CHAPTER 4

“The Fight for Peace”—Spring Campaign

Unlike the usual preconvention campaigns of major parties with their routinized minuet patterns, the Progressives’ spring campaign was not devoted to formalized advances and retreats of hopefuls with their mincing steps toward the prize they must seemingly not covet. Nor was it a time of maneuvering over issues for the fall campaign—a time in which divisions of disputing factions might be aired, then buried in anticipation of the compromises necessary for a party platform.

For the Progressives, such matters had already been clearly defined as they rallied to their self-declared presidential candidate with his openly avowed platform planks. Instead, their problems were an atypical lot—a series of national tours by candidates already decided upon; attempts to relate incidents, not always of their own making, to their newly adopted campaign slogan, “Peace, Freedom and Abundance”; as well as the multitudinous tasks of building and financing a new party, of obtaining for it a place on the ballots of the forty-eight states. The story of their “fight for peace” became a story of alternate hope and disappointment, coupled with an engulfing tide of events far beyond their control—or even their comprehension at the time.
The first blows came in New York State, where the American Labor Party—its decision to support the Wallace candidacy imminent—was faced with the withdrawal of its largest union—the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America. Following closely upon this, the State Executive Board of the Congress of Industrial Organizations met to consider its relations to the third party and by a three to two margin called upon all CIO unions to quit the American Labor Party once it endorsed the Wallace candidacy. Calling the movement a “piece of political adventurism which can lead to nothing but disastrous consequences to all the American people,” the State Board in its action clearly forecast the coming decision of the National Board. And the vote, closely following the existing left-right cleavage within CIO ranks, indicated that all the major national unions except the United Electrical Workers were lined up in opposition to Wallace.

Some two months later, in March, the New York State Board took action by an even more decisive two to one margin to create a state-wide Political Action Committee to oppose both the American Labor Party and the Greater New York Council of the CIO, which was favorable to the Wallace drive. Thus the division in state CIO ranks was solidified, and Wallace’s organizational support neutralized.

But what of the national scene? While substantial backing from the American Federation of Labor had never been indicated, and the course of the CIO’s Political Action Committee had veered away sharply before the December decision, there had remained hopes of strong organized support from the so-called leftwing unions. Even after the CIO’s National Board, in late January by a vote of thirty-three to eleven, had repudiated the third-party movement as inimical to the best interests of labor, several dissenting union heads had seemed determined to invoke the “autonomous rights” of their unions and endorse the Wallace candidacy. It was generally anticipated that the ten unions represented on the board minority
would bring their organizations formally under the banners of the New Party.¹

Now, however, strong pressure was brought to bear on these leftwing leaders—the pressure of Phillip Murray, Jack Kroll, Walter Reuther, and others—to disavow the Wallace candidacy. CIO President Murray, while acknowledging the legal correctness of their position on autonomy, reminded them that they had a “moral obligation to back the executive board’s . . . decision.” Informed of this, Harry Bridges, leader of the International Longshoremen’s Union and CIO regional director for Northern California, foresaw the future accurately: “I think that there will be punitive measures attempted and forms of compulsion resorted to that will be resisted by our union.” Within a few weeks, he found himself forced to relinquish his post as regional director. His union joined the resistance.

Moreover, the attempt of the New York Industrial Council and of some California Political Action Committee groups to remain neutral by neither endorsing nor condemning a third party soon became the subject of a crackdown by the parent CIO Political Action Committee. Warned director Jack Kroll, “There can be no neutrality in fighting the idea of a third party.” He went on to threaten that unless the national policy of repudiating the Wallace candidacy were followed, steps would be taken to remove or discipline the officers involved.

Nor were these the only methods of persuasion employed

¹The ten unions represented in the vote were: United Electrical Workers (2 votes); United Office and Professional Workers; International Longshoremen’s and Warehousemen’s Union; Food, Tobacco and Agricultural Workers; United Furniture Workers; Marine Cooks and Stewards; Fur and Leather Workers; United Farm Equipment and Metal Workers; Transport Workers Union; and National Maritime Union (1 vote for, 1 against the third party). Two unions—the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers and United Public Workers—abstained from voting. See the New York Times, January 23, 1948.
to prevent labor endorsement of the Progressive Party. Reports were soon circulating that the United Auto Workers, under the energetic Walter Reuther, was planning a campaign to take over locals and members of some of the leftist unions. The United Electrical Workers, the United Farm Equipment and Metal Workers, the Transport Workers Union, and the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers were the announced targets. Despite the fact that CIO President Murray sent a letter to Reuther reminding him that the “CIO never condones ‘raiding,’ ” there was a strong threat of just such action. Nor did the threat appear an idle one, as a Hartford, Connecticut, local of the United Electrical Workers was actually won over to the United Auto Workers.

In the face of these tactics, some leaders were unable to secure the Wallace endorsements expected from their own unions. For example, even though Albert Fitzgerald and Julius Emspak of the United Electrical Workers withdrew their union from the Political Action Committee to form an independent committee for Wallace and Taylor, they found it inadvisable to seek outright board endorsement for the Progressive Party. The United Office and Professional Workers Association also failed to take an official stand in support, although it did pass a resolution praising Wallace and condemning both Republicans and Democrats, as well as reaffirming the “right of members and local unions to make their own decisions.”

