

CHAPTER 2

“*The Fight for Peace*”

THE SMOLDERING unrest finally erupted with Henry A. Wallace's Madison Square Garden speech on September 12, 1946. This incident, more than any other single happening, served to crystallize third-party opinion, to widen the split between Conservatives and New Dealers within the Democratic Party, and to confuse the ranks of the Liberals themselves. What were the events that launched the Wallace “fight for peace”?

The Secretary of Commerce had personally presented to President Truman the text of a speech on foreign policy to be delivered at an anti-Republican, anti-Dewey rally to be held in New York City, actually reading the complete address to the President so that there could be no possible misunderstanding through misreading, or omission. After covering the speech, sentence by sentence, in the course of a private White House conference, the President suggested only one alteration—a strengthening of one section. Following this change, and in advance of the speech's delivery, according to James Reston:

President Truman said in his press conference today that he approved the speech [to be] delivered in New York tonight by Secretary of Commerce Henry A. Wallace and that he considered it to be in line with the policies of Secretary of State James F. Byrnes.¹

¹ *New York Times*, September 13, 1946.

Concerning the speech itself, next morning the *New York Times* reported that "Secretary Wallace . . . was hissed and heckled at several points in his speech when he talked of the need for Russian understanding of American aims." Wallace interpreted this unfavorable reception as being caused by the fact that the speech "followed a straight American line." In his estimation, it was "neither pro-British or anti-British, neither pro- nor anti-Russian." Although Wallace endorsed the stated administration objective of seeking peace through United Nations cooperation, he presented three main points of departure: (1) a warning against allowing American foreign policy to be dominated by the British; (2) a warning that "the tougher we get with Russia, the tougher they will get with us"; and (3) a tacit acceptance of a Russian sphere of influence in Eastern Europe, much as the Monroe Doctrine had implied an American sphere of influence in Latin America.

Since the speech attacked the firm policy of the Secretary of State toward Russia—a policy which Mr. Byrnes was even then outlining to a Paris meeting of the United Nations—and since the President had so definitely approved the speech in advance, there was immediate speculation about a possible shift in American foreign policy. Strong repercussions were felt in Paris, although in this country the speech was interpreted as being primarily political and designed to secure the campaign support of dissident leftwing elements in New York—elements of major importance in the coming state election.

From Paris, the American delegation protested immediately and strenuously. Senator Tom Connally of Texas put it this way, according to the *New York Times*, "If the United States is to speak with an influential voice, there must be no division behind the lines." Senator Vandenberg, the Michigan Republican, complained, "We can cooperate with [only] one Secretary of State at a time."

As a result of these protests, President Truman back-

tracked, stating that he meant to approve only Wallace's right to speak, not "the speech as constituting a statement of the foreign policy of this country." He then announced, following rumors of Wallace's forced resignation, that the Secretary of Commerce would remain in the Cabinet under an agreement that no further foreign policy speeches would be made until after the Paris meeting had adjourned.

But this solution was not sufficient to appease the Secretary of State. Byrnes, maintaining a public silence, delivered to the President in a private teletype conversation a Wallace-goes-or-I-do ultimatum. Denied at the time, the report of this communication was later confirmed by Byrnes himself in his book *Speaking Frankly*. It was Wallace's belief that Senator Vandenberg, more than anyone else, influenced Byrnes to take this stand. However, Bernard Baruch, the elder statesman who had recently participated in a public exchange with Wallace over their respective plans for control of atomic energy, also reputedly played a considerable part in putting on the pressure. The President's hand having been forced, he reversed his previous announcement and, in a telephone conversation, requested the resignation of his Secretary of Commerce. Wallace complied, promising at the same time to continue his "fight for peace, in which I am sure that I have your full and continued support." Thus the last of the original New Dealers left the Cabinet.

An overt realignment of political forces began to take place. With Wallace's departure, many of the radical and leftist elements in the Democratic Party—those antagonized by the President's foreign or domestic policies—intensified their battle against their titular head. The split that until now had been more or less concealed came fully to the front and was widened by publicity.

The Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen, headed by A. F. Whitney, still smarting from his earlier encounter with the President over the threatened draft of striking railroaders, issued an invitation to Wallace to address the union's forth-

coming convention. At the same time Whitney condemned Truman for having "removed every progressive appointed by Franklin D. Roosevelt," and declared that "Secretary Wallace is now available to lead a movement for sound and progressive government." Since Whitney and the Trainmen had supported the La Follette Progressive candidacy in 1924, this seemed not just an idle threat but the promise of substantial labor support for a third-party venture.

National Citizens Political Action Committee spokesmen Frank Kingdon and C. B. "Beanie" Baldwin labeled President Truman's action in dismissing Wallace a blow to peace, charging the abandonment of F.D.R.'s foreign policy. Jack Kroll, director of the powerful CIO Political Action Committee, was quoted in the *New York Times* as saying, "Wallace now has the opportunity to bring the real facts on this crucial issue to the American people." Grant Oakes, president of the leftwing CIO United Farm Equipment and Metal Workers Union, alleging that Truman had chosen the path to war, declared that "he leaves the people no alternative but to organize a third party of their own in 1948."

In New York, the American Labor Party went on record as supporting Wallace's position, as did such diverse groups as the American Slav Congress, the Executive Committee of the Methodist Federation of Social Service, and the New Council of American Business, Inc. Vito Marcantonio, ALP spokesman, termed the Wallace dismissal the beginning of disintegration of the Democratic Party and called for a new party backed by labor.

The Communists, taking advantage of the furor created and realizing that their initial interpretation and dislike of the speech must have been erroneous, reversed themselves abruptly to praise the Wallace stand. Their *Daily Worker* had been highly critical the morning after its delivery. Their news columns played down the Wallace role in the rally with no mention of his comments until the ninth paragraph, while editorially they complained:

While expounding the peace ideals of the late President Roosevelt, Henry Wallace defended the policies which are undermining those ideals.

He advanced views, however, which covered up American imperialism's aggressive role.

. . . he implied the U.S. was innocent in this struggle between Britain and Soviet Russia.²

But with the growing furor that the speech was kicking up three days later, they tempered this statement in their early Sunday edition, saying:

Unfortunately, Mr. Wallace didn't do [the] job of showing up American foreign policy . . . although he did say a lot of good things in his speech at Madison Square Garden Thursday night.³

Then, with President Truman's disavowal of the speech and hints of Wallace's impending dismissal, this second opinion was altered, *in later editions for the same day*, to lukewarm praise:

Henry Wallace's speech, last Thursday night despite all its shortcomings, was a repetition of the deep worry which pervades our people over the present war trend of the administration.

. . . Despite inconsistencies, Wallace expressed the desires of the people.

. . . Wallace and Pepper should fight for their policies.⁴

Finally, by Tuesday, the Communists had adopted Mr. Wallace completely for their own, declaring:

² *Daily Worker*, September 13, 1946.

³ Editorial, *Worker* (New York), September 15, 1946, 1st edition.

⁴ Editorial, *Worker*, September 15, 1946, later edition; also reprinted in *Daily Worker*, September 16, 1946.

. . . As for ourselves we declare frankly that the main features of Mr. Wallace's represented a criticism which we have long been making in our own modest way. The things on which we disagree with Mr. Wallace, though important, are secondary to the main areas of agreement.⁵

While some Liberals, such as Senators Claude Pepper and Glen Taylor, supported the Wallace position, many others condemned the speech. The American Liberal Party assailed his acceptance of spheres of influence as inimical to world unity as well as to the United Nations and declared that he had "forfeited support of Liberals working for one world, not two."

Socialist leaders were equally critical, Norman Thomas calling Wallace the "heir to the policy of appeasement disastrously followed by Chamberlain . . . and by Roosevelt and Truman at Cairo, Teheran, Yalta, and Potsdam." However, they, too, agreed that the Wallace episode marked "the beginning of the crack-up of the Democratic party."

