
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”
The Master Speech Files, 1898, 1910-1945

Series 3: “The Four Freedoms” and FDR in World War II

File No. 1517

1944 May 17

**Remarks to Conference of the International
Labor Organization**

REMARKS TO BE DELIVERED BEFORE
THE CONFERENCE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION
THE WHITE HOUSE

MAY 17, 1944.

Chairman Nock.

Miss Perkins, Mr. Goodrich, Mr. Phelan, Delegates to the Conference:

It is a great pleasure to have you with us here in the White House again. As I pointed out to you when we last met -- two and a half years ago -- taking part in a conference of the International Labor Organization is not a new experience for me. I take pride in the fact that I was permitted to play a part in the first conference of the Organization that was held here in Washington in 1919.

Those were indeed trying days when last we met in 1941. The fate of the free peoples of the entire world hung in the balance. Yet with the courage and foresight that have always characterized the International Labor Organization, you as representatives of governments, workers and employers had the boldness to come together from all parts of the world to formulate plans for reconstruction.

You have been meeting in Philadelphia where, one hundred sixty-eight years ago, the Fathers of this Republic affirmed certain truths to be self-evident. They declared that among other things all men are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among them Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness. In these words are expressed the abiding purpose of all peoples imbued with the ideals of freedom and democracy.

The Declaration which you have formulated in Philadelphia may well acquire a similar significance. In it you have reaffirmed principles which are the essential bulwarks of any permanent peace. With the expanding use of machinery and the revolution in transportation, it is well that the world should recognize the fundamental principle of your Declaration: "Poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere". This principle is a guide to all of our international economic deliberations.

You have affirmed the right of all human beings to material well-being and spiritual development under conditions of freedom and dignity and under conditions of economic security and opportunity.

The attainment of those conditions must constitute a central aim of national and international policy. Indeed, the worthiness and success of international policies will be measured in the future by the extent to which they promote the achievement of this end.

Your Declaration sums up the aspirations of an epoch which has known two world wars. I confidently believe that future generations will look back upon it as a landmark in world thinking. I am glad to have this opportunity of indorsing its specific terms on behalf of the United States. I trust, also, that within a short time its specific terms will be whole-heartedly indorsed by all of the United Nations.

As I look over the report of your work, I see that you have, for the first time in history, set out in a form which could be adopted as a treaty by the nations, a particular series of social objectives. I note that among other things they include full employment, wages and working conditions calculated to insure a just share of the fruits of progress to all, the extension of social security, the recognition of the right of collective bargaining, provision for child welfare and the assurance of adequate educational and vocational

opportunities. It will be your responsibility to promote these objectives through your own organization and through such international agencies as may be created.

With great wisdom you have realized that these social objectives cannot be attained and supported without a high level of useful economic activity. You have recommended a series of economic policies and undertakings designed to bring about a material economy which will make it possible to maintain them.

You have also wisely provided for the further development and reorganization of the International Labor Organization itself so that it may be broadened and strengthened for carrying out these social objectives, and at the same time integrated on a cooperative basis with whatever new international agency or agencies are created by the United Nations. This forms an admirable pattern for formulating certain aspects of the peace. I want to assure you that this Government will do everything in its power to see that the provisions for the attainment of these social and labor objectives shall be included.

The people of the occupied countries are in deep suffering. Their representatives have agreed upon the social objectives and economic policies you have set forth. I trust that this marks the beginning of a new and better day, a period of hope for material comfort, for security and for spiritual and personal development, for all those groups now suffering so sorely under the heel of the oppressor. The United Nations will be determined that all the oppressed of the earth shall be included in these social objectives.

I want to offer my congratulations to those of you who have participated in this Conference. You have my gratitude for the program of mutual helpfulness which you have laid out -- a program which, I am sure, will inspire all of those in our generation who want to build and maintain a just peace.

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Franklin D. Roosevelt

The International Labor Organization Meeting
With The President, Held In The
Executive Office Of The President
May 17, 1944, at 11.25 A.M., E.M.T.

(the President shook hands individually with the 130 members present. They were introduced by Walter Nash, Minister from New Zealand, the Chairman, and Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins, the U. S. Government Delegate)

(the Philadelphia Declaration was then signed, on the left leaf of the President's desk, by Walter Nash, Edward J. Phelan, Acting I.L.O. Director, and the President; Secretary Perkins remarking that the President signed as a witness only, which provoked laughter)

(the President then addressed the members, using the prepared remarks before him only as a guide)

THE PRESIDENT: I told Mr. Nash, the Minister from New Zealand, that I missed seeing him a great deal in the past months, and I thought it was high time he returned to his duties in Washington. (laughter)

Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

This is a transcript made by the White House stenographer from his shorthand notes taken at the time the speech was made. Underlining indicates words extemporaneously added to the previously prepared reading copy text. Words in parentheses are words that were omitted when the speech was delivered, though they appear in the previously prepared reading copy text.

introduced by Walter Reed, Minister from New Zealand, the Chairman, and Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins, the U. S. Secretary of State (Lauchlin Currie).

(The following is a description of the scene as it appeared on the left side of the President's desk, by Walter Reed, Edward T. Tamm, Acting U. S. Director, and the President; Secretary Perkins remaining seated to the right of the President as a witness only, which provoked laughter.)

(The President then addressed the members using the prepared remarks before him only as a guide.)

THE PRESIDENT: I told Mr. Reed, the Minister from New Zealand, that I missed seeing him a great deal in the past months, and I thought it was high time he returned to his duties in Washington. (Laughter.)