While one half of the dissident unions—the Fur and Leather Workers, the Longshoremen, the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, the United Farm Equipment and Metal Workers, the Food, Tobacco and Agricultural Workers, and the United Furniture Workers—proceeded with formal endorsements, the combined total of their membership was less than that of the single powerful United Electrical Workers. Meanwhile, the rightwing unions were not content to stop with board action, pressure tactics, or a positive stand for
President Truman. Instead, the two largest—Phillip Murray’s Steelworkers and Walter Reuther’s Auto Workers—voted overwhelmingly to oppose actively the Wallace campaign. The smaller unions, in an approximate three to one ratio, followed their lead.

At about the same time American Federation of Labor President William Green, never receptive to the third-party idea, publicly recorded his opposition to the venture as “a great political mistake.” The trend became a landslide when the same Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen which in 1946 had been promising a “million-dollar slush fund” to defeat President Truman now voted to raise money for his re-election.

Nor was there any significant counterbalance to the loss of labor support; no important new groups indicated any inclination toward the Wallace banners. Negro organizations continued to veer away. Even some of the local Townsend clubs indicated that they might not follow their leader, Dr. Francis Townsend, who seemed certain to endorse the Wallace ticket.

But in the midst of all these gloomy portents there came a ray of hope—the victory, following an uphill battle, of Leo Isaacson in a February special election in New York’s Twenty-fourth Congressional District. Here the Democratic incumbent, Benjamin J. Rabin, had resigned to accept a judicial post, and Governor Thomas E. Dewey had called a special election. While the Twenty-fourth had always gone Democratic in past elections, it had also constituted one of the strongest American Labor Party areas in the city of New York. In the 1946 election the ALP candidate had run a fairly good second in a four-cornered race, garnering some 27 per cent of the vote.

This 1948 special election was given advance interpretation by both sides as a significant test of over-all ALP strength and hence of Wallace support, since the party provided his
vehicle in the Empire State. Some expected that the ALP would be hard pressed to equal its earlier performances. As the *New York Times* remarked (January 15, 1948):

> While these [1946] figures indicate the virtual certainty of the election of the Democratic nominee . . . the expected decrease in the vote for the Labor party candidate in the Congressional district generally will be accepted as an indication of the measure of the loss of Labor party votes caused by withdrawal of the anti-Communist unions from affiliation with the Labor party.

On the other hand, John K. Weiss and Tom O’Connor, writing in *PM* (January 17, 1948), pointed to a number of offsetting factors.

Most of the voters in the district are low-income families. Roughly 40 per cent are Jewish and 25 per cent Negro and Puerto Rican. Wallace’s popularity with minority groups—presumably enhanced by his recent trip to Palestine and his tour of the South speaking before non-segregated audiences—is counted upon by the ALP to weigh heavily.

They also noted the ability of “left wing and labor groups [to] make a much better showing in a special election than in a regular election,” citing the 1946 ALP candidacy of Johannes Steel in the New York Nineteenth District. Here, despite a three to one Democratic enrollment, Steel had lost by a narrow 4,000 vote margin to the joint Democratic-Liberal candidate Arthur O. Klein. “There was general agreement,” they concluded, “that the extraordinary ALP showing could be credited to a new political technique; concentrating experienced political workers from the entire City in one district.”

This same technique was again employed in the Twenty-
fourth. According to Morris Goldin, New York County ALP strategist responsible for the planning, there was, at the height of the campaign, a total of some 7,000 individuals working in the district for the Wallace candidate. Recruited from the ranks of the Progressive Citizens of America and from the trade unions, as well as from the ALP itself, these volunteer crusaders turned in a performance that put Democratic boss Ed Flynn to flight. Working nights, moving steadily from door to door, they played up the issues most appealing to voters in the district. To Jewish constituents they talked Israel and rent control, to Negroes and Puerto Ricans, problems of racial segregation and minority rights.

While the Democratic mobilization approximated the ALP aggregation in numbers, it lacked the latter’s spirit and drive. Many Democratic workers did little more than go through the motions, with the result that they were unable to keep their pledges in line on election day.

Both sides were lavish in their importation of name speakers to support the actual contestants. For the Democrats, Mayor William O’Dwyer and Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt led the appeals for “continuing the New Deal tradition” with the Democratic candidate, Karl J. Propper. On the ALP side, Henry A. Wallace was the leading figure, assisted by Representative Vito Marcantonio and singer Paul Robeson. Their primary theme was the attack on Truman foreign policy and—particularly in the Twenty-fourth—on its inconsistency in dealing with the Palestine issue.

Relatively little thought was paid the other two contenders—Liberal and Republican—who had made the field a four-cornered one. The Liberals had advanced one of their strongest vote getters, former gubernatorial candidate Dean Alfange, but the Republicans did little or no active campaigning for their candidate.

The results from the polls on February 17 showed, in the words of the New York Times, a “sweeping victory” for the
Wallace candidate, Leo Isaacson. Not only had he defeated his Democratic opponent, but he had also received a clear-cut majority, nearly 56 per cent of the votes cast, as against 31 per cent for Mr. Propper. The Liberal candidate was a poor third, and the Republican nominee, Joseph A. De Nigris, also ran.