The Conservative wing of the Democratic Party was far from unhappy at Wallace's departure. Men like James Farley, erstwhile party strategist, and Jesse Jones, Wallace's predecessor in the Commerce post, supported Byrnes wholeheartedly. The *New York Times* was able to quote numerous prominent members of both House and Senate, virtually unanimous in their approval of the President's action.

A broad range of political thought expressed condemnation of Wallace; the United Mine Workers commented editorially on Wallace as an "impractical dreamer," while Harold J. Laski, writing for the *Nation*, assailed not the content of the speech but its timing. In his opinion, it should have been delivered some three months earlier, prior to the Paris talks, to have had any chance of being effective.

⁵ Editorial, *Daily Worker*, September 17, 1946, later edition, p. 1; also reprinted Monday, September 16, 1946.

With respect to new party currents, it can be said that the Madison Square Garden speech stirred up a maelstrom of conflict: Those who accepted the Wallace views on foreign policy were not agreed on the relative advisability of creating a third party or of working within the Democratic Party. Those who were strongly committed to minor-party endeavor, such as the Socialists, the Liberals, and the American Labor Party, found themselves split over the foreign policy issue.

The first tangible political event to come out of this turmoil was the Conference of Progressives held at Chicago two weeks later—September 28 and 29, 1946. This meeting, called by the National Citizens Political Action Committee and the Independent Citizens Committee of the Arts, Sciences and Professions, proposed to "discuss common political strategy for independent progressive organizations." Specifically, it aimed at a showdown over the Wallace ouster and at the formation of a compact power bloc by those Democrats espousing the Roosevelt New Deal traditions, which, they claimed, the Truman administration was gradually deserting.

The conference set as its goal the task of getting out a 50,000,000 vote in the 1946 congressional elections so that liberalism might be reinforced in the coming Eightieth Congress. For the more distant future they set their sights on the selection of Liberal delegates to the 1948 Democratic National Convention. A broad segment of Liberal thought was represented at this Chicago assemblage. The speakers included Henry Morgenthau, Jr., Secretary of the Treasury under Roosevelt; former Interior Secretary Harold Ickes; Florida Democratic Senator Claude A. Pepper; Phillip Murray and Jack Kroll of the CIO; James Patton of the Farmers Union; Clark Foreman of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare; and Walter White of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Morgenthau attacked talk of forming a third party and thus falling into the "trap set by reactionary elements of the

Republican and Democratic parties," while Walter White pointed out that it would take six years to get a third party listed in all the states. Nonetheless, the vehemence of their remarks in trying to quell the ardor for a third-party move strongly suggests the existence of considerable sentiment among the delegates for just such action.

Another alternative was suggested by former Secretary of the Interior Ickes. Since it was highly improbable that their group would be able to capture either major party, he urged the self-proclaimed New Deal heirs to cross party lines and elect Liberals wherever they were to be found.

Unable to reach agreement on the broader aspects of political strategy, the meeting did unite on some of the minor details—building from the ground up, ringing doorbells, and working on the precinct level. Moreover, the conference arrived at an acceptable platform—twelve domestic planks based on the 1944 Democratic stand and seven foreign policy ones based on the views of Henry A. Wallace, as outlined in a letter to President Truman in July of 1946. This accomplished, the group adjourned, but not without Phillip Murray's attempt to read out of the movement "and out of progressive and liberal ranks those of Communist persuasions."

Meanwhile, the Democratic campaign was getting under way. Representative John J. Sparkman announced that Wallace and Pepper had been dropped from the congressional Speakers Committee as a result of their foreign policy views. After a six-week quasi-retirement from the political scene, however, Wallace was summoned by James Roosevelt, son of the late President and chairman of the California Democratic State Committee, to deliver a series of speeches in behalf of Liberal West Coast candidates whose congressional seats were in danger. Wallace followed this California trip with a brief tour of the Middle West. He wound up the campaign speaking in New York, despite the disapproval of the city machine.