And so, having just signed the very splendid result of your Conference, I will start off by addressing him first, and then Mr. Goodrich and Mr. Phelan, and then all of you good people who have come down to the White House for this second time. I think it is about two years and a half ago that the last Conference met in the East Room of the White House. This room is a bit small for us, and I am quite sure that some future Conference will require the use of the East Room again. So, you see, this is not a new experience for us.

But I do take great pride in the fact that I was permitted to play a part in the first Conference of the Organization that was held in 1919; and also in this latest great event, because I do consider this Conference to be a great event in the history of the world.

(the above three paragraphs were delivered
in lieu of the following):

((Miss Perkins, Mr. Goodrich, Mr. Phelan, Delegates to the Conference: It is a great pleasure to have you with us here in the White House again. As I pointed out to you when we last met -- two and a half years ago -- taking part in a conference of the International Labor Organization is not a new experience for me. I take pride in the fact that I was permitted to play a part in the first conference of the Organization that was held here in Washington in 1919.))

(from here on, changes in text appear as
usual)

These are (Those were indeed) trying days, far more trying from our point of view (when last we met). In 1941, when we met last, the fate of the free peoples of the (entire) world hung in the balance. I don't think they hang in the balance any longer. Yet with the courage and the foresight that have always characterized the I.L.O. (International Labor) Organization, you as representatives of the Governments, and Workers and Employers had the boldness -- and I consider it real boldness -- to have come together in a full meeting from all parts of the world, to formulate plans for reconstruction.

It so impressed me just now, as I was shaking hands with you, that I wanted to say to the delegates that had come from countries which are still in prison -- in German hands -- that I hope the next time we all meet, you will have come directly from your own country, actually under its own people and its own government, to wherever the meeting place is. It is something which I think we can keep, not in the back of our heads but in the front of our heads: the restoration of all the nations of the world to their own peoples.

You have been meeting in Philadelphia in a spot where, -- I don't know, what? -- one hundred and sixty to seventy (eight) years ago, the Fathers of this somewhat old Republic affirmed certain truths to be self-evident. They declared (that) among other things that all men are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among them Life, and Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness. In these words are expressed the abiding purpose of all peoples

imbued with the ideals of freedom and democracy. Let us never forget those words.

The Declaration that (which) you have formulated in Philadelphia may well acquire a similar significance in the days to come. In it you will (have) reaffirm(ed) principles which are the essential bulwarks of any permanent peace. With the expanding use of machinery and the revolution in transportation, and in most other things, it is well that the world should recognize the fundamental principle of your Declaration: "Poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere." (This principle is a guide to all of our international economic deliberations).

I have seen that in my travels since the last I.L.O. Conference. You know where I have been pretty well, so you will know what I am thinking about. I am thinking about Africa. And I am thinking about certain parts of the Near East, the west coast of Africa, the north coast of Africa, and then the eastern end of the Mediterranean. You know where I went.

And it is perfectly true that poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere. I think of a little colony, a little piece of the earth's surface, Gambia, where I happened to have landed from Brazil. Nice, peaceful people, and as the saying goes, poor as church mice. Why mice should be singled out, I don't know. (laughter) But Gambia is very, very poor.

Well, when I was there, I wasn't thinking in terms of who should do it, but if they had a little less poverty,

that would bring prosperity to a lot more people outside of
Gambia. They are kept down because of exploitation. I think
that is going to be a new word in the next meeting of the
I.L.O., something that I have had in the back of my head a long
time, something that says something against exploitation of
the poor by the rich -- by governments, as well as individuals.

I think we can get somewhere if we keep that idea of
being "agin" -- as we say in Irish-American-- "agin" exploita-
tion everywhere. It will be an awfully good thing for all of
us.

You have affirmed the right of all human beings to
 material well-being and spiritual development under conditions
 of freedom and dignity and under conditions of economic secur-
 ity and opportunity -- which is saying roughly the same thing
in better language. The attainment of those conditions must
 constitute a central aim of national (and international) policy,
because if it doesn't become the aim of national policies, then
it won't become the aim of international policies. Indeed,
 the worthiness and success of these international policies must
 (will) be measured in the future by the extent to which they
 promote the achievement of the (this) end.

Your Declaration sums up the aspirations of an epoch
that (which) has known two world wars. Most of us, I take it,
were born before the first world war. I confidently believe
 that future generations will look back on this epoch (upon it)
 as a landmark in world thinking. I am glad to have the (this)
 opportunity of indorsing its specific terms and

declarations on behalf of the United States. And I trust, also, that within a short time its specific terms will be wholeheartedly indorsed by all of the United Nations.

As I look over the report of your work, I see that you have, for the first time in history, set out in a form that should (which could) be adopted in (as) a treaty by the nations, a particular series of social objectives. I note that among other things they include full employment, wages and working conditions calculated to insure a just share of the fruits of progress to all, the extension of social security, the recognition of the right of collective bargaining, provision for child welfare and the assurance of adequate educational and vocational opportunities. Therefore, it will be your opportunity (responsibility) to promote these objectives through your own organization, and through such international agencies as may be created. And some will be created.

With great wisdom you have realized that these social objectives cannot be attained and supported without a high level of useful economic activity. You have recommended a series of economic policies and undertakings designed to bring about a material economy that (which) will make it possible to maintain review (them).

