

PROTESTS, RALLIES, DEMONSTRATIONS
ADLAI STEVENSON TEXTILE WORKERS SPEECH

Pacifica Radio Archives: “Protests, Rallies, Demonstrations”

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Transcript of Adlai Stevenson’s Speech to the Textile Workers’ Union. The former presidential candidate campaigns for the Democratic Party and John Fitzgerald Kennedy in the 1960 national elections. This speech was recorded on June 1, 1960 in Chicago, Illinois.

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Transcript

ADLAI STEVENSON’S SPEECH TO THE TEXTILE WORKERS’ UNION

Adlai Stevenson (AS)

SOUND UP

(RHYTHMIC POUNDING, APPLAUSE)

AS: Mr. – Seems like old times here, doesn’t it? Mr. Pollock, my old friend, Mr. Rieve, distinguished guests and delegates. I’m very grateful to you, Mr. Pollock. I’m not only grateful to you for your introduction, but I’m also, I must confess, relieved. After what you said Monday about eggheads and meatheads (LAUGHTER), but I agree with your conclusions. Indeed, I wrote this down this morning: “The egghead is cracked. The meathead is sacked. It’s time to get down to some matters of fact.” (POUNDING, APPLAUSE) I think, uh, - I was reminded when I came here that I think one of the greatest compliments that ever befell me was the man who said – who introduced me as a

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practical idealist, sort of a hardboiled egghead. This meeting, ladies and gentlemen, is an opportunity for me to express my appreciation to the Textile Workers Union who supported the Democratic candidate when I was its candi – the Democratic Party when I was it's candidate and who have, by your endorsement yesterday, expressed your continued support of liberal Democratic principles. (APPLAUSE AND SHOUTS) I consider myself highly honored to join my distinguished friend, Senator Douglas, Senator Pastore, Senator Humphrey, and Senator Kennedy in talking with you about some of the problems that we face in this country. Some of these problems, of course, are of very special significance to *you* as leaders of a great labor union. There is strong temptation to talk about some of these things, about the need, now put off by the President's veto, to meet the depressed areas problem; of the importance to the whole economy of increasing the minimum wage level, of the human demand for medical care for Social Security beneficiaries, but there is, I'm sure you'll agree, *one* issue which overshadows all others and it is properly discussed, not as political partisans or as leaders of labor, but as Americans taking counsel together. Who we are isn't in the least important when we discuss the subject of *peace*. You know, there's a joke that has been going around in Paris recently. It's a very short one. It goes like this: "Once upon a time, there was an American diplomat..." (LAUGHTER) But I'm sorry to say there isn't very much to smile about over the incredible events of the last few weeks the culminated in the collapse of the Summit Conference and in Mr. Khrushchev's exhibition of temper. It's of that that I wanted to talk today. It's enough that we Americans realize the *full* gravity, the urgency of our situation, so that we may now proceed to look to the future. The Summit was a defeat for the policies of both Eisenhower and Khrushchev. The Stalinist

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faction in the Soviet Union has been strengthened. Red China and Russia have been thrust closer together. World tensions have been increased. All those who hoped for détente who hoped for progress through patient negotiation have suffered a serious reverse, while the hotheads and the Cold warriors who don't want to ease the tensions have gained ground. And, finally, the effectiveness of the leadership of the present Administration in Washington has been impaired, if not destroyed. In short, my friends, we have achieved most the results that we wanted to avoid. Instead of a *safer* world, we are confronted by a serious new crisis. With our system of alliances weakened, with our bases jeopardized, with our reputation for competence damaged, and the danger of accidental war, as Dag Hammarskjold of the United Nations said last week, increased. So I should like to suggest some of the things we should do and think about in order to recover our initiative and to restore confidence in American leadership in the long and continuing struggle for peace and freedom, which is the destiny of this generation of Americans. And this, I think, is a very good time to talk about our foreign affairs. Because people are *now* concerned, concerned about the significance of these dramatic events of the last few weeks. Despite the usual White House assurances that all is well. It seems to take something dramatic, like the U2 flight over the Soviet Union, to wake us up. Suez and Hungary, when the world almost blew up, was another moment of awakening. And so was Sputnik, and so was Kamoi and Matsu. But this time I hope we stay awake because our troubles are mounting. As we know the (UNCLEAR) Chinese are saying that this is *no* time to talk peace and relaxation. This is the time to make hay. Massive demonstrations against our security treaty have rocked Japan. In Korea, the era of (UNCLEAR) has ended in violence. At the other end of Asia, the elected leaders of

