

Handwritten: Ghostwritten for Pres-candidate
Adlai E. Stevenson, in (Spring, 1956)
California, not delivered 5600¹³

Everyone likes to come to California. Indeed, to look at the place, you would think there must be no-one left in the East except a few Republican job-holders.

And I am no exception; I like to come here too! I'd like to wage the whole campaign here where I was born, right alongside of you!

However, I cannot complain because some fifty years ago my parents took me from California to Illinois. I did pretty well there. Besides, the Presidential competition is tougher here in California, where one Vice President, one Senator, and one Governor are pawing and stamping for the chance to save civilization - - especially from one another.

Fortunately, there are 4000 people in this very Hall - - and several millions of Californians outside - - who will see to it that the presidential election will not be a circus rodeo, but a sincere and serious contest between two different ideas of government. The chief goal of our election system is to permit and encourage a discussion between the two great parties in order to give our masters, the people, a clear choice between men and measures. I have the profound conviction that there are certain things our party, and our people, must say and do. It is only in the knowledge that I can help them express and do these things that I pledge myself to the great battle again. During the campaign of 1952, I sought and gave no quarter in my profession of the nation's hopes and goals; 27 million Americans voted and

confidence in our campaign. These primaries this year give us renewed opportunity to rally the public to our cause, and during the primaries we must keep in mind that our great objective should not be just the choice of a leader, but the triumph next November of our common cause, of our vision and convictions about America in a Golden Age.

This campaign must deal with the great issues of our time - - of peace against war; of the glorious revolution of poor and oppressed peoples in the face of age-old tyranny and the threats of communism; of personal freedom and equal opportunity for all Americans against government by monopolists; and of saving our natural resources from greedy exploitation. To win these battles of the people, we must use honest, forthright and responsible methods. The Republicans can have their Sunday-school smiles and their week-day auctions of the peoples' interests. Let them hire their legions of soap-salesmen to soft-soap the public, while they deal each other the public bounty. Let's leave these deceptive techniques to those who hold the people's minds in contempt. For our part, let us talk straight and deal straight!

My friends, if you and I could sit together after this meeting and swap stories to prove this point, we would be here until the milkman comes - - and he would probably add a couple of stories of his own. In fact - - as you and I and millions of other Americans know - - when we open the newspaper in the morning nowadays, the only

question is, has a Republican boss struck his foot in his mouth again, or has he resigned one step ahead of the FBI. But one example may light up the problem. I agree that politics should stop at the water's edge, but surely that should not prevent us from trying to pull Mr. Dulles back to dry ground!

The best example of intemperance we have lately witnessed is, I think, the Secretary of State's recent boast that he took three steps toward war and, lo and behold, we are still all in one piece. If elected President, I would be glad to nominate him as commissioner of hotrods. If the Eisenhower administration has to plant more advertising in national magazines, it would do better to boast that it has managed to keep some of the allies and friends in the world that the Democrats made for them!

We have suffered too long from this constant and noisy drumbeat from the Republican politicians and press that we are at peace and all is well. This furious propaganda reached the heights of foolishness after the summit meeting only a few months ago when the Russian bear and the American eagle were supposed to lie down together. In fact, it is difficult to find any area of the world where our situation has not continuously deteriorated. While the Republicans have reduced our strength, they have enlarged our commitments. While they brag about massive retaliation, Russia builds bombs and missiles in abundance. Meanwhile, too, Russia talks of peace, of trade, of friendship, of economic

development and the things the sensitive, suspicious, and hungry masses of the world want to hear. The picture of America that the Republicans give the world is an arrogant, fat man who, stepping out of a rich restaurant, flicks his toothpick at a beggar.

In this age, ever one knows that we have the awesome power of atomic intimidation and that there are extremities, God forbid, in which we might be compelled to use it. But what is demanded of the powerful is a high sense of responsibility. The best guard against war is the unity and the strength of ourselves and our friends - - the unity to act when necessary and the strength to take action suited to the aggression. This is far more than a question of power politics; it is a question of moral responsibility, of moral responsibility for avoiding war and for positively creating a better world for all of God's creatures.