Warren Moscow, writing in the *New York Times*, noted that

The result was an upset with definite national political connotations. In political circles, Mr. Isaacson never had been considered to have a chance to win, but the percentage of the votes given to the third party forces was to be regarded as an indication of the potential Wallace strength in November.

... The result was regarded as certain to strike at Democratic hopes for Presidential victory and to bring gloom to the Truman high command.²

Elation in third-party circles equaled the gloom and depression in Democratic quarters. The results offered evidence that political miracles were not impossible and that Henry A. Wallace's candidacy could be a major force in the presidential campaign. C. B. "Beanie" Baldwin, Wallace's campaign manager, was quick to hail the election as "proof—that the people demand a new party, a third party led by Henry Wallace, dedicated to achieving peace, security and abundance." Isaacson interpreted his victory as a "resounding repudiation by the people of the policies of the Truman administration, policies which are leading down the road to war."

Actually, as both James Reston and Arthur Krock of the

²*New York Times*, February 18, 1948. The numerical totals were: Isaacson (American Labor Party), 22,697; Propper (Democrat), 12,578; Alfange (Liberal), 3,840; De Nigris (Republican), 1,482.
New York Times were now quick to point out and as Weiss and O'Connor had noted a month earlier, the Twenty-fourth District was a rather special case. In the first place, the area issues had been virtually tailor-made for the American Labor Party. Discontent with administration fumbling and backtracking on the question of Israel was strong in a section so predominantly Jewish. Moreover, this was a low-income, large minority group area to which the domestic program of the former Vice President was bound to appeal.

Secondly, the American Labor Party organization had functioned smoothly both in getting out the vote and in keeping its pledges in line. It had mobilized effectively for the task and had been able to get its issues across by dint of doorbell ringing and house-to-house canvassing. On the other hand, Ed Flynn’s Bronx machine had fallen down on the job. He had failed both in getting out the vote and in holding those who did turn out. A staff writer of the Baltimore Sun suggested only half in jest that Mr. Flynn “had better stop writing pieces explaining the mysteries of his esoteric craft and go back to bossing.”

But, making all due allowance for the special factors involved in the special election, the victory for the Wallace forces was truly a sweeping one, and a very bright ray of light in their preconvention campaign. They had scored at least one battle victory in the “fight for peace.”

In spite of this triumph, speculation still continued about whether Henry A. Wallace would actually go through with the 1948 campaign or would, instead, abandon the fight at some strategic time prior to the election. Arthur Krock, writing in the New York Times just after Wallace’s December declaration, had observed:

The possibility exists that Mr. Wallace may withdraw his candidacy before or just after the conventions of the two major parties. . . . Even if . . . a third party
nominating convention is held, and Mr. Wallace enters on a vigorous campaign, he still is capable of finding it expedient to withdraw "before the election."

And now, close on the heels of the Isaacson victory, such speculation was increased by a second open radio bid on the part of Senator J. Howard McGrath, Democratic national chairman, for Wallace's return to the fold. Even before the December declaration of candidacy, McGrath had proffered a series of tentative bids for the support of the former Vice President, saying that "if Mr. Wallace decided to support 'the Democratic candidate' this support would be 'received and welcomed.'"

Wallace's reply to the renewed offer was brief and to the point: "Whenever the Democratic party proves that it is the peace party and Truman gives up his ideas on military training, I'll consider it. At the moment I see little prospect."

Rumors of the prodigal's impending return to the Democratic fold continued throughout the spring campaign, but no concrete offers of compromise on foreign policy were ever actually made by the White House. According to Wallace, all the "peace feelers" were based on his acceptance of the administration's foreign policy as it stood. As such, they never received serious consideration from the Vice President. For the most part, the sources of these rumors were difficult to locate, their sincerity even more problematical, since they may have been plants of Democratic strategists attempting to discourage voters from supporting a "temporary" Wallace party.

But what of the course of events both in the U.S. and elsewhere during the spring of 1948 that so vitally affected the "fight for peace"? Three incidents stood out in the pre-convention campaign period. The first, over which the Pro-
gressive Party exercised no control, but which affected its fate strongly, was the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia. The second was Henry A. Wallace's open letter to Marshal Josef Stalin of the Soviet Union; and the third involved Senator Glen Taylor's brush with the police of Birmingham, Alabama, over racial segregation.

To many the existence in Czechoslovakia of a postwar coalition government in which Communists and non-Communists could work side by side demonstrated the feasibility of similar cooperation on an international scale between East and West. This Czechoslovakian bridge accorded with the Progressive Party's basic contention about peaceful coexistence and served to demonstrate the practicality of their peace plank for lessening world tension.

Consequently, it came as a tremendous blow when, in February, 1948, the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia staged a coup d'état whereby the hitherto democratic government fell under a party dictatorship. Many who had felt it possible for the U.S. and U.S.S.R. to live as peaceful, tolerant neighbors in a shrinking world were now convinced that Russia, shelving her wartime alliance of expediency, had resumed her long-range plans of world conquest, utilizing in Czechoslovakia the same force and fifth column methods employed earlier by Hitlerite Germany.

Viewed in this new light, the Progressive Party's proposals for a peaceful resolution of Russo-American differences seemed futile to many—a disastrous form of appeasement to others. Potential supporters who never could have been dissuaded by American Red-baiting tactics and anti-Communist hysteria found these international facts of life persuasive and compelling. Numbers who had already joined now left the third party; many who were previously undecided now stayed away.

