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## VICE PRESIDENT ALBEN BARKLEY ADDRESSES S. C. FEDERATION OF LABOR CONVENTION

**Editor's Note**—The Labor Journal prints below the entire address of Vice President Alben W. Barkley, which was delivered before the Annual Convention of the South Carolina Federation of Labor. President Earl R. Britton and his board members are to be congratulated for arranging a program such as they did this year in South Carolina which included so many prominent persons as guest of the South Carolina AFL Convention. The address follows:

President, Mr. Keenan (Joseph D. Keenan, National Director, LLPE), members and guests of the South Carolina State Federation of Labor, I greatly appreciate the generous words with which my good friend Joe Keenan has introduced me to this fine body of men and women. I am very glad to be able to be here in Spartanburg today. I have long known of this city because friends of mine who have lived here were the former congressman, former senator, former justice, former Secretary of State Jimmy Byrnes with whom I served in the House of Representatives for 14 years and in the Senate, and my present good friend and colleague in the Senate, your friend also, Olin Johnson. (Applause.) I understand that he was to have spoken here today at 11:00 o'clock, but on account of the death of his brother, he has been compelled to forego that pleasure. I want to say to you that Olin Johnson, in my judgment, is as good a friend of labor as there is in the Senate of the United States. (Applause.)

I have long known the people of South Carolina by what they call on the radio, now, remote control. For during the 36 years mentioned by Mr. Keenan I have known many South Carolinians, conferred with them long before I came here. The speech last night was the first time I have flown over it, I have driven through it, I have ridden through it on a train but last night over at Columbia was the first time I have ever had the honor to address an audience in South Carolina, and I was very happy that I could arrange to stop in Spartanburg, on my way home to Kentucky, to address you for just a few minutes here today.

Now I appreciate the fact that Mr. Keenan introduced me as Vice President after 36 years in the Senate and the House. I haven't quite gotten used to being called Mr. Vice President. It is sort of a tongue twister. I've been called Senator for so long that most people still call me that and it suits me all right. I told an audience the other day that I don't care what you call me just so you call me. (Laughter.) And there are other things that I've been called that are worse than Vice President and worse than Senator, too. President Truman is telling a story in Washington about me that I have no right to deny, and don't, but he is telling this story that after the election on the 2nd of November at which he and I were elected as President and Vice President, to the surprise of four or five people in this country (laughter) I went to my home in Paducah and they had a big celebration. Made a big do do over me. See, I was the only Vice President in captivity. They hadn't had one since Roosevelt died and Vice President Truman became President of the United States. We hadn't had a Vice President for four years. People almost forgot there was such a thing and I went home and they had a big time. I was the only Vice President furnished by the city of Paducah. (Laughter.) May be the last, nobody can tell, because they may get so tired of it that they won't want another one. But anyhow they closed the stores, built a platform in the middle of the street, closed off four blocks in four different directions and we really had a big time celebrating, and during the process I was ushered into the Irvin Cobb hotel, named after a former Paducahan, and I started in some place (this is the President's story, I guess it is so) I started in some place where I wasn't supposed to go and the guard of policemen stopped me. Said, "You can't go in there." And I said, "I'm the Vice Presi-

dent." He halted a minute and I stepped forward a couple of paces, and then he had collected himself and addressed me again and said, "What are you Vice President of?" (Laughter.) So, I said, "The United States." So he said, "Oh, hell, I thought you meant the Irvin Cobb hotel." (Laughter.)

I am very happy in my capacity as Vice President to render any service that I can to the President and to the administration and to the government and to the American people. When Charles G. Dawes was Vice President in the Coolidge administration they were not very good friends, somehow or other. Dawes had more friends on the Democratic side of the Senate than he had on the Republican side. He and I became very good friends. One day he called me up to the Vice President's rostrum. He said, "Barkley, this is a helluva job I've got." And I said, "What is the matter with it? You've still got it. I haven't heard of your resignation. What is wrong with it?" He said "I can't do but two things." I said "What are they?" "Well," he said, "one of them is to sit up here and listen to you birds talk and I can't reply, and the other is to look at the papers every morning to see how the President's health is." (Laughter.) I've often wondered if the Vice President didn't cast furtive glances at the health columns of the paper every now and then; but I've got an iron clad agreement with Harry Truman that I'm not to look at the sick list, even in the paper. (Laughter.) He and I are a team. We are friends. We served in the Senate together. We ran on the same platform together. We stand for the same things and I am trying to help his administration help the American people. (Applause.)