Here, while urging the election of Democratic candidates James Mead and Herbert Lehman in the 1946 New York State races, he joined Senator Pepper in issuing a call for a progressive candidate for President in 1948.

This last-minute visit seemed to many a clear-cut threat to the Democrats of leftwing withdrawal and organization of a third party, if necessary, for the 1948 campaign. But, while National Citizens Political Action Committee leaders Frank Kingdon and C. B. "Beanie" Baldwin declared that

Unless the national administration changes its course, the progressives will sever their bonds of allegiance and form a new third party in the next two years,

Wallace declined to commit himself definitely, saying:

I don't mean that the day after tomorrow we are going to form a third party, but I do say that new currents will be forming.⁶

Immediately following the Republican landslide in the 1946 elections, in which candidates supported by the CIO Political Action Committee won in only 73 of 318 races, the Continuations Committee of the Conference of Progressives met to discuss strategy in view of the disaster at the polls. The decision was reached to continue work within the frame of the major parties. Former Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau told the press that a third party "had not been discussed."

Despite this disavowal, it was a matter of only a few weeks before the leftwing elements of the conference were again meeting—on December 30, 1946—this time to organize the Progressive Citizens of America. Even though the PCA stated that its immediate object was to make the Democratic Party

⁶ *New York Times*, November 5, 1946.

“out and out progressive,” others felt that this was the first serious step toward creating the independent nucleus of a third party. The new group adopted the Wallace foreign policy plank of “peace, prosperity and freedom in one world” and called for widespread domestic reforms.

Thus, by the close of 1946, new currents were running that were to lead eventually to a new party. The Madison Square Garden speech had provided the catalytic agent for translating discontent into political action. It now seemed possible that the divided forces of the Liberals might unite—on both policy and strategy—to carry out the Wallace “fight for peace.”

Inasmuch as the Progressive Citizens of America had been formed with the Political Action Committee of the CIO as one of its main advocates, there was reason to believe that its political endeavors would receive considerable labor support. However, events soon took place that were to eliminate this possibility. First, a group of Liberals and New Dealers, including Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, banded together to reorganize the existing but feeble Union for Democratic Action into a stronger non-Communist left which would oppose the Progressive Citizens of America. They said that their new group, Americans for Democratic Action, would further Liberal aims through the medium of the Democratic Party. It would bar from membership the Communists and fellow travelers who, it claimed, dominated the PCA. Significantly, Walter Reuther, President of the CIO United Auto Workers, was among the founders of the Americans for Democratic Action.

A rift in the ranks of the CIO itself now seemed imminent with CIO President Phillip Murray listed as vice president of the Progressive Citizens of America, and the leader of one of his strongest unions enrolled in the Americans for Democratic

Action. It may well have been this threat of internecine strife in the CIO that led Murray to withdraw his name from the PCA and at the same time urge the CIO to disassociate itself officially from both PCA and ADA. In this manner, a split within the union was averted, but the Progressive movement was effectively deprived of the strong organized labor support without which any attempt to establish a third party was foredoomed to failure.

Meanwhile, the Progressive Citizens of America continued to support the Wallace foreign policy, sponsoring a series of speeches in which the former Secretary of Commerce assailed the Truman doctrine of aid to Greece and Turkey as inviting a fatal arms race between the United States and the U.S.S.R. and dividing the world into two armed camps. At the same time, Vito Marcantonio of the New York American Labor Party continued to call for the formation of a new third party. Whereas a year before certain members of the Democratic Party had walked out on him at the annual Jackson Day Democratic festivities, this time it was Wallace who absented himself.

In the midst of the American debate on foreign policy, the former Vice President now embarked on a tour of Western European democracies. In a series of speeches delivered in England, Sweden, and France during April, 1947, he was highly critical of administration policy, accusing it of undercutting the U.N., which he termed the world's "best, perhaps only, hope for peace."