You have (also) wisely provided for the further development and reorganization of the International Labor Organization (itself) so that it may be broadened and strengthened to (for) carry(ing) out these social objectives, and at the

same time integrated on a cooperative basis with whatever new (international) agency or agencies are created by the United Nations. And I personally am very confident that the United Nations are going to have at least one new international agency that will bring the whole world closer together than it ever has been before in all history. This forms an admirable pattern for formulating certain aspects of the peace -- to start at the beginning. I want to assure you (that) this Government will do everything in its power to see that the provisions for the attainment of these social and labor objectives shall be included.

The people of the occupied countries are in deep suffering, as we all know. Their representatives have agreed upon the social objectives and economic policies, the views of all (you have) set forth. I trust that this marks the beginning of a new and better day, a period of hope -- hope for material comforts, (for) and security, and then even more greatly the (for) spiritual and personal development, development for all of those groups now suffering so sorely under the hands (heel) of the enemy (oppressor). The United Nations will be determined that all the oppressed of the earth -- and in every hemisphere, and every continent, and all the islands too -- will (shall) be included in these social objectives.

And so I want to offer my congratulations to (those of) you who have had the opportunity of taking part (participated) in this Conference. You have my gratitude for the program of mutual helpfulness which you have laid out -- a program

that ought to and I think (which, I am sure) will inspire all of those in our generation who want to build and maintain a just peace. And may that time come soon.

(prolonged applause for the President)

MR. WALTER NASH: On behalf of the delegates of the Conference and those present, I want to say "thank you very much" for giving us the opportunity to come to this historic White House to present three most important documents, and to sign them here. They were determined after the deliberations of the delegates, and we feel privileged and honored, and also proud to come to you, sir, and to thank you for all that you have done in the past to enable the I.L.O. and all that it stands for to become what it has become.

We doubly thank you for your words in regard to the removal of poverty and exploitation from the world, and the objective that you have in your mind. We are proud to be alongside you in the work that you are doing. I know the representatives from the occupied countries also feel as you feel: to be themselves as early as humanly possible, and to live honorably as free and independent countries.

This is not the time for long speeches. We are glad to be here with you, and we thank you for all that you have done. We doubly thank you that on behalf of the United States you have accepted this Declaration; and we feel, as time passes, that you in turn will go on doing the things that will enable us -- with you, and with the United States

and the other countries that are representatives on it -- to build a better world. We know it can be done. We feel -- the representatives of Governments, Employers and Employees -- that it is going to be done if it is humanly possible for it to be done.

I speak, also, on behalf of the Government group, and every word, as I said on behalf of the Conference as a whole, is reiterated as their representative. But I also feel, as you do -- without long speeches that I know you hear so much of -- that you might like to have a word or two from the chairman of the Employers group, Sir John Forbes Watson from Britain, and I would ask him just to say a word or two, if he would, at this time.

SIR JOHN FORBES WATSON: Mr. President, I have the honor, on behalf of the Employers at this Conference, to thank you for the opportunity of being here today in this tripartite organization where Governments, Employers and Employees work in equality.

It has been proved, however much men may differ as to methods, that they can work together so long as they have a common aim; and our common aim is the words you said, Mr. President, of securing Life, Liberty and Happiness.

The war has deepened our aims, because although it has destroyed things, it has also created things, it has created a bond of unity between freedom-loving peoples.

May I just in a word say how much this

Organization owes to your country for its support, and to you, sir. Two and a half years ago you gave us a message which sustained us in very grim days, and we are going away back now to our respective tasks, once more inspired by your message, determined that liberty shall prevail, and fortified and encouraged by the touch of your hand. (applause)

MR. WALTER NASH: The Workers would like Mr. Jef Rens of Belgium to say a word on their behalf.

(Mr. Rens addressed the President briefly,
in French)

MR. WALTER NASH: Our closing words, Mr. President, are "thank you very much," and also for Frances Perkins, Mr. Goodrich, Mr. Phelan and Mr. Lubin, the magnificent representatives you sent to be our hosts in your country. They have done a remarkable job. I question whether inside the history of the I.L.O. there ever has been a Conference so successful, or there ever has been a country so good, hospitable and kind as you people have been to us whilst we have been here. That could not have been, were it not for the inspiration that came to us all from your message at the opening of the Conference, and from the work that has been done by Mr. Goodrich, Mr. Lubin, Mr. Phelan, and the others of your nation.

The last words from the Conference are, "thank you very much."

(applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Goodbye, and good luck. And come
back and see us again very soon.

(laughter, and more applause for
the President)

STATEMENTS FILE

HOLD FOR RELEASE

HOLD FOR RELEASE

HOLD FOR RELEASE

MAY 17, 1944

CAUTION: The following remarks of the President, to be delivered in his Office at the White House before the Conference of the International Labor Organization MUST BE HELD IN CONFIDENCE until released.

NOTE: Release to editions of all newspapers appearing on the streets NOT EARLIER THAN 11:15 A.M., E.W.T., May 17, 1944. The same release applies to radio announcers and news commentators.

CARE MUST BE EXERCISED TO PREVENT PREMATURE PUBLICATION.

STEPHEN EARLY
Secretary to the President

MISS PERKINS, MR. GOODRICH, MR. PHILAN, DELEGATES TO THE CONFERENCE:

INSERT "A"
HERE

It is a great pleasure to have you with us here in the White House again. As I pointed out to you when we last met — two and a half years ago — taking part in a conference of the International Labor Organization is not a new experience for me. I take pride in the fact that I was permitted to play a part in the first conference of the Organization that was held here in Washington in 1919.