There was no way of gauging precisely the ebb tide resulting from the Czech coup. But, judging by the polls at the
time, the defections were sizable. Although no clear-cut before-and-after surveys were made, a January Roper survey had indicated that Wallace would receive 11 per cent of the popular vote. By June, the figure had fallen to 6 per cent.

Coupled with the effects of the incident itself—so shattering to Progressive hopes—came the reaction of presidential candidate Wallace. His first impulse, in a speech at Minneapolis, had been to adopt a logically defensible position that:

The Czech crisis is evidence that a “get tough” policy only provokes a “get tougher” policy.

What is happening in Czechoslovakia is not a tempest in a vacuum. There is a clear pattern of cause and effect—a triangular pattern connecting Moscow, Prague and Washington.

Every act under the Truman Doctrine is clearly labeled anti-Russian. The men in Moscow from their viewpoint would be utter morons if they failed to respond with acts of pro-Russian consolidation.

The Czechoslovakia story will repeat itself so long as our gun and dollar policies in Greece, China and elsewhere on Russia’s doorstep are continued.\(^3\)

However, a few weeks later in a New York press conference Wallace put himself out on a limb when asked about the Czech situation. In response to a reporter’s question, he said he had commented on the Czech crises before he “knew what Steinhardt [U.S. Ambassador to Czechoslovakia] had been up to, before the rightists staged their coup.” Queried further, Wallace implied that Ambassador Steinhardt’s actions supporting the rightist cause had provoked the Communist intervention—that the Communists had acted in self-defense to prevent a rightist coup. The press conference was a tumultuous one, and it may have been that Wallace was

prodded farther than he intended to go. But, to many of his earlier sympathizers, his remarks indicated that the extreme leftists among his advisers had gained his ear too well.

The end result of both the incident and the Wallace reaction was a marked weakening of the peace plank's appeal. If, as some charged, the Wallace Progressive Party was nothing more than the American branch of an international Communist conspiracy, it had received a tremendous jolt from its home office. For years the Stalin tactics shattered most hopes of peaceful coexistence between the two major powers.

Two months later the second incident involving the peace issue had a much different orientation, with American origins, and reflected a newly changed Moscow view with respect to the desirability of propagandizing her "peaceful" intentions in America. The idea of addressing an open letter to Russian Premier Josef Stalin originated at a midwinter conference attended by Michael Straight, publisher of *New Republic*, Henry Wallace, editor of the magazine at the time, and Lewis Frank, Jr., editorial aide and later chief speech writer for the candidate. While no immediate action was taken, the idea took definite shape some months later, prior to a major address scheduled for May 11. According to Wallace himself, "I had been thinking about it for some time and when I got up to the farm I decided to go ahead. Actually I wrote part of it at the farm and I finished it on the train coming in from South Salem."

Early in the morning on the day of the scheduled speech, the story broke about an exchange of notes between U.S. Ambassador to Moscow Bedell Smith and Russian Foreign Minister Molotov—an exchange interpreted by many as indicating a more conciliatory attitude on the part of each nation in seeking new paths to a settlement of their differences. Wallace felt that the incident made propitious the publication of his letter. Despite contrary advice, he delivered in his speech that night an open letter to Stalin. Before an audience
of 19,000 which jammed Madison Square Garden, he outlined the letter's six-point program for terminating the cold war between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.

1. General reduction of armaments—outlawing all methods of mass destruction.
2. Stopping the export of weapons by any nation to any other nation.
3. The resumption of unrestricted trade [except for goods related to war] between the two countries.
4. The free movement of citizens, students and newspapermen between and within the two nations.
5. The resumption of free exchange of scientific information and scientific material between the two nations.
6. The re-establishment of a reinvigorated United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration [UNRRA] or the constitution of some other United Nations agency for the distribution of international relief.

Having examined some of the problems creating friction between the two nations, such as the German and Japanese peace treaties, control of atomic energy, and the "ideological competition between communism and capitalism," Wallace concluded:

There is no misunderstanding or difficulty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics which can be settled by force or fear and there is no difference which cannot be settled by peaceful, hopeful negotiation. There is no American principle or public interest which would have to be sacrificed to end the cold war and open up the Century of Peace which the Century of the Common Man demands.¹

¹ For complete text of the Address, see New York Times, May 12, 1948.
The delivery of the speech itself created little stir in the American press. Although the New York Times published the full text, the Associated Press and other news services carried only brief résumés. The entire episode would undoubtedly have been quickly forgotten, consigned to obscurity as just another campaign speech, had it not been for Stalin’s decision to respond. Less than a week later, the Soviet Premier broadcast his answer, declaring that the letter constituted a “good and fruitful” basis for discussion between the two nations. Although he did not indicate acceptance of all the Wallace proposals, Stalin labeled the six-point plan a “serious step forward” from the Smith-Molotov notes and called it a “concrete program for peaceful settlement of the differences between the U.S.S.R. and the United States.” Moreover, concluded Stalin, “. . . The U.S.S.R. Government considers that despite the differences in their economic systems and ideologies, the coexistence of these systems and a peaceful settlement of differences between the U.S.S.R. and the United States are not only possible but also doubtless necessary in the interests of a general peace.”