We have many perplexing problems that face this country at this time with which every laboring man is concerned. We talk about politics and we think about politics. Many people think about politics as a mere game in which man maneuvers schemes to get power and to get office. But in the real sense of the word politics is the science of government. That is what the dictionary defines it as being and it is correct. Now, there is an intimate connection between politics and economics. I do not pretend to be an economist. A very prominent banker in this country the other day defined an economist to me as a financier without any money who wears a Phi Beta Kappa key on one end of his watch chain and has no watch on the other end. (Laughter.) I don't adopt that as my definition of economist, but we do know that economics play a great part in the welfare of our people and it is a handmate of politics in this sense. Economics is the science of production, distribution and use of the things that man makes for his advancement and his welfare and for all the people. Now, political conditions of any country may determine the kind of economic condition that country has. It may determine the kind of economic condition every man and woman and every family may find themselves in. Bad politics, by which I mean bad government, will make bad economics, bad economic conditions. By the same token bad economics, bad economic conditions undoubtedly have a vital and direct effect on the kind of politics you have. So that, if our economic conditions are good, if we are prosperous and happy, and if every man and woman and child has a feeling that they are obtaining approximate justice under the government under which they live, they may take a different attitude towards political conditions and political parties than that which they would

LABOR DAY 1949



take if the reverse is the situation, for they know that if we have a government in this country to undertake to deal out justice, to undertake to enact laws that are fair and just and equitable to all classes of our people, but nobody has any priority in the administration of justice or in the administration of the affairs of our country. Politics and economics may go along hand-in-hand and work out our conditions, our society, the prosperity and happiness of our people with fair justice and equity toward all classes. There is no class of people in this country that has any right to demand a monopoly in the use of government and in its power and in the use of its power and that is particularly true and recognized as being true by laboring men in this country; and it is in my judgment laboring men, whether organized or unorganized, have never asked any priority. They have never asked any special favors of our government. All they have asked is that our government do justice to them as it does to everybody else. (Applause.) And when they feel that our government is trying to do justice to them, give them an even break with all other classes of our people, laboring men and women find themselves, like all others, pleased to be satisfied with their government and happy over its success.

Now I am here not as a partisan, not as a Democrat, but I happen to be a Democrat because I have always believed, and I now believe more firmly than ever, that taking the record of political parties in the United States from the day of Thomas Jefferson to the day of Harry Truman, the Democratic party has done more to bring about equality of justice to all our people than any other political party in the history of the United States. (Applause.) And it has done that because it has been inspired by the original philosophy of Thomas Jefferson, who in his Declaration of Independence announced for the first time that all men are created equal and as such they are endowed by their creators certain unalienable rights. And we use the word unalienable instead of inalienable, which many people think are interchangeable. But they are not. When he said unalienable he meant that they could not be alienated even by the possessor of these rights or by anybody else, and among those rights are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. And in order to secure those rights the governments are instituted among men deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. A more profound sentence was never uttered by any political philosopher in the history of the world.

Jefferson is not only the author of the Declaration of Independence. He is not only the author of the statutes in Virginia for religious liberty, not only the founder of a great educational institution as the capstone of the educational system of the State of Virginia. He was also the talented organizer of the Democratic party in opposition to the Federalist idea that only the rich and the well-born and the educated had any rights to participate in government so far as voting was concerned. Well, Thomas Jefferson advocated the rights of the people because he believed in the education of the people. Because he started out against tremendous opposition in his own state to bring about universal education among the people, he was called a demagogue. If there had been such a word at that time he would have been called a socialist. That word was not coined until a little later. He was called a demagogue by those who desired to use the powers of the government for their own use and benefits instead of for the majority. He founded the party of which I am a member in order to offset the theory that the government of the United States was set up for the benefit of a special class, a special class of men and women who were more fortunate than their brothers in the economic and social world. So that we have tried and are now trying to carry out the philosophy of Jefferson, the philosophy of all those who have believed with him in a government of, by, and for the people. That is what we stand for.