Nor is the domestic scene so heavenly as the Republican presses and propaganda agencies tell us it is. For twenty years the Republican party fought - - except in election years - - the whole of what they derisively still call the "New Deal" - @ social security, public housing, minimum wages, farm income supports, a managable fiscal policy, resource development, federal aid to education, and medical care. That our Republican friends are now accepting all of these things pleases us. Just as it pleases men that after taking a million years to invent a language, they can

teach a few words of it to a parrakeets. After all, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. But the basic issue is: who means what he says about these domestic issues and who doesn't? Who is going to do anything about putting these agreed principles into effect, and who isn't?!

On the farm problem: which are we to take seriously - - an election year Republican promise, or three years of Republican performance during which all their 1952 campaign promises were broken and the farmer's share of the national income dropped by four billion dollars?

What about schools? Which are we to take seriously: an election year Republican proposal that we build half the new schools we need, or three years of Republican performance consisting of one conference? (And who knows more about the school problem than California, where the school teacher shortage is already some 14,000, where enrollment will increase by nearly one million in the next eight years.)

What stands behind their self-praise regarding conservation and development of our natural resources: simply ~~this~~, three years of shameful subversion of the public-spirited policies of half a century. All of you here know --even if the Republicans pretend not to know - - that in California, which has suffered so dreadfully from floods this winter, there were no floods where the Central Valley Project had built its dams. Only where endless controversy and pussyfooting prevented the control and use of your water resources have the terrible floods wrought their havoc.

So it goes. And now, President Eisenhower has blandly suggested to the Democratic Congress that it now adopt its own legislative program, which he and his numerous tribe of attendents have been denouncing and sabotaging for years.

It looks as though our Republican friends have not so much pursued Democratic policies as been pursued by them. And in these days the typical Republican document proclaims that America has no problems - - and then goes on to propose Democratic solutions for them!

Why is this? Well, 1956 is an election year, and the way Republicans are acting reminds me of what one English statesman once said of another: "The right honorable gentleman uses two languages; one during his hour of courtship, another for his years of possession." Well, this is courtship year!

Now, thus far I have shown that when the Republican elephant tries to act like the Democratic donkey, the most he can do is to learn how to bray. I should also like to call to your attention some of those cases in which the Republicans appear perfectly true to type as we have always known them - - going back to that generation after World War I in which the Republican Party first turned its back to a ruined world and then turned its back to a helpless nation in the tortures of the worst depression in the history of man.

I. First, let us talk about personal freedom and the right of Americans to personal privacy.

The Republicans used to have a favorite tune that they played whenever the Democrats sought to give a break to the common man: "The Democrats are dividing class against class," they cried, clutching at their pocketbooks. Well, no-one has ever worked so insidiously, unfairly, and destructively to pit one American against another as have the Republicans in their attempts to wangle votes from an anxious people. I refer to their reckless and baseless six-year campaign to promote mass hysteria and mass suspicion among Americans. They have called suspicion down upon every sort of mind except a blank mind. They have tried to convince us that the only true patriots are the witch-hunter and the unthinking human machine that serves him.

And to what effect, all this Republican slander? Are the Soviets any weaker for it all? No! Are our allies more dependable for it all? No! Are our schools and colleges greater as a result? No! Are we Americans more generous, thoughtful, and secure in consequence? No! None of these things that were so irresponsibly pledged by the Republicans have come about. They have had their great experiment in mass psychological torture. Our Democratic experiments have given us TVA, social security, a higher

standard of living to nine-tenths of the American people. This Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde Republican experiment has given us only grief. Grief, I say, and also a lesson, too, a direct lesson to millions of Americans and an indirect lesson to all others. Figures will not show the lesson - although the best lying figures that the administration could devise serve to show that less than one in five hundred civil servants left the government with some question regarding his loyalty since 1952. And of these, there was a great disproportion among persons who came in under the Republican administration. But the Republicans are possessed of the devil on this question. They are bound to prove that the world is square. The Attorney-General, who is the grand Inquisitor is, sure that he can prove it now if he can only change the Constitution. What a shame, they must feel, that America isn't Russia, where every day the government can prove that the world is square.

