

---

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

**Series 1: Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Political Ascension**

---

**File No. 234**

**1920 November 1**

**Hudson, NY - Campaign Speech**

## EXTRACTS FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT'S SPEECH

Today marks the close of the campaign. It seems peculiarly fitting that I should finish it in my own home territory after more than eleven weeks of intensive crusading in thirty-odd states. Tomorrow the people will render their verdict - a verdict of such potential importance to the America of the future that all of our personal and even party considerations are forced into the background.

Tomorrow the people will pass upon the greatest issue ever presented to the electorate for judgement and were it possible by any ~~act~~ of mine, by any personal sacrifice to make certain an overwhelming victory for the League of Nations, right gladly would I make it.

Looking back over the past eleven weeks one thought is uppermost in my mind and it gives me deep and lasting satisfaction. We have fought a clean fight. There has been no mud-throwing by us, no misrepresentations, no attempts to mislead or deceive the people, no attempt to evade any issue. In direct contrast to the more than questionable campaign methods of our opponents we have fought fair, waging a campaign worthy of the great moral issue we stand for. There is deep personal satisfaction in the knowledge of this. It is good to know that whatever the outcome tomorrow we can always feel that we have come through with clean hands.

During the closing days of the campaign there have been several happenings of more than passing interest, and on none of these possibly has public interest centered more than the fitting climax of the republican campaign of deception and misrepresentation, the publishing of the infamous and sacrilegious cartoon by recognized republican publications like Harvey's Weekly. The bigotry and bitter partisanship which prompted its creation is receiving prompt and deserved rebuke, the resentment against it and the type of campaign it represents giving a ~~fresh~~ fresh impetus to the mighty swing through the nation toward Governor Cox and the League of Nations.

During these closing days too, ~~one~~ mighty effort is being made by the republican leaders to stem this tide with disclaimers of

responsibility for this cartoon and other offense, and with mighty claims of prospective victory. At the eleventh hour a full awakening has come to the American people that this election is in truth a "solemn Referendum" on the League of Nations. In time has come the realization that the line of demarkation is clearly drawn. On the one side is Senator Harding and a flat rejection of the League of Nations, regardless of what reservations are offered. On the other Governor Cox and our entrance into the League with all the helpful and safeguarding reservations the new United States Senate, working with the new chief executive may deem necessary.

Only recently Senator Harding has come out with a challenge to any Democrat to "find a contradiction" in anything he had said. It is obviously a great temptation to accept the challenge, but for once we will take him at his word. In his now famous speech at Des Moines, Iowa, Senator Harding, wooing favor with the irreconcilables of his own party, turned his back on the League of Nations, declaring that what he sought was not reservations of the League as drawn at Versailles but flat rejection. Taking his late statement of challenge at its face value we can only interpret it to be substantiation of his rejection speech, as, quite frankly, that is the only really definite utterance he has ever made as to his stand on the League.

There is another recent utterance of the amiable and pliant standard bearer of republicanism that deserves unfavorable mention. Night before last in Akron Ohio he said:

"I would not want to be your President unless you are going to give us a Republican Congress to translate Republican promises into legislative enactments. It is very important to have a majority in the United States Senate, and you ought always to think of the Senate as saving to you your American liberty."

Just about two years ago, Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States, on the eve of the congressional elections made an open appeal to the people of the country to elect a democratic congress, pointing out in this appeal the necessity of a friendly house and senate to hold up his hands and carry on the great work

that confronted the government, unhampered by partisan opposition. A storm of protest, a veritable howl, went up from republicans in every part of the country. The President was accused of every crime in the calendar almost, among the milder of the charges being the one that he aspired to a virtual dictatorship. In view of the happenings of the past two years with their worse than do-nothing congress, few there are now who will not admit the wisdom of the President's desire to have a whole-hearted support.

Admitting the reasonableness, from his viewpoint at least, of Senator Harding's request, it is not unfair to point out the inconsistency of the republican attitude, for today Senator Harding is doing almost exactly what his colleagues and supporters so heartily damned Wilson for two years ago. I realize of course it is asking too much to expect consistency from the world's greatest exponent of the modern "wiggle-and-wobble" policy.

In my final talks of the present campaign I would like to drive home just one thought, that after all is the most important of all. The referendum tomorrow is one for the individual voter to pass upon. There can be no shifting of responsibility to other shoulders for each man and woman has a voice and is a free agent. Broadly speaking, the question at issue is not one of individuals or parties, but whether the United States is to finish the war or to quit cold; whether we are to join the other forty-odd nations in the great working League of Nations that will serve to end war for all time, or whether we will turn our backs on them and choose a policy of national isolation with its threat of future wars and the consequent burden of ever growing armaments. It is for you to decide, Mr. Individual. It's either Cox and our place in the League at its head, or Harding and flat rejection.

