CHAPTER 12

"More Than a Single Campaign"

Long before election night brought the gloomy tidings of overwhelming defeat to the camp of the Wallace Progressive Party, the decision had already been made that this was not to be a single-campaign party like so many minor contenders of the past. As early as mid-September, Henry A. Wallace had publicly declared that his party was "not going to die out in 1948." In the final week of the fall campaign, the presidential nominee had promised that this Progressive Party would stay and expand "until the war for peace and abundance is finally won." He continued, "We are not fighting a single campaign. We have organized ourselves into a party that will endure until the American people control this land their work has built."

And on the eve of the election, the quasi-official party organ, the National Guardian, had pointed out editorially that the "fight for peace" was more than a single battle, that "the Progressive Party, unlike the two old organizations, had its sights fixed on Wednesday as well as Tuesday. 'First battle in a long war' was the way Wallace put it."

Consequently, when Cabell Phillips, writing in the New York Times some weeks after the election, remarked that "the Gideon's Army that Henry A. Wallace led through ten months of spectacular campaigning is bivouacked today on the Plains of Indecision," he was voicing better metaphor than fact. The decision to continue the "fight for peace"
after November 2, 1948, had long since been reached. Nor was there any apparent questioning of this decision. However, Phillips was on much sounder ground when he observed: "... It is widely agreed that the Progressive Party will need hidden springs of strength to survive as a factor four years, or even two years hence." The final episodes of this particular political saga—the "fight for peace"—were about to unroll.

In the last week of the campaign, third-party manager C. B. "Beanie" Baldwin had issued a summons to an immediate post-election meeting of the party's National Committee in Chicago, saying, "the fight for peace and for an America governed in the people's interest has just begun." It was intended that this conclave should plan both political activity looking toward the 1949 state and municipal elections and a legislative program aimed at influencing the course of congressional action in the months ahead.

Assured of one senatorial seat (so they believed), the Progressives had hoped also for a substantial House delegation in the coming Eighty-first Congress—a hope doomed to disappointment, as we have seen, with the election of only one third-party candidate, Vito Marcantonio.

Notwithstanding the party's repudiation at the polls, the National Committee met as planned to see what could be salvaged for the future. Presidential candidate Wallace made a personal appearance to assure his associates of continued assistance, even to the point of again running for the Presidency in 1952 if that seemed "the best thing" for the party. Wallace promised:

I intend to continue to support the Progressive Party. I don't know what form it will take. I will do anything that will help. I feel that I want to fight harder and more effectively than in the past.
On the other hand, only a few weeks after the Chicago meeting, vice-presidential candidate Glen H. Taylor indicated in a letter to Baldwin that it was his "intention to quit the party, not politics." And in a public statement Senator Taylor declared: "I was elected from Idaho as a Democrat and sit as one." Moreover, while he expressed a determination to carry on his attacks on American foreign policy at every opportunity, the Senator indicated that he would, as in the past, probably "go along with all the President's liberal domestic programs." And while his formal reconciliation with President Truman was delayed for nearly a year, the erstwhile third-party nominee from this time forward resumed his Democratic Party label.

While any precise numerical estimate is completely lacking, there seems little doubt that many of the rank and file had, with Senator Taylor, read the handwriting on the election wall, and in the weeks immediately following the second of November, moved informally, if reluctantly, toward the re-establishment of their major party ties. At the same time, however, segments of the right wing, as well as virtually the entire left wing of the Progressive Party offered renewed pledges of support in a series of state committee sessions across the nation.

The National Committee continued to meet at regular intervals throughout the winter months that followed. In the course of these meetings various standing committees—on foreign policy, civil liberties, housing, labor legislation, and the like—were appointed to keep abreast of current happenings; plans were laid for the future; and continuing opposition to the Truman foreign policy was voiced.

Thus, in January, 1949 the Committee called upon President Truman to implement his statement that "peace is all we want" by concrete action. They urged that he meet the Russian Premier personally to negotiate the differences separating the U.S. and U.S.S.R. and that he refuse to place the United States in the North Atlantic Pact. This Progressive
Party request for a top-level meeting received prominent display in all the leading Moscow newspapers, and there were indications that an American bid would be favorably received in the Kremlin itself.

President Truman’s reply to these unofficial advances was characteristic of his previous comments on the subject: “I would be delighted to meet with Premier Stalin—any time he cares to come to Washington.” Negotiations leading to NATO continued unabated.

In response to queries by an American newspaperman, Premier Stalin replied that, on doctors’ advice, he was unable to make sea or air trips, but that he would be willing to meet with the President at any of five Soviet cities or in Poland or Czechoslovakia. President Truman remained adamant: “Washington and nowhere else—not even Alaska.” And “nowhere” it remained.

To Secretary of State Dean Acheson’s objections that these Russian feelers were merely “political maneuvering” and that the United States would not negotiate outside the United Nations, Wallace retorted:

It was said that we could not consider bypassing the United Nations by engaging in peace talks with Russia. This from a Government that has bypassed the United Nations with the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan and is doing so again in preparing a North Atlantic military pact and to arm Western Europe for war.

... Section 33 of the charter itself specifically directs that nations in a dispute threatening the peace shall meet together to discuss and settle their differences.

The rejection of the Stalin offer has been followed by a new wave of hysteria against the so-called menace of Communism.

In addition to voicing continued opposition to the cold war, the Progressive Party also offered related proposals for
the solution of domestic problems. Their efforts to publicize this aspect of their program were highlighted by the presentation of a Wallace "budget for abundance" as opposed to the Truman "budget for war." The underlying premise of Wallace's fiscal proposals was that slashing "cold war" expenditures of some 21.1 billions to 7.2 billions for "defense" would make it possible to increase expenditures for "better living"—housing, education, social security, atomic energy for peace—from 12.0 to 26.85 billions.

