
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”

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Radio Speech in support of John W. Davis

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Sept. 24 - 1924

A hard basted, dyed in the wool, blown in
the bottle Republican friend of mine said to
me this afternoon "I'm going to listen in on your
talk tonight, & if you say anything thing,
about the Republican Party, I shall talk
back at you and the panel operator -"

I told him I wasn't going to say anything
against the Republican Party, but that as
the rank & file of them are honest good
feeling Americans but that I felt
I ^{state} ~~say~~ a few home truths about leaders
of the Repub. Party. - He said "O
K it - that won't make me mad"
Lo here goes.

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F. D. R. Campaign

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HYDE PARK, DUTCHESS COUNTY
NEW YORK

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The campaign of 1924 cannot well be compared with any national election since the Civil War, though the Progressive split in 1912 shows the nearest analogy because of the fact that the Progressive Party of that year and the Third Party of this year ~~xxxx~~ both voiced a protest against the reactionary and class controlled leadership of the Republican administration then in power. ~~Everybody~~ everybody should bear in mind that this spirit of protest is directed not at the rank and file of voters, but at legislative leaders who are responsible for congressional policies, and against administrative leaders who are responsible for the honesty and efficiency of the executive branch of the ~~legislative~~ government.

It will not do, in analyzing the present campaign to base one's vote merely on the personalities of candidates. In view of the fact that every reasonable person recognizes that Senator LaFollette cannot possibly be elected President, either Mr. Davis or Mr. Coolidge will be the next President. I could go on for ten minutes and explain why, in my own personal judgment, and knowing both men, I am convinced that there is little real ability and certainly no real leadership behind the mask of President Coolidge's silence, and that Mr. Davis is possessed of qualifications in the way of leadership and experience and progressive mindedness which few presidential candidates have had in the past. I could go on and point out how Mr. Coolidge took action in the case of the Boston Police Strike after the trouble was all over, and how, when graft and scandal reared its head in Washington he stood by tongue tied while others cleaned out the stables; and I could tell you about the progressive record of John W. Davis as a member of Congress during the days when a Democratic majority in Congress was placing more progressive

legislation on the statute books than in any similar period in our history, and of the days when John W. Davis, as Solicitor of the United States was regarded by the members of the Supreme Court as the ablest defender of the rights of the government who had ever appeared before them. But the average citizen and voter, man or woman, can get all these facts from the flood of literature and the campaign speeches which will flow incessantly for the next six weeks. It is more important I think that I should give you what ~~I think is~~ ^{Shelton D. B.} an even more important reason for casting your vote a certain way this year - a reason that goes deeper than mere personalities - goes all the way to the fundamental principles and practical workings of our government.

When we come to think of it, the President of the United States is not by any means the government. Year in and year out the actual policies and the carrying of ^{one} ~~the~~ ¹²³ policy into effect is based on what Congress does in passing laws and making appropriations, and what the administration does in carrying these laws into effect, and in spending the money appropriated. I do not think I am stretching the truth when I say that the great majority of citizens are today discontented with our Federal government. They know that President Harding and President Coolidge were in a continuous disagreement and row with Congress, that legislation suffered during these past 4 years and that administration was also highly unsuccessful as has been shown by the recent investigations and as will undoubtedly be shown by the investigation of the Internal Revenue Department which is about to begin. President Harding may have been greatly to blame, and President Coolidge may be greatly to blame, but it is only fair to say that they occupied very difficult positions in view of the fact that neither one of them had a majority in either House of Congress working in cooperation with them. In the Senate the Democratic members and the Administration

Republican members are about equal in number. Neither side has a majority, for the balance of power is held by what may be called the insurgent Republican group. In the house of Representatives the situation is the same, the balance of power being held by a group of insurgent Republicans mostly from Wisconsin. As a matter of fact these insurgent Republicans are in thought and deed much more in sympathy with Democratic policies than they are with the old line Republican policies, and much legislation actually enacted recently was due to the support of Democratic measures by these insurgent Republicans. The best example is the tax law reducing the income taxes - a measure drawn by the Democrats and substituted for the Mellon Plan which gave the greater reductions to the very rich and not to the average tax payer.

