# 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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1920 October 20

Cleveland, OH - Campaign Speech

## EXIRACTS FROM SPEECH OF HON.F.D.ROOSEVBLT <br> CLTMELAND, OHIO., OCT. 20,1920

I want to make a few ramarks in regard to the position taken by the eminent legalist, Mr. Elihu Root, on the subjeot of the League of Nations. First of all, it is important to obtain a background of Mr. Root himself. No one questions his legal ability. No one questions the fact that he has used those abilities on the conservetive side of almost every public question which has come up in the past forty years. It is well-known that he has represented, first and last, almost every rasctionary element in American business life and as a lawyer and public man has fought rather consistently against the enactment of nearly all progressive measures which have come before the Nation. His is the type of mind which would have sided with King John against granting the Magna Carta; the type of mind which would have opposed the ratification of the Constitution of the United States because he would have found so many holes in it. His is the type of mind which would have opposed the Monroe Doctrine on the ground that it was dangerous. His is the type of mind which would have opposed the Emancipation Proclamation on the ground of taking away property without due process of law. His is the type of mind which would have opposed Cleveland's Venezuela message to England on the ground that it was unprecedented. His is the type of mind which did its best in 1912 to oppose Theodore Roosevelt's effort to make the Republican Party progresaive.

So much for the man who now oomes out with a specious argument against our joining the League of Nations. I have seakhil statement with great interest. It is based on two major objections. First, to Article 10, and, secondly, the allegation that president Wilson was by his attitude responsible for our fallure to ratify during
the last session of the Senate.
In regard to Ar£iole 10, Mr. Root's whole statement falls to the ground because of his misstatement of what lawyers call the "facts in the case". Mr. Roote says that - "Article 10 undertakes to guarantee and maintain by force of arms the territorial boundaries adopted by the chief representatives of four nations in Paris in 1919. Surely Mr. Root cannot be so ignorant as he makes himself out to be. Article 10 does not guarantes to maintain by force of arms. It guarantees to maintain the territorial integrity of nations against outside aggression/in case of a threat against this territorial integrity the Council of the League shall recommend what steps shall be taken to prevent the execution of the threat. Mr. Root knows that force of arms would not be recommended unless various other measures such as international ostracism of the country making the threat had first wholly failed. In other words, force of arms, which Mr. Root drags up as a bogey, would only be recommended in case of a threatened world conflagration such as that through which we have just passed. Every sane man knows that in case of another world war America would be drawn in any way, whether we were in the League or not, but it is chiefly in regard to his statement relating to the territorial lines as laid down in Paris that $M r$. Root is disingenuous.

Mr . Root must know what others know that the Paris Peace Conference laid down certain boundaries between new peoples and certain tentative boundaries between older nations, and that the lines of demarcation were drawn as well as possible under the
oircumstances. Great shifts of population had taken place. Definite facts were hard to obtain, sarixa at the close of the war, and it was recognized by all present that future considerations and better knowledge later aqquired might require the amendment of many of these lines. The whole treaty proceeded on the assumption that by creating the League of Nations errors made at the Paris Conference could later be corrected or amended through the instrumentality of the League, without causing a complete upsetting of international relations with wars resulting therefrom. Dozens of paragraphs of the Treaty prove this contention. They refer many undefined matters to the future action of the League of Nations. It will be clearly seen, therefore, that Mr. Root, in order once more to maintain that hideous danger to our citizenship, known as perty regularity, besed his accuses on assertions which are not facts.

In regard to the rest of his speech, he seeks to excuse his vote for Harding on the allegation that President Wilson was is responsible for our not being in the League at the present time. I will leave it to any person with a logical mind to ask himself or herself whether that is a logical argument. President Wilson is not running for reelection. People may have different opinions in regard to what took place between the Executive and the senate during the past year. The blame for what happened has nothing to do with the present election because of the simple fact that the issue of the League at the present time is between Governor cox and Senator Haraing. One of these gentlemen will take up the question with the next Senate, of whom one-third will be new members.