Moreover, the Wallace budget promised a "more equitable distribution of the tax load"—outright exemptions for individuals in the lower income brackets (under $4,000 for a family of four) and an increased burden on corporate incomes. While this budget had slim chances of adoption by a Democratic Congress, its presentation was designed to bring home graphically a more realistic idea of the cost of the cold war in terms of services left unsupplied and the better living for all that might otherwise be had.

Throughout the spring of 1949 the Wallace Progressive Party continued to make use of two of its proved devices of the campaign a year earlier for propagandizing its position—congressional committee testimony and the national tour. Thus in February, former presidential candidate Wallace led off with testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee opposing extension of the Marshall plan.

Wallace argued that the European recovery program had failed in four main points:

1. In the "barriers imposed" on trade between Eastern and Western Europe.
2. In the lack of provision for a necessary increase in Europe's industrial capacity.
3. In the "cold war drive" to rebuild Germany at the expense of Western European allies.
4. In the "policy of cold war and the maintenance of the colonial system" that are "saddling Western Europe with an intolerable burden of armament expenditures."

He also concluded that the proposed North Atlantic Pact would undoubtedly "provoke heavy counter measures" and that in his opinion American policy was demanding "unconditional surrender" on the part of Russia as the price of peace.

This attack on American foreign policy in general and the Pact in particular continued in May before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee with Wallace again advancing as alternative the points proposed a year earlier in his open letter to Stalin. He continued to press for a Truman-Stalin meeting as the best possible method of initiating a new policy of friendship toward Russia. At the conclusion of his testimony, the following exchange occurred with Senator Brien McMahon (Democrat, Connecticut):

Senator McMahon: My summary of what you have really charged is that your country and my country is [sic] in a gigantic conspiracy to make aggressive war upon the Soviet Union.

Mr. Wallace: We are in very grave danger of getting into that position. With the adoption of the Atlantic Pact we would be in substantially that position. I do not use the word "conspiracy" because that implies something subterranean. The pact is open. We are whipping up another holy war against Russia.

Once again, as in 1948, this committee forum produced widespread publicity for the party's views, even though it gained no better a press, nor even any marked abatement of the smear tactics employed during the campaign. Thus C. P. Trusell of the New York Times wrote of the hearings: "After
several poses a photographer suggested that Mr. Wallace give the closed fist salute of the Soviets. Mr. Wallace obliged." While the Times two weeks later publicly, if inconspicuously, apologized for this misstatement of fact, other papers continued unimpeded in their presentations of the "fact" of Communist domination of Wallace's mind and party.

A second substantial similarity to the spring campaign of 1948 was the nation-wide "peace tour" of the Progressives in the spring of 1949. Focal point of this transcontinental trip was their vehement opposition to the proposed North Atlantic Treaty.

The pact is proposed in the name of peace. In fact it would lead to war. It is a flagrant violation of the charter of the United Nations. It would replace the United Nations' concept of one world with two irreconcilable blocs of nations.

The "peace tour" was the Progressives' method of taking this issue to the people of America. Planned along the basic lines of the 1948 campaign tours, this 1949 jaunt added an international touch with the presence of members of two European parliaments—British Laborite H. Lester Hutchinson and Italian leftwing Socialist Michelo Giua. Originally it had been planned that Pierre Cot from the French Chamber of Deputies and Konni Zilliacus, like Hutchinson a leftwing M.P., would also accompany the caravan. But the latter two found their entrance into the United States blocked by a ruling of both State and Justice departments which, for undisclosed reasons, labeled them "inadmissible."

The New York Times questioned the wisdom of this action editorially:

The good words [about Communist Russia] and the bad words [about the "Western Imperialists"] will be said, any-
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how, by individuals who are Americans in the legal sense, if not in other senses, and who cannot be excluded. No further harm could have been done if they had been said by Mr. Cot and Mr. Ziliacus.

Cot and Ziliacus were, quite naturally, enraged by this open affront to legally elected members of the duly constituted parliamentary bodies of powers friendly to the United States. The Briton, blaming the "outrage" on the "idiotic arrogance of the State Department," was quoted in the Times as saying:

The United States claims to be the savior of Western democracy and civilization but the State Department deprives the American people of the right to hear both sides and consider all the facts before making up its mind on matters that are life and death issues for all of us.

Despite the exclusion of these two guest speakers, Wallace embarked on his transcontinental peace tour with Hutchinson and Giua. During a three-week visit to some fifteen cities, the three presented their views to some 100,000 persons. Reverting to the six points of his year-earlier open letter to Stalin, the former Vice President offered his own plan as a workable alternative to the North Atlantic Pact with "its certainty of war." To Wallace there was no doubt that

As America becomes the military arsenal for the Atlantic military pact, more and more liberties and rights will be lost.

For every dollar spent for arms, for every dollar you lose in welfare, you lose its equivalent in human freedom.

Nobody gets the freedom, nobody gets the welfare and the arms are a complete and utter waste.

The reactionaries know that if the Administration wants
an armed pact and an arms economy, it must demand the right to control labor, the right to interfere with labor’s rights.

Under the cloak of an anti-Communist crusade, it is the right that threatens our institutions and our most precious liberties.

And just as these words of Wallace had a familiar ring to them, so the techniques employed in the course of the “peace tour” were similar to many utilized in 1948. As was the case a year earlier, this 1949 caravan was financed by the paid admission-voluntary contribution method. However, with audiences substantially smaller than during the presidential year, their contributions were also markedly less. Whereas a year earlier the pitch had usually opened with a call for $1,000 contributions and had generally secured several of that size, this year the starting point was a more modest $100, with relatively few donors at that level. Nevertheless, gross receipts from the fifteen-day tour totaled more than $150,000, with an additional $25,000 realized from a $50-a-plate dinner in New York and a $25-per-plate affair in Newark.

