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## Viva Wallace Tampa Latins, the politics of Americanization, and the Progressive party campaign of 1948

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"Viva Wallace!"

Tampa Latins, the Politics of Americanization,  
and the Progressive Party Campaign of 1948

by

Jared G. Toney

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts  
Department of History  
College of Arts and Sciences  
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## Dedication

To my family, who always encouraged me to follow my heart, and supported my every endeavor. They provide a constant source of inspiration, security, and strength as I tread uncertain paths in search of a dream.

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“Viva Wallace!” Tampa Latins, the Politics of Americanization, and the Progressive Party Campaign of 1948

Jared G. Toney

ABSTRACT

This research deals with the presidential election of 1948 and the questions it raises concerning issues of ethnic identity and the experiences of working-class migrants in the U.S. South. Central to the discussion is the unprecedented success of third-party challenger Henry Wallace and his Progressive campaign in the immigrant enclaves of Tampa, Florida. Stigmatized by controversial foreign and domestic programs which drew disabling connections between Wallace and the Communist Party, the Progressive Party campaign hardly got its proverbial feet off the ground before falling victim to virulent criticism and widespread opposition. Carrying just over two percent of the votes nationwide, Wallace was soon relegated as an afterthought in modern historical memory, a footnote to the “real” battle between Dewey and Truman for the hearts and minds of the American public. This paper reevaluates the Progressive Party campaign in 1948 for the insights it provides into the immigrant experience, ethnic politics, and the continuous reinvention and contestation of “radical” politics and “American” identity. At issue here is not the failure of the campaign itself; nor is this intended to be a measure or judgment of Henry Wallace himself. Rather, it is to his appeal and isolated successes that I look to gain a better appreciation of the constructions and negotiations of ethnic identity and contested claims to the principles of American democracy and the rights of citizenship.



## Introduction

On a brisk evening in Tampa, Florida, in February 1948, an integrated crowd of nearly 2,500 spectators gathered at Plant Field to hear Henry Wallace articulate his idealistic vision for the future of the nation. Only months before, Wallace had accepted the Progressive Party nomination for President and embarked on a spirited campaign tour throughout the United States. His liberal platform presented a viable alternative to voters disillusioned with the increasing conservatism of mainstream U.S. politics, and provided a vehicle by which to advance more progressive interests. Building upon the tradition of Roosevelt's New Deal reforms, Wallace espoused the empowerment of organized labor and the working class, an end to racial discrimination and the institution of segregation, the demilitarization of postwar Europe, and an improvement of relations with the rising Soviet power. In so doing, Wallace invoked the symbolism of U.S. democratic traditions and the revolutionary legacy of the nation's most beloved figures.

We fight in the tradition of Jefferson and Lincoln. ... They were revolutionaries and we are revolutionaries. But we are revolutionaries in the finest American sense. We are not fighting to bring the Russian system to the United States. We are fighting to bring the American system back to the United States.<sup>1</sup>

Formidable opposition to the Progressive campaign surfaced throughout the country, though nowhere as vociferously as in the South, where an ardent commitment to states' rights prevailed among white southerners united in their mutual allegiance to racial segregation.<sup>2</sup> Opponents throughout the region turned out in great numbers to

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<sup>1</sup> Henry Wallace speaking at a PCA meeting in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in November of 1947; From the *Daily Worker*, 12 November 1947.

<sup>2</sup> Patricia Sullivan, *Days of Hope: Race and Democracy in the New Deal Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 3.

protest Wallace's appearances and counter a perceived threat to the entrenched economic and social interests of white southerners.

Boldly advancing into an inhospitable region historically characterized by ideological conservatism and extralegal repression, Wallace discovered a pocket of support in Tampa's immigrant enclaves of Ybor City and West Tampa. His appearance in Tampa that February evening demonstrates the degree to which many working-class women and men, especially Latins from Spain, Cuba, and Italy, and people of African descent, identified with the Wallace campaign and collectively rallied behind the Progressive platform. Appearing at Plant Field, Wallace emerged before the crowd to enthusiastic applause and cheers of "*Viva Wallace!*" from his Latin supporters, to which the appreciative and beleaguered candidate genially responded, "*Amigos mios!*"