II. Let us also talk to the people about another old Republican vice that has a long history. Let us talk about the "honest grafters" of the Eisenhower administration. Now an honest grafter is a government official who profits himself and his friends so well that he has to resign on grounds that he is sacrificing too much to serve his country. The Republicans have a peculiar turn of mind: they seem to feel that if a private interest is big and

juicy enough, it becomes the public interest. So they hire private bankers to judge our public power projects, millionaires to criticize our tax laws, and monopoly chiefs to allocate our production. We know that is well-thought-of in the highest Republican circles. The President has said so. His friends are beyond reproach. They feast at the White House. Of 555 dinner guests there in a year and a half, 294 were big businessmen. Somehow, 8 union officials, 6 church leaders, and 30 educators were sandwiched in. Where is the public interest in all of this, where the good of the common man and woman? How lucky we are that they have left us with our humble little ballot boxes, for we shall have desperate need of them very soon. That is where we, the people, have our feast.

III. Thirdly, let us talk about the unions of the working man that the Republicans accept because they can't do anything about them. Most American wage-earners manage to get along well today, especially where their unions keep an eye on things. Thanks to the far-sighted and heroic work of the numerous leaders of labor in local and international unions, ~~over many~~ years, the American worker has a dignity unequalled in the world. It is to the eternal credit of the Democratic Party that it has helped in this grand social movement. The wage-earner and the wives and husbands of wage-earners can count on us in times both

bad and good. Under the cover of prosperity, the Republican Party is seeking to undermine the fortress of labor so that it will crumple with one blow when the chance to attack appears. Our hats go off to those many leaders of the workers who are sticking to their guns now, in the certainty that, should they falter, the workers' movement in America will be pushed back to the days of wholesale scabbing, company unions and the empty lunch-box.

IV. Fourth, let us watch carefully the new theory of irresponsibility in the Presidency that has been pushing its way into the public mind. It is not new, nor a product of unhappy accident, although recent events have made this theory part of the "crash program" of Republican propaganda. The Republicans have always sought a weak presidency; they know that no single office in the country can so well express the needs and ambitions of the whole people; hence they want it to be a weak post, like the British monarch. Then to it they would like to attach a cabinet of ministers of real power, unaccountable to the voters and responsible to the interests backstage.

Therefore, what used to be called "passing the buck" is now said to be good administration. The technique is simple: everything is delegated, except the credit. All power is parcelled out to the interests: it is delegated, sub-delegated and sub-sub-delegated.

But all credit must be turned in for use upstairs, for there is where it is needed every four years at election time. And only if that credit is cashed in at the polls, can the private Republican interests in the departments, bureaus, commissions, and boards make their own brand of law.

If this trick is successful, you will no longer have the American constitutional system that you know and love. The Presidency, to which the majority of Americans have looked in their lifetimes for expressing and executing the public's demands, will surely waste away. Like the Cheshire Cat in Alice in Wonderland, it will fade away to less and less until there is nothing left but the grin.

In view of all these facts and tendencies, we can look upon this moment and the balance of this year as of critical importance: we must mobilize the nation to feel deep pride in what the Democratic administrations of the past have provided. We should plainly expose the Republicans' attempts to misrepresent their position. We should clearly trace their consistent record of placing private interests before the public good.

These matters, I say, are important. They deserve our forceful attention and action. But I suggest also that we cannot stop there. For as the Democratic Party has been, is, and must remain the party of foresight, we must look ahead to the problem of expansion and growth

which, next to the cold war, is the most significant fact of modern society.

There are two ways of looking at America, at its future, and at the role of government in meeting - - yes, and in shaping - - that future.