And once again the same general staging technique was utilized—preliminary speakers to “warm up” the audience; Pitchman Gailmor again on hand to extract every possible dollar; then the offstage voice, the darkened hall; and finally, the spotlighted appearance of Henry A. Wallace. While it was Wallace’s nominal task to introduce his foreign guests, his address actually remained the feature presentation of the series of rallies, just as it had been a year earlier. However, one marked difference stood out in comparison with the 1948 mass meetings—the general composition of the Wallace audiences. Whereas a year earlier large numbers of teenagers had been attracted by the third party’s presidential candidate, this year they were conspicuously missing. While numbers of
young people still attended, the average audience age had shifted upwards considerably.

And once again in 1949 the forces of intolerance were abroad in the land. Dissent from the Truman-Vandenberg bipartisan foreign policy was more than ever before evidence of "un-American" activity. Criticism was to be suppressed at all costs. Not only the South, but also the North responded to increasing violations of the Bill of Rights. In one of the more famous cases, a Syracuse University student, Irving Feiner, member of the Young Progressives, stood convicted of disorderly conduct for having refused to heed a police officer's request to cease his street corner attack on President Truman as a "bum" and the city's mayor as a "champagne-sipping bum."

His conviction and jail sentence were upheld through the courts of the state and ultimately by the Supreme Court, notwithstanding a bitter and eloquent dissent by Associate Justice Hugo Black, joined by his colleagues William O. Douglas and Sherman Minton. "Even a partial abandonment . . . marks a dark day for civil liberties in our nation," said Black (340 U.S. 315).

... this conviction makes a mockery of the free speech guarantees of the First and Fourteenth Amendments. The end result . . . is to approve a simple and readily available technique by which cities and states can with impunity subject all speeches, political or otherwise, to the supervision and censorship of the local police . . .

... today's holding means that as a practical matter minority speakers can be silenced in any city. Hereafter . . . the policeman's club can take heavy toll of a current administration's public critics. Criticism of public officials will be too dangerous for all but the most courageous . . . .
But while the Wallace "peace tour" influenced few minds not already favorable, it did serve as a measure for continuing that party organization still operative across the nation. Despite the dismal showing at the polls and the substantial defections of the post-election period, this spring tour indicated that it would be a grave mistake to count the Wallace Progressive Party out as long as American foreign policy remained in dispute, with "peace" a crucial issue. Moreover, with an economic recession beginning, and unemployment already becoming a serious problem in the "indicator" areas of New England and upstate New York, it seemed as though the Wallace crusade might be about to acquire new converts from a source denied it by 1948's prosperity—the ranks of the domestically discontented.

But while the testimony and tours offered by the Wallace Progressive Party in the spring of 1949 closely paralleled their preconvention campaign of 1948, happenings within the party fold were soon to blot out those rather feeble rays of hope. First, came another crushing repudiation at the polls—in New York's Twentieth (Manhattan) Congressional District where the seat long occupied by the late Representative Sol Bloom was at stake in a special election. A year earlier the American Labor Party candidate had scored a sweeping victory in a Bronx by-election, thus lending considerable support to party morale. During this year and this district, however, the special election proved a damaging blow to party hopes of resurgence. Nor could Progressive spokesmen ascribe the defeat to "ganging up" by the other three parties involved (Democrats, Republicans, and Liberals), as had been the case in several fall contests in the metropolitan area. In a four-cornered race, a third-party candidate was the victor, but he was the candidate of the Liberal and Four Freedoms parties—Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr. The ALP nominee, Dr.
Annette T. Rubinstein, ran a sorry last, garnering only 6.6 per cent of the total vote.\(^1\) And while the special conditions that had prevailed to aid the Isaacson Bronx victory a year earlier were not repeated in this predominantly Irish section, still the returns were disappointing. For the third party had conducted a vigorous campaign, once more bringing in its name speakers, Henry A. Wallace and Vito Marcantonio, to assist the local candidates.

Disheartening as this defeat was, its damage to party hopes was slight compared with that rendered by the growing internal rift that appeared as the summer of 1949 wore on. The first indications that all was not well within the ranks of the third party’s remaining faithful had come earlier in the year with the coolness reported in New York’s ALP between Representative Vito Marcantonio, state chairman, and Eugene P. Connolly, New York County chairman. Warren Moscow reported in the *New York Times* that Connolly was spokesman for a faction opposing the “continued open participation of Communists on the ground that the future of the ALP lies with the future of the national Progressive Party and that the Communist bridge hurt the Wallace candidacy immeasurably in the last national election.” Other rumors indicated that O. John Rogge, militant leftwing non-Communist and unsuccessful ALP contender for the office of surrogate in 1948 was up in arms following reports of “vote trading” in a Harlem area that had aided the Marcantonio candidacy at his expense.

\(^1\) Results in the Twentieth District election, May 17, 1949, as published in the *New York Times*, May 18, 1949, were: Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr. (Four Freedoms–Liberal), 41,146, 50.9 per cent; Benjamin H. Shalleck (Tammany Democrat), 24,352, 30.1 per cent; William H. McIntyre (Republican), 10,026, 12.4 per cent; Annette T. Rubinstein (American Labor Party), 5,348, 6.6 per cent. A year earlier, Eugene P. Connolly, the American Labor Party candidate, had received 15,727 votes—12.6 per cent of the total cast in the Twentieth.
Nor was the Connolly-Marcantonio split long in reaching the surface. With a municipal election pending, and Marcantonio ready to run for Mayor, Connolly refused to accept the state chairman’s designee for the post of Borough President of Manhattan. Instead he declared his own candidacy for the office, thus forcing the ALP into a primary battle. With hopes of victory in the fall election already slim, it was clear that the real issue at stake was future control of the Labor Party organization, with New York County the immediate target. A bitter battle ensued. When the smoke had cleared away following the September primary, it was found that the Marcantonio slate had triumphed by an overwhelming 5 to 1 margin. The defeat at the polls of the moderate Connolly faction meant that Vito Marcantonio had now acquired virtually unchallenged control of the entire New York State branch of the third party.