By election day in November 1948, much of Wallace's support had collapsed as a result of red-baiting and Democratic politicking. Even those who remained ideologically committed to the Progressive cause were reluctant to "throw away" their votes on the third-party challenger.<sup>3</sup> With Truman's dramatic victory, the traditional U.S. party structure remained firmly entrenched and resistant to reformist (revolutionary, some argued) rhetoric. Though Wallace ultimately suffered an overwhelming defeat at the polls, his campaign was not without isolated successes. From the urban-industrial centers of the northeast to the waterfront cities of the west coast, just over one million Americans formally registered their support for Wallace on election day. This study seeks to analyze the effects of the Progressive campaign among the Spaniards, Italians, and Cubans of Ybor City and West Tampa, where Wallace's success was second only to that of New York City. Expressing their discontent with conservative U.S. policies and exclusionary

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<sup>3</sup> From Braulio Alonso, Interview with the author, 22 May 2002.

nationalist politics, the majority of working-class *Tampeños* defiantly endorsed a candidate branded by opponents as an un-American Communist dupe.<sup>4</sup> The Progressive campaign provides a means through which to understand ongoing constructions and assertions of ethnic and class identity among generations of Latins in Tampa.

Contesting the Anglo rhetoric of American idealism and republican principle, “political radicals” and “social activists” advanced an alternative – and in many ways oppositional – application of democracy and patriotism.<sup>5</sup> While Latin voting patterns in 1948 may be read as affirmations of political and social disenchantment with the mainstream Anglo discourse, they are conversely indicative of conscious attempts to work within the parameters of formal institutional politics to advance distinct ethnic, cultural, and class interests. Voting for Henry Wallace in 1948, *Tampeños* challenged U.S. conservatism not as outsiders, but as confident citizens with vested interests in a system perceived partly as their own.

The Wallace campaign in Tampa is significant for what it suggests about constructions of immigrant identity, community, and the politics of Americanization. Drawing from shared cultural memories and traditions, and rooted in the transnational

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<sup>4</sup> The term ‘Latin’ is used to speak comprehensively of the Spaniard, Italian, and Cuban immigrants of Ybor City and West Tampa. While on the one hand it was used by the Anglo community to speak of and relegate a collective ‘other,’ it was also embraced within the ethnic enclave as a demonstration of common identifications and shared experiences; See Susan Eckstein’s discussion of the ballot as “an instrument of political defiance,” in Susan Eckstein, ed., *Power and Popular Protest: Latin American Social Movements* (Berkeley, California: The University of California Press, 1994).

<sup>5</sup> Most simply, the ‘Anglo’ population of Tampa can be defined as whites of non-Latin descent whose native language was English. However, it can be more effectively understood as a reference to a national majority who maintained political and social power over ethnic and racial minorities. Because race is a social construction legitimized within a particular discourse of power, the category could be – and was – transgressed by elite members of the Latin community with access to local politicians and business leaders. Race and ethnicity, as historians have since recognized, was (and continues to be) very much a language of power. Historian George Sanchez provides a meaningful analysis of such a phenomenon by defining race as a relational concept which, in the U.S., equates notions of citizenship with ideas about whiteness. See George Sanchez, “Race, Nation, and Culture in Recent Immigration Studies,” *Journal of American Ethnic History*, (Summer 1999, Volume 18, Number 4), 66-84.

experiences of industrial labor and radical politics, first- and second- generation Latin immigrants found in the Progressive Party a chance to exercise their rights and voices as U.S. citizens, though in decidedly provocative and often controversial ways. Acting upon cultural and experiential conceptions of democracy, the Latin workers of Ybor City challenged hegemonic Anglo discourses of nationalism through their support of Henry Wallace and the Progressive Party in 1948.<sup>6</sup> While participating in the formal institutions of U.S. politics, Latin migrants and their children evoked individual and collective traditions of ethnic working-class radicalism that decried simple functions of assimilation. While individual identities were fashioned in part by respective ethnic traditions, the immediate experiences of life, work, and community in the U.S. South framed a collective identity in opposition to the Anglo community.

Thus, an analysis of the Progressive Party campaign in Tampa, Florida, provides a means by which one may better understand the construction of ethnic identity among first and second-generation immigrants in the United States. Because the Latins of Tampa were chiefly involved in the cigar industry, their identities were firmly entrenched in working-class culture and community. Latin support for Wallace's progressivism, controversial as it was, served as the very vehicle of Americanization through which cigar workers and their children contested U.S. political conservatism and social exclusivity as citizens invested in the American democratic system.