*W.H.*  
EXTRACTS FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT'S SPEECH

Hudson N.Y. Nov 1  
Today marks the close of the campaign. It seems peculiarly

fitting that I should finish it in my own home territory after more than eleven weeks of intensive crusading in thirty-odd states. Tomorrow the people will render their verdict - a verdict of such potential importance to the America of the future that all of our personal and even party considerations are forced into the background.

Tomorrow the people will pass upon the greatest issue ever presented to the electorate for judgement and were it possible by any <sup>further</sup> act of mine, by any personal sacrifice to make certain an overwhelming victory for the League of Nations, right gladly would I make it.

Looking back over the past eleven weeks one thought is uppermost in my mind and it gives me deep and lasting satisfaction. We have fought a clean fight. There has been no mud-throwing by us, no misrepresentations, no attempts to mislead or deceive the people, no attempt to evade any issue. In direct contrast to the more than questionable campaign methods of our opponents we have fought fairly, waging a campaign worthy of the great moral issue we stand for. There is deep personal satisfaction in the knowledge of this. It is good to know ~~that~~ that whatever the outcome tomorrow we can always feel that we have come through with clean hands.

During the closing days of the campaign there have been several happenings of more than passing interest, and on none of these possibly has public interest centered more than the fitting climax of the republican campaign of deception and misrepresentation, the publishing of the infamous and sacrilegious cartoon by recognized republican publications like Harvey's Weekly. The bigotry and bitter partisanship which prompted its creation is receiving prompt and deserved rebuke, the resentment against it and the type of campaign it represents giving a ~~fresh~~ fresh impetus to the mighty swing through the nation toward Governor Cox and the League of Nations.

During these closing days too, ~~and~~ mighty effort is being made by the republican leaders to stem this tide with disclaimers of

responsibility for this cartoon and other offense and with mighty claims of prospective victory. ~~I believe that~~ At the eleventh hour a full awakening has come to the American people that this election is in truth a "solemn Referendum" on the League of Nations, ~~that~~ In time has come the realization that the line of demarkation is clearly drawn. On the one side is Senator Harding and a flat rejection of the League of Nations, regardless of what reservations are offered. On the other Governor Cox and our entrance into the League with all the helpful and safeguarding reservations the new United States Senate, working with the new chief executive may deem necessary.

Only recently Senator Harding has come out with a challenge to any Democrat to "find a contradiction" in anything he had said. It is obviously a great temptation to accept the challenge, but for once we will take him at his word. In his now famous speech at Des Moines, Iowa, Senator Harding, wooing favor with the irreconcilables of his own party, turned his back on the League of Nations, declaring that what he sought was not reservations of the League as drawn at Versailles but flat rejection. Taking his late statement of challenge at its face value we can only interpret it to be substantiation of his rejection speech, as, quite frankly, that is the only really definite utterance he has ever made as to his stand on the League.

There is another recent utterance of the amiable and pliant standard bearer of republicanism that deserves unfavorable mention. ~~Night before last~~ In Akron Ohio he said:

"I would not want to be your President unless you are going to give us a Republican Congress to translate Republican promises into legislative enactments. It is very important to have a majority in the United States Senate, and you ought always to think of the Senate as saving to you your American liberty."

Just about two years ago, Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States, on the eve of the congressional elections made an open appeal to the people of the country to elect a democratic congress, pointing out in this appeal the necessity of a friendly house and senate to hold up his hands and carry on the great work

that confronted the government, unhampered by partisan opposition. A storm of protest, a veritable howl, went up from republicans in every part of the country. The President was accused of every crime in the calendar almost, among the milder of the charges being the one that he aspired to a virtual dictatorship. In view of the happenings of the past two years with their worse than do-nothing congress, few there are now who will not admit the wisdom of the President's desire to have a wholehearted support.

Admitting the reasonableness, from his viewpoint at least, of Senator Harding's request, it is not unfair to point out the inconsistency of the republican attitude, for today Senator Harding is doing almost exactly what his colleagues and supporters so heartily damned Wilson for two years ago. I realize of course it is asking too much to expect consistency from the world's greatest exponent of the modern "wiggle-and-wobble" policy.

In my final talks of the present campaign I would like to drive home just one thought, that after all is the most important of all. The referendum tomorrow is one for the individual voter to pass upon. There can be no shifting of responsibility to other shoulders for each man and woman has a voice and is a free agent. Broadly speaking, the question at issue is not one of individuals or parties, but whether the United States is to finish the war or to quit cold; whether we are to join the other forty-odd nations in the great working League of Nations that will serve to end war for all time, or whether we will turn our back~~s~~ on them and choose a policy of national isolation with its threat of future wars and the consequent burden of ever growing armaments. It is for you to decide, Mr. Individual. It's either Cox and our place in the League at its head, or Harding and flat rejection.