But here again Mr. Root is guilty of a deliberate and clear misrepresentetion of what are well-known facts. Mr. Root states - MMr. Cox declares that he will insist on the Treaty just as $\mathbb{M r}$. Wilson negotiated it". That statement by the eminent legalist is a continuation of the series of similar statements given out by eminent Republi8endefor partisan purposes. Mr. Root intends to convey the thoughthat the United states must ratify the Covenant of the League of Nations without the erossing of a "t" or the dotting of an "i". It seems a pity that prominent men cannot stick more closely to what they know to be fact.

Mr. Wilson himself has clearly stated that he was willing to accept the so-csiled Hitchcook reservations - reservations which were extremely similar to the Lodge reservations and differed in language but not in thought, seeking to change words in the Lodge reservations which were in their character insulting to other nations.

Fuxther than this, Mr. Root has undoubtedly had an opportunity to read the statements made by Governor Cox and by me for several months, the gist of them being that we do not oppose reservations which would clarify doubts existing in the minds of any oftizens as to any conflict between the Covenant of the League and the Constitution of the United States. We have made it clear that we wish every citizen to be reassured that the Constitution of the United States and the powers of our Congress shall in every way be preserved. In view of this, Mr . Root's statement as above quoted is a mere piece of impudence. on his part.

There is only one other thing about Mr. Root's statement. He says - "On the other hand Mr. Harding, who voted for the ratific-
ation of the Treaty with the Senate reservations, declares that he would do it again under the same circumstances".

This too is an attempt to create an erroneous impression an attempt to say that $\mathbb{M r}$. Harding is in favor of going into the League. Mr. Root must have read Senator Harding's speech in Des Moines in which he said he was againtgoing into the League with any kind of reservations or amendments - what he wanted was rejection. It may be true that Senator Harding would again vote as he did under the same circumstances. He will not have the chance to do this because the circumstances are changed. It is now nearly a year later and he has come out as candidate for the Presidenay with a statement rejecting the League.

I suppose, however, there is little use in continuing a. controversy of this nature because $M r$. Root is a bitter partisan, and in addition to that a reactionary legalist.

The average voter of the United States understands perfectly clearly the time-worn misrepresentations which have been handed them. They appreciate the fact that forty-one Nations have entered the League of Nations without in any way giving up any of their constitutional or national rights. They appreciate that the League is a going concern. They understand that Governor cox and I want the united states to join with all of these nations and in joining to make it perfectly clear that we give up no rights. Every time a man like Mr . Root comes out with a statement as weak, narrowminded and misrepresentative as this one, it serves merely to give an dmpetus to the swing of thinking voters which is now in progress toward the Democratic Ticket.

There is one point that I want to bring out in regard to the business of the Nation. Jvery person recognizes the need of putting our government on a better business basis. Governor Cox. Senator Harding, Governor Coolidge and I have all spoken of this need. The country recognizes that the nation's government has grown up in a haphazard way, and that the work of the different departments needs to be redistributed and reorganized and that federel employment should be put on a more sound basis.

I want to ask a simple question of the businessmen of the United States. Suppose any one of you at the head of a large business were to find that you had to leave on an extended trip and that you had to find some person to take your place for a year or two. Your business is growing by leaps and bounds - changel have to be made from time to time to meet the changing needs. You want a man who has had experience as a practicall business executive. You would examine into the record of several men. Suppose, for instance, the choice were to narrow down by virtue of circumstences to two gentlemen, one named Cox and one named Harding. I wonder very much whether you would entrust your business to the one of these two who/had no executive or administrative experience, or whether you would choose the one who has had charge of a great executive office through times of stress and has made a complete success of his work, carrying out various reforms in business and orgenization which have won for him the admiration of all who have come in contact with niw. I will leave it to any businessman to tell me which of these manegers he would select.

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The averago voter of the United States understands perfeotly cleariy tho time-worn mierepresentatione which have been handed tham. They appreelate the fact that forty-one Hations have entersd the League of liations without in any way giving up any of their constitutional or netional rights, They appreaiate that the Laague is a going concern. Thoy wndoratand that Governor cox and I want the united states to join with all of these nations and in joining to make it perfeetly clear that we give up no rights. Jvery time a man like ur . noot comes out with a statemont as woak, narrowninded and miarepresentative as this ono, it serves merely to give an ompotus to the awing of thinking voters whioh io now in progress toward tho Domoerntic Micicet.