The furor created by this reply was immediate and lasting. Wallace, apprised of the news just before a campaign speech at Oakland, California, was elated and remarked, according to Howard Norton in the Baltimore Sun, “If my letter has served and can still serve to further international understanding of the issues and the practicability of peace, I consider that this past two years’ work has been truly fruitful.”

The reaction in Washington was markedly different, however. As had been the case a year earlier on the occasion of Wallace’s European tour, there were congressional calls for prosecution for violation of the Logan Act of 1799. This time it was Senator Owen Brewster (Republican, Maine) who alleged that the Progressive nominee was guilty of violating the Federalist injunction against a private citizen’s interfering in the relations between this nation and a foreign power.

Of more lasting import was the administration's reaction. Although his scepticism regarding Stalin's sincerity may have been well grounded, President Truman's failure to follow up meant that the offer was destined never to be tested. Once again the administration laid itself open to charges of having failed to explore a possible avenue to peace uncovered by a political rival. As the pro-Truman Washington Post ruefully editorialized, "How much capital Henry Wallace collected out of the Administration's maladroitness of last week is anybody's guess. But we feel it was plenty."

Moreover, it is probable that this abrupt end to the "peace scare" closed the door completely on any possible rapprochement between the Progressives under Wallace and the Democrats led by Truman. To many this was convincing evidence of Wallace's accuracy in his contention that Truman was absolutely opposed to even the slightest compromise on foreign policy, and that only the third party offered an opportunity to protest the bipartisan get-tough-with-Russia program. If the "fight for peace" was to continue, there was only the Progressive Party to wage the battle.

But once again the potential appeal of the coexistence theme was undercut as soft Russian words gave way to hard Soviet actions. This time it was Berlin. Following a series of moves and countermoves linked to German currency reform, the U.S.S.R. began early in June to place increasing restrictions on Western supply lines through East Germany into Berlin. The pressure increased until on June 24 all rail traffic was halted by their inspectors. It became intolerable when, on June 25, all food shipments were stopped. Western reaction was both immediate and vigorous, and on June 26 President Truman ordered planes mobilized to supply the beleaguered city by air. Thus began the famous Berlin Airlift which was to become a monument to Western determination, and the tombstone for Progressive hopes of an immediate response—by either Soviet leaders or American voters—to the Wallace proposals for lessening tension.
A third incident of the preconvention campaign saw the spotlight of publicity focused on the other member of the Wallace-Taylor team. This time their second issue—freedom and the protection of civil rights—was involved in the Birmingham arrest and conviction of Senator Taylor.

Although the formal charge was disorderly conduct, the actual question clearly concerned racial segregation at public meetings. Taylor was scheduled to address a meeting of the Southern Negro Youth Congress—an organization listed by the Department of Justice as Communist-inspired, according to the *New York Times*. The Negro group had encountered difficulty in finding a meeting place after Birmingham City Police Commissioner Eugene (“Bull”) Connor had threatened, “There’s not enough room in town for Bull and the Commies.” Eventually, arrangements had been made to hold meetings in a small Negro church, but, on the afternoon of Senator Taylor’s scheduled speech, four of the convention’s leaders had been arrested on charges of permitting unsegregated meetings. Following this arrest, temporary barriers had been erected to separate the races, and police officials had designated separate “white” and “Negro” entrances to the church.

When Senator Taylor attempted to enter the church through the “Negro” entrance, he was taken into custody. At this point reports differed concerning whether the Senator attempted to resist or whether the arresting officers decided to rough him up a little, but the fact remained that the Senator arrived at the police station in a disheveled condition. There he was booked and posted bail for a court appearance.

At a hearing held later the same week, Taylor was convicted of disorderly conduct, fined fifty dollars and costs, and given a suspended jail sentence of 180 days. Police Court Justice Oliver Hall, according to the Associated Press, “gave Taylor a profound tongue lashing for ‘introducing’ the racial issue into the case,” ascribing the matter to publicity seeking and an “outside influence attempting to create dis-
turbances between the white and Negro races in the South.”

The Senator immediately announced his intention of appealing the case all the way to the Supreme Court, if necessary. More than a year later the Alabama State Appeals Court upheld the conviction. The United States Supreme Court eventually declined to review the case, with Justices Black and Douglas dissenting, being of the opinion that Taylor’s petition for a writ of certiorari should have been granted. Birmingham officials then pressed for the Senator’s extradition to serve out the jail term, but Alabama Governor James Folsom refused to seek his return, and the case was finally abandoned.

While other similar incidents occurred during the spring campaign, such as the Baltimore tennis courts case, obviously planned to invite arrest for the purpose of testing the validity of segregation ordinances, none received the same nation-wide publicity. While the freedom issue was thus emphasized, its net vote-winning impact was highly questionable, with many anti-segregationists deploring such “publicity-seeking opposition.”

Although spectacular incidents and issues played a large part in the preconvention campaign, the main device employed by the Wallace-ites to link together their party organizational and publicity work was the traditional campaign tour. These tours became a means of arousing interest in the various state founding conventions, of attracting prospective party workers, of spurring the drives for a place on the state ballots, and of providing the focal stellar attractions for the fundraising, paid-admission rallies.