These speeches, warmly received in some circles abroad, became the immediate target of attack at home. Representative John Rankin, chairman of the House Committee on un-American Activities, urged that the Logan Act of 1799 be invoked to prosecute the former Vice President for "dealing with foreign nations to defeat American measures." In this argument, Rankin received the warm support of many southern Congressmen. Similarly, the Veterans of Foreign Wars

urged that Wallace's passport be revoked. On the other hand, the Americans for Democratic Action contented itself with opposing the Wallace views but not his right to state them.

With the increasing strength of his attacks upon the Truman administration, third-party rumors began to fly in earnest. Wallace, however, disclaimed any ambitions for himself, suggesting that Senator Claude Pepper of Florida, a firm supporter of the United Nations, would be the ideal choice to head such a movement. Senator Pepper immediately tossed the ball back to Wallace, stating that he would "remain in the Democratic party as long as it is truly liberal."

Upon his return from the controversial European tour, Wallace embarked, under sponsorship of the Progressive Citizens of America, on another American tour—continuing to urge economic aid to Europe (still some weeks prior to the enunciation of the Marshall plan⁷) and to oppose what he termed "war preparations." In his own words, the purpose of the tour was to "liberalize the Democratic party." Stating that he did not know whether he would back Truman in 1948, he continued to urge that the President meet with Premier Stalin to settle American-Russian differences.

By the first of June, this stumping tour of the country was beginning to have noticeable effects. Cabell Phillips remarked in the *New York Times*:

As Henry Wallace stumps the country in advocacy of his program for altering the course of American foreign policy, he is leaving in his wake a recrudescence of that familiar form of political rebellion that seeks its ends through the formation of a third party.⁸

⁷ Wallace's speech to the French Chamber of Deputies in which he proposed a fifty-billion-dollar world reconstruction program was delivered April 23, 1947. Under Secretary of State Acheson's speech at Cleveland, Mississippi—the forerunner of the Marshall plan—was delivered May 8, 1947.

⁸ *New York Times*, June 1, 1947.

But at the same time there were serious obstacles in the way of a new party—the lack of any cohesive organizational control, the difficulty of securing a place on the state ballots, much greater than in the days of La Follette, and the belief that the “balance of power technique [would] yield more practical results in the next few years at least.” Moreover, while the movement was acquiring perhaps a few supporters, it was making many enemies.

The persistence of the Wallace attacks on foreign policy continued to draw the fire of those who had opposed his Madison Square Garden speech. In New York David Dubinsky again attacked the Wallace position, while former Under Secretary of State A. A. Berle, Jr., urged Wallace to leave the “Appeasement Party,” as he termed the Progressive Citizens of America. Socialists Norman Thomas and Louis Waldman continued their barrage, as did the old Democratic Party war horse Jim Farley.

A suggestion by Wallace that “liberal Republicans” might be willing to support a new alignment drew a sharp rebuff from Senator Wayne Morse (Oregon), who at this time still maintained that “the only hope for sane and sound progressive politics is through liberalizing the Republican party.”

The only new accretion to the strength of the movement during the first months of 1947 came with announcement that Dr. Francis Townsend and his old-age pension group would support a third party because they had “lost faith in the sincerity of both of the old parties.” Wallace continued to urge that organized labor, small businessmen, and farmers cooperate within the Democratic Party to end the “feudal leadership” of the Southern Democrats, while he parried all suggestions that a third party was in the making. His, he insisted, was a struggle to make possible the survival of the Democratic Party by persuading it to adopt a policy of peace and disarmament.

But at the same time his followers in the Far West were

posing a much greater threat to party harmony. A considerable segment of the California Liberal wing of the Democratic Party, led by Robert W. Kenny, former Attorney General and candidate for Governor, met at Fresno on July 19, 1947, to organize a move to elect Wallace-pledged delegates to the 1948 National Convention. If this move failed, they said, they planned to launch a third party with the former Vice President at its head.

