

Harry S. Truman (1884-1972)

## Address at Mechanics Hall in Boston

*given on October 27, 1948*

THANK YOU, thank you very much. I can't tell you how very much I appreciate that magnificent reception. And the reception on the street this afternoon was something out of this world.

Thank you, my good friends and fellow citizens.

Twenty years ago another Democratic candidate for President came to Boston. He was that great, outstanding  
5 American, Alfred E. Smith.

You gave him a tremendous reception. And when the cheers had subsided, he took all of you to his heart with one phrase. He said, "It's good to come home."

I know just how Al Smith felt. For Massachusetts is home to every American who loves freedom and trusts the people.

10 From the first days of our Nation, the spirit of the men and women of the Bay State has impressed upon American life the love of freedom and the hatred of tyranny.

Even before the end of the Revolutionary War, Massachusetts freed her slaves--all of them--because the people held that liberty was not for any one race or creed.

Here in Boston, you still stand among the Nation's foremost fighters for freedom and against intolerance.

15 Now, many of you recall that campaign of 1928, when Al Smith ran for President against that well-known engineer--Herbert Hoover. He was one engineer who really did a job of running things backward.

That campaign of 1928 was one of the most shameful political campaigns in our history.

A vile whispering campaign was spearheaded by the Ku Klux Klan and by Klanminded people to discredit Al Smith. The Republican appeal was based on religious prejudice because of Al Smith's Catholic faith.

20 The leaders of the Republican Party served notice on America then and there that they would stop at nothing in order to gain power.

Don't think that the elephant has changed his habits in the last 20 years. This Republican elephant is not that kind of elephant. They're trying to make you believe he has that new look, but he hasn't.

That Al Smith campaign of 1928 was fought with different arguments from those we hear today. But, fundamentally,  
25 the issue was the same--that is, the rights of all the people against special privilege for the few.

I have often thought what a different and better world we would have had if Al Smith had been elected President.

But that didn't happen. And the great engineer we elected backed the train all the way into the waiting room and brought us to panic, depression, and despair.

Here at home, we had boom and bust.

30 In our dealings with other countries, we had Republican high tariffs, political isolation, and economic confusion--forces that helped to bring on World War II.

I say to you people of Boston that if Al Smith--and not Herbert Hoover--had been chosen President in 1928, we and the world would have been spared untold misery and suffering.

Unfortunately, there was no mechanical Republican substitute for Al Smith's great heart. No engineering equivalent  
35 could be found for his moral courage, his passion for justice, and his love of humanity.

After the Republicans had made such a mess of our domestic welfare and world security, we brought to the

Presidency a Democrat--that courageous leader and great humanitarian, Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Under Roosevelt's leadership, we licked the Hoover depression, we rebuilt a strong America, and we won the greatest war in all history.

40 I am proud to have been a part in Roosevelt's great fight for the rights and liberties of humanity.

At the end of the war, in 1945, the people of this country were more prosperous than ever before in their history. The Democrats planned it that way. And in spite of the scorn and derision which the Republicans in Congress expressed about Government planning, that planning paid off.

Labor was stronger than ever before. The farmers were more secure than ever before. Business was making more  
45 money than ever before. Our homes and our earnings were protected against inflation and rising prices.

We seemed to be headed for a period of safe and wholesome progress in this country.

But in November 1946 we suffered a misfortune which now threatens to destroy our hopes and our safety with a new wave of blind and selfish reaction. Two years ago, when it was the responsibility of the people to elect a new Congress, millions of Americans failed to vote. Almost two-thirds of those entitled to vote did not vote. And the result  
50 was the notorious "do-nothing" Republican Both Congress--the Congress that owes its election to Democrats who didn't bother to vote.

You know the record of that Congress.

You know how it refused to deal with inflation and how it let prices keep on rising.

You know how it failed to provide low-rent housing and how it remained faithful to the slogan of "Two families in  
55 every garage."

You know how it played the game of big business lobbies at Washington and how it shackled labor with that awful Taft-Hartley law.