Of course the complexity of our national life in growth and development of the industrial age made it necessary for men and women to organize to protect themselves in their employment, in their wages and in their conditions of labor. But no one man now can protect himself against entrenched wealth, and I am not saying that in any invidious term. I believe in the profit system. I believe in the incentive that ought to be held out to government for men to invest their money in private enterprise which gives employment to men and women; but no one man or woman exercising all the power he may possess as an individual can protect himself or herself against the stronger arm of those who are entrenched, who are more fortunately situated in regard to this world's goods; and that as the industrial age came upon them, it became necessary for labor unions to be organized and founded in order that organized workers, that muscle and brawn and sinews, might have a chance against organized money, not to obtain more than they were entitled to, but to obtain approximately what they were entitled to. I might say that

in the process of this movement the party of which I am a member was the original, was the pioneer in enactment of laws to justify and protect the organization of labor and of farming, because it was in the days of Woodrow Wilson when we were writing the Clayton Anti-Trust Law for the first time in our history as a result of the fact that labor unions, that members of labor unions and members of farm organizations had been arrested and indicted as violators of the anti-trust law because they belonged to a labor union or to a farmers organization. And when we came to write the Clayton Anti-Trust Law we put a provision in there, "No man shall be even guilty of a violation of the anti-trust law in restraint of trade because he was a member of the farmers organization set up to protect farmers and their families in the obtaining of adequate prices for what they produce out of the soil. No man who joins a labor union shall be guilty of violation of the anti-trust law." We enacted that law. That was the first enactment to protect labor men and women of their rights to join and organize that was ever enacted in the history of the United States. (Applause.)

Now, there are those in this country who seek to separate labor from agriculture, who try to build up opposition among laboring men and women to the farmer and in reverse try to build up opposition and prejudice among farmers against laboring men. No man who tries to separate labor and agriculture is a friend either of labor or agriculture. (Applause.) Their interests are, in a sense, identical. It is to the interest of every laboring man discussed that the farmers receive adequate prices for what they grow in the field because, although the farmers of the nation constitute only 15 per cent of the population, they buy 25 per cent of all the things that are produced in the factories of this country and that difference between their relative strength and what they buy is due to the fact that they raise much of what they use on the farm themselves and thereby have a larger proportion of their income to use in the purchase of the products of labor. Therefore, it is to the interest of the laboring man that we have a successful and stable agriculture in order that the farmer may buy the things which he cannot produce himself. And by the same token it is to the interest of every farmer in this nation that there shall be a well paid and satisfied and happy labor group in the nation so that they may buy the products of the farm which they are so in need of in food and clothing and other things that are produced by agriculture, so that there is an indispensable partnership between labor and agriculture. We have never been prosperous in this country and never will if agriculture is prostrate. We will never be prosperous in this country if labor is unemployed and not employed at a wage rate that will give them purchasing power in order that they may give their families the same advantages enjoyed by every other group in the United States.

I am happy to be able to say during my 36 years in the Congress of the United States, and you are bound to recognize, Mr. Keenan, that having been in Congress for 36 years I must have entered it as a very young man. (Applause and laughter.) I still am. (Applause and laughter.) I work four times as hard as I did 40 years ago and feel just as well. I never had indigestion in my life. I've never had a headache in my life. My habits are as regular as an Elgin watch. I sleep every night just the same as if I was an innocent man. (Laughter and applause.) All these years, all these years in which I have been a member of the House of Representatives and the Senate, I do

## Labor Day Message From Acting Director J. L. Rhodes

BY J. L. RHODES  
Organizer  
American Federation of Labor



J. L. RHODES

Organized labor has ever forged ahead until the people of America built a monument to labor in the form of a day of rest for the nation, created by legislative action. After many years there is a wholesome acceptance of this monument to labor by all the citizenry alike. Although the day was sponsored by members of Organized Labor there is the general acceptance of the day—Labor Day—without a single thought that organized labor sponsored, advocated creation of Labor Day and did secure the passage of laws through the National Congress setting aside this day, the first Monday in September as a national monument to labor.