These are the days when we are trying to find a way to bring about the fate of the free peoples of the entire world hung in the balance. Yet with the courage and foresight that have always characterized the International Labor Organization, you as representatives of governments, workers and employers had the boldness to come together from all parts of the world to formulate plans for reconstruction.

You have been meeting in Philadelphia where, one hundred and sixty years ago, the Fathers of this Republic affirmed certain truths to be self-evident. They declared that among other things, all men are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among them Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness. In these words are expressed the abiding purpose of all peoples imbued with the ideals of freedom and democracy.

The Declaration which you have formulated in Philadelphia may well acquire a similar significance. In it you have reaffirmed principles which are the essential bulwarks of any permanent peace. With the expending use of machinery and the revolution in transportation, it is well that the world should recognize the fundamental principle of your Declaration: "Poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere." This principle is a guide to all of our international deliberations.

You have affirmed the right of all human beings to material well-being and spiritual development under conditions of freedom and dignity and under conditions of economic security and opportunity. The attainment of these conditions must constitute a central aim of national and international policy. Indeed, the worthiness and success of international policies will be measured in the future by the extent to which they promote the achievement of these ends.

Your Declaration sums up the aspirations of an epoch which has known two world wars. I confidently believe that future generations will look back upon it as a landmark in world thinking. I am glad to have the opportunity of inscribing its specific terms, on behalf of the United States, and trust, also, that within a short time its specific terms will be wholeheartedly indorsed by all of the United Nations.

because if it doesn't become the aim of national policies, then it won't become the aim of international policies.

-- which is saying roughly the same thing in better language.

I take it, were from before the first World War.

I don't think they hang in the balance any longer.

and in most other things,

As I look over the report of your work, I see that you ^{that should} have, for the first time in history, set out in a form ~~which could~~ be adopted ~~as~~ a treaty by the nations, a particular series of social objectives. I note that among other things they include full employment, wages and working conditions calculated to insure a just share of the fruits of progress to all, the extension of social security, the recognition of the right of collective bargaining, provision for child welfare and the ~~provision~~ ^{opportunity} of adequate educational and vocational opportunities. ^{It will be your responsibility} to promote these objectives through your own organization and through such international agencies as may be created. And some will be created.

With great wisdom you have realized that these social objectives cannot be attained and supported without a high level of useful economic activity. You have recommended a series of economic policies and undertakings designed to bring about a material economy ~~which~~ will make it possible to maintain them. review

You have ~~also~~ wisely provided for the further development and reorganization of the International Labor Organization ~~so that~~ so that it may be broadened and strengthened ~~for~~ carrying out these social objectives, and at the same time integrated on a cooperative basis with whatever new ~~international~~ agency or agencies are created by the United Nations. ~~This forms an admirable pattern for formulating certain aspects of the peace. I want to assure you that this Government will do everything in its power to see that the provisions for the attainment of these social and labor objectives shall be included.~~

^{as we all know.} The people of the occupied countries are in deep suffering. Their representatives have agreed upon the social objectives and economic policies ~~you have~~ set forth. I trust that ~~this marks~~ the beginning of a new and better day, a period of hope, for material comfort, ~~for~~ security, and ~~for~~ spiritual and personal development, ^{development} for all those groups now suffering so sorely under the ~~hand~~ ^{hands} of the oppressor. The United Nations will be determined that all the oppressed of the earth shall be included in these social objectives.

^{enemy.} And I want to offer my congratulations to ~~those of you who~~ ^{that ought to and I think} have participated in this Conference. You have my gratitude for the program of mutual helpfulness which you have laid out — a program which, ~~if we ever~~ ^{you, (prolonged applause for the President) if} will inspire all of those in our generation who want to build and maintain a just peace. And may that time come ^{then even more greatly} the

and in every hemisphere, and all the continents, and all the islands, too

— the view of all

had the opportunity of taking part in that Conference

And I personally am very confident that the United Nations are going to have at least one new international agency that will bring the whole world closer together than it ever has been before in all history.

(INSERT "D")

May 17, 1944

INSERT "A"

11.25 AM EWT

The International Labor Organization Meeting with the President, ^{held} in the Executive Office of the President.

the
Walter Nash, Minister from New Zealand, ^{Chairman, and}
Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins, *the U.S. Government Delegate*

each one of the 130
(the President shook hands individually with ~~████~~
~~████~~ members present. ^{They} were introduced by ~~████~~
~~████████████████~~

Philadelphia Declaration left
(the ~~████~~ was then signed, on the leaf of the
President's desk, by ~~████~~ Walter Nash, ~~████~~
~~████~~ ^{Edward J. O'Donoghue} Phelan, and the President, Sec-
retary of Labor Perkins remark^{ing} that the Presi-
dent signed as a witness only, ~~████~~ which ^{provoked} ~~████~~
laughter)

addressed the members,
(the President then ~~████████████████~~ using ~~████~~ the
^{before him} prepared remarks only as a guide)

THE PRESIDENT: I told Mr. Nash, the Minister ^{from} ~~████~~ New
Zealand, that I missed seeing him a great deal ⁱⁿ ~~████~~ the past months,
~~████~~ and I thought it was high time ~~████~~ he returned to his
duties in Washington. ~~████~~ (laughter)

And so, I will lead off -- with the I.L.O. conference

INSERT "A" - (continued)

— having just signed the very splendid result of ^{your} [redacted] Conference, — I will [redacted] start off by addressing him first, and then Mr. Goodrich and Mr. Phelan, ^{and} then all of you good people who have come down to the White House for ^{this} [redacted] second time. I think it is about two years and a half ago that the last Conference met in the East Room of the White House. This room is a bit small for us, and I am quite sure that some future Conference ^{will} require the use of the East Room again. So, you see, this is not a new experience for us. ^P But I -- I do take great pride in the fact that I ^{was} permitted to play a part in the first Organization -- Conference of the Organization that was held in nineteen -- in XXXXXXXX nineteen -- what was it? In 1919; and

SECRETARY PERKINS: 1919.