This achievement was closely followed by rumors of an impending Wallace-Marcantonio split. The Congressman had been urging the former presidential candidate to enter the special New York State senatorial election occasioned for November, 1949 by the resignation of old line New Deal Senator Robert F. Wagner. It was expected that Wallace, on the basis of his 1948 Empire State showing, would run a strong race, thus lending support to Marcantonio’s mayoralty candidacy. When Wallace declined repeated urgings that he enter the lists, it seemed that he might be on the verge of a break with the party organization in New York.

These rumors were only partially controverted by a speech of the former Vice President at Madison Square Garden on the third anniversary of his 1946 address in the same arena that had marked the initiation of the “fight for peace.” In his remarks Wallace indicated an increasingly critical attitude toward the Soviet Union, noting pointedly that the “welfare state” cannot be achieved by “police state methods.” Moreover he warned, “... if anyone should try to use
the Progressive Party for Communist Party purposes, be
would be doing the cause of peace a distinct disservice." Nevertheless, he promised his full support for Marcantonio in
the mayoralty race.

The following night at a dinner in Wallace's honor, the
Congressman announced that there would be no state ticket
because:

> We deem it important to win the municipal election . . . such a victory can be achieved only by following a policy of concentration which was adopted by the National Committee of the Progressive Party. For the ALP to nominate [state candidates] would detract from the policy of concentration and would only diffuse our strength from the important major objective of winning in the municipal campaign. [Italics supplied.]

With this bow in the direction of the national party, it appeared that the Wallace-Marcantonio rift had been either originally exaggerated or presently healed. This view was seemingly substantiated by a two-day meeting of the National Committee in Cleveland at which "Marc" was named head of a campaign committee to plan for the 1950 congressional races. At the same time Wallace's views were embodied in a six-point plan to combat what the Progressives termed a "growing economic crisis."

Nevertheless this surface appearance of unity was not heightened by the single speech during the course of the New York mayoralty campaign which the former Vice President delivered in behalf of ALP candidate Marcantonio. While Wallace declared that "Marc" had advanced the cause of peace and understanding and disarmament in a "war-mad world" and bore the Progressive banner in this race, still the fact that Wallace spoke only once in the course of the campaign seemed significant.
However, it was only after the November election in which Marcantonio, while running well for a minor-party candidate, was defeated (receiving 356,423, or 13.8 per cent as against Wallace's 423,424, 15.2 per cent in 1948) that a marked coolness between Wallace and leftwing officials of the party he had founded became quite apparent. Informed observers including Helen Fuller of *New Republic* predicted a gradual parting of the ways that would put an end to the party in less than a year.

It was, however, nearly a year before Wallace finally divulged some of the reasons for his growing dissatisfaction during the summer and fall of 1949. First, he said, reports reaching him throughout 1949 from Communist-dominated Czechoslovakia had gradually convinced him that political cooperation with the Communists was impossible. Second, he had become increasingly aware that, with few exceptions, it was only the extreme leftists who had remained fully active in the Progressive Party following the 1948 election. Third, he deplored the continuing and even increasing use by these leftwing groups of tactics that tended to drive away the very groups on whose support Wallace felt a lasting party must be constructed.

The Peekskill incidents involving Paul Robeson were typical of the sort of activity which, in his view, served to permanently alienate large segments of "Protestant middle class America" which he had hoped to attract to his Progressive Party. These Peekskill events began in August, 1949 when a group of veterans' organizations in that Hudson Valley city undertook to prevent a scheduled open-air concert by Negro baritone Paul Robeson for the benefit of the Civil Rights Congress (a group listed as "subversive" by the Department of Justice). When the veterans "paraded" in mass formation back and forth in front of the park entrance to prevent the Robeson audience from entering or leaving, a
riot occurred—cars were overturned and several people injured. The concert was called off.

In the words of Milton Flynt, commander of Peekskill Post 274 of the American Legion, as quoted in the *New York Times*:

Our objective was to prevent the Paul Robeson concert and I think our objective was reached. Anything that happened after the organized demonstration was dispersed was entirely up to the individual citizens and should not be blamed on the patriotic organizations.

This rather warped view of the proper function of a patriotic organization was almost universally assailed in the days after the incident—both by national leaders of the veterans’ groups involved and by citizens interested in protecting the rights of all—even the most detested—to a full and peaceful expression of their views.

As the *New York Times* commented editorially:

Sympathy for Paul Robeson and his followers, after their interrupted concert near Peekskill last Sunday was not increased by their threat to mobilize “20,000 strong” this Sunday and their protest against a permit for the anti-Communist veterans to stage another parade. But sympathy or lack of sympathy has nothing to do with the case. Mr. Robeson has a right to assemble his followers peaceably, sing and, if he wants, make a speech . . .

. . . The truth is, of course, that civil rights are rarely threatened except when those who claim them hold views “hateful” to the majority.

Not content with similar verdicts indicating wide disapproval of the veterans’ actions, Robeson, supported by much
of the left wing of the New York City ALP, vowed that the concert would be held—that he would be back the following Sunday with his own protection. The Peekskill veterans’ groups replied in kind—that they, too, would be back. With the stage seemingly set for a battle royal, Governor Thomas E. Dewey ordered all available state police to the scene. Local police officers from the near-by communities were deputized into a total force of nearly one thousand.