So it goes. Organized labor has secured many public interest bills for the enhancement of all the people's welfare and when these benefits are secured the sponsors are forgotten. Almost every bill for the benefit of mankind has been placed on the statute books of the states and the nation by strong labor sponsorship.

No monument in the general and accepted meaning of the term can be built to labor, for labor builds all things. If money were appropriated to build a huge marble and granite monument in a public park to be dedicated to Labor, Labor would have to build that. It would be Labor building a monument to itself. You would not bake your own birthday cake, would you? You would not give yourself a Christmas gift, would you? No, of course, you wouldn't. But Labor Day as a monument to those who toil was about the only type of monument that could be brought about that would not embarrass the recipient.

All the accomplishments of Labor are annually brought to the attention of all who read or listen on that day. Many of the problems that stand in the way of future and further progress of Labor are brought to the attention of its friends on Labor Day, where remedies are discussed and ways and means considered to further permit the advancement of Labor.

1949 is no year to overlook for the laying of plans and for the making of preparations to carry the Labor program to all the people in this United States of America. This is a year when full consideration will be given the persecutory laws that have been saddled upon the backs of Labor.

This is the year when plans will be made to rid the books of the Taft-Hartley law and all others of its type. This is the year when plans will be made to elect men to public office who have the true concept of value and the true understanding of the problems of Labor and have the conviction to protect the people who build all

things. This is the year when men will be chosen for public office who know that America cannot remain healthy or maintain its high standard of living by legislating against the interests of the working people.

The unfair laws that are made, created and written by the unfair employers have no place on the statute books, and any legislator who votes for or supports such laws must be retired from public office.

Labor Day celebrations will be held all over the country and in every city and village of the Southland. These celebrations will be days of rejoicing for the many accomplishments of Labor and rededication to principles that have brought Labor along the road of progress for so many years. It is doubtful that the workers of the South would willingly roll back to the days of the past for they know that by their skill, their brains and their muscle and sinew have come all worthwhile things. The retarding of the interests of Labor would be to upset the economy of the country and would cause the standard of life in America to dwindle to a point of destitution. To follow the anti-labor forces would mean Labor at low wages. It would mean unemployment.

The American Federation of Labor is found ever in the vanguard of those who fight for the high standard of living the American laborer is first entitled to—why shouldn't he be?—he built it. Though there are no bronze plaques or marble shafts or granite blocks erected as monuments to Labor there is indelibly engraved upon the hearts and minds of the American people the memory of "Well done thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the gates of heaven."

Labor Day, 1949, offers those who sincerely believe Labor in America has a rightful and influential place in American business and in American public affairs the right to publicly so proclaim and to do honor to those who toil to make and produce the wealth of the nation whether it be farmer or day laborer.

America must be a happy working force and one that is well paid, for under other conditions there would be no consumers. A healthy American economy requires a healthy status to the farmer and the city worker, for the economy of both groups is dependent one upon the other. A high income of the city worker will assure the farmer of a market for his products, and a high income for the farmer assures the city worker a market for the things he builds.

The Southern office of the American Federation of Labor extends Labor Day Greetings to all whose eyes fall upon these lines and wishes for all America a prosperous and happy year until another Labor Day shall roll around.

### WIDE POWER IS GIVEN TO PRESIDENT TRUMAN IN EXECUTIVE BRANCH

WASHINGTON—Congress completed action today on a bill giving President Truman broad powers to streamline the executive branch of the Government.

The Senate, by a voice vote with no opposition, approved a compromise version of the bill which was worked out by a Senate-House committee yesterday.

The House passed it a few minutes earlier. Senate action sent the measure on its way to the White House after a month of bitter wrangling.

(Continued On Page 2)