The Republican way is to look at today with the tired eyes of yesterday, to think of hanging on to what we have and staying where we are. If we sense that something seems to be missing from our daily lives - - if people are anxious, fearful, insecure; if our metropolitan centers seem like organized chaos; if the juvenile courts are overburdened, the older people poor and frustrated, and the mental hospitals and clinics crowded; if X million Americans do not have a dime in the bank - - if we sense and harken to these troubles, a Republican chorus tells us: "Never mind, forget it, we've never had it so good!"

But I would speak for a different view of America. We live in a time of danger, true, but it is also a time of great hope. Whoever bids us be complacent, complacency blinds us to the danger and denies us our hope.

There has never been a time when Americans were self-satisfied, and we can pray that there never will be such a time. We are a people who have lived by our faith in greater tomorrows. In the march of our history we have been trained never to turn back, and never to stand still. For this profound restlessness and ambition we are thought

to be foolish by some, feared by many, and followed by many more in the world today. We are thought to be foolish when we fritter away our enormous energies in senseless pursuits or materialistic pomp. We are feared when our boundless energies turn to destructive struggles among ourselves or to aggression abroad. We are followed when we deserve to be followed - - when we act in the name and ideal of those brave men who in the Declaration of Independence first called upon the world to judge the justice of our actions - - when we dedicate ourselves to peace, productivity and brotherhood.

Government has an inescapable role in this process. It can stimulate progress or retard it. More than this, it is today through our agencies of government that we are choosing between the often divergent paths of material and of spiritual growth.

The fact remains, as it was inscribed in the Book of Proverbs - that no nation can survive which will not look ahead, which dares not dream. Unless we can conceive a further future for ourselves, a second journey, we shall remain what we have sometimes seemed to be in recent years - a nation concerned not with its own destiny but only with its fear of the destiny of its adversary.

A people which gives up the vision and settles for the thing we have come to call "security" is a nation sick and in mortal danger, for security as an end and aim is a sick man's vain delusion. Security in the true sense

of that word is never gained as an end in itself. Nations are secure when they are alive, and alive when they are moving toward their proper ends, the ends they dream of. We were secure when we had the West to open; a continent to achieve; the Golden Gate to win; when we measured every choice against that high endeavor.

Shall we use our strength to stand still?

Shall we use it to build walls around ourselves, imitating our enemies in the delusive hope that thus we can overcome them? Or shall we take this God's plenty and set ourselves a second labor on this continent and beyond it in the world? Shall we conceive and build for ourselves a new civilization such as men have never seen - - a new wealth of freedom and of life - - using the materials means we have acquired, the leisure we have won, the amelioration of sickness and suffering and the lengthening of the span of life we have been given? Shall we conceive for ourself a world truly and creatively at peace in which the Republic shall be secure in the only true security - - the security of life and hope? Shall we imagine a nation of enlarged and richer lives in which the great fruitful labors shall go forward - - a society dedicated to its proper ends and vigorous with a hope and purpose no tyranny can destroy?

We have the means. Have we the vision and the will?

These are the great questions put to our generation on earth. The journey to which we were committed

in the early days of the Republic has been completed. The new continent has been explored. The rim of the Pacific - - golden California - - is settled. The problem of food has been solved. Industry has provided our necessities - - and then some! A vast and complex system of commerce has been perfected. Our standard of living has been fixed above any present level of comparison. Our science is successful. Our skills are fabulous. We know the how of more know-how than any society in history.

But this is not the end. We will move on so long as we maintain faith in ourselves - - not in dictators or symbols or images, but in each other - - and in something higher, stronger, and wiser. Our reliance resides here, with people like you, in meetings like this which bring together men and women who have insisted upon their right and recognized their obligation to participate in the processes of a people's party and a people's government.

The future demands of us no departure from principle, no restrictive new political doctrine. It simply demands that we continue with good heart to follow the historical promise of America. It requires that the marvelous, flexible instrument of government which is our heritage be used to transmute our faith into the substance of good works on earth.