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<sup>6</sup> When speaking of "hegemony," I mean to say that the discourse of domination constructed and advanced by entrenched Anglo interests permeated southern white culture and perceptions in myriad ways, informing social relations and reinforcing ethnic and racial stratifications. I actually argue against a strict Gramscian definition of hegemony, however, instead contending that immigrants manipulated stereotypes and Anglo expectations of behavior through complex transcripts of resistance and defiance. See Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, edited and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971).

This thesis takes the following form. To understand Wallace's appeal to the Latin population of Tampa requires an examination of the very roots of ethnic and working-class identity among the various groups who inhabited the enclave. Thus, the first chapter draws from the transnational experiences of an eclectic and mobile community of workers, analyzing the ways that Latins experienced, ordered, and defined their lives in the process of migration to the United States, and engaged in the ongoing redefinition of their individual and collective identities. The second chapter traces the rise and development of the Progressive Party and what it purported to offer Americans, specifically working-class migrants, in the 1940s. Following Wallace along the campaign trail illustrates how people received and responded to the Progressive message, particularly in the U.S. South where he faced the most obstreperous (and often violent) attacks. The third and final chapter analyzes the election results in Tampa, explaining why Latin immigrants chose to endorse the controversial candidate for president. I consider not only the ways in which Latins voted, and but also how they explained those votes. The election of 1948 suggests an alternative theory of Americanization in which immigrants fashioned identity through a reconciliation of radical tradition with long-term investment in U.S. society. The Progressive Party campaign in Ybor City and West Tampa exemplifies the ways in which immigrants acted both individually and collectively as U.S. citizens on behalf of common ethnic, cultural, and class interests. Ultimately, this study demonstrates that despite the superficial appearance of effective "assimilation," successive generations of Latins continued to identify with their heritage through cultural memory and more immediate experience, incorporating it into their own unique constructions and expressions of Americanism.

## Chapter 1: *Aves de Paso* \* Latin Migration and Settlement

“I am a little of everywhere I have been. I feel that I am part of the world.”+

Born in northwestern Spain in the 1860s, brothers Enrique and Jaime Pendas followed separate paths around the world before meeting again in Ybor City, Florida, in the early 1890s. The elder of the brothers, Enrique, left Spain for Havana, Cuba at the age of eighteen, and quickly became engaged in the island’s cigar manufacturing industry. Only two years later, having acquired some valuable trade experience, he moved on to New York City to join his uncle’s firm, Lozano, Pendas, & Company. In 1887, after five years of apprenticeship with his uncle, Enrique migrated to Tampa and established a cigar factory of his own in the isolated southern town, where he ultimately settled and raised a family. Meanwhile, his brother Jaime took a slightly different route, migrating first to New York City in 1871 and obtaining a formal education at Peekskill College on the Hudson. Ten years later, Jaime went west, traveling throughout the frontier states before eventually sinking roots in Ybor City with his brother in 1891. After spending a few years working as a manager in the cigar factories of Puerto Rico, Jaime married and lived out his years in Tampa alongside his brother.<sup>7</sup>

Though most migrant cigar workers were not afforded the economic advantages particular to the Pendas brothers, their story is nonetheless a valuable illustration of important migration networks between Latin nations and American cities. Workers from all corners of the world followed complex channels of migration, largely determined by

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\* “Birds of Passage”

+ From Andrea O’Reilly Herrera, ed., *ReMembering Cuba: Legacy of a Diaspora* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2001), 30.

<sup>7</sup> From Ernest Lauren Robinson, *History of Hillsborough County, Florida; Narrative and Biographical* (Saint Augustine, FL: The Record Company, 1928), 348-349.

the availability of work and pressing economic concerns.<sup>8</sup> The United States was not their only destination. Newly industrializing cities across the globe drew large numbers of migrant workers with the promise of regular employment and economic security.<sup>9</sup> From Paris to Buenos Aires to New York City, innumerable localities east and west offered particular advantages to mobile populations of transnational workers. As the lives of the Pendas brothers effectively illustrate, migrants consciously navigated established familial and ethnic networks as they sought the best opportunity for themselves and their families. Migration was not a chaotic or capricious process. Unless otherwise compelled by threatening or oppressive conditions in their native lands, migrants often saw relocation as a temporary phenomenon, a means by which to compensate for economic and social