And when the Southern Democratic bloc in Congress combined with the Republicans to pass the Taft-Hartley Bill in June, it again seemed possible that large groups of organized labor might bolt their Democratic traces. The General Executive Board of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union called for action leading to the ultimate organization of a third party. Their doubts concerning the advisability of such a move had seemingly been dispelled by the possibility of President Truman's signing the measure, or of its becoming law over his veto. They urged that it was time for the AFL to abandon its traditional nonpartisan role in favor of positive action.

The seriousness of this latter threat, however, is rather to be doubted in the light of their actions once the measure passed over the Truman veto. As with the earlier Case anti-strike bill, it seems possible that much of the force was directed at pushing a decision upon a wavering President. While it is difficult to determine the amount of influence that such declarations had in bringing about the veto, there is less doubt that the Truman message, couched in strong terms, proved one of the greatest blows to the possibility of a new and strong third-party alignment. It turned the labor tide that had been receding from the Democrats and intermittently threatening independent-party action. Despite the fact that a large number of Democrats joined with the Republicans to override the President, his waning prestige with

labor and with Liberal groups was considerably restored by his action.

One immediate effect was that A. F. Whitney, who just a year previously had been threatening to raise a "million-dollar slush fund" to defeat Truman, now in July, 1947, advised his Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen that the Taft-Hartley veto "vindicated [Truman] in the eyes of Labor." He went further to state that a third party would be "suicidal" and "out of the question," as it would merely serve to help the Republicans. This declaration was a damaging blow, since for three years, ever since the 1944 Convention fight, Whitney's Trainmen had been firm supporters of Wallace, and their organized support, to say nothing of their financial assistance, would have been significant in any attempt to create a third party.

At the same time it was observed that while many Liberals thought that a "third party will ultimately be necessary," they added that "it must have a grass roots origin, not now considered possible," according to Clayton Knowles in the *New York Times*. Coupled with the backing off by labor leaders, there came a sudden waning of strength in California, with the announcement that James Roosevelt, who had earlier been highly critical of the Truman foreign policy, was now back in the Democratic fold.

When, in September, Wallace announced that it was his "intention to work within the Democratic party realm" and President Truman rebuked Gael Sullivan, acting national chairman of the Democrats, for singlehandedly reading Wallace and Pepper out of the party, it seemed that threats of a third party had nearly vanished.

Yet, at the same time that Wallace was expressing his intent of working within the Democratic Party, he was also keeping the door open for a change in plans "if the Democratic party is a war party . . . [and] continues to attack

civil liberties." Furthermore, he went on to say, "If both parties stand for high prices and depression, then the people must have a new party of liberty and peace. The people must have a choice." And while most of the labor support for a third party was withering away, the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, a leftwing CIO affiliate headed by Harry Bridges, came out in open support of a third party to be headed by Wallace. This was more than counterbalanced by the final decision of the CIO Political Action Committee, as announced by Jack Kroll on October 16, that this group would not lead in the formation of any new party organization.

Thus it can be seen that by the fall of 1947 most of the third-party agitation stemming from the domestic labor policies of the first Truman administration was beginning to subside. The sole main current still running strongly in favor of a third party was that impelled by groups in opposition to its foreign policy. During this period, with many of his supporters wavering and returning to the Democratic ranks, Wallace embarked upon a three-week visit to Palestine to survey at first hand the situation in the infant state of Israel. Nor was this trip devoid of political significance in view of the large numbers of Jewish voters who might thereby be attracted to the Wallace banners.

By the time he returned, the situation in California had become increasingly critical. The withdrawal of the Roosevelt support and the desire of many Liberals to work only within the Democratic Party left the newly formed Independent Progressive Party in the hands of Hugh Bryson, president of the Marine Cooks and Stewards (CIO), supported by some seventy CIO locals and a few AFL affiliates. The Independent Progressive Party had the support of the Townsend organization, but the Southern California chapters of the Progressive Citizens of America had adopted a wait-and-see attitude.