Beginning in February with a blizzard-swept tour of Minnesota, timed to coincide with the attempt to capture the Democratic Farmer-Labor nomination in that state (to be discussed in the next chapter), presidential candidate Wal-
lace was almost constantly on the road. Despite the fact that he “hated campaigning, and hated to get into it,” the third-party nominee began the tours that were to set a new record, as of 1948, for mileage covered by any candidate in American history.

February witnessed, in addition to stops in the Midwest en route to and from Minnesota, a junket to Florida, where the deadline for ballot qualification came early, and a series of speeches in the New York State Twenty-fourth Congressional District. March was comparatively quiet, with the high point a Pennsylvania Progressive Party Founding Convention at York. But the end of the month witnessed the beginning of a New England tour timed to coincide with organizational drives in Connecticut and Massachusetts. This was followed in April by a second trip into the Midwest, which included the Chicago Founding Convention (to be discussed in the following chapter), as well as several speeches in Indiana, where the Progressive organization was being perfected.

May, however, witnessed the peak of the spring campaign. Kicking off with the Madison Square Garden speech at which the open letter to Stalin was unveiled, Wallace embarked on a transcontinental tour via chartered air liner that took him four times across the continent in the space of two weeks. After a brief stop in Detroit, where he marched with the picket lines around the strike-bound Chrysler Corporation plants, Wallace arrived in Los Angeles, spent two days in that area, thence continued to San Francisco, Oakland, and south again to San Diego. The Pacific Northwest was next. Arriving in Oregon in the midst of the torrid Dewey-Stassen Republican presidential preference primary, the third-party candidate assailed both contenders. Continuing through this area, Washington and Idaho were covered before Wallace interrupted his tour temporarily, flying back to Washington to testify before a Senate committee considering the Mundt-Nixon proposals for subversive control.
Returning once more, the candidate continued throughout the Mountain States and the Southwest, appealing in Denver for a broadly based state organization and speaking in Spanish before Mexican-American audiences in New Mexico and Arizona.

Finally, after twenty-five days in which he had covered some 25,000 miles, Wallace wound up the tour and returned to his South Salem, New York, farm for a brief rest before embarking on a second New England tour that immediately preceded the Philadelphia Convention.

Throughout all of his speeches in these different states and cities there was one unchanging theme: Only the Progressive Party offered Americans a chance to vote for peace—to vote in opposition to the bipartisan drive of both Republicans and Democrats toward a new world war. The third party was the people’s weapon in the “fight for peace,” its candidates their leaders.

There were, of course, many issues of national concern dealing with a third plank: “Abundance”—an end to inflation, economic planning to prevent a new postwar depression, and Federal aid for health, for education, and for housing. And in every locality there were particular vital issues of local concern: irrigation proposals in the arid Southwest, racial problems in Mexican-American country, and power development and flood control in the recently devastated Columbia River Valley.

Thus the Progressives’ candidate attempted to relate the main issue to his audiences—to link their immediate, closely felt needs to his third-party platform—to demonstrate that their solution was dependent upon solving the overriding issue of peace. Foreign policy remained the dominant theme, since all these public projects, works, and improvements necessitated peace for their completion—a peace which Henry A. Wallace alone of the presidential possibilities was pledged to work and fight for.

Meanwhile his running mate, Senator Glen H. Taylor, was
concentrating his endeavors in the nation's Capital and throughout the South. Unremarked by the press, save for the Birmingham incident, the Senator's tours were run on a similar basis. Organizational meetings in North Carolina, ballot drives in West Virginia, and fund-raising rallies everywhere—these were the skirmishes in the Taylor portion of the crusade.

Almost everywhere he went, Taylor cast down the anti-segregation gauntlet. Refusing to speak to audiences separated by the color of their skins, Senator Taylor conducted his southern tour to the accompaniment of a series of incidents paralleling the Alabama case. The major exception came in Macon, Georgia, where the issue arose at the Progressive Party State Founding Convention. With both white and Negro delegates and the customary municipal ordinance forbidding mixed public gatherings, the party found it expedient to bar the public, thus making the meeting technically private.

Although Senator Taylor's preconvention campaigning reached as far west as California and included northern and midwestern states, this southern tour was his most significant contribution outside the Halls of Congress. Inside the Senate Chamber, however, he did much to publicize the party's stand on both foreign and domestic issues. An open letter to President Truman demanding the ouster of James Forrestal as Secretary of Defense exemplified the Progressives' attack on the Wall Street-military team which, they alleged, controlled both course and conduct of American foreign policy.

Perhaps the most noteworthy congressional action revolved around Senate consideration of the peacetime draft. Joined by Senator William Langer (Republican, North Dakota), Taylor undertook an eighteen-hour filibuster against the appointment of Senate conferees on the measure. Doomed from the outset, this two-man delaying action provided a dramatic means of highlighting the Progressive Party position on the issue.

Congressional testimony also offered a vehicle for Pro-
gressive Party publicity as their presidential nominee appeared before numerous committees. In February, Wallace testified before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, opposing the European recovery program “as constituted.” Despite a ruling by Chairman Eaton (Republican, New Jersey) barring newsreel, sound-recording, and television men from the hearings, press coverage of Wallace’s counterproposals was extensive although not very detailed.