This mobilization proved adequate to keep the groups apart as some 15,000 persons—Robeson-ites, Communists, ALP members, Wallace-ites, and liberals merely interested in personally protesting against suppression of free speech—filed into place. The concert proceeded with only a few minor disturbances. Once the performance ended, however, the police force proved insufficient to patrol the roads leading from the grounds. Mass stoning began as the audience departed, bus and auto windows were shattered, and a total of 145 persons (according to impartial reports) were injured, several seriously.

Widespread protests by such groups as the American Civil Liberties Union against the local officials’ handling of both policing and prosecution led to an eventual order for a grand jury probe by Governor Dewey. The report filed by a Westchester County “blue ribbon” group the following year concerned itself primarily with what it felt was a carefully planned Communist use of Westchester as a proving ground for mass mobilization tactics. Moreover it attacked the ACLU for an earlier report in which this nonpartisan body had ascribed the riot to local anti-Negro and anti-Semitic sentiment as well as to anti-Communist animosity, and in which it had charged that local and county police “permitted the assault upon the Robeson supporters.” More objective inquiry indicated a clear-cut violation of civil liberties on the first occasion by the veterans’ groups alone, but a substantial contribution to the second riot by the attitude and conduct
of the Robeson-ites. Despite the complete legality of their assemblage, their "we dare you" approach, when coupled to the "you're on" response of the veterans had led to the second bloody affray.

While Wallace publicly deplored violence of the sort exhibited here, resulting in restrictions of freedom of speech and assembly, he later privately criticized the intemperate speeches and actions on the part of his more extreme followers calculated to hurl a virtual challenge to interference and violence. He was particularly critical of threats such as that voiced by Robeson that his group would, if denied adequate police protection, take the law into its own hands.

At the same time the Peekskill violence was erupting in New York, there was evidence elsewhere of a growing rift between the moderates and the extreme leftists of the Progressive Party. In New Jersey, state party leader and gubernatorial candidate James Imbrie flatly refused to accept the proffered support of the New Jersey Communist Party in his campaign. In Washington, Senator Glen H. Taylor's complete return to the Democratic Party was heralded by a White House conference with President Truman. Indicating that his views on administration foreign policy had not changed, the Senator commented, according to the New York Times:

I wish I could go along with the President [on foreign as well as on domestic policy]. It would be much more pleasant. I can't get it out of my head that we can't get along with the Russians and make agreements. The President believes in a tough foreign policy.

Coupled with these various incidents of 1949, there were other indications early in 1950 that Henry A. Wallace was on the verge of a complete break with his Progressive Party. In both speeches and committee testimony it seemed that Wallace was adopting a position that was primarily indi-
vidualistic, rather than reflective of a party stand. Thus, on the very day that a party program looking forward to the 1950 elections was being issued from the National Committee in the name of Secretary C. B. Baldwin (previous reports had been in Wallace’s name), the erstwhile presidential nominee was delivering an address to a church group in which, completely ignoring party affairs, he dealt with the much broader over-all problem of the need for an understanding between communism on the one hand, and capitalism and Christianity on the other.

Shortly thereafter the former Vice President voluntarily appeared before the House Committee on un-American Activities to defend his personal position and reputation against charges hurled that he had been responsible for wartime shipments of uranium to Russia. Regardless of his justification and motivation in this matter, it was rather unique for the third-party spokesman to be appearing in such a role. For this marked the first time since the inception of the “fight for peace” that Wallace had utilized congressional testimony as a method of personal defense against the unrelenting attacks on him rather than as a national forum for his party’s views.

In the face of these internal difficulties a second national convention was called to Chicago in February, 1950 by the National Committee of the Progressive Party to adopt a comprehensive program and a plan of action for the coming fall congressional elections. Most observers, however, expected that the assemblage would develop into a final showdown between the leftwing and the remaining rightwing elements in the party, with Wallace’s continued membership and leadership at stake.

Some 1,200 delegates from thirty-five states gathered February 24 in the drafty expanse of Lakeland Auditorium. The anticipated duel began at once as Wallace opened proceed-
ings with an address reported by W. H. Lawrence of the New York Times as an “attempt to remove the Communist label from the Progressive Party.” He proceeded to assail “with equal fervor” the foreign policies of both the United States and the Soviet Union, which he claimed, “stand out as the big brutes of the world.”

Each in its own eyes rests on high moral principles—but each in the eyes of other nations is guided by force and force alone.

Indicating that he was not urging a purge of party ranks “because of past or present labels,” Wallace said flatly that the third party couldn’t tolerate “organized factions or groups” within its ranks, and that Communists in the party couldn’t be permitted to place first emphasis on any allegiance to Moscow. We must convince the people, said the former Vice President, that

We are fighting for peace, not because any foreign power wants us to fight for peace, but because we understand the deep needs of the American people and the world.

Our principles are vastly different from those of the Communist Party. We do not believe in the one-party system of government for the United States. Our philosophy is not based upon the principles of Marxism or Leninism. Our program is based upon reform by constitutional and democratic processes. We believe in progressive capitalism not socialism.

The Progressive Party stands for civil liberties for all. Civil liberties, like peace, are indivisible. We believe in civil liberties in Eastern Europe, but we recognize that except in the case of Czechoslovakia there has been no democratic tradition on which to build.

The Communists have their party; we have ours. We agree with the Communists that peace with Russia is
possible—but that doesn’t make us Communists. We agree with the Democrats and Republicans that capitalism can be made to work—but that doesn’t make us Democrats or Republicans.

