ALTHOUGH THE campaign tours of the candidates, the New York City by-election to fill the Bronx vacancy, and the inexorable press of events—both at home and abroad—formed the major features of the 1948 spring campaign, they were far from the only battles in the “fight for peace.” But the Wallace crusaders were faced with the multiple tasks of building a new party. Three major problems confronted them—organizing party machinery, obtaining a place on the ballots of the forty-eight states, and securing adequate financial support. From the standpoint of both importance and timing, all three were integrated, all three were independent. They form the subject of this and the two following chapters.

If this was to become a true party of the people, organization was the first need—to build a machine possessing a breadth of support, depth of organization, and endurance for the future. As L. B. Wheeldon had concluded in Editorial Research Reports the preceding July, “Established party machines can be overthrown, if at all, only by new machines. Electoral votes are created out of the votes in precincts, wards and districts.”

It was to the precincts, wards, and districts that the Wallace followers now turned their attention. And here, it soon became apparent, there was not the same general degree of agreement that surrounded the “Peace, Freedom and Abun-
"dance" issues already discussed. Of the three questions raised—whether the party was to seek "breadth or narrowness," whether the primary target was the 1948 or the 1952 campaign, and whether or not an attempt should be made to build from the ground up—there was general agreement on only one. Whereas the divergent groups in the party accepted most Wallace policy decisions, they were unable to agree on his organizational views.

The first ideological cleavage developed over the question of securing breadth of support for the New Party. Wallace himself was very much aware of the importance of this factor. In an April speech to the New York State Wallace-for-President Committee he warned:

I urge elimination of groups and factions in this new party movement. This movement is as broad as humanity itself. I urge that we accept all people who wish for a peaceful understanding between the United States and Soviet Russia . . . . We can get the support of these people if they realize that we do not represent one group.

If we are going to be a party of 20 million, there are going to be many kinds of people in that party. Keep the door open.

On the other hand many within the party looked upon it as more of a pressure group for their particular viewpoint. They were anxious to keep its organization narrow so that it might express those views more vigorously. For example, some of its labor leaders urged that the party de-emphasize the international relations aspect, and play up Taft-Hartley as the main issue of the campaign. Then there were those of Communist leanings who felt that all pretense of breadth should be abandoned and a closely knit "cell-type" structure established.

Closely related was the question of whether to build for
the 1948 campaign alone, or for the future. The immediate need for haste if election deadlines were to be met was in the back of everyone's mind. But those who favored a narrow organization argued that theirs would be the only type with sufficient cohesiveness to endure. Again their premise was based upon the idea of a small band of well-disciplined, loyal workers whose continued support could be relied upon. Wallace rejected this idea as well, telling the Colorado Progressive Party:

People who want the party narrowly based say that a broad base won't work. They want to go ahead with the idea of winning not in '48 but in '52 . . . . But it's a hard fact that we can't win the necessary votes in either year unless by a crusade among the principal groups of our people . . . the women's groups, the church groups, and the young people in our schools and colleges.

The only organizational matter upon which there was agreement in the ranks was the necessity of a strenuous attempt to establish machinery down to the ward and precinct levels all across the nation. This, it was realized by all, was the only way to attract any sizable number of voters into the Progressive camp and to turn them out on election day.

Despite the fact that this was a new party, there existed, even prior to the Wallace declaration, considerable nationwide machinery. The most important was that of the Progressive Citizens of America. The origins of PCA could be traced to a series of political maneuvers in the 1944 presidential campaign. In that year the Political Action Committee of the CIO had formed the National Citizens Political Action Committee in the attempt to broaden its appeal out-
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side the labor sphere. The National Citizens Political Action Committee operated on a national basis in the 1944 campaign to raise funds for the Roosevelt-Truman ticket. In the spring of the same year a New York City group led by Mrs. Elinor S. Gimbel, Quentin Reynolds, and others, feeling that Tammany Hall was not sufficiently active for the Roosevelt candidacy, had formed the Citizens' Action Committee. This group of political amateurs, primarily Democratic but with a sprinkling of Republicans, desired to work on the local level, ringing doorbells and speaking to small groups, thus actively entering into practical politics.

Shortly after the Democratic National Convention still a third group came into existence, the Independent Citizens' Committee of the Arts, Sciences and Professions. An outgrowth of the earlier (1940) Independent Voters Committee, the ICC-ASP had a much different orientation, according to Miss Hannah Dorner, its director. Its members—from the stage, from the academic world, and from professional life generally—were more interested in pressure group activities, such as pressing for promotion of a National Science Foundation. But, here too, there were some seeking a broader political outlet for their specialized talents—from playwriting to stage lighting.

The first joining of forces came when the Citizens' Action Committee merged its local New York City activities into the broader National Citizens Political Action Committee during the 1944 campaign, thus bringing together the well to do, the middle class, and the labor segments of the original groups. Two years later, prior to the 1946 congressional campaign, the two main bodies, NC-PAC and ICC-ASP, merged to form the Progressive Citizens of America. With similar interests and backing it was felt that a combination would effect greater strength and greater efficiency. However, once inside the PCA, many of the ASP members who
had favored pressure-group activity alone began to feel ill at ease. Many walked out when the PCA became the vehicle for the Wallace third-party candidacy.

As noted in an earlier chapter, both NC-PAC and ICC-ASP had supported the Wallace position following the Madison Square Garden speech. In 1947, with the enunciation of the Truman doctrine, the PCA embarked upon a broad campaign of opposition to the administration's bipartisan foreign policy. Although Wallace was not a member, he became PCA's principal speaker at a series of rallies and meetings across the nation.