Noting his earlier support for economic aid to Europe as a “lend-lease program for peace,” Wallace ascribed the reversal of position to his view that Europe was now being handed a “blueprint for war.” In the face of hostile cross-examination, he defended strongly his eight points, which he felt constituted a plan to end “the gnawing fear of war and destruction.” Keystone of the Wallace proposals was a fifty-billion-dollar reconstruction fund to be administered by a United Nations agency—rather than by any single nation or its big-business groups—and to be supported by those nations “with appropriate means.” He felt that aid should be based on need, not political belief—available for all war-devastated nations, with no strings attached (such as prohibitions against usage for nationalization of industry) save to prohibit their employment in purchasing implements of war and destruction. Moreover, the United Nations should set up a world-wide ever-normal granary both to prevent famine and to support world grain markets, thus aiding the American farmer. Finally, Wallace envisioned joint supervision of the Ruhr industrial potential by Britain, France, Russia, and the United States to insure that “its resources [would] be used to reconstruct Europe.”

While unsuccessful in convincing the committee that the Marshall plan was little more than an extension of the earlier Truman doctrine, Henry A. Wallace had, in the view of some observers, emerged as one possessed of a clear and concrete counterproposal which might serve as a basis for modifying
the original administration plans. Although the unwarranted action of the committee in barring full press coverage of the hearings occasioned considerable protest, it curtailed public awareness of his points.

Wallace's second opportunity came some two months later before a Senate Armed Services Committee considering the peacetime selective service—universal military training proposals of the Truman administration. Ascribing a series of "deliberately created crises" to the President, Wallace called for a reversal of American policies that, in his opinion, were helping to breed a new war.

Our country is in danger. But the danger comes from our own policies which will bring war—unnecessary war—upon our country. The crisis lies in the war fever itself, not in the real threats of invasion, but in the synthetic "threats of invasion" pumped out to support the arms program.⁶

If a "peaceful foreign policy" were resumed, said Wallace, there would be no need for either inflated military budgets or armed forces built up beyond a point attainable with voluntary enlistments. Once more, the consensus of opinion was that the former Vice President had changed few minds in Washington but that he had obtained a public forum for the third-party position.

The third opportunity came with Senate Judiciary Committee hearings on the Mundt-Nixon subversive activity control bill. Dramatically interrupting his far-western tour, Wallace flew back to Washington to testify that the proposed legislation was both ill-advised and undemocratic. It was contrary to traditional American freedom of expression, he said, and sought to impose restrictions on political

thinking and ideas—even going so far as to outlaw his new party.

As the bill is framed, its penalties can be visited upon every organization which espouses the cause of world peace and progress—every organization which opposes the basic tenets of the bipartisan program.

In the name of fighting foreign totalitarianism [the Mundt-Nixon bill seeks] to impose domestic totalitarianism. In the name of saving the constitution, the constitution is destroyed.⁷

But while the party thus received a ready-made, if specially muted, national sounding board, it was changing few minds, swaying few votes; for the crusade was under way in a milieu which increasingly insisted upon conformity—a climate of opinion learning to label as subversive all dissent and to demand punishment for the dissenters. Violence, slanted press coverage, and attempted intimidation all became a part of the “fight for peace.” The first actual bloodshed came as a Wallace organizer was stabbed to death, apparently for his third-party activities, in Charleston, South Carolina. The drive for the petition signatures in West Virginia witnessed gunplay, midnight auto pursuits, and threats of bodily harm for organizers, although fortunately no actual bloodshed was reported.

Nor could all of this un-American display be attributed to extremists or the uneducated. Violence of a different sort—intimidation to remain silent or risk losing one’s job—broke out in an appalling number of colleges and universities across the nation. At Evansville College in Indiana, Professor George Parker was summarily dismissed for acting as chairman of a local Wallace rally and introducing the third-

⁷ As reported by Rodney Crowther in the Baltimore Sun, May 30, 1948.
party presidential candidate. College officials frankly admitted that the reason for the dismissal was “Mr. Parker’s political activity, both on and off the campus.” At the same time they claimed, according to the *Baltimore Sun*, “The college fully subscribes to the principle of academic freedom but believes that the individual who exercises the privilege must assume the responsibility for his utterances and actions when they destroy confidence and faith in the institution of which he is a member.”

The following month a Bradley University professor, Dr. W. V. Lytle, introduced Mr. Wallace to a Peoria, Illinois, rally over the protests of university officials and soon found that his contract would not be renewed. Although he did not actually lose his position, it was reported that pressure was exerted on Professor Curtis MacDougall by his university (Northwestern) in an unsuccessful attempt to force the withdrawal of his name as Progressive senatorial candidate in Illinois.

In the South, pro-Wallace activities were the cause for the dismissal of four instructors at two other institutions. The University of Georgia fired Assistant Professor James Barfoot, proposed Progressive gubernatorial candidate, on the grounds that “his political activities had become so extensive and involved that his effectiveness as a teacher was impaired.” And the University of Miami in Florida conducted a wholesale purge, releasing three instructors who dared support the Wallace candidacy.

At the University of New Hampshire, Professor John Rideout, who had served as chairman of the state Progressive Party, suddenly found it advisable to move to Idaho, despite the fact that his contract had another year to run. A second Wallace-supporting New Hampshire professor who had seen promotion denied him because of his political activities remarked that he might “be forced to resign to save [his] career.” As a result of its actions in these cases,
the University of New Hampshire found its application for a Phi Beta Kappa charter tabled for three years.