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Turkey are in jail after a popular uprising. To the hostile developments in Cuba, we all know about, and the memory of the anti-American riots in Latin America and the Middle East is still fresh. So I say to you, with all the sobriety that I can command, that this is a very good time for a sober national discussion of our foreign affairs. And with a national campaign coming up, I hope that we can talk sensibly and that every criticism, that every proposal won't bring forth the senseless cries of "appeasement" and "soft on Communism," *all* those ugly reminders of the recent low point in our national debate that have suddenly re-appeared to deface our politics again. (APPLAUSE) When the Republican orators, with injured innocence, imply that criticism of our behavior abroad is somehow disloyal, perhaps they should be reminded of Senator Taft's words in 1952. "It is the right and the duty," he said, "of the Republican Party, to point out the mistakes and the unbelievably bad judgment of those who have conducted our foreign policy." And that, my friends, was during wartime. But when they are in power, the Republican leaders seem to venerate "national unity," as they call it. And only last week, Mr. Nixon attacked Senator Symington, Senator Kennedy, and myself for, as he put it, "making a partisan issue out of the Summit Conference." I can see why he would like to hush up all discussion of foreign policy. But has he forgotten his own past role as a critic? I don't believe any member of the opposition today will debase the national debate as he did during the Korean War, or when he charged President Truman with having lost 600 million people to the Communists. True national unity will only come from courageous self-scrutiny and the search for truth by Democrats and Republicans alike. (APPLAUSE)

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AS: I say, in these dangerous months, that we must direct our energies to *positive* rather than negative purposes. The President has told us to keep our chins up, but we must do more than that. We must keep our eyes open and we must keep our brains busy. For I say to you that good intentions are not enough. What we shall have to have is a grand strategy for peace. All right then, where do we go from here? What are the priorities for peace? Well, I say we must assume that the Administration will quickly untangle the lines of authority and remedy the defects revealed by the Senate investigation of the U2 incident. But in trying to defend our management of the affair, some responsible Republican spokesmen seem to be implying that it is impossible to negotiate with the Soviet leaders and that to do so is in the nature of appeasement. This would compound the disaster, for we shall have to talk and bargain with the Communist countries for many years to come. I think this historic incident does prove, however, that successful negotiation at the Summit is impossible unless the area of negotiation is clear on both sides and unless both sides are willing to *give* something. Summit negotiations should be the *last*, not the first, stage of international communication. With the help of our Allies, we must repair the damage as soon as possible. We must resume meaningful discussion with the Russians at lower levels over the whole wide range of world affairs. Soviet readiness is revealed, I think, by the good climate in the Nuclear Test-ban Conference in Geneva. Also, the United Nations Security Council is made-to-order for communications between East and West. If the United Nations could be revitalized as a center for quiet, orderly diplomacy, without the propaganda and the forensics of the great power meetings, it would be a major achievement.

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AS: Another lesson of the Summit experience is that we should anticipate the clumsy affect of our actions in the Communist world; something we don't seem to do. By our clumsy and provocative handling of the U2 incident, we have probably strengthened the hand of the Soviet militarists, and that is not a victory for anybody. It is a defeat. Because of our obsessive fear of the Soviet Union, we ignore the conflicts between Russians and the greater threat from Red China. But even if we Americans understood better the true state of world affairs, even if our illusions about foreign policy were dispelled, even if we recognized our mistakes, even if fruitful negotiation was possible again, it wouldn't alter for many years. The constantly aggressive Communist political activities, especially among the peoples of Asia, of Africa, of South America, who are seeking a new dignity in this modern world – So the question is, then, how do we live with the aggressive Communists in this revolutionary age, *without* giving in to them or destroying each other in a nuclear war? We do not do it, I submit, just by trying to stop or contain them. We do it by out-producing them. We do it by competing with them as strenuously as we can on the economic and political front, and by demonstrating with action, rather than words, that *our* system has more to offer mankind than theirs.