At this time, C. B. "Beanie" Baldwin, who had served under Wallace in the New Deal days, was the executive vice president of PCA. He was already trying to kindle a third-party fire, despite Wallace's continued advocacy at that time of action within Democratic ranks.

Finally, with the prospective candidate increasingly receptive, in December, 1947, the executive board of the PCA had voted with only three abstentions and one dissent "to urge Henry A. Wallace to run as an independent candidate for the Presidency of the United States." What contribution was the PCA prepared to make to the "fight for peace"?

Organizationally, they possessed state and local chapters of varying degrees of strength in twenty-five of the forty-eight states. New York and Southern California branches were well established, but elsewhere there was merely a skeleton framework. But the PCA also promised a background of political know-how. As early as 1946, Lew Franks and Ralph Shikes had conducted studies and compiled a manual of political organization aimed at the proven house-to-house type of campaign. Moreover, the PCA had originated a "school for political action"—a Washington, D.C. seminar for political workers. This school was the forerunner of those later utilized by the CIO Political Action Committee, the
Americans for Democratic Action, and eventually big business itself.

In addition, the PCA had been perfecting new techniques for gaining financial support. Originating with the CIO Political Action Committee, the basic idea consisted of paid admissions and voluntary contributions at political rallies. To these rallies, the ASP group from Broadway had added staging, lighting, and dramatization. The resulting presentations had proved themselves during 1947, when the PCA garnered over one quarter of one million dollars from their series of rallies opposing the Truman doctrine and administration foreign policy.

Thus the PCA had already faced two of the three major obstacles in the path of the New Party at this time, and promised aid in both.

In endorsing the Wallace candidacy, the Executive Board of the PCA announced that it would submit its decision to the second annual convention of the body at Chicago the following month. The 500 delegates to this January assembly promptly ratified the board action in a resolution that permitted: (1) the state chapters to affiliate, merge, or cooperate with any Wallace party or committee, (2) delegates to represent the PCA at an April founding convention for a third party, and (3) the National Board to determine whether PCA should merge into or affiliate with the third party, subject to ratification by two-thirds of the state chapters. Thus the way was paved for the PCA to retain its identity or to become the nucleus of the third party.

It soon became apparent, however, that the new party would require a much stronger central organization than could be evolved from the semi-autonomous PCA branches. As early as March, a threefold split into right, left, and center groups was appearing among the Wallace committees. State and local organizations had proceeded pretty much on
their own, and conflict with national policy began to emerge. For example, the Independent Progressive Party of Southern California had gone ahead with plans to oppose the re-election of the Liberal Democratic representatives Helen Gahagan Douglas and Chet Holifield on the basis of their support for Marshall plan aid to Europe. This was contrary to the policy announced by Beanie Baldwin of supporting incumbents with a predominantly "good" record. Baldwin, according to notes by Helen Fuller, in the files of New Republic, told the Chicago conference, "While we cannot and must not judge any sitting Congressman by any single vote, there are certain conditions . . . to receive our support . . . support of the UN . . . the full rights of organized labor . . . support of the constitutional civil rights of every person living within our borders." (Italics supplied.) Wallace, in a later letter to Mr. C. J. O'Donnell was even more specific. "Candidates will not be judged on the basis of their position on any single issue such as the Marshall Plan."

In the meantime, plans were being formulated for a 700-member National Wallace-for-President Committee, to be headed by a brain trust composed of Baldwin as campaign manager, Elmer Benson as chairman, and Angus Cameron as treasurer. Its first meeting was scheduled to coincide with the Chicago assembly called by the Progressive Citizens of America for April.

At this Chicago meeting the decision was reached to take over the Progressive Citizens of America machinery and incorporate it into the new party. For policy planning the third party, like the British Labor Party, would have an annual National Convention, with representation based on individual members and interest groups as well as state and local organizations. For interim meetings there would be a much smaller National Committee. Representation on the latter was to be primarily geographical, with the number of state committee members proportional to population, unlike the
major party pattern of two for each state. A supplemental "functional representation" for labor and other groups was added later. Since it was expected that the large size of this National Committee would make it even more unwieldy than its major party counterparts, there were to be two smaller bodies—a National Executive Committee to meet every month and an Administrative Committee to carry out the day-to-day tasks of policy planning.

For the execution of third-party policy, a board of national officers was projected—a chairman and several vice-chairmen, as well as a party treasurer, secretary, and campaign manager. This panel would be responsible for carrying out over-all policy, for establishing lines of communication to the various state, local, and associated groups, and for insuring coordination in all the phases of a presidential campaign.

With a basic structure thus agreed upon, the delegates went on to plans for a first national convention, at Philadelphia in July. This summer assemblage would formally establish the organization, adopt a name for the New Party, ratify a party platform, and formalize the choice of the national candidates.

The national organization now faced its major problem—determining an organizational policy and transforming this policy into a machine that would be both comprehensive and enduring. The fundamental antagonism now began to emerge between right and left—between Wallace himself and those he later labeled the "Peekskill Boys." ¹ The candidate felt that the actions of his more rabid followers of the extreme left would result in a base far too narrow for the party following of 20,000,000 which he anticipated.

