

Stevenson delivered the following speech at the Cleveland Arena in Cleveland, Ohio, on October 23.

THE HISS CASE ¹⁶⁶

The hour is growing late in this autumn of our political decision. But I find it necessary to talk here tonight of things which are more fundamental than the immediate political questions before us.

For three months now I have done my best to talk sensibly.

I believed with many of you that General Eisenhower's hard-won victory in the Chicago Convention was a victory of the constructive and progressive men in the Republican Party over its bitter and reactionary elements.

I believed that an educational and elevating national discussion would result. But, instead, in the past two months the General has, one by one, embraced the men who were so savagely against him at Chicago. He has lost the support of men like Senator Wayne Morse of Oregon and has won the support of men like Colonel McCormick of the *Chicago Tribune*.

Meanwhile, his Vice Presidential candidate and other principal speakers on his behalf have given the Republican campaign its distinct shape and pattern.

It is not a campaign by debate. It has become a systematic program of innuendo and accusation aimed at sowing the seeds of doubt and mistrust.

The Republican candidate for Vice President has himself set the pace. This week and next — in these last days before the election — the Republican high command is counting heavily on this kind of campaign.

Next Monday, I'm informed, the junior Senator from Wisconsin is going to make a highly advertised speech — the man who said last week that, if he were put aboard my campaign train with a club, he might be able to make a good American out of me.¹⁶⁷

Now plainly I have no concern about what the junior Senator from Wisconsin has to say about me. As an isolated voice he would be unimportant. But he has become more than the voice of a single individual who thinks the way to teach his brand of Americanism is with a club. This man will appear on nationwide radio and television as the planned

¹⁶⁶ The text is from *Major Campaign Speeches AES 1952*, pp. 269–275.

¹⁶⁷ At one point in October, 1952, Senator McCarthy said, "If somebody would only smuggle me aboard the Democratic campaign special with a baseball bat in my hand, I'd teach patriotism to little Ad-lie." See Fred J. Cook, *The Nightmare Decade: The Life and Times of Senator Joe McCarthy* (New York: Random House, 1971), p. 6; see also p. 581 for an explanation of the source of this and other similar quotations.

climax of the Republican campaign — as the voice of the wing of the Republican Party that lost the nomination but won the nominee. You will hear from the Senator from Wisconsin, with the permission and the approval of General Eisenhower.

Only last week, stung by charges that he had surrendered to the Old Guard, the General said that the decisions in this campaign “have been and will be mine alone.” He added: “This crusade which I have taken to the American people represents what I, myself, believe.” Crusade indeed!

In 1950 a group of Republican Senators, headed by Senator Smith of Maine, issued a Declaration of Conscience denouncing the tactics of smear and slander.¹⁶⁸ The General might have endorsed that Declaration of Conscience. He might have made it the testament of a real Crusade. Instead, by ignorance or choice, he has turned not to the Republican signers of that declaration, but to the Republican Senator who called Senator Smith a thief and defender of the communists.

I had not expected that the General would ever countenance such a campaign by his “crusaders.” But this was before the General gave his hand to Senator [William E.] Jenner of Indiana who had called General George C. Marshall a “living lie” and “a front man for traitors” — Marshall, the architect of victory and General Eisenhower’s greatest benefactor. It was before General Eisenhower struck from the speech that he was to give in Wisconsin words of praise for General Marshall at the request of the junior Senator from Wisconsin who had termed Marshall “so steeped in falsehood” that he “has recourse to the lie whenever it suits his convenience.”¹⁶⁹ And it was before General Eisenhower last week quietly reinserted the words of praise for General Marshall in New Jersey once he was safely out of McCarthy and Jenner territory.

If the General would publicly embrace those who slandered George Marshall, there is certainly no reason to expect that he would restrain those who would slander me.

The Republican Vice Presidential candidate — who asks you to place him a heartbeat from the Presidency — has attacked me for saying in a

¹⁶⁸ On June 1, 1950, Senator Margaret Chase Smith delivered a Declaration of Conscience to the Senate. She criticized confusion arising from the lack of leadership from the White House, but she stated: “Certain elements of the Republican party have materially added to this confusion in the hopes of riding the Republican party to victory through selfish political exploitation of fear, bigotry, ignorance, and intolerance.” Republican senators Charles W. Tobey, George D. Aiken, Wayne C. Morse, Irving M. Ives, Edward J. Thye, and Robert C. Hendrickson joined her in the declaration.