The country must have learned by this time that a continuation of the present situation in Washington for another two or four years must spell further chaos for the country and ~~there~~ greatly increased dissatisfaction among the voters.

What then, can we expect? What should we seek? The answer is perfectly clear. It is to the advantage of the United States that its President and a majority in both the Senate and the House of Representatives shall belong to the same party and shall work together for the good of the nation instead of working at cross purposes. I do not hesitate to say that the most important thing for us to consider this year is the election of a united government instead of a divided government.

How, then, can we do it? If President Coolidge is victorious in November will the country give him a Congress which will work with him? No matter how you figure it the answer to this question must be an emphatic "NO". The Insurgent Republicans in the present Congress are few in number yet they control the balance of power. Practically all of them will be re-elected as they come from Districts where the Third

small group of LaFollette followers holding the balance of power, it would again be most unfortunate to have President Coolidge in the White House and it would be highly desirable to have John W. Davis as President, for I have pointed out before that the LaFollette followers can far more readily work with the Democrats in Congress than they can with the old line Republicans, and the country would have a guarantee of far better cooperation than it has at present. *When* all is said and done there are millions of people in the United States who think beyond and above mere party lines. The so-called independent vote is constantly increasing its proportions. Fewer and fewer people are voting one way just because their grandfathers voted that way. The Third Party will undoubtedly get a large popular vote, though it will carry few states in the electoral college. The size of this popular vote will be due to that same desire to protest against existing conditions which I have spoken of before.

I do not blame ~~anyone~~ *especially people* for voting the Third Party ticket, ~~but~~ *if a person* they ~~must~~ do ~~nothing~~ so with the clear understanding that Senator LaFollette cannot possibly be elected, *and that they are wasting their vote.* If they want to make their vote really count in a practical way - count as a means of actually changing the existing conditions of bad government in Washington, they should vote for Democratic Congressmen and a Democratic President. Let them not forget that the first four years of President Wilson's Democratic Administration, when he had with him a Democratic Congress, were responsible for more constructive, progressive legislation and for more administrative reforms, than had been accomplished in a generation.

We have got away from the upsetting influences and misunderstandings of the World War, and the few years that followed.

We have come back to Times of Peace when we can think about the progress of our own nation, about problems which require new remedies.

Be very certain that we are not going to stand still, to leave things as they are. People who are snugly contented, people who shrug their shoulders when they hear of graft in Washington, people who are perfectly willing to let the old line Republican leaders continue to own the people's government, people who don't care a Continental whether Congress & the President work together or not - these people will or ought to, vote for Coolidge in Nov.

But I have faith that these people constitute a minority in our nation. I have faith that Americans think - that they want a good government, that they want them work in Washington, that they want a President who will lead, that they want progress and not reaction, and finally that they will ~~not~~ concur that

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Treasure in office by changing the nation's
expectations.

Dont waste your vote!

To vote for La Follette is to be sure a
protest, but a silly protest because he
can't be elected.

Dont waste your vote!

To vote for Coolidge is to support a man
who if ^{elected} President will be at odds with
Congress on ~~the~~ every ~~new~~ construction and
progressive measure. The country will stand
still, discontentment will increase and
parliamental chaos will result.

To vote for Coolidge is not merely a waste,
it is ^a backing given to ineffective government.

To vote for Davis is to support a man who offers
a fair ~~offer~~ promise of orderly government
and honest administration. He can and will work
with the next H. of R. or the next Senate.

Think it over for the next few
weeks - Many of you who are now

expecting I suppose Colidge or La Follette
will I know see my point & end by
voting for John W. Davis, putting
Davis in ahead of party

Torn my friend who warned me not
to be caught in the Republican party
is getting converted - I can hear
him saying "yes that's right".

Thank you for listening - and for doing
some thinking yourselves. - Goodnight