¹ Wallace's description of his more rabid followers as the "Peekskill Boys" derived from the methods and tactics of leftists in the series of riots and disorders at a scheduled Peekskill, New York, concert by Paul Robeson, in 1949. Although not overt antagonists, some of the left-wingers displayed an attack-us-if-you-dare attitude.
Despite his strong views on the subject, Wallace remained aloof from the organizational problems of the party. Having delegated this function completely to Beanie Baldwin, he devoted himself to policy issues and campaigning—an action which was not solely the result of time pressures. Viewing political organization only as a means to an end, Wallace, in his own words, was simply “not interested.” He left the vital organizational tasks almost completely in Baldwin’s hands, and Beanie was under constant, almost irresistible, pressure from the New York City extremists opposed to Wallace’s view that this be made a broad party of the people. When non-Communist leadership and talent failed to respond on the organizational level in adequate numbers, the left-wingers were able by default to take over to a considerable extent. As Wallace viewed the dilemma, “the broad mass is always slow to act, the narrow, rabid group will act, but by their very action, will keep the others away.”

Coupled with the failure of old New Dealers and eastern Liberals to respond to the organizational demands of the New Party was a similar lack of response from the midwestern inheritors of the La Follette tradition. As Rexford Tugwell wrote in the *Progressive* a year after the campaign:

If there had been a flood of Progressives [to the Party]—energetic, determined, dedicated—where would the Communists about whom we hear so much, have been? . . . They would have been lost as they were always lost when they tried to claim President Roosevelt, or . . . when they made approaches to old Bob La Follette . . . . The reason Communist workers were so prominent in the Wallace campaign was that the Progressives were . . . sitting it out; wringing their hands, and wailing.

The real tragedy [was the] withholding of support [and] leadership by those who should have offered it.
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Professor Thomas I. Emerson of the Connecticut People's Party citing the difficulty of determining who was and who was not a Communist, summarized the problem: "Communist workers were undoubtedly involved and did much of the work [of organization] . . . . There was a lack of non-Communist talent and leadership to submerge the Communists . . . [but] the Communists probably lacked the strength to take over."

Given the rift over organization and the failure of the moderates to respond in greater numbers, what sort of organization emerged? To what extent was there coordination of the various groups involved and integration of the various levels? The strategic design followed a pattern more closely akin to British than to American major party practice, with national headquarters assuming supervisory powers over those state and local organizations already in existence. In unorganized areas personal contacts were established or re-established by the campaign manager Beanie Baldwin, in an attempt to secure a complete coverage of the nation. Field organizers were dispatched from New York to assist in areas where local know-how was lacking or deficient. There were five of these trouble shooters, the chief of whom, Barney Conal, had received his training in a research and organizational post with the American Federation of Labor.

One of the most pressing problems was that of establishing adequate communications. If there was to be national-local coordination, a two-way transmission channel was a necessity so that local problems and policy could be forwarded to New York and the decisions made there in line with national strategy, then dispatched to the local groups for execution. Baldwin's remarks indicated that this formidable task was never accomplished satisfactorily. As campaign manager he was unable to get out into the field and had to remain in the New York office to receive the emergency calls from local
chiefs. Time was so short and the local groups so pressed by their ballot deadlines that no regular system ever emerged. Chief reliance was placed upon reports of the field organizers and upon sporadic phone calls from local leaders.

Consequently, national headquarters remained poorly informed regarding developments and problems in the field. The lower echelons, in their turn, failed in many instances to receive adequate or timely tactical plans that accorded with over-all strategy.

In any evaluation of organizational work, the conclusion must ultimately be reached that the Progressive Party was not too successful. The policy determination split over the broad versus the narrow approach was never successfully resolved, although, as Wallace suggested, this was possibly a dilemma whose horns could not have been avoided. Deliberately or not, the party wound up with a fatal narrowness.

Although the national organization was able to establish broad lines of authority over its state and local groups, it failed to integrate them through any successful control mechanism. The major parties' ability to operate successfully without any strong chain of command appears to rest on the power of their local and particularly their state committees. These committees possess the ability to conduct effective campaign operations on their own. Being strong, they can afford to be individualistic in manner and even in direction. However, lack of central control in the Wallace party was magnified by the continued weakness of most of the Progressives' state and local organizations.

The Progressives had only one strong local party—the American Labor Party. Hence it was necessary for their weaker units to operate along parallel lines if they were to be at all effective. Central command was necessary to insure that strength of unity would be afforded their endeavors. Moreover, the weak links had to be located, so that they might be given reinforcement. Had it not been for the vigor
and initiative of the individual trouble shooters, it appears there would have been almost a complete lack of policy coordination among state, local, and national bodies.

The details of organization on the state and local levels were as varied as the forty-eight states themselves. But out of this myriad array of varying problems, techniques, and degrees of success, an extremely broad classification of patterns emerges that may be examined through the activities in only five states.

First, there were the states where the party hoped to make use of existing party machinery—New York with its American Labor Party and Minnesota with its Democratic Farmer-Labor Party. Second, there were those where organizing had already begun during the previous year, such as California with its Independent Progressive Party and Illinois. Finally, there were the forty-four remaining states, where the task would be to start from scratch and build organizations to fight the petition battles for places on the ballots as well as in the election campaigns. Connecticut was a typical example of building from the ground up, and Colorado exemplified a complete and open rift along the lines of the broad-narrow right-left cleavage referred to above.

In New York State, the American Labor Party had been born of the 1936 campaign coalition of anti-Tammany Labor-Liberal sentiment mobilized for the re-election of President Roosevelt. In the ensuing years it had built for itself a strong, deep, and durable machine on the sidewalks of New York. Never able to attract any substantial following upstate—even in the industrial cities of the Mohawk Valley and Lake Ontario Plain—the ALP's power in the metropolis was such that it could regularly turn out some 400,000 votes in every state-wide election.