And now the Republicans tell us that they stand for unity. In the old days, Al Smith would have said, "That's baloney."  
60 Today, I think he would say, "That's a lot of hooey." And if that rhymes with anything, it is not my fault.

They made their great mistake when they decided that the election of 1946 was a mandate--a mandate, mind you--to destroy the New Deal.

Two years ago the people lost control of the Congress. Control passed to big business--to special privilege--to the owners of the Republican Party. Big business and special privilege have only one idea--to charge all that traffic will  
65 bear. Through the action of the .Both Congress they have given you warning of worse things to come.

But less than a week from now you will have a chance to regain control of your Government. You can elect a Democratic Congress and a Democratic President.

My friends, there will never be a time in your life when you can spend 2 hours to better advantage than by voting on this election day, November the 2d. For more than your prosperity hangs on the result of that decision.

70 The peace and freedom of the entire world depend on the courage and imagination of a people's Government at Washington.

Yesterday, the free peoples of the world were threatened by the black menace of fascism. The American people helped to save them. Today, the free peoples of the world are threatened by the red menace of communism.

And again, the American people are helping to save them.

75 I think that I speak for every loyal American-Democrat and Republican alike--when I say that we detest what Communists stand for, and what they have done to the free peoples under their control.

If the people of some other country freely choose a Communist form of government, that is their own business. But we don't want any Communist government in the United States of America.

And if the people of other countries don't want communism, we don't want to see it imposed upon them against their  
80 will.

We have been taking positive and successful action, everywhere in the world, to halt the threat of communism.

There are some Republicans who have been trying to make you believe that your Government is endangered by Communist infiltration. That is just a plain, malicious lie.

But that is not a new form of attack. The Republican candidate for President in 1944, who is trying again this year,  
85 said here in Boston--now listen to this--he said, right here in Boston--that Franklin Roosevelt was soliciting the support of Communists. He said that the Communists were seizing control of the New Deal.

Those statements were absurd and ridiculous. They were just as absurd as the reasons this same Republican candidate gave in 1944 as to why the New Deal could not provide jobs after the war. I wish you would ask him about that now.

Ask him how many jobs there are today. He was going to blame us if there were no jobs. So, if he will give us credit  
90 for the 61 million people working today, that will be all right. He won't do that. Sixty-one million!

I said 61 million people. There are more people at work today than ever before in the history of the country. There isn't a man in the United States who, if he wants a job, can't find one--and with good pay. I wish you would ask that Republican candidate sometime how many jobs the Republicans were providing in 1932.

All of this Republican talk about communism in 1944 and again this year is in the same pattern with their appeals to  
95 religious prejudice against Al Smith in 1928. They are afraid to go before the American people on the merits of the policies they believe in. So they try to distract the people's attention with false issues.

I want you to get this straight now.

I hate communism. I deplore what it does to the dignity and freedom of the individual. I detest the godless creed it teaches.

100 I have fought it at home. I have fought it abroad, and I shall continue to fight it with all my strength.

This is one issue on which I shall never surrender.

Now, my friends, the truth of the matter is, the Communists are doing all they can to defeat me and help my Republican opponent.

Just take a look at the facts.

105 The Communist Party of the United States is today supporting a third-party candidate in an effort to defeat me.

In State after State the Republicans have worked to get this Communist-supported candidate on the ballot in order to defeat me, and with me, the party of the people who want no share of this unholy alliance.

You can all see the Republican point of view--it is anything to get votes.

But you may wonder why the Communists, with their supposed hatred for capitalism, are working night and day for  
110 the victory of the party of big business.

Well, I'll tell you why.

The Communists don't want me to be President, because this country, under a Democratic administration, has rallied the forces of all the democracies of the world to safeguard freedom and to save free people everywhere from Communist slavery.

115 Our goal is peace--a lasting peace in the world.

It is our conviction that peace in this atomic age is an absolute necessity. But only a peace that is based on human rights and freedom will be a lasting peace.

I propose to keep on doing my level best to win a lasting peace.