¹⁶⁹ On June 14, 1951, Senator McCarthy, on the floor of the Senate, accused General George C. Marshall of being part of “a conspiracy so immense, an infamy so black, as to dwarf any previous such venture in the history of man.” See Walter Johnson, *1600 Pennsylvania Avenue*, Chapter 28: “Politics of Revenge.”

court deposition that the reputation of Alger Hiss was good.¹⁷⁰ And let us always be clear where the responsibility lies. As the Republican Vice Presidential candidate put it last Monday, General Eisenhower "is the captain of the team." Senator Nixon added significantly: "With due regard for his team members and their abilities, he is calling the plays."

Now what are the facts? In the words of Al Smith, "Let's look at the record." I had known Hiss briefly in 1933 when I worked about five months for the Agricultural Adjustment Administration in Washington, where he was also employed. I did not encounter him again until twelve years later, in March of 1945 in the State Department. I saw him intermittently from March of 1945 to March of 1946 in the course of our official duties. Half that time I was in London for the Government. He never entered my house and I never entered his. I saw him twice in the Fall of 1947 at the U. N. General Assembly in New York. I have not seen him since.

In the spring of 1949 I was requested by the lawyers for Alger Hiss to appear at his first trial and testify as to his reputation. I refused to do so because of the burden of my official duties as Governor of Illinois. I was then requested to answer questions submitted under order of the court with regard to his reputation, as I had learned about it from others.

I said his reputation was "good" — and it was. I didn't say it was "very good"; I didn't say he was a "great patriot"; I didn't say any of the things the Wisconsin Senator, whose best weapon is carelessness with facts, says I said. I said his reputation was "good" so far as I had heard from others, and that was the simple, exact, whole truth, and all I could say on the basis of what I knew.

This was his reputation as the General, himself, has good reason to know.

These same spokesmen have challenged my sworn statement that I didn't believe that I had seen Hiss between March, 1946, and the fall of 1947. They say I introduced him at a speech in Chicago on November 12, 1946. All of the records make clear that my recollection was accurate. For on November 12, 1946, I was in official attendance as a U.S. delegate to the United Nations in New York, and was not in Chicago.

I am a lawyer. I think that one of the fundamental responsibilities not only of every citizen but particularly of lawyers is to give testimony in a court of law and to give it honestly and willingly. It will be a sorry day for American justice when a man, particularly one in public life, is too timid to state what he knows or what he has heard about a defendant in a criminal trial, for fear that the defendant might be later convicted.

¹⁷⁰ For the text of the deposition see *The Papers of Adlai E. Stevenson*, Vol. III, pp. 101-104.

And I might add that here in your own state of Ohio a Republican Congressman was recently convicted for unlawful acts.¹⁷¹ Before his conviction, your own Senator Taft appeared and testified that this man's reputation was "excellent without question." Senator Bricker¹⁷² and Congressman Joseph W. Martin, Jr., Republican minority leader, gave the same testimony.

My testimony in the Hiss case no more shows softness toward communism than the testimony of these Republican leaders shows softness toward corruption.

At no time did I testify on the issue of the guilt or innocence of Alger Hiss as a perjurer or a traitor. As I have repeatedly said, I have never doubted the verdict of the jury which convicted him.

I testified only as to his reputation at the time I knew him. His reputation was good. If I had said it was bad, I would have been a liar. If I had refused to testify at all, I would have been a coward.

But while the brash and patronizing young man who aspires to the Vice Presidency does not charge me with being a communist, he does say that I exercised bad judgment in stating honestly what I heard from others about Hiss' reputation. "Thou shalt not bear false witness," is one of the Ten Commandments, in case Senator Nixon has not read them lately. And if *he* would not tell and tell honestly what he knew of a defendant's reputation, he would be a coward and unfit for any office.

The responsibility of lawyers to co-operate with courts is greatest of all because they are officers of the court. And Senator Nixon is a lawyer.

He has criticized my judgment. I hope and pray that his standards of "judgment" never prevail in our courts, or our public life at any level, let alone in exalted positions of respect and responsibility.¹⁷³

These are the plain and simple facts. I would suggest to the Republican "crusaders" that if they were to apply the same methods to their own candidate, General Eisenhower, and to his foreign affairs adviser, Mr. Dulles, they would find that both these men were of the same opinion about Alger Hiss, and more so. And more important, I would suggest that these methods are dangerous, not just to the Republican candidate, but to the very processes of our democracy.