What were the foundations of its metropolitan machinery?
First, there was, in the Eighteenth Congressional District, the personal following of Representative Vito Marcantonio. In an area predominantly populated by low-income groups of Italian, Jewish, Puerto Rican, and Negro lineage, Marc had employed an orthodox if modernized ward-level approach to the hearts of his voters. In his New York office he established an amazing multilingual assembly line for the efficient mass processing of myriad requests. Nor was the Representative himself ever too busy to talk to the lines of constituents who flocked there for advice, for favors, and for assistance. Coupled with this were Marcantonio’s steady and vocal espousal of causes favored by these submerged groups and his ability to keep the forces of Democratic and Republican opposition divided.

But the American Labor Party machinery was far broader than the Eighteenth District, even though Marcantonio was its sole congressional representative until the Isaacson victory. The New York County (Manhattan) organization had been building for many years—again on the traditional ward-service pattern. At the base of the pyramid were some thirty local precinct clubs, with at least one in each of the sixteen assembly districts. Each with its own headquarters, officers, and executive committees, these clubs formed the nucleus for a multitude of personal services. For instance, at income tax time these clubs would advertise free assistance in filling out returns. No questions were asked—no indoctrination attempted—no party affiliation checked—there was only a consistent effort to impress the voters that here was a legitimate and a friendly political group. Numerous other errands were performed—assistance to tenants in curbing unlawful landlord practices and aid in securing immigration papers for relatives or in arranging transportation for those flying in from San Juan, Puerto Rico. As Geraldine Shandross, county committee executive secretary, put it, “This assistance was placed on the basis of principle... and since the
Democratic Party had begun to fail in its endeavors of a similar nature, the ALP gained acceptance, if not adherents.”

Within these local clubs themselves, monthly meetings were held, policy discussed, and decisions arrived at. According to ALP information, these meetings were open, and anyone desiring to pay one-dollar-per-year dues could become a full member. Policy could originate at these lower levels and pass up through the county committee to the state committee for action. For instance, the party request that President Truman intervene in the 1949-50 coal strike on behalf of the miners was said to have come from the club level.

This sense of participation on the part of the members explained, at least in part, why they proved such valuable workers in the 1948 campaign—donating their services as watchers at the polls, as drivers of cars, and as ringers of doorbells. There were problems, of course, for this minority party—the lack of patronage and favors to dispense, the lack of free-flowing funds, and the strength of the propaganda forces combined against them by both major parties. And with no scrutiny of the political beliefs of prospective members, infiltration to influence policy may have proved relatively simple. For instance, in Albany County the O’Connell Democratic machine, with different motives, sent 1,500 infiltrators to dominate the 1948 ALP primary, nominating its own local candidates, who then withdrew, leaving vacant the Row C spaces on the ballot. Despite all these handicaps, the ALP had, by 1948, established itself on the state political scene.

The preconvention battle in New York revolved around the questions of who would dominate, who would support the Wallace candidacy, and what would be its campaign vehicle. As noted in a preceding chapter, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, with their claimed strength of 135,000, had withdrawn early in January from the American Labor Party, as it backed the Wallace candidacy. Three months later, Mike Quill, flamboyant president of the Transport
Workers Union, earlier in the third-party ranks on the CIO National Board, dramatically reversed his position—resigning from the ALP he had helped found, with a denunciation of "the screwballs and crackpots who will continue to carry on as if the Communist Party and the American Labor Party were the same house with two doors." These withdrawals left Vito Marcantonio clearly in command of the ALP machinery—with its ballot place already promised the Wallace-Taylor ticket as soon as its state committee could legally make the formal endorsement.

At this time there was, however, a question about whether or not the ALP would serve as the exclusive third-party vehicle in the Empire State. When O. John Rogge, New York City attorney prominent in many Liberal causes, issued the call in March for a New York State Wallace-for-President Committee that would include PCA and upstate components as well as ALP, his action was interpreted as the start of a drive to place the Progressive name on the November ballot separately. Marcantonio, however, was quoted in the New York Herald Tribune as saying, "There will be no fifth line on the machine!" (in addition to Republican, Democratic, ALP, and Liberal lines) Although PCA delegates outnumbered those from the ALP at the April Founding Convention of the New York Committee, a majority favored the Marcantonio position. No attempt would be made to qualify under the Progressive label, and the ALP would become the exclusive vehicle for the crusade in the Empire State. As Marc had dictated, there was no fifth line on the ballot.

Events in the second state where the Progressives hoped to utilize an existing party—Minnesota—will be described

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2 The New York Times, April 14, 1948, reported that of 1,031 delegates the PCA had 310 from New York City and 121 from upstate, the ALP 159 city and 74 upstate, and the unions had 161, with the balance divided among youth, student, Jewish, and Negro organizations.
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in greater detail in the following chapter. It suffices for the present to note that the left wing of the Democratic Farmer-Labor Party under former Governor Elmer Benson met defeat at every turn. In control of the state executive committee, but not the larger state central committee, this faction was unable to outmaneuver the rightwing Humphrey-led group. Convention arrangements were voted out of its hands, and county convention support failed to materialize. Finally, refused seats in the state convention, the left-wingers convened a rump convention, whose choice of pro-Wallace DFL electors was later invalidated by the state Supreme Court.

But what of the states where new organizations had begun to blossom during 1947? In California, as noted earlier, the third-party movement had started in a drive among left-wing Democrats to secure the Democratic presidential nomination for Henry A. Wallace. There was considerable dissatisfaction reported on the West Coast—particularly among labor leaders such as those of the International Longshoremen’s and Warehousemen’s Union, who condemned President Truman’s earlier actions concerning the railway strike. Moreover, it seemed possible that a large segment of the Liberal wing of the party might back the Wallace movement. James Roosevelt, eldest son of the late President and state chairman of the Democratic Committee, was reported favorably disposed, as were such Liberal members of Congress as Helen Gahagan Douglas and Chet Holifield.