(APPLAUSE)

AS: You know, instead of always worrying about what Russia will do next, let's concentrate on what *we* can do next and I have some suggestions. First, we must forge a deterrent power and a limited war capability with our NATO Allies that does not depend on the budget bureaucrats. There must be no chance of Soviet miscalculation. We, the United States, will never strike first, so we are at a disadvantage in the nuclear rocket age

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and we dare not tempt them with our weakness. Our European Allies can make a larger contribution than they have in the past to our military strength, until that happy day when a workable disarmament agreement lifts the burden of fear and expense from all of us.

AS: And second, we must promptly take steps, I think, to strengthen our Western Alliance, not only to repair the ravages of the Summit, but to get on with the job of building a stronger political and economic community in the Free World and especially in the North Atlantic area. (APPLAUSE) We can begin this process, too, by resisting the temptation to gloss over our blunders or to blame Mr. MacMillan for urging the ill-fated Summit meeting or to criticize General De Gaulle for postponing it, or for praising Chancellor Adenauer for opposing it in the first place. Let us then recognize anew the fact of our economic, of our military, of our political interdependence. With the resources, military, economic, moral, of the great democracies united for common purposes, there is little we cannot do to advance peace and well being, but disunited there is little that we can do. I have suggested than an Atlantic Council could formulate joint policies for sharing our responsibilities and bringing about the genuine partnership in the Atlantic Community which our successes in the past, notably the Marshall Plan, make feasible and the greatest challenge that we have ever faced, make necessary. With *new* and bolder directives, *new* common policies for defense, for disarmament, for monetary reserves, for tariffs and trade in a larger economic sphere, and for aid to the underdeveloped areas. The *alternative* is to see the centrifugal forces, which are *always* at work. Witness now the conflict between the Common Market and the free-trade area in Europe. The alternative, I say, is to see these forces, which are always at work, pull us

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further apart and one thing is sure. We cannot deal with a Communist challenge, divided and in disarray. (APPLAUSE)

AS: In the third place, we must organize a mighty effort to help the less developed countries advance to self-sustaining growth. There is no more significant, no more sinister fact in the world today than the disparity in living standards between the rich countries and the poor. In America, the average annual income is well over \$2,000. For nearly half the world's population, it is less than \$100. The rich, moreover, are getting richer and the poor poorer. We must provide an alternative to Communist methods of development in countries where literacy is low, where hunger is high, and the gap between resources and population is widening. *This* is the great struggle of our century and if the Free Way of life doesn't help the poor, it will never save the rich.

(APPLAUSE)

AS: The chief aim of our programs in this field has, frankly, been to *stop* the Communists, but recently a new and more hopeful attitude has appeared. Mr. MacMillan, General De Gaulle, and President Eisenhower have *all* taken notice of the Western responsibility to help bridge the gap between the rich nations and the billion souls or more in the lands outside the Communist block, which are under-developed, unmodernized, and lacking the capital they need for growth. This is a task beyond the capacity of any of us alone. We shall have to coordinate *all* aspects of the effort with the other more fortunate nations, especially those in the developing Atlantic community. And, as in our common defense, the time has certainly come for other countries to

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participate and shoulder a share of the common burden of economic development and assistance. As the Communists know full well, *these* are the decisive areas of the world, but the problems of growth, the problems of poverty would exist, even if Communism had never been invented. Their solution accords with our American tradition, as I see it, the tradition of an expanding frontier, of work to be done, of hurdles to be leaped, of new markets to be opened; to complete the revolution of modernization, which began here in the west to spread new education to all peoples, to offer hope for health and food and shelter and elbow room to all members of the great human family. These, my friends, are not negligible goals. They complete the vision of a Jefferson and a Lincoln. The vision of burdens lifted from every shoulder and a life of opportunity for *all* mankind.