That must be done, not only for the people of the United States, but for people everywhere in the world.

120 In March of last year I announced a fundamental decision of your Government, designed to preserve the freedom of the world. In stating that doctrine, I said: "It must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures."

Our first step under that doctrine was to give economic and military aid to Greece and Turkey, two countries right under the shadow of Communist domination.

125 The whole world knows of the success of this policy. Now, the Communists will never forgive me for that.

This was only the first step in a broad program to check the spread of communism.

The next step was the European recovery program, known as the Marshall plan.

You have heard of the heartening results which are now being achieved under this program in 16 European countries. Not only are hungry people being fed, but industries have been reconstructed and farms restored and railways and  
130 mines set in order.

As a result of these wise measures the European recovery program is driving back the threat of communism.

And the Communists will never forgive me for that, either.

Let's take three European countries--Italy, France, and Germany--and see why the Communists hate your President so bitterly.

135 Our aid has given Italy a new lease on freedom. Our aid has helped really decisive popular support for the freely elected government of Italy. It has shown the Italian people that they can solve their economic problems under democracy.

I wonder what would have happened to Italy without our help? I think we all know. The salvation of Italy from Communist tyranny is one of the great achievements of our recovery program.

140 And for that the Communists will never forgive me.

Our aid has also been a bulwark of free democracy in France. There, as throughout Europe, we are using our economic strength to raise the living standards of the people, and thus to avoid the danger of a Fascist reaction or a Communist tyranny.

And, the Communists hold that against me, too,

145 In Germany, we have taken the frank and firm position that communism must not spread its tentacles into the Western Zone.

We shall not retreat from that position.

We shall feed the people of Berlin, and the people of Germany will be given their chance to work out a decent life under a democratic government.

150 Now, the Communists hate me for that, too.

As an American, as well as your President, I resent the contemptible Republican slur that charges me with being "soft" where Communist tyranny is concerned.

Under your Democratic administration, the people of the United States have thrown themselves wholeheartedly into the support of freedom and democracy against the predatory pressures of communism.

155 Our sustained, unprecedented worldwide fight against the spread of communism has brought new hope to people everywhere in the world.

Now, on the strength of that record, it is clear why the Communists would like to bring about my defeat, and elect a Republican President.

But I am surprised that the Republican Party should lend assistance to this Communist intrigue.

160 Let me remind you that the Communist Party in this country reached its maximum strength in 1932, under a Republican President.

Communism thrives on misery. Human suffering nourishes the Communist menace. That menace withers away where there is prosperity, justice, and tolerance.

The real threat of communism in this country lies in the danger of another major depression. The real threat of  
165 communism lies in widespread unemployment and arrogant injustice, such as we had in 1932.

The real threat of communism in this country grows out of the Republican policies of the 80th Congress--policies which threaten to put an end to American prosperity.

The real threat of communism in this country grows out of the submission of the Republican Party to the dictates of big business, and its determination to destroy the hard-won rights of American labor.

170 You can fight communism on November 2d with a Democratic vote, and you can defeat Republican reaction at the same time.

Reactionary Republican policies invited communism in 1932. We were saved then, but we cannot afford to take that risk again.

If the Republican candidate wants to rid the country of Communists--and I believe he has some of them right in his  
175 own State of New York--he ought to begin by shaking off the hand of reaction which now has a stranglehold on the Republican Party.

But somehow, I don't see him doing that.

It all falls into the same old Republican pattern--appeal to the passions of prejudice and intolerance, and hope to get the votes.

180 All I can say is that I'm proud to be a Democrat. We are engaged in a great crusade--a crusade for freedom, for tolerance, for the rights and welfare of all the people.

This fight is Al Smith's fight.

This fight is Roosevelt's fight.

And now it is my fight.

185 More than that, it is your fight.

And I'm proud to be making this fight with you for the things in which we believe.

With your help, and your courage, and your enthusiasm, we are going to win this fight on November the 2d.  
(2658 words)

Quelle: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=13073&st=&st1=>