This hope faded however, when Roosevelt ultimately decided to join his previous opponents on the state committee, Edwin Pauley and William Malone, in an endorsement of President Truman’s policies. Nevertheless, union agitation continued, and the decision was made to press for a third party. The strategy was this: If the leftists could still force the selection of pro-Wallace delegates to the Democratic National Convention, they would do so, but in the event that they should fail, the necessary machinery for a third party
must be already in motion in view of the early deadline for a place on the ballot.

Accordingly, in August, 1947, a Joint Trade Union Conference for a Third Party was held in Los Angeles. Although this body discussed a new party, it took no action. But the day after it had adjourned, in a building just across the street, with many of the same personnel present, the Organizing Committee of the Independent Progressive Party of California was founded by some six hundred delegates and observers.

What were their hopes of success? They lay chiefly, according to Progressive Party organizer Barney Conal, in the "fluid politics" of Southern California. Party discipline was rendered feeble by the state cross-filing system and by the absence of political machines, except in San Francisco. There were no clubs, no bosses, no precinct workers of the traditional Democratic-Tammany type. There were no ward, assembly district, or county committees with entrenched machinery. Lines of party authority ran directly from precinct committeeman to state committee to state executive committee at the higher level.

With many of the precinct leaders favorable to Wallace and no entrenched apparatus to overturn, a strong new movement seemed possible. Moreover, of the three main state political groups outside the Democratic Party, one had already committed itself to the crusade, and the others were not completely unfriendly. These three main groups—the Townsendites, the EPICS ("End Poverty in California") of Upton Sinclair, and the "Ham and Eggers"—had been linked with the Democratic Party by Franklin D. Roosevelt to turn

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3 There were 1,236 delegates representing 51 AFL, 116 CIO, 19 railroad, and 11 independent unions and 34 veterans', 22 youth, 205 Townsend, 45 Jewish, 13 Negro, 18 nationality, and 58 Progressive Citizens of America groups according to Jack Young, "California Started Something," New Masses, October 14, 1947.
California from the Republicans. They were now somewhat loosely tied to it as a Progressive, even "Radical," fringe. Dr. Francis Townsend had announced in May, 1947, his support of a third-party endeavor.

Another unusual factor in California stemmed from the state's "political fluidity." Progressive-Party strategists felt that an ideological approach would be possible. With party loyalty so weak and with a vast influx of foreign-born population, particularly into the Los Angeles area, they felt they could reach many independent and uncommitted voters—especially Mexican-Americans—on the basis of Wallace's program, as well as his Latin-American ties—his earlier tours, his link with the Good Neighbor Policy, and his ability to speak Spanish.

In this favorable climate, the Progressive Party began to build what was to become its broadest state organization. Participating in this construction were Townsendites, leftwing CIO unions—chiefly the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union and Marine Cooks and Stewards—the leftwing Democrats, and eventually the Progressive Citizens of America. Of these groups, the Townsendites were the best organized. They possessed clubs and politically minded members. Both had gone through many a campaign, many a petition drive. Dr. Townsend himself had some practical suggestions to make: "Give your public a personal stake in the outcome . . . top the opposition with a better organizer in each district . . . . Women make better organizers than men."

On the other hand, union participation proved disappointing. Although a considerable number of small locals pitched in, it soon became apparent that the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union had the only really effective organization. Nevertheless, there was already established, as Wallace announced his candidacy, an active Cali-
fornia machine—its strength concentrated in the Los Angeles area, its success about to be measured in the petition drive for a place on the ballot.

Among the states with no third-party organization prior to 1948, Connecticut was one of twenty-five in which there had been an active Progressive Citizens of America movement during 1947. Even before that, the Nutmeg State had housed a branch of the National Citizens Political Action Committee, the group which had tried to broaden the labor-based CIO Political Action Committee. Although there had been new-party talk late in 1947, the actual tasks of organization did not get under way until the December announcement. With the decision to back Wallace, the Connecticut Political Action Committee, as happened in other state committees, lost many of its members as well as its director. Regardless of these withdrawals, the majority was still enthusiastic and proceeded to organize a provisional Wallace-for-President Committee with Professor Thomas I. Emerson, of Yale Law School, at its head.

The first problem was to secure a new director for the headless forces. From Washington's Capitol Hill came Charles B. Calkins, secretary to Senator Brien McMahon, to volunteer his services. Beginning a state-wide tour to establish contacts, in order to build a network of organizations in every one of Connecticut's 169 towns, Calkins found considerable indication of discontent in Connecticut—the two main issues of peace and labor relations being the same as elsewhere. Along with private conferences, a series of open meetings was planned to keep public opinion informal on the Progressive issues, and to keep discontent bubbling under the Truman administration. Meanwhile, the provisional committee proceeded with an interim organization. Constitutional, finance, and campaign committees were established and operations started.

This preliminary work was all designed to lead up to an
April founding convention. But the night before the conven-
tion was to open, Calkins, who had played such a leading
role, fell victim to his overexertion, dying of a sudden heart
attack. The unexpected loss almost disrupted the delegates,
but after some confusion the convention began. Slowly a new
machine—a People's Party—emerged for the Nutmeg State
battle.

Organizations were planned for each of the state's five
congressional districts. Each district was to have a finance and
a campaign committee which would supervise the work of the
existing town organizations and which would in turn report
to corresponding state groups. The task of organizing down
to the ward and precinct levels was delegated to the town
groups. Actually, according to Professor Emerson, not too
many of these groups were successful in this respect, and it
was here that the party mechanism broke down.