In December, 1946, Hiss was chosen to be president of the Carnegie

¹⁷¹ Walter E. Brehm, Republican congressman from Ohio since 1943, was convicted on April 30, 1951, and fined five thousand dollars for receiving illegal campaign contributions from his office employees. He was not a candidate for reelection in 1952.

¹⁷² Republican Senator John W. Bricker of Ohio.

¹⁷³ The handwritten draft of this and the two preceding paragraphs — from which the typed copy of the speech was made — is in the Schlesinger papers, John F. Kennedy Library.

Endowment by the Board of Trustees, of which John Foster Dulles was Chairman and several leading Republican businessmen were members. After Hiss was elected, but before he took office, a Detroit lawyer offered to provide Mr. Dulles with evidence that Hiss had a provable communist record. No such report or warning ever came to me. Under date of December 26, Mr. Dulles responded. Listen to what he said:

"I have heard the report which you refer to, but I have confidence that there is no reason to doubt Mr. Hiss' complete loyalty to our American institutions. I have been thrown into intimate contact with him at San Francisco, London and Washington . . . Under these circumstances I feel a little skeptical about information which seems inconsistent with all that I personally know and what is the judgment of reliable friends and associates in Washington."

That, my friends, is what John Foster Dulles, the General's adviser on foreign policy, thought.

In May, 1948, General Eisenhower was elected to the Board of Trustees of the Carnegie Endowment at the same meeting at which Hiss was re-elected president and Dulles Chairman of the Board. This was months after I had seen Hiss for the last time. I am sure the General would never have joined the Board of Trustees if he had any doubt about Hiss' loyalty.

After he had been indicted by the grand jury, Hiss tendered his resignation as president and trustee of the Carnegie Endowment. The Board of Trustees, of which General Eisenhower was a member, declined to accept his resignation and granted him three months' leave of absence with full pay so that he might defend himself. The General was not present at the meeting, but I do not find that he ever voiced disapproval of this concrete expression of trust and confidence. In May of 1949, the month in which I gave my deposition, and again in December, 1949, after the first trial of Alger Hiss, the Board of Trustees, of which General Eisenhower was still a member, again voted to reject Hiss' resignation.

Alger Hiss, General Eisenhower and Dulles continued as fellow members of the Board of Trustees until after the conviction of Hiss.

I bring these facts to the American people not to suggest that either General Eisenhower or John Foster Dulles is soft toward communists or even guilty of the bad judgment with which the General's running mate charges me. I bring them out only to make the point that the mistrust, the innuendoes, the accusations which this "crusade" is employing, threatens not merely themselves, but the integrity of our institutions and our respect for fair play.

I would remind General Eisenhower of the wisdom of yet another General. One day, after inspecting his troops, the Duke of Wellington said: "They may not frighten the enemy, but gad sir, they frighten me."

I might observe to the General that although his troops do not frighten us they ought to frighten him.

I do not suppose that the Hiss case exhausts the arsenal of accusation with which the General's high command hopes to obtain victory. But these things I can tell you about myself and they are on the record. In 1943, during the war, after leading an economic mission to Italy, I warned against the spread of Soviet influence in the Mediterranean. In 1945 and 1946, just after the war, I engaged in constant and heated debate with Soviet representatives in the United Nations in support of the interests of the United States. I repeatedly pointed out that appeasement doesn't work. In March, 1946, I said to an audience in Chicago that: "Russia and communism are on the march . . . We must forsake any hope that she is going to lie still and lick her awful wounds."

This was not long after General Eisenhower had told a House Committee: "Nothing guides Russian policy so much as a desire for friendship with the United States." As late as June of this year he said, "There is no more reason to fear the 190 million backward people living on the Eurasian continent than there is to fear pollywogs swimming down a muddy creek."

I would never have believed that a Presidential contest with General Eisenhower would have made this speech necessary.

It may well be that the General has been misled by his lack of experience in civil life. This is not a war; it is a political contest in a free democracy; and the rules are different. We who believe in our system have always considered it to be the responsibility of candidates to promote wider understanding of the true issues — and not to stir up fear and to spread suspicion.