AS: And finally, in the fourth place, we must make it plain that peace and disarmament are the paramount goals of our foreign policy. (APPLAUSE)

AS: We know the lethal nature of modern weapons. We know that war can come to us from two directions. It can come to us by deliberate attack or it can come to us by accident. Not long ago, only Russia and the United States had nuclear weapons. Now four countries have them. Ten years from now, who knows? The proliferation, the spread of nuclear capability multiplies the danger of war by accident, or by design. Therefore, general and complete disarmament under international control has become an imperative for *all* of us and we should not hesitate to say so. (APPLAUSE)

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AS: (CROWD NOISE, SHOUT OUT) You know, it seems to me ironic that the Communists have so largely succeeded in exploiting the cry for peace which is surely the loudest and the clearest sound in this war weary, frightened world that I have traveled about so much in recent years. *They* have been able to do so because *we* have for so long put our emphasis on military containment. For years, it appeared that we didn't want to negotiate with the Russians either to test their intentions or to call their bluff.

Meanwhile, they, the Communists, stop nuclear testing without waiting for us. *They* twice reduced their army. *They* proposed total disarmament. Whatever their motives, cynical or sincere, *they* have constantly taken the initiative. *They* have answered the cry for peace, while we have hesitated and then, finally, step by step, given in. Too often our uncertainty and our quibbling has left the impression that the United States is looking for reasons *not* to reach an agreement. The trouble is, of course, that the Administration in Washington is divided on disarmament, and the President has not resolved the conflicts and established a clear policy, especially with regard to the pursuit of total disarmament and the stopping of nuclear testing. On both of these issues, the Russians took the initiative and the Russians got the credit. Mr. Khrushchev has stated his purpose plainly. He says, "Let's disarm and we will beat you at economic development and peaceful co-existence." Well, I hope that disarmament and economic competition is *still* the Russian policy after the Summit collapse, for we in the United States are not afraid of economic competition, and we look forward to the day when we can put to better uses a large part of the forty billion dollars that we now spend annually for defense. (APPLAUSE)

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AS: Great progress, great progress toward a nuclear test-ban and a break in the arms deadlock was made last Fall until the flight of the U2. That progress must not be lost. The United States, which has been the source of most of the revolutionary concepts of human and political freedom should be the tireless, the fearless leader in the cause of freedom from war in this revolutionary century. To seize that role, to pursue it with passion should be our national policy. Our approach to disarmament instead has been, “Yes, but...” It ought to be “Why not?” But *who* is doing the homework for peace. *Who* is drawing up the blueprints for disarmament? *Who* is studying the inspection and detection systems for each category? *Who* is making plans for the eventual re-conversion of our economy to full-time, non-military production? *Who* is studying the political, the judicial, the psychological obstacles that must be overcome before peace can be effectively enforced? We have had a series of improvised efforts and of temporary men in charge. I think the time has come to put this important business on a permanent and professional basis. (APPLAUSE) I think we need a special agency under the Secretary of State charged with the great, complex and neglected task of peace and disarmament, which will also be a symbol of our determination to lead the world away from madness. (APPLAUSE) And I would hope that we could take the initiative in this field in the United Nations also. Why was total disarmament proposed last Fall by Khrushchev, and not by the President of the United States? Why didn’t *we* take the lead in the crusade to free mankind from the scourge of war? Instead of reacting in confusion to Soviet proposals, we should be sounding the high, clear call that billions of people all over the world want to hear.

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AS: Now, finally, my friends, I've talked about the lessons of the Summit and this sorry chapter in American diplomacy. I've tried to condense the great objectives of American policy, as I see it. I have said that, instead of concentrating on things we cannot hope to change in Russia, we should concentrate on things we can change in our Alliance and in our own policy. (APPLAUSE)

AS: And there is one more (I'm glad you agree, sir) that we can change and it's right here at home. We can put first things first. As Senator Fulbright has said, it is frequently pointed out that the United States out-produces the Soviet Union and this is true, but the use that is made of that productive capacity is at least of equal importance with the size of that capacity and on this score there is no room for complacency. The Russians devote a much larger proportion of their resources to Defense, to education, to the other things which really matter in the Cold War and which would be decisive in a hot war.

