

## Primary Source Reading 9-1 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## Republican Principles

### ■ About the Selection

Republican Herbert Hoover traveled to his opponent's turf in the closing days of the 1928 presidential election campaign. He delivered the speech he entitled "New York City" on October 22 at Madison Square Garden in Manhattan. It was broadcast on national radio. Hoover's speech had two goals: to rally the New York business community, and to discredit Democrat Al Smith by arguing that his proposals were un-American. The speech recalled the themes Hoover had presented in his book, *American Individualism*.

### Reader's Dictionary



**decentralized:** the delegation of power from a national authority to local authorities  
**utilities:** services, such as electricity or water, provided by a public or government organization

### GUIDED READING

As you read, determine what Hoover believes is the correct relationship between government and business. Then answer the questions that follow.

I intend rather to discuss some of those more fundamental principles and ideals upon which I believe the government of the United States should be conducted.

. . . [T]here has been a further fundamental contribution—a contribution underlying and sustaining all the others—and that is the resistance of the Republican Party to every attempt to inject the government into business in competition with its citizens. . . . During one hundred and fifty years we have builded up a form of self-government and a social system which is peculiarly our own. . . . It is founded upon a particular conception of self-government in which decentralized local responsibility is the very base. Further than this, it is founded upon the conception that only through ordered liberty, freedom, and equal opportunity to the individual will his initiative and enterprise spur on the march of progress.

During the war we necessarily turned to the government to solve every difficult economic problem. . . . To a large degree we regimented our whole people temporarily into a socialistic state. . . .

. . . When the war closed . . . we were challenged with a peace-time choice between the American system of rugged individualism and a European philosophy of diametrically opposed doctrines—doctrines of paternalism and state socialism. The acceptance of these ideas would have meant the destruction of self-government through centralization of government. It would have meant the undermining of the individual initiative and enterprise through which our people have grown to unparalleled greatness.

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## Primary Source Reading 9-1 (continued) ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

There has been revived in this campaign, however, a series of proposals which, if adopted, would be a long step toward the abandonment of our American system and a surrender to the destructive operation of governmental conduct of commercial business. Because the country is faced with difficulty and doubt over certain national problems—that is, prohibition, farm relief, and electrical power—our opponents propose that we must thrust government a long way into the businesses which give rise to these problems. In effect, they abandon the tenets of their own party and turn to state socialism as a solution. . . . It is proposed that we shall change from prohibition to the state purchase and sale of liquor. If their agricultural relief program means anything, it means that the government shall directly or indirectly buy and sell and fix prices of agricultural products. And we are to go into the hydro-electric power business. In other words, we are confronted with a huge program of government in business.

The American people from bitter experience have a rightful fear that great business units might be used to dominate our industrial life and by illegal and unethical practices destroy equality of opportunity.

Years ago the Republican administration established the principle that such evils could be corrected by regulation. . . . It insisted upon the principle that when great public utilities were clothed with the security of partial monopoly . . . there must be the complete control of rates. . . .

As to our manufacturing and distributing industries, the Republican Party insisted upon the enactment of laws that not only would maintain competition but would destroy conspiracies to destroy the smaller unit or dominate and limit the equality of opportunity amongst our people. . . .

To me the foundation of American life rests upon the home and the family. I read into these great economic forces . . . but one supreme end—that we reinforce the ties that bind together the millions of our families, that we strengthen the security, the happiness, and the independence of every home.

Source: *The New Day: Campaign Speeches of Herbert Hoover*. Palo Alto, California: Stanford University Press, 1928.

### READER RESPONSE

**Directions:** Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper.

1. What is the basic Republican principle of the relation of government to business, according to Hoover?
2. How does Hoover characterize the Democrats' proposals?
3. What does Hoover say is the basis of the American conception of self-government?
4. **Critical Thinking** How do your ideas of the role of American government in the lives of its citizens compare to Hoover's views?