THE PRESIDENT: [redacted] also in this latest great event, because I do consider this Conference ^{to be} [redacted] a great event in the history of the world.

INSERT "B"

^{so}
It impressed me just now, as I was shaking hands with
you, ^{that} ~~to note~~ -- I want ^{at} to say to the delegation ^{that} had come
from countries which are still in ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ prison -- in German
hands, that I hope ~~the~~ the next time ~~we~~ we all meet, ~~you~~ you will have
come ^{directly} to wherever the meeting place is, from your own
country, ^{actually} under its own people and its own government. It
is something which I think we can keep, ~~in the~~ ⁱⁿ not the back of
our heads but ⁱⁿ the front of our heads; -- the restoration of all
the nations of the world ~~to~~ to their own people.

INSERT "C"

I have seen that in my travels since the last I.L.O. Conference. You know where I have been pretty well, so you will know what I am thinking about. I am thinking about Africa. ^{And} I am thinking about certain parts of the Near East, the west coast of Africa, the north coast of Africa, and then the eastern end of the Mediterranean. You know where I went. ^PAnd it is perfectly true that poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere. I think of a little -- a little colony, a little piece of the earth's surface, Gambia, where I happened to have landed from Brazil. Nice peaceful people, ~~and~~ ^{and goes} as the saying ^{poor as church mice}. Why mice should be singled out, I don't know. ^(laughter) But Gambia is very, very poor. ^PWell, I wasn't thinking when I was there, ^{in terms of who} should do it, but if they had a little less poverty, that would bring prosperity to a lot more people outside of Gambia. They are kept down ^{because of} exploitation. ~~(Have President check last sentence)~~ I think that's going to be a new word in the next meeting of the I.L.O., something that I have had in the back of my head a long time, something that says something against exploitation of the poor by the rich ⁻⁻ ~~by~~ governments, as well as individuals. ^PI think we can get somewhere if we keep that idea of being "agin" -- as we say in Irish-American -- "agin" exploitation everywhere. It will be an awfully good thing for all of us.

INSERT "D"

MR. NASH: ^{these present} On behalf of the delegates of the Conference and ~~the delegates~~, I want to say "thank you very much" for giving us the opportunity to come to this historic ^{white} House to present three ~~of the~~ most important documents, and ^{to} sign them here. They were determined after the deliberations of the delegates, and we feel privileged and honored ~~to be able to come to you~~ and also proud to come to you, sir, and to thank you for all that you have done in the past to enable the I.L.O. and all that it stands for to become what it has become.

We doubly thank you for your words in regard to the removal of poverty and exploitation from the world, and the objective that you ~~have~~ ^{we} in your mind. We are proud to be alongside ~~with~~ you in the work that you are doing. I know ~~that~~ the representatives from the occupied countries also feel as you feel: ~~to enable them~~ to be themselves as early as ~~it is~~ humanly possible, ~~for them to be themselves again~~, and to live honorably as free and independent countries.

This is not the time for long speeches. We are glad to be here with you, and we thank you for all that you have done. We doubly thank you ~~for us again setting up~~ that on behalf of the United States you have accepted ^{this} ~~the~~ Declaration, and we feel, as time passes, ^{that} you in turn will go on doing the things that will enable us ^{with} you, and with the United States, and the other countries that are representatives on it ^{to} build a better world. We know it can be done. We feel ^{the} representatives of ~~Governments~~, ~~Employers~~ and ~~Employees~~ ^{that} it is going to be done, if it is humanly possible for it to be done.

2 // D¹

I speak, also, on behalf of the Government group, and every word, as I said on behalf of the Conference as a whole, is reiterated ^{as their representative.} and as the representative here of the government group. But I also feel, as you do, ~~that~~ without long speeches that I know you hear so much of, [^] that you might like to have a word, a word or two from the chairman of the Employers group, Sir John Forbes Watson from Britain, and I would ask him just to say a word or two, if he would, at this time.

SIR JOHN FORBES WATSON: Mr. President, I have the honor, on behalf of the Employers at this Conference, to thank you for the opportunity of being here today in this tripartite organization where governments, employers and ^{employees} ~~workers~~ ^{equality.} work in ~~the~~.

^PIt has been proved, ~~that~~ however much men may differ as to methods, ^{that} they can work together so long as they have a common aim; and our common aim is the words you said, Mr. President, of securing life, liberty and happiness. ^PThe war has deepened our aims, because although it has destroyed things, it has also created things, it has created a bond of unity between freedom-loving peoples. ^PMay I just in a word say how much this Organization owes to your country for its support, and to you, sir. Two and a half years ago you gave us a message which sustained us in very grim days, and we are going away back now ~~to~~ to our respective tasks, once more inspired by your message, determined that liberty shall prevail, and fortified and encouraged by the touch of your hand. (applause)

MR. NASH: The Workers would like Mr. ^{Jef} ~~Rens~~ of Belgium to say a word on their behalf.

