

CAMPAIGN ADDRESS IN YONKERS

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT (1882-1945)

Mr. Chairman, and my old friends:

I want to say something about the theory of Government. You know, campaign speeches are very different nowadays from what they were when I was young. I go back far enough to remember the Fourth of July orator. There are few of them left, thank God.

But I believe that people are interested in the philosophy of politics, in the theory of our Government. More and more the old-fashioned “pull the eagle’s tail to make him scream,” or “twist the lion’s tail to get a howl out of the mob,” has gone by. That day is gone, and we have come down with our better education all over this country to a willingness to talk about the philosophy of politics, and about the theory of Government, provided it can be made at all interesting.

What leads me to think about this is the fact that this morning I happened to pick up the November number of one of the leading magazines and there on page one was an article with the following caption: “Is Hoover Human?”

That title implies something. It implies the suggestion in the minds of a great many citizens that Mr. Hoover is not human. And I went on and I read it, and through seven long pages the author of that article labored, and labored heavily, to prove that the Republican candidate has the human qualities which the title of his own article puts in question.

In this article there was a quotation, a quotation from a book written by Hoover. Here is what Mr. Hoover writes, with his own pen, out of his own head, in his own book, a book called *American Individualism*, and he says:

“Acts and deeds leading to progress are born of the individual mind, not out of the mind of the crowd. The crowd only feels, it has no mind of its own which can plan. The crowd is credulous, it destroys, it hates and it dreams, but it never builds. It is one of the most profound of exact psychological truths that man in the mass does not think, but only feels.”

Franklin D. Roosevelt, *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, ed. Samuel Irving Rosenman (N.Y.: Random House, 1938): 67-72.

I know the gentleman well, and have for many years; and that, in my judgment, is the best insight that you can possibly find into the personality of Herbert Hoover, into his approach to every public and private question. It is characteristic of the man. That question gives the reason why the author of the article asked, "Is Hoover Human?"

Now, Mr. Hoover's theory that the crowd, that is to say, 95 percent of all the voters who call themselves average citizens, that the crowd is credulous, that it destroys, that it hates, that it dreams, but that it never builds, that it does not think, but only feels—that is in line with the training, the record and the methods of accomplishment of the Republican candidate for the Presidency.

It is another way of saying, and I say this as an analyst and not as a candidate, that there exists at the top of our social system in this country a very limited group of highly able, highly educated people, through whom all progress in this land must originate. Furthermore, that this small group, after doing all the thinking and all the originating, is fully responsible for all progress in civilization and Government....

In the final analysis the great issue in both the national and State campaigns revolves around that fundamental belief of my friend Mr. Hoover in the incapacity of the mass of average citizens either to think or to build. In the national election the great Governor of the State of New York is the most splendid living example of the opposite fact. And in this State election, too, the same point is raised, for the Republican leadership of this State is based on that same belief that Mr. Hoover holds.

I deny, and the Democratic Party denies, that the average man and woman in this State, who make up its electorate, are incapable of thought or of constructive ability. I know that the electorate does think, that it does originate, and that it does build, and it is on that fundamental belief that I base my campaign for the Governorship. It is the same belief which has brought to us the great program of the past few years; the same belief that must carry us forward during the coming years to an even greater progress.