Offering a ten-point program designed to keep America from “falling into monopoly fascism, war and communism,” the former presidential candidate called upon the party to abandon its present “narrow range of support” and to become “a new broader forward-looking party.” Having thus placed the issue squarely before the assembled delegates, Wallace departed for Des Moines, Iowa, to await the verdict of the convention in its remaining sessions.

The following day a protracted floor fight ensued over the proposed Wallace planks on the Soviet. The battle between left- and rightwing groups ended only when it was announced that Representative Vito Marcantonio was in agreement with Wallace on the issue. With the left wing thus brought into line, the two camps were apparently reconciled, and the following statement was written into the 1950 Progressive platform:

The Progressive Party recognizes that while the United States and the Soviet Union have both made mistakes in foreign policy, these two great countries can rise above their respective shortcomings, to work together fruitfully for international peace and cooperation.

We are not apologists for Russia, but in so saying, we want it understood that our supreme objective is one world at peace, and to that end it is essential that an understanding be reached between the United States and the Soviet Union.

This language seemed to temper considerably the more vigorous tone employed by Wallace in his address. Nevertheless, he indicated from Des Moines that the platform was
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"generally satisfactory" to him and substantially in accord with his demands.

In addition to these foreign policy pledges, the Progressives' 1950 platform reiterated the domestic planks adopted at the 1948 convention. As for the strategy to be employed in the fall campaign, the party indicated that it would concentrate "in selected areas where the candidates of the old parties offer the voters no real choice and where a victory or balance-of-power vote for our candidates will help unite and strengthen the Progressive forces."

By comparison with the first national convention at Philadelphia in the summer of 1948, this Chicago assemblage in mid-winter 1950 clearly indicated the state to which the party's fortunes had been reduced in the intervening two years. Instead of some three thousand exuberant singing delegates from forty-seven states, there were less than half that number, representing thirty-five states, at Chicago. Instead of the buoyant enthusiasm of two years earlier, hanging over their heads was a pall produced by their failures and by the basic disagreement in their ranks. Whereas in 1948 non-Communists and Communists alike had seemed in basic agreement on most major points of policy, this time evidences of a growing rift were termed an "uneasy truce" between right and left; this was to later prove a short-lived attempt at final reconciliation.

While labor representation at Philadelphia had been limited to the leftwing CIO unions, at Chicago it had dwindled to the vanishing point. Gone from the chair was Albert J. Fitzgerald, United Electrical Workers' president who had served as permanent chairman at Philadelphia. And gone from the floor were the members of his once third largest CIO union. For the UE itself had been torn asunder in the intervening period by the CIO's "purge" of leftwing unions and leaders who had violated national policy to support Henry A. Wallace in 1948.

But, while this second national convention of the Progres-
sive Party showed clearly the stresses and strains that had developed, it also indicated that there was a still substantial structure available for future campaigns. After all, this was not a presidential year, a national party in an off-year was a novelty on the American political scene, and the actual election date was some nine months in the future. Consequently it was hardly to be expected that interest would be at the same fever pitch earlier reached in Philadelphia. Time alone would determine whether this was the first step in the party’s fight back, or merely another stage in a gradual decline.

Despite the appearance of unity attained at Chicago, events during the early part of 1950 indicated a continuing coolness between Henry A. Wallace and the party he had founded. While the former Vice President continued to call for a Truman-Stalin meeting in the interests of world peace, and while he continued to press for such measures as an International Development Corporation to invest in the “basic economy of the underdeveloped and over-crowded areas of the world for the specific purpose of increasing world output, stimulating world trade, and satisfying human need,” his addresses were becoming more and more expressions of individual position rather than party pronouncements.

In fact, portions of one radio address indicated a virtual abandonment of the party organization, as Wallace called upon the American people to form “Progressive Capitalism clubs . . . for the purpose of saving capitalism in the United States by making it serve the people rather than exploit them.” Moreover, while the third party once again resorted to congressional committee testimony for publicity purposes as it had in 1948 and 1949, it no longer presented the former Vice President as its spokesman. Hearings of the House Committee on un-American Activities considering the proposed Wood
and Nixon bills (whose features were later embodied in the McCarran Act) saw Progressive Party opposition led by Professor Thomas I. Emerson of the Yale Law School.

Meanwhile, from New York came word that Wallace had once again declined to become an ALP nominee in a state contest—this time for the governorship of the Empire State—but that nevertheless the party was planning to run a gubernatorial candidate to maintain its legal status. Thus, as late as June, 1950, it seemed that there was little prospect of a clean break between Wallace and his Progressive Party. Rather it seemed that their association would weaken gradually through the course of time, with no clear point of separation.

All this changed overnight with the invasion of the Republic of (South) Korea by North Korean Communist troops and the decision of President Truman, quickly backed by the U.N.’s Russian-less Security Council, to oppose the aggression with armed force. The National Committee of the Progressive Party met in New York to consider its policy toward the situation. Over Wallace’s objections, the Committee reached the decision to press for the admission of Red China to the United Nations and the return of the Soviet Union to the Security Council as prerequisites for ending the conflict. Their conclusion was:

With the effectiveness of the United Nations restored through the admission of the government of China and the consequent return of the Soviet Union to the council table, the Security Council will be in a position to take measures to preserve the peace.

Meanwhile, Wallace had been in touch with Secretary General Trygve Lie of the United Nations and had been given access to U.N. reports coming in from the thirty-eighth parallel. There was no longer any doubt in his mind as to the nature of the conflict or Soviet intentions. When the Commit-
tee refused to modify its statement in line with his views, the former presidential candidate refused to go along, countering with a public statement of position.