(Mr. Rens addressed the President in French briefly)

3 11 D¹¹

MR. NASH: Our closing words, Mr. President, are
"thank you very much" ^{and also} for Frances Perkins, Mr. Goodrich, Mr. Phelan
and Mr. Lubin, ^{the} ~~the~~ magnificent ^{representative} ~~representative~~ you ~~sent~~ sent
to be our hosts in your country. They have done a remarkable job.
I question whether inside the history of the I.L.O. there ever has
been a conference, or there has ever been a country that has been
so successful ~~so~~ so good, ~~and~~ hospitable and kind as you people have ^{been}
to us, whilst ^{we} ~~we~~ have been here. ^{that} ~~that~~ could not have been, ~~more~~
~~had~~ ^{more} ~~had~~ it not ~~been~~ for the inspiration that came to us all from
your message at the opening of the conference, and from ^{the} ~~the~~ work
that has been done by Mr. Goodrich, Mr. Lubin, ~~Mr. Phelan,~~ ^{Mr. Phelan,}
~~and the others of your nation.~~ ~~They have~~
~~been more than guided and inspired~~ ^{the last words from the} ~~the~~ ^{also} ~~also~~ conference, ~~thank you very much.~~

THE PRESIDENT: Good-bye, and good luck. And come
back and see us again very soon.

(laughter, and ^{more} applause for the President)

Miss Perkins, Mr. Goodrich, Mr. Phelan, Delegates to the Conference:

It is a great pleasure to have you with us here in the White House again. As I pointed out to you when we last met -- two and a half years ago -- taking part in a conference of the International Labor Organization is not a new experience for me. I take pride in the fact that I was permitted to play a part in the first conference of the Organization that was held here in Washington in 1919.

Those were indeed trying days when last we met in 1941. The fate of the free peoples of the entire world hung in the balance. Yet with the courage and foresight that have always characterized the International Labor Organization, you as representatives of governments, workers and employers had the boldness to come together from all parts of the world to formulate plans for reconstruction, ~~and to set up within your own tripartite group a body to study and prepare measures designed to cope with the social and economic needs of the postwar world.~~

You have been meeting in Philadelphia where, one hundred sixty-eight years ago, the Fathers of this Republic affirmed certain truths to be self-evident. They declared that ^{among other things} ~~all men are created equal, that they~~ are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, ~~and that~~ among ^{them} ~~these rights are~~ Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness. In these words are expressed the abiding purpose of all peoples imbued with the ideals of freedom and democracy.

The Declaration which you have formulated in Philadelphia may well acquire a similar significance. In it you have reaffirmed principles which are the essential bulwarks of any permanent peace. With the expanding use of machinery and the revolution in transportation, it is well that the world should recognize the fundamental principle of your Declaration: "Poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere". ~~In the future~~ ^{As} this principle should be a guide to all of our international economic deliberations.

You have affirmed the right of all human beings to material well-being and spiritual development under conditions of freedom and dignity and under conditions of economic security and opportunity. The attainment of those conditions must constitute a central aim of national and international policy. Indeed, the worthiness and success of ~~national~~ ^{and} international policies will be measured in the future by the extent to which they promote the achievement of this end.

Your Declaration sums up the aspirations of an epoch which has known two world wars. I confidently believe that future generations will look back upon it as a landmark in world thinking. I am glad to have this opportunity of indorsing its specific terms on behalf of the United States. I trust, also, that within a short time its specific terms will be whole-heartedly indorsed by all of the United Nations.

As I look over the report of your work, I see that you have, for the first time in history, set out in a form which could be adopted as a treaty by the nations, a particular series of social objectives. I note that among other things they include full employment, wages and working conditions calculated to insure a just share of the fruits of progress to all, the extension of social security, the recognition of the right of collective bargaining, provision for child welfare and the assurance of adequate educational and vocational opportunities. It will be your responsibility to promote these objectives through your own organization and through such international agencies as may be created.

With great wisdom you have realized that these social objectives cannot be attained and supported without a high level of useful economic activity. You have recommended a series of economic policies and undertakings designed to bring about a material economy which will make it possible to maintain them. These economic policies involve technical problems which experts in special fields will also have to develop. In carrying out these policies, the participation and cooperation of many types of international organisations will be necessary. It will be the duty of the International Labor Organisation to focus the attention of those responsible for the administration of these international economic

agencies upon the social objectives in the light of which their work will be judged.

You have also wisely provided for the further development and reorganization of the International Labor Organization itself so that it may be broadened and strengthened for carrying out these social objectives, and at the same time integrated on a cooperative basis with ^{whatever new} ~~unimpaired~~ international ^{of 1919} ~~economic~~ agencies. ^{incorporated in the United Nations.} This forms an admirable pattern for formulating certain aspects of the peace. I want to assure you that this Government will do everything in its power to see that the provisions for the attainment of these social and labor objectives shall be included, wherever appropriate, in international agreements for the great peace. And I am full of hope that having come to agreement with regard to so many matters in this field, the nations of the world may find themselves in agreement on other matters which we shall take up from time to time.

The people of the occupied countries are in deep suffering. Their representatives have agreed upon the social objectives and economic policies you have set forth. I trust that this marks the beginning of a new and better day, a period of hope for material comfort, for security and for spiritual and personal development, for all those groups now suffering so sorely under

the heel of the oppressor. The United Nations will be determined that all the oppressed of the earth shall be included in these social objectives.

