with the individuals and corporations who are in politics for purely selfish ends. There is a distinct connection between the reactionary element and the corporations which seek to own city governments or State governments, and also with the individuals who, in the past, have sought to purchase seats in the Senate of the United States itself by the mere use of money and without regard to whether they were fitted for the position or not.
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Senator Beveridge says we should not enter the League of Nations until the Irish in our country forget that they are of Irish descent. This, I take it, is another way of saying we should never enter. As to his contention that until everybody forgets the nationality of their fathers and grandfathers, a compact with the other nations of the world would make us a racial hot house - that is mere rot. We have just passed through a war in which nations represented by many sons in this country were arrayed against each other. I failed to see any symptoms of a racial hot house in this country during that conflict. If it did not happen under those circumstances, how absurd to say it would be the result of an agreement to promote peace among nations, under which we retain all of our splendid American individuality unimpaired.
This ninth criticism of the League you can probably answer better. You might answer that the reason we went to war was because the future of all civilization was imperiled and because it was obvious that if we did not enter the war, liberty would perish from the earth, and at the same time learned that unless some common compact between the Nations of the earth was reached by which it would be impossible for some new German tyrant to rise again and to plunge the world into the miseries, we would sooner or later have all of our work to do over again.
Granted, there is grave danger of our admitting peoples of other countries to the full enjoyment of our franchise faster than they can be assimilated. How did we get to be so near the danger line? It was because the tariff protected monopolies who and and are financing the Republic Party in long years of Republican Administration, saw to it that floods of cheap European labor were imported after only a mockery of examination and supervision, in order to break down the living wage of native American workmen and secure cheap labor for their steel mills and their mines. Today a new gigantic flood is preparing to roll over our shores. Dissatisfaction at the terrible conditions in Europe has made American the hope of millions of peasants. Do you want to again put the Republican Party in power under the leadership of the same people who, for their selfish profit, let down the bars before? Is it not obviously wise, on this issue alone, to seat at the doorways of our country men who believe that American labor is entitled to as much protection as American monopolies, who believe that no financial advantage to any particular group of manufacturers can possibly repay the dangers of a large foreign emigration, and that the most careful safeguards should be thrown around our emigration laws.
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KEEPS 'ALL SHE KNOWS' ABOUT DENTON CASE

Denies Rumors of 'Wild Party'; Not Incriminated by Any Statement, Says Coast District Attorney.


Must Fuse Population.

What is the highest of all American interests, the hardest of all American tasks, the most vital of all American duties? That interest, task and duty is to fuse into a homogeneous American unity the variegated racial groups of which our population is now composed.

It is indispensable to our well-being, vital indeed, to our very existence as a nation, that these various and variegated racial elements of our population shall be fused and welded into a homogeneous people—a people not only one in interests but also one in speech; not only one in ideals, but also one in blood; not only one in name, but also one in distinct and distinctive national consciousness. Any force that perpetuates racial divisions among us is destructive of American interests and hostile to American destiny.

Any influence that tends to obliterate racial lines from American citizenship promotes American well-being and advances the prosperity, prestige and power of the American nation. That is why we Americans, for our own good and that of the world, cannot take any political part in the affairs of other nations—cannot become a political factor in foreign ententes or alliances; cannot become politically involved in the plots or intrigues, the ambitions or animosities of distant peoples.
The grantee of leasing the garden at the highest bid will be the owner of the property. The lessee is given a three-year lease with the option to renew for an additional two years. The lessee is responsible for all maintenance and operational costs. The lease agreement is subject to the approval of the City Council.
It was the government of each member-nation that determined, as occasions arose, what the covenant required that nation to do. If so, it is certain that the member-nations will be in perpetual dispute, since we ourselves violently differ as to what the covenant requires of us.

If, on the other hand, the central league government, such as a court or council, or any agency whatever, undertakes to decide what are the duties and obligations of member-nations and those member-nations refuse to obey, precisely the same fundamental question is raised that made our Civil war inevitable.

Why We Went to War.

These fundamental considerations—the racial structure of our population and the interpretation of the league covenant apply to any political combination whatever with foreign nations. For such a political arrangement must be based on some formal written compact defining the relation between member nations and the general organization of which each is a part; second, setting out the obligations of member nations to one another; third, stating the functions to be performed by the international combination.

But regardless of the policy—the certain disaster—America involved in any political foreign association would find that America must risk that peril and suffer that disaster because it was to establish just such an international relationship that we declared war on Germany. Is that true? If so, it was the most important fact in the whole history of the human race; and congress was infinitely stupid and eternally disgraced that, in its war resolution, it did not mention that supreme and unprecedented consideration. Congress alone has the power to declare war; congress alone can state its reasons for exercising that august and terrible authority; and congress avowed that we made war on Germany only because Germany was and had been making war on us.

Spartan Constitution.

Go ask the men who did the fighting, whether they knew the word to establish a league of nations, or to uphold and vindicate the rights and honor of their country, outraged, insulted and trampled upon by an unprovoked, ruthless and insolent government. They will tell you that their purpose was to whip Germany, their country's enemy, and not to make Germany the envy of Europe and the dread of old and conquest-swollen Asiatic and European governments.

But we are informed that Mr. Wilson's speeches set out the true reasons for our military action. That is consistent with the whole theory pursued by the administration, of subordinating the legislative and executive branch of our national government, of spurning the constitution and asserting prerogatives unknown to our fundamental law and destructive of the spirit of that charter of our national life. The president has no more constitutional authority to state the reason for declaring war or to commit the nation to any plan as the outcome of a war than he has to make the declaration of war itself. As a matter of law, his statement of the reason and
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