Owing to stringent California requirements on nominat-

ing petitions,⁹ a total of 275,970 signatures would be required by March 18, 1948—only three months away—if the party were to have a place on the November ballot. While it was still hoped that Wallace-pledged delegates to the Democratic Convention could be elected, there was an immediate necessity to establish contingent machinery should that plan fail. And with the reluctance of Wallace to announce his candidacy, the task of obtaining the required signatures seemed hopeless. Word was received from the Coast that unless a positive commitment was forthcoming by January 1, the Wallace drive would have to be completely abandoned.

Spurred on by this deadline, the National Executive Committee of the Progressive Citizens of America announced on December 17 that it had decided to support Wallace for the Presidency and urged the immediate formation of third-party machinery to place the name of its candidates on the ballots of all the states. This decision was arrived at only at the cost of a complete break within the Progressive Citizens of America leadership. According to Wallace, during 1947 co-leader Frank Kingdon had "put more pressure on" him than anyone else to form a third party. But now Kingdon, his eye on the Democratic senatorial nomination in New Jersey, announced his resignation, stating that while he supported the Wallace foreign policy, and would have worked for the *Democratic* nomination for Wallace, he was opposed to the attempt to organize a third party.

Kingdon's resignation was followed by that of Bartley Crum as national vice-chairman. Of the original substantial leadership in the Progressive Citizens of America, only a shadow now remained. The potential third-party ranks were further diminished by the announcement that the Amalgamated

⁹ According to California law, 10 per cent of the number of votes in the last gubernatorial election must be secured as signatures to any nominating petition prior to both the state primaries and the national conventions.

Clothing Workers was ready to withdraw from the American Labor Party if, as anticipated, that party should become the vehicle for a Wallace candidacy in New York State.

Wallace himself remained silent while all these maneuvers were taking place during mid-December, but his acceptance of sponsorship by the Progressive Citizens of America for an upstate New York speaking tour indicated probable receptivity to the formal bid now tendered him. Hence, his declaration of candidacy on December 29 came as no great surprise. As J. Howard McGrath, Democratic national chairman, put it, this announcement merely served to "clear the atmosphere."

In a radio address to the American people, Wallace explained the reasons for his decision:

Peace and abundance mean so much to me that I have said "If the Democratic party continues to be a party of war and depression, I will see to it that the people have a chance to vote for peace and prosperity."

When the old parties rot, the people have a right to be heard through a new party The people must again have an opportunity to speak out with their votes in 1948

A new party must stand for a positive peace program of abundance and security, not scarcity and war

. . . I have fought and shall continue to fight programs which give guns to people when they want plows Those whom we buy politically with our food will soon desert us. They will pay us in the base coin of temporary gratitude and then turn to hate us because our policies are destroying their freedom.

. . . We are acting in the same way as France and England after the last war and the end result will be the same—confusion, digression and war.

It just doesn't need to happen. The cost of organizing for

peace, prosperity and progress is infinitely less than organizing for war

Thousands of people all over the United States have asked me to engage in this great fight. The people are on the march

By God's grace, the people's peace will usher in the century of the common man.¹⁰

It should be noted, however, that in the same speech Wallace left the door open to a possible reconciliation with Democratic leaders prior to the election, provided that they would drop their proposal for universal military training and get rid of what he called the "Wall Street-Military appointees" whom he saw as leading the administration toward a war with Soviet Russia.

With this final definite announcement, the new currents that had been swirling about for so many months now entered straighter, narrower, and more discernible channels. Of the five main groups that had composed Wallace's chief support at the 1944 Convention—the old line New Dealers, the CIO Political Action Committee, labor leaders, the Negro groups, the sprinkling of professional politicians, and the Communist fringe—only one group—the Communists—now remained intact and firmly behind the third-party candidacy. Wallace had declared his opposition to any and all forms of Red-baiting and his willingness to accept the support of any and every group working in the interests of peace, with the wistful hope that the Communist Party would avoid passing any resolutions of support for him. The Communists proceeded at once to offer him their firm support.

