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**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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**File No. 241**

**1920 Not dated**

**Unidentified Campaign Drafts**

Speaking in Marion, Ohio, yesterday, Senator Harding declared - "The Constitution or the Covenant - that is the paramount issue. The two are irreconcilable".

The edition of the Metropolitan Press that carried this statement carried another Marion item, - a letter written by Senator Harding to the President of Cornell University. In this letter the Republican candidate for the Presidency virtually declares that if elected he would scrap the Covenant of the League of Nations, favoring in its place - "An association of Nations inspired by the ideals of justice and fair dealing, rather than of power and self-interest.

In elaborating on his idea, with his usual clarity of expression, the Senator uses the following remarkable sentence: "I favor a world association, aiming at the practical expression of the consciences of Nations, planned to focus world opinion. This, it must be confessed, is something of a poser for after reading it one has very little idea as to what sort of vague and intangible association of powers the Senator really does favor. The attitude of Senator Harding, finally driven into the open by pressure brought to bear upon him from the dissenting elements of his own party, is hardly logical, to put it in the mildest possible terms.

In this same letter in which he declares his unalterable opposition to the League, to any and all parts, Senator Harding, makes the statement that - "President Wilson has twice rejected the opportunity to secure ratification of the peace treaty with what the Senate regarded as safeguarding reservations.

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TUESDAY

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AUGUST

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SPEECH OF HON. F. D. ROOSEVELT

*From:**SPEECH FILE**Unidentified Extracts**from Speech of FDR*

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as to make it impossible for any believer in the League to support him.

Senator Harding's course of action has been evidently founded on two theories. First, that the importance of the League of Nations could be either minimized or distorted so that its true value could not be realized by the voters of the country before election, and, secondly, by shiftiness and evasiveness of statement he could persuade both the League and anti-League Republicans he was on their side at heart.

During the last week it has become clear that both of these assumptions are wrong.

The people in the districts through which I have travelled are tremendously interested in the League and are beginning to clearly understand what it means, and Mr. Parsons' letter as well as the California telegram show conclusively that not only the rank and file but

EXTRACTS FROM SPEECH OF HON. F. D. ROOSEVELT

I have just read the full text of Mr. Herbert Parsons' letter in which he resigns as a member of the National Committee because he is convinced the only hope of the Country is in the election of Governor Cox and the early entrance of America into the League of Nations, and also the wording of the telegram to Senator Harding from the 30,000 members of the Women's League for the Peace Treaty, of California, declaring that it is impossible for them to support him if he has been correctly quoted on the League. I think that these two remarkable documents amply justify the confident assertions I have been making during the past week that the nation is at last aroused to the paramount necessity of our joining the present League of Nations without delay, and is convinced that Senator Harding has so definitely committed himself as to make it impossible for any believer in the League to support him.

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the leaders of the Republican Party who are sincere in their belief that the League is a necessity, have decided that Senator Harding has so definitely cast his lot with Borah and Johnson as to make it a patriotic duty for them to desert his cause.

AUGUST							1956
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FRIDAY

17

AUGUST

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From:

SPEECH FILE

1920

Unidentified Speech

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time in seeking to discover scandals in a Democratic Administration,  
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This, of course, was the purpose of the dozens of costly investigations  
which were undertaken by this Republican Congress.

I know from having been in Washington during this period,  
and from having conversed as lately as this Spring with a great many  
personal friends in the Republican camp that they were bitterly disap-  
pointed that the investigations had failed to disclose graft and waste  
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While it is my purpose to devote the greater part of my address to the League of Nations, I desire first to discuss some of the very grave home problems which must come up for solution during the coming four years. I want to call particular attention to the two big domestic problems of taxation and of government reform, and to lay special emphasis on the fact which nobody can deny that the present Republican Congress, in existence since the Fourth of March, 1919, has accomplished literally nothing towards the solution of these questions. It is a simple matter of history that the present Congress has had every opportunity to do something; more than that, that it has been repeatedly called to the attention of Congress that something ought to be done. It is also a simple matter of history that the present Congress, dominated by a safe Republican margin in both the House of Representatives and the Senate, determined, through its Republican leaders over a year ago, that it would spend its whole time in seeking to discover scandals in a Democratic Administration, and by political tricks try to put the opposition on the defensive. This, of course, was the purpose of the dozens of costly investigations which were undertaken by this Republican Congress.

I know from having been in Washington during this period, and from having conversed as lately as this Spring with a great many personal friends in the Republican camp that they were bitterly disappointed that the investigations had failed to disclose graft and waste as they had hoped. It seems to me a very dreadful commentary on the point of view of some of our so-called leaders when they actually admit disappointment that the American Government cannot be proved crooked or spendthrift. It

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is simply another proof that the present leaders of the Republican Party are wholly misrepresentative of the rank and file of their party, because they place party gain above the national good.

But it is not only on the record of the past that we must judge. We must not only show ~~the~~ the failure of this Congress to take hold of the important domestic problems requiring constructive measures, but we must also examine into what both parties propose to do in case either should be successful.

It is true that the present Republican Congress has failed to do anything about the present taxes of the nation. The only suggestion in their platform is to relieve the country of burdensome taxes. They do not state or suggest how they would do it. Their candidate for the Presidency also has been, as usual, wholly vague on the subject. If we assume that a Republican Congress would in the next four years take some action, the people of this country are entitled to know what kind of action they would take. Past history has shown that it is Republican doctrine to levy indirect taxes in such form that the individual consumer pays the tax, whether he be a rich man or a poor man in approximately equal amounts. This means, first, that the taxes pass along from the producer to the consumer, and secondly, that those who possess wealth do not pay taxes in proportion to their possessions. The Democratic doctrine is, of course, opposite. The Democratic Party was the father of the Income Tax, a system which has been adopted by every great nation on earth, and a system which proceeds on the theory that a citizen should help support his Government more generously if he is the possessor of great wealth than if he has but little. It is a fair tax, and it brings the burden of taxation on those who can best afford it. The present system of



proceeds along its present ineffective lines, playing politics and filling thousands of pages of the Congressional Record with speeches which have never been delivered, it is idle to expect substantial improvement in other branches of the Government whose very existence depends on Congress itself.

The Republican Party leaders have expressed no definite measures to remedy these faults. Democratic leaders have proposed them. We advocate reclassification of the Government service, reorganization and consolidation of the Departments, reorganization of the business of Congress itself, and a deliberate and continuing effort to make the Government of the United States ~~xxxxxxx~~ measure up in successful efficiency with the standards of at least the average business concern in the United States.

Which program do you favor? What type of man do you want to handle this ~~xxxx~~ big questions in the next four years? Again we are faced with the alternative of choosing a practical executive who has made good along these very lines for six years as the head of a great State, or of choosing a gentleman who ~~xxx~~ is not an executive and who is wedded to the old fashioned Senatorial methods --- delay, <sup>Talk</sup> inaction, partisanship.