I want to offer my congratulations to those of you who have participated in this Conference. You have my gratitude for the program of mutual helpfulness which you have laid out -- a program which, I am sure, will inspire all of those in our generation who want to build and maintain a just peace.

The International Labor Organization Meeting
With The President. Held in The
Executive Office Of The President
May 17, 1944. at 11.25 A.M., E.M.T.

(the President shook hands individually with the 130 members present. They were introduced by Walter Nash, Minister from New Zealand, the Chairman, and Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins, the U. S. Government Delegate)

(the Philadelphia Declaration was then signed, on the left leaf of the President's desk, by Walter Nash, Edward J. Phelan, Acting I.L.O. Director, and the President; Secretary Perkins remarking that the President signed as a witness only, which provoked laughter)

(the President then addressed the members, using the prepared remarks before him only as a guide)

THE PRESIDENT: I told Mr. Nash, the Minister from New Zealand, that I missed seeing him a great deal in the past months, and I thought it was high time he returned to his duties in Washington. (laughter)

And so, having just signed the very splendid result of your Conference, I will start off by addressing him first, and then Mr. Goodrich and Mr. Phelan, and then all of you good people who have come down to the White House for this second time. I think it is about two years and a half ago that the last Conference met in the East Room of the White House. This room is a bit small for us, and I am quite sure that some future Conference will require the use of the East Room again. So, you see, this is not a new experience for us.

But I do take great pride in the fact that I was permitted to play a part in the first Conference of the Organization that was held in 1919; and also in this latest great event, because I do consider this Conference to be a great event in the history of the world.

(the above three paragraphs were delivered
in lieu of the following):

((Miss Perkins, Mr. Goodrich, Mr. Phelan, Delegates to the Conference: It is a great pleasure to have you with us here in the White House again. As I pointed out to you when we last met -- two and a half years ago -- taking part in a conference of the International Labor Organization is not a new experience for me. I take pride in the fact that I was permitted to play a part in the first conference of the Organization that was held here in Washington in 1919.))

(from here on, changes in text appear as
usual)

These are (Those were indeed) trying days, far more trying from our point of view (when last we met). In 1941, when we met last, the fate of the free peoples of the (entire) world hung in the balance. I don't think they hang in the balance any longer. Yet with the courage and the foresight that have always characterized the I.L.O. (International Labor) Organization, you as representatives of the Governments, and Workers and Employers had the boldness -- and I consider it real boldness -- to have come together in a full meeting from all parts of the world, to formulate plans for reconstruction.

It so impressed me just now, as I was shaking hands with you, that I wanted to say to the delegates that had come from countries which are still in prison -- in German hands -- that I hope the next time we all meet, you will have come directly from your own country, actually under its own people and its own government, wherever the meeting place is. It is something which I think we can keep, not in the back of our heads but in the front of our heads: the restoration of all the nations of the world to their own peoples.

You have been meeting in Philadelphia in a spot where, -- I don't know, what? -- one hundred and sixty to seventy (eight) years ago, the Fathers of this somewhat old Republic affirmed certain truths to be self-evident. They declared (that) among other things that all men are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among them Life, and Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness. In these words are expressed the abiding purpose of all peoples

imbued with the ideals of freedom and democracy. Let us never forget those words.

The Declaration that (which) you have formulated in Philadelphia may well acquire a similar significance in the days to come. In it you will (have) reaffirm(ed) principles which are the essential bulwarks of any permanent peace. With the expanding use of machinery and the revolution in transportation, and in most other things, it is well that the world should recognize the fundamental principle of your Declaration: "Poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere." (This principle is a guide to all of our international economic deliberations).

I have seen that in my travels since the last I.L.O. Conference. You know where I have been pretty well, so you will know what I am thinking about. I am thinking about Africa. And I am thinking about certain parts of the Near East, the west coast of Africa, the north coast of Africa, and then the eastern end of the Mediterranean. You know where I went.

And it is perfectly true that poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere. I think of a little colony, a little piece of the earth's surface, Gambia, where I happened to have landed from Brazil. Nice, peaceful people, and as the saying goes, poor as church mice. Why mice should be singled out, I don't know. (laughter) But Gambia is very, very poor.

Well, when I was there, I wasn't thinking in terms of who should do it, but if they had a little less poverty,

that would bring prosperity to a lot more people outside of
Gambia. They are kept down because of exploitation. I think
that is going to be a new word in the next meeting of the
I.L.O., something that I have had in the back of my head a long
time, something that says something against exploitation of
the poor by the rich -- by governments, as well as individuals.

I think we can get somewhere if we keep that idea of
being "agin" -- as we say in Irish-American-- "agin" exploita-
tion everywhere. It will be an awfully good thing for all of
us.

You have affirmed the right of all human beings to
 material well-being and spiritual development under conditions
 of freedom and dignity and under conditions of economic secur-
 ity and opportunity -- which is saying roughly the same thing
in better language. The attainment of those conditions must
 constitute a central aim of national (and international) policy,
because if it doesn't become the aim of national policies, then
it won't become the aim of international policies. Indeed,
 the worthiness and success of these international policies must
 (will) be measured in the future by the extent to which they
 promote the achievement of the (this) end.