The old line New Dealers split over the Wallace move, with only a few—such as Rexford Tugwell and Elmer Benson—supporting the new-party decision. The balance—Harold

¹⁰ Text of Wallace's Address, *New York Herald Tribune*, December 30, 1947.

Ickes, Leon Henderson, Wilson Wyatt, Chester Bowles, and Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt—had returned through the Americans for Democratic Action into the Democratic fold. Their belief that only through an immediate victory in the 1948 election could the cause of liberalism be advanced was soon to be exhibited by their myopic espousal of the presidential nomination of General Dwight D. Eisenhower—a man whose political views were virtually unknown, and the known few conservative—since in early 1948 he seemed the only nominee with enough strength to carry a lagging Democratic Party to victory.

Labor, too, was now divided; only a few leftwing CIO national unions—the United Electrical Workers and the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union—were openly supporting Wallace, although it appeared that some locals as well as many of the rank and file might cling to his banner. The great power of the CIO, with its Political Action Committee, was gone from the camps of the third party. The Railway Brotherhoods were gone. In re-electing Walter Reuther as its head the United Auto Workers had evidenced that it too was in the camp of the Americans for Democratic Action rather than that of the Progressive Citizens of America.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, through Secretary Walter White, seemed similarly in the ADA lineup, although here again there were indications that many individuals would continue to support Wallace. Finally, the professional politicians, quick to sense the trend, stayed away from the Wallace camp in large numbers. The task of organizing the new party would be left almost completely in the hands of the amateurs, except in New York where the American Labor Party was well established.

Of the groups outside the Democratic Party, only the American Labor Party and the Communist Party could be

counted upon for complete support. The American Labor Party had been greatly weakened by the withdrawal of its greatest single constituent group—the Amalgamated Clothing Workers. Communist Party support was of dubious value at best. Indeed, Wallace estimated later that its 100,000 votes (or less) would probably cost him 3,000,000 non-Communist supporters. The Progressive Party had expired in Wisconsin, and the remaining independent threads sustained by the *Progressive* magazine would soon endorse the Socialist candidate, Norman Thomas. It should be noted that at this time, however, there was still some substantial hope of capturing the Democratic Farmer-Labor Party in Minnesota.

Elsewhere in the agricultural areas, farm support for the onetime Secretary of Agriculture was almost completely lacking. Even the National Farmers Union, through President James Patton, announced that it would take no stand on his candidacy, although they realized that "undoubtedly many farmers of the NFU [would] support Henry Wallace for President."

Of the press, only the Communist *Daily Worker* and "Jess" Gitt's York, Pennsylvania, *Gazette and Daily* promised support. Publisher Gitt was one of those who had earlier placed pressure on Wallace, saying, "If you don't run, some one else will." Such liberal publications as the *Nation* and *New Republic* took an exceedingly dim view of the proceedings. As the *Nation* editorialized:

There is still a gulf between the two [major] parties taking them by and large, both in intention and in program . . . [and] by 1952 the fate of the American economy may well have been sealed and the question of war or peace decided. Never before has a serious progressive group in this country even thought of launching a third party without major support from the trade unions . . . the only result can be to confuse enough Progressives to assure a Republican vic-

tory without establishing a mass base for a future third party movement.¹¹

Small wonder, then, that political observers shrugged their shoulders and shook their heads as Henry A. Wallace, former Vice President of the United States, announced that he had “assembled a Gideon’s Army, small in number, powerful in conviction, ready for action” and that he would “run as an independent candidate for President of the United States in 1948.” Small wonder that the whole scheme of the Wallace–Progressive Citizens of America group was dubbed “quixotic politics.”

¹¹ *Nation*, 165 (December 27, 1947), 693.