I want to make it clear that when Russia, the United States and the United Nations appeal to force, I am on the side of the United States and the United Nations. Undoubtedly the Russians could have prevented the attack by the North Koreans and undoubtedly they could stop the attack any time they wish.

I hold no brief for the past actions of either the United States or Russia but when my country is at war and the United Nations sanctions that war, I am on the side of my country and the United Nations.

But while declaring his support of the American–United Nations position, the former Vice President at the same time warned:

The United States will fight a losing battle in Asia as long as she stands behind feudal regimes based on exorbitant charges of land lords and money lords. Russia is using a mightier power than the atom bomb as long as she helps the people to get out from under their ancient aggressors. But we in the United States have a still mightier power if we will only use it for the people. I refer to our modern technology and our huge reserves of capital, when and if applied to solving the problems of poverty and hunger.

For the first time in its brief history the Progressive Party was faced with a substantive difference over policy. For the first time it became possible to single out those third-party members willing to follow the Russian-inspired decision for war and against the United Nations rather than continue to
back the Wallace program for peace and support of the United Nations. For the first time since the overnight reversal of the Communist Party line with the 1941 German invasion of Russia, it became possible to separate American Communists and pro-Communists from non-Communist dissenters and anti-war elements on a definite policy basis.

Wallace indicated that he would wait for rank-and-file support of his position to develop within party ranks. Should this fail to materialize, thus leaving the National Committee decision as the official policy of the Progressive Party, he would resign as the party’s leader. Opposing camps were quick to respond. The Communist Party press turned on the man who had been its darling since September 15, 1946, and assailed him in no uncertain terms. Editorialized the Daily Worker:

The thinking and policies which dragged Wallace into the position supporting an aggressive colonial war were indicated when he attacked the Communists some time ago and sought to equate Soviet and Wall Street policies.

When Stalin accepted Wallace’s bid for negotiations with the United States, Wallace was denounced by the Wall Street buccaneers and the cold warriors of Washington for his pains. Now Wallace has joined these same forces who vilified and traduced him throughout the period of the cold war.

On the other hand, non-Communist leaders of the Progressive Party rallied to Wallace’s support. Both O. John Rogge and James Waterman Wise of New York announced their agreement with his stand as did James Stewart Martin and Dr. John E. T. Camper in Maryland. Professor Thomas I. Emerson of Connecticut, who had cast one of the two pro-Wallace votes in the National Committee, announced that he was in wholehearted agreement with the former Vice President on Korea, even though he was unable to join him
in support of a "status quo" neutralization of Formosa by American naval forces.

In the course of the following weeks, the mail reaching Wallace indicated a substantial majority of the party rank and file in favor of the position he had adopted and in opposition to the National Committee. Despite this, most of the state party committees endorsed the national party stand. In Connecticut a two-day convention of one hundred delegates adopted a resolution condemning Wallace for his support of the United Nations action. In Maryland, announcement of a similar state party stand came from executive secretary Harold Buchman, rather than from chairman Camper or vice chairman Martin. Buchman was quoted in the Baltimore Sun as saying of Wallace:

I feel he made a valuable contribution to the subject of peace [before his stand on the Korean crisis].

I regret his failure to agree with the resolution which is actually a compromise of all the divergent positions in the Progressive Party.

I hope the course of events will convince him of the correctness of the stand of the majority.

In New York, the third party's most important state organization, now firmly in the hands of Representative Vito Marc-antonio, censured Wallace. But signs of dissension were clear as former Representative Leo Isaacson announced that he would accept the ALP gubernatorial nomination tendered him only if he would be assured of Wallace's support. On the West Coast, 150 delegates to an Independent Progressive Party state convention in Sacramento tried to straddle the issue, adopting what the New York Times called a "conspicuously guarded stand."

But this was not an issue that could be straddled. The lines were drawn. Convinced that the still active party officials
represented a viewpoint originating in the Kremlin rather than among the party's followers, Henry A. Wallace decided now on the final break. As he remarked later, he could see that many of his associates placed Moscow ahead of the United Nations, and that others whom he felt were clearly non-Communist had been in association with the "party-liners" so long they seemed to have soaked up similar views.

In a two-paragraph note to party secretary C. B. Baldwin, so long his personal associate, Wallace revealed his decision.

In view of the actions recently taken by the national committee of the Progressive Party and the various state committees, I am convinced I can more effectively serve the cause of peace by resigning from the national committee and the executive committee of the Progressive Party.

You will, therefore, take this letter as my formal resignation from the party.

In a later message, prepared for Pathé Newsreel, Wallace expanded somewhat on this brief note.

I resigned from the Progressive Party because I felt the party should support the United States and the United Nations in the Korean war. My mail convinces me that fully half of the rank and file of the party is with me but I also know that the top leadership is almost 100 per cent against me. Therefore I could no longer serve the cause of peace through the Progressive Party. It had become clear to me that victory in Korea for the United States and the United Nations was the absolutely essential first step on the road to peace. The second step which in the long run is far more important is planning both while we fight and after we win to gain the friendship of the people of Asia. Only through Asiatic friendship and cooperation can we prevent successful Russian aggression. The common man is on the march
all over the world. It is our job to help that march to expand and enrich human values, not to destroy them. In action this means a program of economic help to a united Korea by the UN after the war stops. We can and must do a better job than Russia in helping the common man to help himself all over the world. This is the only possible road to safety for the United States, the United Nations, for your children and my children. I still hope Russia will cooperate with us through the United Nations to help the march of the common man to become constructive not destructive.

But the first brief notice had served as death warrant for the party whose cause he had served ever since he had announced its formation on December 29, 1947. For without the man around whom the "fight for peace" had centered, around whose views workers of both right and left wings had been hitherto able to rally, the Progressive Party was obviously doomed.