I want to make a fow remarks in regera to the position taken by the ominent legalist, Mr. Elihu Root, on the subject of the League of Notions. Nixst of all, it is important to obtain a background of $\overline{i r}$. Root himself. Io ono questions his legal ability. No onee questions the fact that he has used those abilities on the conservative side of amnost every public question which has come up in the past forty years. It is woll-known that he has represented, first and lest, almost every reactionary element in American business life and as a lewyer and public man has fought rather congistently agoinst the enactment of nearly ell progressive measures which have come before the Nation. Hie is the type of mind which would have sided with King John against granting the Magna Carta; the type of minc vhich rould have opposed the ratificetion of the Constitution of the United States beeause he would have found so many holes in 1t. His is the type of mendwhich would have opposed the Monroe Doctrine on the ground that it was dangerous. His is the type of mind which rould have opposed the Thancipation Proclamation on the ground of taking avay property without due process of law. His is the type of mind whioh would have opposed Celeveland's venezuela message to Thgland on the ground that it was unprecedented. His is the type of mind which did its best in 1912 to oppose Theodore Roosevelt's effort to make the Republioan Party progressive.

So ruch for the man who now comes out with a specious argument against our goining the League of Hations. I have read his statement with great interest. It is based on two major objections. Firat, to article 10, and, secondly, the allegation that President Wilson was by his attitude responsible for our failure to ratify during

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the last sesaion of the Senate.
In regard to Article $10, \mathbb{Z} r$. Root's whole statement falls to the ground because of his misatatement of whet lawgers call the "facts in the case". Mr. Roote says that - "Article 10 undertakes to guarantee and maintain by force of arms the territorial boundaries adopted by the chief representatives of four nations in Paris in 1919. Surely Mr. Root cannot be so ignorant as he makes himself out to be. Article 10 does not guarantes to maintain by force of arms. It guarantees to maintain the territorial integrity of nations against outside aggression/in case of a threat againgt this territorial integrity the council of the League shall recommend what ateps shall be taken to prevent the exesution of the threat. Mr. Root knows that force of arma would not be reoomended unless various other measures such as international ostracism of the country making the threat had first wholly failed. In other words, force of arms, which $X x$. Root drags up as a bogey, would only be recommended in case of a threatened world conflagration such as that through which we have just passed. Every sane man knows that in case of another world war Amerioa would be dravm in any way, whether we were in the League or not, but it is chlefly in regard to his statemant relating to the territorial lines as laid down in Paris that $W$. Root is disingenuous.

Mr. Root must know what othere know that the paris Peace Conference laid down certain boundaries between new peoples and oertain tentative boundaries betiveon older nations, and that the
lines of demarcation were drawn as well as possible under the
circuhatances. Great shifts of population had taken place. Definite facts were hard to obtain, soubrx at the olose of the war, and it was recognized by all present that future considerations and better knowledge later acquired might require the mendment of many of these lines. The whole treaty proceeded on the assumption that by creating the League of Nations errors made at the Paris Conference could later be correoted or amended through the instrumentality of the League, without arusing a complete upsetting of international relations with wars resulting therefrom. Dozens of paragraphs of the fresty prove this contention. They refer many undefined matters to the future action of the Jeague of Netions. It will be olearly seen, therefore, thet $H$ r. Root, in order once more to maintain thet hideous danger to our aitizenship, known as perty regularity, besed his accuses on assertions which are not facts.

In regard to the rest of his speeoh, he seeks to excuse his vote for Harding on the allegation that president wilson was is responsible for our not being in the loague at the present time. I will leave it to any person with a logical mind to ask himself or herself whether that is a logical argument. President wilson is not running for reelection. People may have different opinions in regard to what took place between the Executive and the senate during the past year. The blame for what happened has nothing to ao with the present election because of the simple fact that the issue of the League at the present time is between Governor cox and Senator Harding. One of these gentlemen will take up the question with the next senate, of whom one-third will be new members.