I resent — and I resent bitterly — the sly and ugly campaign that is being waged in behalf of the General, and I am deeply shocked that he would lead a so-called "crusade" which accepts calumny and the big doubt as its instruments.

Because I believe in freedom I am opposed to communism. And I think I know more about it and more about the Soviet Union than most of these self-appointed Republican custodians of patriotism. I even went to Russia more than twenty-five years ago to see for myself, before, I dare say, some of these crusaders even knew what was going on in the world,¹⁷⁴ and I have negotiated face to face with the Russians and their satellites in San Francisco, London and New York.

We are opposing communism abroad, where its relentless pressure seeks further to narrow the area of freedom. We are opposing it at home

¹⁷⁴ For Stevenson's visit to Russia in 1926, see *The Papers of Adlai E. Stevenson*, Vol. I, pp. 167-169; Davis, *A Prophet in His Own Country*, pp. 153-159.

where its agents and converts seek to undermine our society and corrupt our government. As I have repeatedly said, the Federal Government must use all its resources to expose and identify communistic activity, to keep communists out of places of responsibility in our society, and to protect our institutions from communist espionage, sabotage and subversion.

But I know and you know that we do not strengthen freedom by diminishing it. We do not weaken communism abroad or at home by false or misleading charges carefully timed by unscrupulous men for election purposes. For I believe with all my heart that those who would beguile the voters by lies or half-truths, or corrupt them by fear and falsehood, are committing spiritual treason against our institutions. They are doing the work of our enemies.

In the end such tactics serve directly the interests of the communists and of all other foes of freedom.

Even worse, they undermine our basic spiritual values.

For in the final accounting, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

Before starting off on his final campaign tour of New York and New England, Stevenson, from his rich experience in the founding of — and participating in the early days of — the United Nations, delivered the following radio speech marking United Nations Day on October 24, 1952.

THE UNITED NATIONS:
OUR HOPE AND OUR COMMITMENT ¹⁷⁵

We do more today than to observe the anniversary of an institution. What we do today is to hold communion with an idea.

I speak of the idea of peace on earth.

The pursuit of this idea is at once old and new. It is as old as man's discovery that he could conquer and enslave other men. In the same sense it is as old as the will to resist, as old as the power of a righteous cause. But it is also a young idea, this pursuit of peace, for it is only in our century that human wisdom and energy have sought to bring all the nations of the earth under a rule of law through world organization.

If the pursuit of peace is both old and new, it is also both complicated and simple. It is complicated, for it has to do with people, and nothing in this universe baffles man as much as man himself. Much of nature's mystery has come under man's mastery. Heat, cold, wind and rain have lost their terrors, but the environment man has created for himself has yet to

¹⁷⁵ The text is from *Major Campaign Speeches AES 1952*, pp. 276-277.

be brought under control. Nature's jungle has been conquered, but man still lives in the larger jungle of his fears.

Yes, it is complicated, this pursuit of peace, but there is also an inspiring simplicity to it. We can win the war against war because we must. Progress is what happens when impossibility yields to necessity. And it is an article of the democratic faith that progress is a basic law of life.

If I thought that the human race was no longer capable of human progress, I would not be trespassing now upon the time and attention of the American people. Instead, I might be off on a remote hilltop silently contemplating the closing scene of the final act of the human comedy.

But I do not believe it is man's destiny to compress this once boundless earth into a small neighborhood, the better to destroy it. Nor do I believe it is in the nature of man to strike eternally at the image of himself, and therefore of God. I profoundly believe that there is on this horizon, as yet only dimly perceived, a new dawn of conscience. In that purer light, people will come to see themselves in each other, which is to say they will make themselves known to one another by their similarities rather than by their differences. Man's knowledge of things will begin to be matched by man's knowledge of self. The significance of a smaller world will be measured not in terms of military advantage, but in terms of advantage for the human community. It will be the triumph of the heartbeat over the drumbeat.

These are my beliefs and I hold them deeply, but they would be without any inner meaning for me unless I felt that they were also the deep beliefs of human beings everywhere. And the proof of this, to my mind, is the very existence of the United Nations. However great the assaults on the peace may have been since the United Nations was founded, the easiest way to demonstrate the idea behind it is by the fact that no nation in the world today would dare to remove itself from membership and separate his country from the human hopes that are woven into the very texture of the organization.

The early years of the United Nations have been difficult ones, but what did we expect? That peace would drift down from the skies like soft snow? That there would be no ordeal, no anguish, no testing, in this greatest of all human undertakings?