It was hoped that the lower levels would be stimulated by
two factors—personal appearances of the candidates and
preparations for the drive to get on the ballot. As in most
states, the link between organization and petition drive was
expected to aid both these aspects of the party's work. But
in Connecticut, reported Emerson, this "didn't pan out too
well." While Wallace's appearance at a New Haven rally
was successful from the financial viewpoint—to the tune of
some $35,000 or more—it did not appreciably help the
task of organizing on lower levels.

The next step in the campaign was a state nominating
convention at which a platform was adopted, the Wallace-
Taylor slate endorsed, and candidates for state and local
offices decided upon. District organizations selected their own
congressional candidates, but the convention chose the repres-
sentative-at-large nominee as well as a six-man slate for
state offices. The nomination for governor went to Professor
Emerson on the understanding that he would withdraw later if
the Democrats put up an acceptable candidate. Only Chester
Bowles seemed to fit this description, and when he later received the Democratic nomination, Emerson did in fact withdraw. In addition to these matters, the state convention selected delegates to the national convention and discussed the problems of organizing for the petition campaign.

On paper it appeared that Connecticut had set up a comprehensive state-wide establishment, but such was not the case. In this state, as in so many others, there were two main failures—the failure to convert an impressive superstructure into precinct-level reality and the failure to secure organized labor support. In Connecticut, the nonparticipation of the United Electrical Workers, powerful in the Bridgeport area particularly, was most damaging. The People’s Party remained for the most part a top-level white-collar affair.

In Colorado, the failure to achieve adequate breadth stemmed from the difference of opinion between the right and left wings of the party concerning the type of structure to be built. Broad-base organization was desired by the center and right wings, led by Charles A. Graham, a Denver lawyer serving as state Wallace committee chairman; a narrow base was sought by the left wing, under Craig Vincent. Despite the fact that Wallace made a personal appearance to urge strongly the broad position, the leftists won out in a bitter all-night convention session. Having lost the decision, the moderates walked out, and Graham refused to accept the chairmanship of the newly formed Progressive Party of Colorado.

The Colorado action threw into bold relief both the contrasting opinions and the groups holding them. Those who wanted breadth cited the American Labor Party in New York as a successful example of party membership open to all. Only in this fashion, they argued, could the party build rapidly enough for the 1948 campaign. The advocates of narrowness urged a well-disciplined party core—a compact cohesive group which would be able to build for their
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primary goal, the 1952 campaign. The similarity of this position and that of the Communist Party was remarked at the time by at least one reporter—Howard Norton in the *Baltimore Evening Sun*. The narrow-base advocates won, despite Wallace’s entreaties to make this “a broadly based party of the people.”

The states examined reveal the general organizational pattern followed by the Progressives elsewhere. The preliminary organization—initiated late in 1947 or early in 1948—usually consisted of a series of local committees for Wallace, who then established a state-wide Wallace committee. The latter, having set up a provisional apparatus, would summon a state-wide convention, at which the party would be officially launched, a platform adopted, the national candidates endorsed, and local candidates decided upon. Then, employing the twin techniques of petition drives and mass meetings with name speakers, the dual task of getting on the ballot and obtaining funds was intertwined with the attempt to set up a real party machine. Although fine on paper, the over-all outcome was one of failure—the party neither gained the breadth of support, nor did it organize down to the ward and precinct levels. The sole exceptions—and qualified exceptions at that—were in New York, where the American Labor Party provided some depth, at least in the city area, and California, where a degree of breadth was attained. In no instance where the party had to start from scratch in 1948 was it able to achieve either of these goals. And within a few short years both the American Labor Party and the Independent Progressive Party would have completely vanished—following Wallace’s withdrawal from the party of his creation.

Whereas the state organizational ventures of the New Party followed established political paths, their work to line
up various functional groups was something of a departure from the American geographical norm. These "associated groups," including the National Labor Committee for Wallace and Taylor, Women-for-Wallace, the Progressive Youth of America, the Nationalities Division, Farm and Veteran groups, and Businessmen-for-Wallace, were designed on a functional basis to appeal to the specific voting segments suggested by their titles.

Unlike attempts made previously to garner the support and endorsement of labor leaders, the National Labor Committee for Wallace and Taylor was established to promote rank-and-file affiliation. The committee consisted of some one thousand trade unionists all across the nation. Although Albert J. Fitzgerald, United Electrical Workers president, was the chairman, the bulk of the actual work of the committee rested on the shoulders of Executive Secretary Russell Nixon. During the campaign, Nixon, on "loan" from the United Electrical Workers, was paid in part by the union and in part by the National Committee.

Early in 1948 UE strategists formulated plans for an organization that would reach "all branches of the labor movement." Nixon submitted to the Chicago Convention a "Report on Organization" in which he expected that:

Labor's support for Wallace and Taylor [would be] based in the trade unions on a grass roots rank and file basis . . . . The foundation of this support is found among the local union officers, grievance men, stewards, and active rank and filers.

Unsuccessful in their attempt to secure leadership endorsement, the Progressives would attempt to carry the campaign directly to the workers and to the locals, in the hopes of wooing them away from their chiefs' political direction. A complete hierarchy was blueprinted. On the lowest levels,
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shop committees were planned for plants and locals. Their task was to distribute literature, raise funds, register voters, and get out the vote. On the next level, there were to be state and area committees. These were to coordinate the work of the shop committees in their respective areas, as well as to prepare literature adapted to local conditions and arrange for mass meetings. One of their most important duties was to see that the relatively weaker areas of organized labor would be covered. For example, it was hoped that considerable Wallace support could be recruited from among the comparatively unorganized workers of the Baltimore industrial area.