Your Declaration sums up the aspirations of an epoch
that (which) has known two world wars. Most of us, I take it,
were born before the first world war. I confidently believe
 that future generations will look back on this epoch (upon it)
 as a landmark in world thinking. I am glad to have the (this)
 opportunity of indorsing its specific terms and

declarations on behalf of the United States. And I trust, also, that within a short time its specific terms will be wholeheartedly indorsed by all of the United Nations.

As I look over the report of your work, I see that you have, for the first time in history, set out in a form that should (which could) be adopted in (as) a treaty by the nations, a particular series of social objectives. I note that among other things they include full employment, wages and working conditions calculated to insure a just share of the fruits of progress to all, the extension of social security, the recognition of the right of collective bargaining, provision for child welfare and the assurance of adequate educational and vocational opportunities. Therefore, it will be your opportunity (responsibility) to promote these objectives through your own organization, and through such international agencies as may be created. And some will be created.

With great wisdom you have realized that these social objectives cannot be attained and supported without a high level of useful economic activity. You have recommended a series of economic policies and undertakings designed to bring about a material economy that (which) will make it possible to maintain review (them).

You have (also) wisely provided for the further development and reorganization of the International Labor Organization (itself) so that it may be broadened and strengthened to (for) carry(ing) out these social objectives, and at the

same time integrated on a cooperative basis with whatever new (international) agency or agencies are created by the United Nations. And I personally am very confident that the United Nations are going to have at least one new international agency that will bring the whole world closer together than it ever has been before in all history. This forms an admirable pattern for formulating certain aspects of the peace -- to start at the beginning. I want to assure you (that) this Government will do everything in its power to see that the provisions for the attainment of these social and labor objectives shall be included.

The people of the occupied countries are in deep suffering, as we all know. Their representatives have agreed upon the social objectives and economic policies, the view of all (you have) set forth. I trust that this marks the beginning of a new and better day, a period of hope -- hope for material comfort, (for) and security, and then even more greatly the (for) spiritual and personal development, development for all of those groups now suffering so sorely under the hands (heel) of the enemy (oppressor). The United Nations will be determined that all the oppressed of the earth -- and in every hemisphere, and every continent, and all the islands too -- will (shall) be included in these social objectives.

And so I want to offer my congratulations to (those of) you who have had the opportunity of taking part (participated) in this Conference. You have my gratitude for the program of mutual helpfulness which you have laid out -- a program

that ought to and I think (which, I am sure) will inspire all of those in our generation who want to build and maintain a just peace. And may that time come soon.

(prolonged applause for the President)

MR. WALTER NASH: On behalf of the delegates of the Conference and those present, I want to say "thank you very much" for giving us the opportunity to come to this historic White House to present three most important documents, and to sign them here. They were determined after the deliberations of the delegates, and we feel privileged and honored, and also proud to come to you, sir, and to thank you for all that you have done in the past to enable the I.L.O. and all that it stands for to become what it has become.

We doubly thank you for your words in regard to the removal of poverty and exploitation from the world, and the objective that you have in your mind. We are proud to be alongside you in the work that you are doing. I know the representatives from the occupied countries also feel as you feel: to be themselves as early as humanly possible, and to live honorably as free and independent countries.

This is not the time for long speeches. We are glad to be here with you, and we thank you for all that you have done. We doubly thank you that on behalf of the United States you have accepted this Declaration; and we feel, as time passes, that you in turn will go on doing the things that will enable us -- with you, and with the United States

and the other countries that are representatives on it -- to build a better world. We know it can be done. We feel -- the representatives of Governments, Employers and Employees -- that it is going to be done if it is humanly possible for it to be done.

I speak, also, on behalf of the Government group, and every word, as I said on behalf of the Conference as a whole, is reiterated as their representative. But I also feel, as you do -- without long speeches that I know you hear so much of -- that you might like to have a word or two from the chairman of the Employers group, Sir John Forbes Watson from Britain, and I would ask him just to say a word or two, if he would, at this time.

SIR JOHN FORBES WATSON: Mr. President, I have the honor, on behalf of the Employers at this Conference, to thank you for the opportunity of being here today in this tripartite organization where Governments, Employers and Employees work in equality.

It has been proved, however much men may differ as to methods, that they can work together so long as they have a common aim; and our common aim is the words you said, Mr. President, of securing Life, Liberty and Happiness.

The war has deepened our aims, because although it has destroyed things, it has also created things, it has created a bond of unity between freedom-loving peoples.

May I just in a word say how much this

Organization owes to your country for its support, and to you, sir. Two and a half years ago you gave us a message which sustained us in very grim days, and we are going away back now to our respective tasks, once more inspired by your message, determined that liberty shall prevail, and fortified and encouraged by the touch of your hand. (applause)

MR. WALTER NASH: The Workers would like Mr. Jef Rens of Belgium to say a word on their behalf.

(Mr. Rens addressed the President briefly,
in French)

MR. WALTER NASH: Our closing words, Mr. President, are "thank you very much," and also for Frances Perkins, Mr. Goodrich, Mr. Phelan and Mr. Lubin, the magnificent representatives you sent to be our hosts in your country. They have done a remarkable job. I question whether inside the history of the I.L.O. there ever has been a Conference so successful, or there ever has been a country so good, hospitable and kind as you people have been to us whilst we have been here. That could not have been, were it not for the inspiration that came to us all from your message at the opening of the Conference, and from the work that has been done by Mr. Goodrich, Mr. Lubin, Mr. Phelan, and the others of your nation.

The last words from the Conference are, "thank you very much."

(applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Goodbye, and good luck. And come
back and see us again very soon.

(laughter, and more applause for
the President)