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But here again Mr. Root is guilty of a deliberate and elear misrepresentation of what are well-known facts. Kr. Root states - "Nr. Cox declares that he will ingist on the Treaty just as $M r$. Wilson negotiated it". That statement by the eminont legalist is a continuation of the series of aimilar otatements given out by eminent Republigg ${ }^{\text {gitiotor partisan purposes. Mr. Root }}$ intends to convey the faet that the United States must ratify the Covenant of the Ieague of Nations without the crosaing of a "t" or the dotting of an "1". It seems a pity that prominent men cannot stick more closely to what they know to be fact.

Mr. Wison himself has clearly stated that he was willing to accept the so-callea Hitchcock reservathons - reservations which were extremely similar to the Lodge reservations and differed in language but not in thought, seeking to change words in the Lodge reservations which were in their character insulting to other nations.

Further than this, Mr. Root has undoubtedly had an opportunity to read the statementa made by Governor cox and by me for several months, the gist of them being that we do not oppose reservations which would clarify doubts existing in the minds of any citizens as to any conflict betweon the Covenant of the League and the Constitution of the Unitod States. We have made it clear that we wish every citizen to be reassured that the Constitution of the United States and the powers of our congress shall in every way be preserved. In viev of this, Mr. Root's atatement as above quoted is a mere piece of impudence. on his part.

There is only one other thing about $M x$. Root's statement. He says - "On the other hand Mr. Harding, who voted for the ratifle-

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ation of the Treaty with the Senate reservations, declares that he wonid co it agein under the same circuinstances".

This too is an attempt to ereate an erroneous impression an attompt to say thet $4 x$. Farding is in favor of going into the Leegrae. $H$ r. Root must have read Senator Herding ${ }^{\prime}$ s speech in Des Koines in which he said he was againstgoing into the League with ony kinâ of reservetions or amendments - what he wanted was rejection. It may be true that Senator Harding would again vote as he did under the same efrcumstances. He will not have the chance to do this beasuse the ciroumstances are changed. It is now nearly a yaar later and he has come out as candidate for the eresidenoy with a statement rejeoting the Jeague.

I suppose, hovever, there 1s little use in continuing a controversy of this nature beause $M x$. Root is a bitter partiaan, and in addition to that a reactionary legalist.

The average voter of the United States understands perfectly clearly the time-worn misrepresentations which have been honded them. They appreciate the fact that forty-one Nations have entered the League of Nations without in any way giving up any of their constitutional or national rights. They appreciate that the League is a going concern. They understand that Governor cox and I want the united states to join with all of these nations and in joining to make it perfectly clear that we give up no rights. Every time a man 11 ke Lir. Root comes out with a statement as weak, narrowminded and misrepresentative as this one, it serves merely to give an kmpetus to the swing of thinking voters which is now in progress toward the Democratic Mcket.

There is one point that I want to bring out in regard to the business of the Nation. Avery person recognizes the need of putting our government on a better business basis. Governor Cox, Senator Harding, Governor Coolidge and I have all spoken of this need. The country recognizes that the nation's government has grown up in a haphazard way, and that the work of the different departments needs to be redistributed and reorganized and that federal employment should be put on a more sound basis.

I want to ask a simple question of the businessmen of the United States. Suppose any one of you at the head of a large business were to find that you had to leave on an extended trip and that you had to find some person to take your place for a year or two. Your business is growing by leaps and bounds - changer have to be made from time to time to meet the changing needs. You want a man who has had experience as a practicallo business oxecutive. You would examine into the record of several men. Suppose, for instance, the choice were to narrow down by virtue of circumstances to two gentlemen, one named Cox and one named Harding. I wonder very much whether you would entrust your business to the one of these two who had no executive or administrative experience, or whether you would choose the one who has had charge of a great executive office through times of stress and has made a complete success of his work, carrying out various reforms in business and organization which have won for him the admiration of all who have come in contact with him. I will leave it to any businessman to tell me which of these managers he would select.

## BXTRAOTS YROM SPREOH OF BON. F.D.ROOSEVELT CLEVELAND, OHIO, OOT.20.1920

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