Finally, on the industry level, a dual approach was planned. As Nixon explained it in his "Report . . .":

In the industries covered by several unions, it was possible because of leadership sympathetic to Wallace for "New Party" supporters to work within the trade unions themselves . . . .

Where this [was] not feasible, the organization of support for Wallace on an industrial basis [was to be] organized, not on a basis of competition with the international union leadership involved, but merely as a campaign organization of the workers supporting Wallace and Taylor in these industries.

The four main areas in which this second type of organization was attempted were the automobile, railroad, Maritime, and steel industries. Less attention was paid coal miners, textile and garment workers, and printers.

In the auto industry, a National Auto Workers for Wallace Committee was established, which proved successful in forming approximately one hundred shop committees across the nation. A similar committee was set up among railroad workers at the outset of the campaign and was reported to
have distributed about one million pieces of literature. Along the water fronts of the East Coast—the territory of the National Maritime Union—an attempt was made to establish both shore and ship committees to spread propaganda and to conduct fundraising drives. And finally, among the steelworkers, a concerted effort was made in western Pennsylvania to found a steelworkers’ conference. This conference called a convention, attended by several hundred delegates, and set up a national Wallace committee for the steel industry.

Within this broad framework, what were the techniques employed? The strategy stressed action on current issues. For instance, the Progressives actively aided and supported strikers in various plants and localities. They allied themselves with the Packinghouse Workers in Chicago and the Chrysler employees in Detroit. They set great store by the distribution of literature—total handouts were estimated at more than three million. The main emphasis in this literature was placed on portraying the New Party as the only true friend of labor—playing up the Taft-Hartley Act and the Truman threats to draft railroad employees as evidence of a bipartisan big business coalition. “The collection of campaign funds in small sums from large numbers of workers” was also a “basic organizational task.” And finally, the labor committee placed emphasis on the task of getting the workers to register and turn out to vote.

On paper this added up to an impressive campaign among organized labor, but in reality the committee’s accomplishments were limited. Even among those unions whose leaders were friendly to the Progressives, it never succeeded in working up enthusiasm among the rank and file. There were three major factors that made the labor committee’s task a hopeless one: First, there were the general conditions of prosperity—high wages and full employment—that made labor unwilling to change horses. Second, there was the
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Communist label that rightwing labor leaders successfully pinned on the heads of those unions supporting the Progressive Party. Finally, there was the fear of a Republican victory. Few felt that Wallace had any real chance of victory, and Truman seemed by far, from the labor viewpoint, the lesser of the two evils.

Among the unfriendly unions a fourth factor entered into the outcome. This factor was intimidation—the use of threats and even violence—to keep union members from even attending third-party meetings. One such example emerged at a western Pennsylvania Wallace rally. Here, Barney Conal, an on-the-scene organizer, reported that a steelworkers' local stationed checkers at the door to count off on union lists the names of those attending.

But what of the ladies? How did they respond to the peace banner borne by the Wallace crusaders? A major attempt to organize their endeavors came in the Women-for-Wallace group.

Prior to the declaration of the Wallace candidacy, several local women's clubs had been established in favorable localities—New York City and Southern California—under leaders such as Elinor Gimbel and Elinor Kahn, to plan a women's program that would be integrated with the national party organization. Formal organization of the national Women-for-Wallace movement, however, was deferred until the April party conference in Chicago. The emphasis was placed, by these delegates from more than twenty-seven states, on altering the traditional secondary role accorded women in the major parties. In the Progressive Party, they would achieve complete equality—filling roles as “leaders, as candidates, and as door to door campaign workers.” Informing the group that their “major job was to organize the millions of women voters behind the New Party,” Chairman Elinor Gimbel also promised that “for the first time in our political
history, there is going to be a new party which will have women not only as organizers, but have them in at the very beginning . . . to give it guidance.”

The women’s appeal was aimed at groups all across the nation, but particularly in the smaller towns—with the Wallace foreign policy views expected to strike a responsive chord in the minds of wives and mothers. Party leaders anticipated that it would prove much more difficult to Red-bait a woman, since the average member of a women’s club in a small midwestern town seemed unlikely to be called a Communist. Mrs. Gimbel herself embarked upon a nation-wide tour of the “whistlestops”—East Coast, West Coast, Middle West, almost everywhere except the Deep South. Countless luncheons and other affairs served to raise both funds and, it was hoped, women’s support. Although the Women-for-Wallace group was successful in obtaining a great deal of political action from women—leg work and doorbell ringing on the house-to-house level—and although it was quite successful in raising funds, its successes were largely localized—in the metropolitan New York and Southern California areas where the women’s groups had the advantage of pre-existing support as well as superior leadership. Despite their hopes, the small towns and the “whistlestops” never seem to have responded to the rallying cry of “Peace, Freedom and Abundance.”

Was there a greater response from the potential leaders of tomorrow—the youths and students brought together in a third association, the Progressive Youth of America?

The organizational pattern here was not markedly different from that of the women’s groups. Active and well represented in New York and other metropolitan areas such as Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Los Angeles, the Young Progressives failed to gain any following across the nation as a whole.

The conservative cross section of youth that constituted college America in 1948 exhibited far less interest in the peace and progress issues raised by Wallace than might have been
expected from nonacademicians. There was general apathy over the possibility of future war or depression and a much greater concern over immediate job prospects. The few student political groups in existence were more attracted to the pseudoliberal Harold E. Stassen, than to the allegedly radical Henry A. Wallace. Few crusaders emerged from the Halls of Ivy—particularly in the midst of increasing pressures for intellectual conformity.