Continuing with what he said, it won't do us any good to out-produce them in TV sets if they out-produce us in missiles. It won't do us any good to train more advertising copywriters if they train more nuclear physicists. It won't do any good to train more tax lawyers if they train more diplomats. If we put cement into swimming pools and they put it into factories, who has improved his position more? In making decisions on the allocation of resources, the Russians have a considerable advantage over us because of the difference in the decision-making process in the two countries. *There* it is centralized in a few men. *Here*, in its basic aspects, it involves all of the people. Yes, and here in the United States, not a handful of commissars, but *all* of the people must decide by our time-honored method of the ballot box, whether we have neglected our basic needs for

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schooling, for research, for health, for housing, for urban renewal and all other forms of public service. Whether we want a new emphasis in the use of our resources; whether freedom means full civil rights for all Americans; whether freedom means nothing more than freedom to stagnate; to have no greater aim than a new car and another television set. Today not rhetoric, but sober fact, bids us believe that our present combination of complacency and of apprehension has within it the seeds of destruction, first of our own community and then for the larger hope that freedom and not tyranny will be the organizing principle of the society of men. (APPLAUSE)

AS: You know the great periods of American life have usually been preceded by years of questioning and of soul-searching. I believe that America is *great* precisely when its citizens question themselves and today, after these years of self-indulgence of little aims and of large fears, I believe a new era of great decisions is ahead of this country and that is why the only kind of political campaign that will make any sense at all in the year 1960 is a sober discussion of our foreign situations. The American people must know the facts to mobilize their strength for the great contest, a contest in which Democracy and the processes of persuasion must match the efficiency of central planning and of dictatorship. To be *honest* with the people, to help them understand and make up their minds is the sacred obligation of both political parties, (APPLAUSE) and I hope with all the *fervor* I can command that *both* political parties meet that obligation for our security, our system of government, all that we hold highest is at stake. Thank you very much for your patience. (APPLAUSE, SHOUTS, WHISTLING)

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End of Adlai Stevenson's Speech to the Textile Workers Union

NOTES:

1. Adlai Stevenson (1900-1965) was the Democratic candidate for President in 1952 and 1956. He served as Governor of Illinois, after service in FDR's "New Deal. He participated in the planning of the United Nations on behalf of the USA and served as the US Delegate to the UN.
2. For a history of the Textile Workers Union see Culture of Misfortune: An Interpretive History of Textile Unionism in the United States, by Clete Daniel.
3. William Pollock, General President of the TWUA.
4. Emil Rieve, the former President of the TWUA.
5. Senator Paul H. Douglas (1892-1976) (D., Illinois), A champion of Civil Rights.
6. Senator John O. Pastore (1907-2000) (D., Rhode Island), U.S. Senator from 1950-1976; Governor from 1945-1950.
7. Senator Hubert Horatio Humphrey (1911-1978), (D. Minnesota). U.S. Vice President under Lyndon Johnson, two times Senator from Minnesota, 1968 Democratic Presidential Candidate.
8. Senator John Fitzgerald Kennedy (1917-1963), (D., Massachusetts) Thirty-Fifth President of the United States, elected in 1960, Assassinated in 1963.
9. Senator Robert Alphonso Taft (1889-1953), (R., Ohio), Son of President William Howard Taft.

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10. Senator William Stuart Symington (1901-1988), (D., Missouri) Senator from 1953-1976.
11. Dag Hammarskjold, Swedish statesman and economist, Second Secretary General of the United Nations (1953-1961). Posthumously awarded Nobel Peace Prize in 1961.
12. U2 incident refers to the US spy plane shot down over Russia on May 1, 1960. The Russians captured pilot Francis Gary Powers, effectively ending four years of reconnaissance flights, and having a major effect on the US-Soviet Cold War following Nuclear Testban talks between Eisenhower and Khrushchev.
13. Konrad Adenauer, West Germany's first Chancellor
14. General Charles DeGaulle, attempted to prevent German invasion of France, became head of French government after World War II.
15. Harold Macmillan, British Prime Minister from 1957-1963, played a pivotal role in the failed Summit of 1960 (impacted by the Gary Powers U2 incident), but was instrumental in the 1962 Partial Testban Treaty. Britain's application to the EEC was vetoed by Charles DeGaulle.
16. Search "Adlai Stevenson" in the Pacifica Radio Archives catalog for more audio recordings. www.pacificaradioarchives.org

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