Any great institution or idea must suffer its pains of birth and growth. We will not lose faith in the United Nations. We see it as a living thing and we will work and pray for its full growth and development. We want it to become what it was intended to be — a world society of nations under law, not merely law backed by force, but law backed by justice and popular consent. We believe the answer to world war can only be

world law. This is our hope and our commitment, and that is why I join all Americans on this anniversary in saying: "More power to the United Nations."

Stevenson delivered the following speech at the Nelson House in Poughkeepsie, New York, on October 25.

FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT ¹⁷⁶

I am sorry I kept you waiting. I have just been up at Hyde Park and the Roosevelt Library and then I went over to Val Kill cottage for breakfast with Mrs. Roosevelt and Franklin Roosevelt, Jr. It was hard to tear myself away from a scene so thronged with memories for any Presidential candidate or, indeed, for any Democrat — or for any American.¹⁷⁷

As I came across upstate New York yesterday, I reflected a little on the meaning of Franklin Roosevelt for our time and for our nation.

As a man, he remains a vivid and unforgettable figure in all our minds. His courage, his gallantry, his world vision and his passion for democracy will stay always alive in the national memory. Of course, I know he had — and has — his enemies too. Like all great historical figures, he aroused contention and controversy. But, when I look at those enemies, I can only remember the statement made about another great New York Democrat: ¹⁷⁸ We honor him for the enemies he has made.

He made enemies because he led the party of progress — and those who benefit by the vested privileges or injustices of an existing order always resent and resist change.

Franklin Roosevelt became President at one of the turning points in our history. The old order had reached the end of its tether. Our nation either had to revolutionize itself from within — or risk revolution from without. It had to recognize the existence of the twentieth century.

At home, the disorder and collapse of the security markets and then the economy, the misery and despair of the people, threatened revolt and violent social change.

Abroad, the old order had built one wall after another, insulating America from the world, until it had succeeded totally in neutralizing our

¹⁷⁶ The text is from *Major Campaign Speeches AES 1952*, pp. 278–281.

¹⁷⁷ Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr., wrote Stevenson on October 27: "It was a great privilege for Mother and me to have you for breakfast at her cottage, and I heard nothing but praise for your speech at Poughkeepsie."

¹⁷⁸ Grover Cleveland, governor of New York, 1882–1884, and President of the United States, 1885–1889 and 1893–1897.

power and withdrawing us from the world balance of forces. War threatened.

Fortunately we had in President Roosevelt a man with the historical insight to understand the problems and with the will and leadership to do something about them.

At home, he knew that the economy of a great nation could not be weak, anarchic, undermined by speculation and influenced by selfish and unscrupulous concentrations of wealth and power. He stood for a strong economy — and he knew that the people's government had an essential role to play in releasing the energies of the people.

Under his leadership, the American people drew up programs by which they could gain the assurance of economic and social security. His New Deal put solid foundations under our free economic system — foundations designed to maintain the buying power of the people and thus to prevent another collapse into the dark pit of depression and despair. Sense and sanity and responsibility were restored to our economic life.

The result was that our nation, so weak and battered and despairing in 1932 in the greatest economic misfortune of our history, was able ten years later to serve as the arsenal of democracy in the greatest war of our history — and today is riding the crest of the greatest prosperity of our history.

As Mr. Roosevelt believed in strength at home, so he believed in strength abroad — because he knew that, without strength, America would be without influence, and without influence America could not make her proper contribution to the maintenance of peace. From the beginning of his administration, he led the way in building up American military and naval power.

Some of you will remember that his early requests for naval appropriations horrified certain of his liberal friends. They tried to explain it away by saying that it was a kind of hobby for him, like sailing his favorite sailboat! Well, if it was a hobby, it was a fortunate one for the American people. Those aircraft carriers and destroyers built with PWA money turned out to be mighty useful just a few years later.

But Roosevelt did not believe in strength for the sake of strength. He believed in strength for the sake of co-operation with other free nations in the service of peace. Unfortunately, by the time he could persuade the rest of us of the vital importance of an affirmative foreign policy, the Second World War was upon us. Once war had begun he understood that we could best defend America by helping our friends in the world defend themselves. And in the fire and fury of war, he never lost sight of the ultimate objective — the building of a structure of world security which would reduce the chances of another such global holocaust.