Its already depleted ranks were immediately subjected to a mass exodus that left them bare of virtually all except the disciplined "party-liners." From all across the nation, those non-Communist liberals still in the party began announcing their resignations. Professor Thomas I. Emerson had already, on August 3, taken his departure. With the Wallace announcement, countless others—Martin and Camper in Maryland, Corliss Lamont in New York, and practically all the non-Communist name figures—followed suit. Admitted former Communist Lee Pressman, accused by the press in 1948 of leading the "left-wing, pro-Communist policies" of the party, announced that he was resigning from the ALP because its policies now reflected those of the Communist Party. The consensus of opinion was that the party had been so weakened by the constant defections ever since 1948 that it no longer possessed an organization whose control was worth
contesting. The Communists, pro-Communists, and other "party-liners" who remained in the no-longer-Wallace Progressive Party were left to pluck its bones at will.

Only in New York, where the ALP still possessed a well-grounded firmly established ward and precinct organization, was there disagreement with this view. O. John Rogge, who had previously taken such a firm stand in support of Wallace's policy position, announced that he thought Wallace was making an error in leaving rather than pressing for the adoption of his views within the party. Rogge was confident that with the former presidential candidate as a rallying point for the weakened forces of the right it would still be possible to take over from the extreme leftists. Former Representative Leo Isaacson indicated that he, too, while agreeing with the Wallace policy views, would not resign from the party, but would continue to press from within for modification of its attitude.

Those who supported this Rogge-Isaacson position soon found just how hopeless was their task. At a sparsely-attended National Committee meeting the following month in Chicago, Rogge saw his call for a special national convention to review the party's position on foreign policy defeated by a decisive 41 to 2 vote.

It thus became evident that the scattered remains of the third-party venture were at last in the hands of the extreme leftists. On its deathbed the organization had finally succumbed to their almost complete control; it had been "narrowed" in accordance with their earlier hopes to the point where they were clearly supreme. But theirs was the control and the supremacy of a party that no longer boasted Henry A. Wallace, former Vice President of the United States, as its leader; of a party that no longer could claim spiritual affinity with American Progressives of the past. With Wallace gone, with the native Progressive elements gone, the Wallace
Progressive Party had faded from the American political scene, leaving behind only a crimson shadow.

Where once it had stood proudly on the ballots of forty-five states, now only scattered remnants, either captive of or clearly addicted to a Communist Party line (despite an occasional remaining non-Communist leader) were visible. Such was the case in California, in Connecticut, in Maryland, and in a few other states. Elsewhere the third party had vanished, leaving hardly a trace. Only in New York where the American Labor Party had preceded the Wallace Progressive Party by some eleven years were there indications that the right-wing elements still fought on within the party—challenging the increasing one-man control of Vito Marcantonio and his fellows of the farthest left.

And even in the Empire State, the “triumph” of the extreme leftists was to prove both hollow and short-lived. Shorn of the support of Henry Wallace and many of the moderates, the party’s 1950 gubernatorial candidate, John T. McManus, received only a little more than 200,000 votes, in contrast to the more than half a million received by Wallace two years earlier. And in this same election, the “unbeatable” Marcantonio came to the end of the congressional trail in his own Eighteenth District, falling before a coalition candidate, James G. Donovan, backed by Democrats, Republicans, and Liberals.

Within half a dozen years both Marcantonio and the state party he had helped found would be dead—but not before he too had ultimately come to the parting of the ways with the Communists in the party’s ranks. In 1949 with “Marc” as its mayoralty candidate, and Wallace still in the fold, the ALP had polled more than 350,000 in New York City. Four years later with Clifford T. McAvoy as candidate for the same post, it could do no better than 54,372. A day later, “Marc” resigned as state chairman, blasting the Communists for their
support of Mayor Robert Wagner instead of the ALP nominee, and prophesying:

The ALP will become more and more a pressure group with the issue unresolved. It will become more and more a mimeograph machine rather than a political party. This role is inescapable, it is inherent in the present house divided condition of our party.

The handwriting was clearly on the wall, and the 1954 gubernatorial campaign wrote "finis" to the history of the American Labor Party as a legal political entity in the state. Its candidate, once again John T. McManus, this time received only 46,886 votes—not up to the legal minimum of 50,000 for retention of the party name and place on the ballot. But Vito Marcantonio had not survived to see his party succumb, for in August, at the age of fifty-one, he had passed away.

Interment of the ALP was delayed nearly two years, but in October, 1956, state chairman Peter J. Hawley announced its final dissolution—ascribing its decline to the cold war and to the loss of labor support. Significantly, however, the Communist Party in the United States had decided a month earlier on a new "party line"—to renew its independent fight on the grounds that it had previously placed "too much reliance" on the Progressive Party venture.

In the meantime there had been little to show nationally for third-party efforts once 1950 had raised the uncompromisable policy barrier between the extreme leftists and the much larger majority of party moderates. The attempt to wage a second presidential campaign in 1952 went almost unnoticed. From the ranks of California's Independent Progressive Party came Vincent William Hallinan, San Francisco lawyer, to carry on the tattered, shrinking, now crimson-hued banner. A thirty-state campaign tour with running mate Mrs. Char-
lotta Bass, was rewarded with little more than fringe votes—140,023 all across the nation, with nearly half concentrated in the Empire State. So vanished the last remnants of Wallace’s crusaders. Like the ALP in New York, the national party, bereft of the dominant figure of Henry A. Wallace, died not with the bang of Korea, but with a fading whimper at America’s polling places.

The prophetic words of Fiorello H. La Guardia once more resounded in the minds of those who watched the final rites:

The new progressive movement, when it comes, will come from the Main Street of thousands of Prairie Junctions, and not from Union Square in Manhattan.