Despite sanctions such as this and reprimands from the American Association of University Professors, the toll in academic freedom ran high—far higher than the reported firings. On too many campuses traditional American free speech fell victim to short-sighted administrations and witch-hunting boards of trustees.

Progressive campaigners found it increasingly difficult to secure either auditorium or hotel accommodations in many cities. The Birmingham incident involving Senator Taylor was typical of the difficulty in finding a forum. Scheduled to deliver speeches, Wallace and Taylor would find themselves deprived of a meeting place with little or no notice. Registering at a hotel, they would find their reservations had been mysteriously canceled. And again, it was not only a case of political machines denying the use of municipal facilities. University administrations which had in the past permitted the presentation of divergent political views now found it inexpedient to permit the voice of a third party. Thus Wallace found himself barred from campus facilities of the University of California at Berkeley, the University of Missouri, the University of Cincinnati, and Syracuse University, to mention only a few.

At the University of Washington, Wallace found himself in strange company as officials there simultaneously excluded both him and Republican contender Thomas E. Dewey from the campus, notwithstanding the fact that President Truman was scheduled for later delivery of a "nonpolitical" address.

And in those more enlightened institutions where free speech was sustained as more than a theoretical concept, it often became impossible for third-party speakers to make themselves heard above the clamor of hecklers unversed in or unwilling to abide by the American tradition of freedom to present all points of view.
The most damaging impact of all this was not upon the Progressive Party itself, but rather upon the whole of American society. As the campaign progressed, the pressure for conformity and the unwillingness to permit any expression of dissenting opinion increased rather than abated.

As John Stuart Mill had warned a century earlier:

... It is not the minds of heretics that are deteriorated most by the ban placed on all inquiry which does not end in the orthodox conclusions. The greatest harm done is to those who are not heretics, and whose whole mental development is cramped and their reason cowed by the fear of heresy.

... There is always hope when people are forced to listen to both sides; it is when they attend only to one that errors harden into prejudices, and truth itself ceases to have the effect of truth by being exaggerated into falsehood.8

There was still another facet of the spring campaign which made it increasingly difficult for the American people to listen to both sides—the scanty coverage accorded the third party by both press and radio, save in a few metropolitan centers. Although large numbers of reporters accompanied candidate Dewey on his western preconvention jaunt and throngs of commentators traveled with the Truman “nonpolitical” campaign train, only three newspapers saw fit to give full coverage to Wallace’s spring tours. And the objectivity of coverage by these three, the New York Post, the Baltimore Sun, and the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, suffered considerably by comparison with their handling of the major party campaigns.

Perhaps the most glaring examples, in the light of reputed

fairness and expected full coverage, were the New York Times and the New York Herald Tribune. Although the Times did report in greater detail than other papers those incidents occurring in New York City (such as the Wallace letter to Stalin), it clearly allowed its editorial view that the American Labor Party was “Communist-dominated” to permeate its news columns. This bias emerged particularly in its coverage of the Isaacson campaign, for which objective treatment by the anti-third-party PM offered a basis of comparison.

Vice-presidential nominee Taylor was given even more pronounced silent treatment by the press than was Wallace. Only the Birmingham incident, played up for its sensationalism, showed that journals across the nation were even aware of his candidacy.

A few papers demonstrated even greater zeal—going so far as to attempt the intimidation of voters who had dared sign Wallace nominating petitions. The Pittsburgh Press, as will be described in a later chapter, was the leader in this respect, and journals in Boston, Milwaukee (the Milwaukee Journal), and Cleveland, as well as others of the Scripps-Howard chain, were guilty of similar practices, according to party officials.

While radio commentators were on the whole scarcely more objective in dealing with the Wallace Progressive Party, the national networks, until the time of the Philadelphia Convention, provided considerable free time for the party’s speakers. Thus the Taylor acceptance speech, Wallace’s reply to an intemperate Truman attack on the party as a “Communist front,” and several other major preconvention addresses received full airings.

But on the whole, the American mass media did little in this preconvention campaign to disprove Senator Taylor’s comment that “our modern means of communication do not necessarily mean that the American people are the best in—
formed in the world, only that they have greater access to larger amounts of information and possible misinformation.”

As a first round in the “fight for peace,” the spring campaign proved a losing one for the Wallace forces. Preaching the virtues of peaceful coexistence, they watched the Czech coup destroy their only successful model, taking with it the appeal of their peace issue. Successful in a congressional contest where the Palestine problem was foremost, they saw the Truman administration shift to a more consistent pro-Israelite position. Still hopeful of Labor and Liberal support, they witnessed a pronounced trend to the left as President Truman, aided by the Americans for Democratic Action, strove to muster the New Deal remnants into a Fair Deal army. Their arguments for abundance became less persuasive as the Democratic Party once again took on its Roosevelt image as the party of the people. And before long their freedom issue was to be undercut by the victory of the Humphrey-led integrationist forces at the Democratic National Convention and by the subsequent defection of the Dixiecrats.

Thus the Progressives had not only lost the first battle in the “fight for peace,” but their arms—“Peace, Freedom and Abundance”—had been captured by the enemy as well. For the first time in American history, the thunder of a party of discontent had been stolen, neither four nor forty years later, but in the very midst of the campaign.