Perhaps the most interesting and unique contribution of the Young Progressives was their July National Youth Convention at Philadelphia immediately following the Progressive Party Convention. Modeled on much the same pattern as traditional party affairs, but with the platform rather than the candidates holding the center of the stage, the young convention was almost equally big, noisy, and frustrating. While it served to drum up enthusiasm among the already convinced delegates, it boomeranged as a means of attracting converts to the cause. The success of newspaper columnists in labeling this organization "Communist-dominated" undoubtedly served to completely alienate any persons who were still politically undecided.

Moreover, the inability of the youth organization to plan its agenda sufficiently well to complete a platform left an impression far from inspiring. The prolonged wrangling—late into Saturday night and all day Sunday—over trivial details and bits of minutiae was maddening. In two days the Philadelphia youth convention failed to act on a single matter of importance. It wound up ignominiously in the dark of Convention Hall—the lights turned out on its windmill battle of semantics.

Another of the associated groups—the Nationalities Division of the National Committee—was pitched on the level of recent immigrant groups. Organized at the Chicago conference by some eighty representatives of twenty-four different nationalities, headed by Zlatko Balokovic of the American
Slav Congress, its announced purpose was to “devote itself to the political and cultural problems peculiar to each group.” Accordingly, some eighteen subcommittees were formed representing major nationality groupings—Yugoslav-Americans, Italian-Americans, and even Irish-Americans, as well as Poles, Rumanians, Russians, and Greeks.

But once it had been formed, the Nationalities Division dropped almost completely from sight. Only in the small financial contributions traceable to it, did it emerge again—evidence that this too was just another paper organization.

A similar outcome was the fate of the Farm and Veterans groups. Although preliminary committees were formed in each of these fields, their activities proved untraceable either in the press or through financial statements. Farmers, particularly those of Progressive tradition, were in evidence at Philadelphia and throughout the campaign, but their numbers were not impressive. Similarly, the only liberal veterans group—the American Veterans Committee—failed to respond to the Wallace crusade, although some of its members undoubtedly donned the battle garb.

The National Businessmen’s Committee for Wallace constituted another associated group, somewhat more successful than the foregoing—particularly in the New York City area, where it had support in import-export circles. A carry-over of sorts from the earlier Businessmen for Roosevelt groups in the 1940 and 1944 campaigns, it included a core of Wallace’s personal followers, gained through speeches for the Democratic Party, his tariff stand during the 1930’s, and his support of small business assistance while Secretary of Commerce. Additionally, a bloc of Jewish businessmen in New York City had recently been attracted to Wallace by his position on the Palestine issue.

Although the contribution of the National Businessmen’s Committee to the Progressives in the realm of organization was relatively insignificant, their financial support from vari-
The last of the major associated organizations was the National Council of Arts, Sciences and Professions. At an earlier date, the Independent Citizens Committee for the ASP had been merged with the National Citizens Political Action Committee to form the Progressive Citizens of America. A second group, the National Council of the ASP, was formed in June, 1948 as an independent organization—primarily to accommodate those who did not wish to identify themselves completely with the third party. In their own words:

We, of the arts, sciences and professions, while basically nonpartisan, have always supported candidates, of whatever political affiliation, best qualified to carry forward a genuine program in the best interests of humanity and progress . . . . Today [1948] these hopes and achievements are embodied in the program and candidacy of Henry A. Wallace.

The NC-ASP never affiliated with the Progressive Party. Nor did its twenty thousand members in some nineteen local councils enter into the organizational operation on the ward-precinct level. They were not interested in doorbell ringing, house-to-house canvassing, and the other details of political work. But they did contribute in their own respective spheres. For example, Lillian Hellman and Norman Corwin brought their talent to the preparation of radio scripts, while others were responsible for stage techniques, lighting, and dramatization of the party’s rallies.

But what of the three tasks the party had set for itself in its organizational drive? From the outset, the Wallace crusade had seemed quixotic to many, inasmuch as it had been launched without the broad base of support or of popular
discontent so essential to success for any American third party. In its organizational work of building a new party, these deficiencies were brought home clearly. Starting from an already restricted base, the party soon found itself divided along broad versus narrow lines. Despite Wallace’s support of the former position, he failed to inject himself into organizational matters with enough vigor or sustained interest to impose his views. Coupled with this, the presence of the “Peekskill Boys” tended to exclude the moderates who might have supplied the necessary breadth. Yet only these leftists seemed prepared to turn out, to work zealously—eventually to attain through default a position of prominence in a narrowly defined organization.

Nor was the second task, of building in depth, any more successfully accomplished. Starting from the top and building downward would have been difficult even under the most favorable circumstances. In the face of public apathy to the issues of “Peace, Freedom and Abundance,” the task of organizing support on ward and precinct levels proved almost impossible. But the climate of opinion became worse than neutral as anti-Red hostility served increasingly even to prevent public discussion of the serious issues raised, let alone promote the building of a party machine. Only in New York City was there much success along these lines. And here the American Labor Party had enjoyed a twelve-year period in which to fashion an effective organization.

Even here, time, world events, the insistence of Marcan-tonio on a narrower and narrower party, and the final departure of Wallace himself were ultimately to shatter the only effective organization of the Progressives in their “fight for peace.” Elsewhere across the nation, the factor of personal allegiance to and support of one man—the former Vice President—was even more rapidly to prove fatal to party longevity. The organizational foundations laid down by those intent on building a new party proved to have been built on sand.
Neither breadth, nor depth, nor permanence was attained in the course of organizing the Progressive Party of 1948.

In 1947, Fiorello H. LaGuardia had predicted in a *PM* article, "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." Unfortunately for the Wallace Progressive Party, Main Street had not responded to its call to organize. Union Square had.