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<sup>8</sup> Historian Dirk Hoerder argues that, “We should replace the terms *emigration* and *immigration* by *migration* since many, perhaps most, moves were not intended to be permanent.” From Dirk Hoerder, “From Migrants to Ethnics: Acculturation in a Societal Framework” in Dirk Hoerder and Leslie Page Moch, eds., *European Migrants: Global and Local Perspectives* (Boston, Northeastern University Press, 1996). As transnational workers, Latins in the cigar industry underwent continuous processes of migration as they followed work from one location to another. Throughout this thesis, however, when I speak of settled (and for all intents and purposes, permanent) populations within a host country, I consciously seek to de-emphasize ongoing movement by referring to “immigrant” populations. Of course, this is a luxury afforded the historian who sees beyond the uncertainties contained within particular historical moments. Nina Glick Schiller et al build upon this notion of “transmigration” in which migrants lives their lives across borders, maintaining multiple identities rooted in custom, tradition, and experience. See Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Christina Blanc-Szanton, “Transnationalism: A New Analytic Framework for Understanding Migration,” in *Towards a Transnational Perspective on Migration: Race, Class, and Nationalism Reconsidered* (New York Academy of Sciences, volume 645), July 6, 1992, and “From Immigrant to Transmigrant: Theorizing Transnational Migration,” *Anthropological Quarterly* (January 1995, 68:1), 48-63. Also see Nancy Green’s comparative analysis of the Jewish diaspora in, “The Modern Jewish Diaspora: Eastern European Jews in New York, London, and Paris,” in Hoerder and Moch, eds., *European Migrants*, 263-281, and, more broadly, “The Comparative Method and Poststructural Structuralism – New Perspectives for Migration Studies,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* (Summer 1994, Volume 13, Number 4), 3-22. Other historians have also effectively employed theories that decentralize the United States within larger global migration networks. See, for example, Sucheng Chan, who places migrants at the center of historical research in “European and Asian Immigration into the United States in Comparative Perspective, 1820s to 1920s,” Virginia Yans-Laughlin, ed., *Immigration Reconsidered: History, Sociology, and Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 37-75.

<sup>9</sup> In their study of working-class migration, Donna Gabaccia, Franca Iacovetta, and Fraser Ottanelli argue that such proletarian networks linked people, goods, and ideas beyond the formal boundaries of state. Thus, global patterns of migration witnessed the recurring (and renegotiated) confluence of class, ethnicity, and nationalism among transnational communities of workers. Historians, they argue, should recognize the effects of class, gender, and the state in studies of transnationalism, treating national and transnational studies as “entwined levels of analysis” in early processes of globalization. From Gabaccia et al, “Laboring Across National Borders: Class, Gender, and Militancy in the Proletarian Mass Migration,” *International Labor and Working Class History* (Issue 66, Fall 2004), 57-77.

insecurities in their homeland. As such, movement occurred in multiple directions within emerging world systems: between sending and receiving societies, and among nations as well as within them.<sup>10</sup> Mobility afforded migrants a relative amount of agency as arbiters of their own labor, granting and withholding work according to local conditions and circumstances.<sup>11</sup>

As both agents and products of this international exchange, displaced individuals, families, and communities developed fluid and multiple identities, maintaining ties to their geographic and ideological roots while adjusting to the demands and expectations imposed by the host society.<sup>12</sup> Recent historiographical trends have begun to recognize and appreciate immigrants as much more than “blank slates” to be colored by North American cultures.<sup>13</sup> Rather, as the behavior of Latins in Tampa demonstrates, responses to new experiences, behaviors, and ideological influences in the host country were determined by and reflective of myriad factors, not the least of which was the socio-

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<sup>10</sup> These ideas of “world systems” are grounded in the work of Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein. See, for example, *World Systems Analysis: An Introduction* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2004); and *Geopolitics and Geoculture: Essays on the Changing World System* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

<sup>11</sup> Historians of migration and ethnicity largely agree that migrants exercised some degree of agency within larger global structures. Mobility was a chief means by which immigrants attempted to affect their environments and control their lives. For example, See Ewa Morawska, “The Sociology and Historiography of Immigration,” in Virginia Yans McLaughlin ed., *Immigration Reconsidered: History, Sociology and Politics* (1990): 187-238.

<sup>12</sup> Idea is grounded in Nina Glick Schiller, et al., “From Immigrant to Transmigrant: Theorizing Transnational Migration” *Anthropological Quarterly* (no. 1, 1995), 39-63.

<sup>13</sup> From Jose Moya, *Cousins and Strangers: Spanish Immigrants in Buenos Aires, 1850-1930* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1998), 4; Early scholars of immigration (best illustrated by the Chicago School) focused on over-arching, teleological methods of analysis which emphasized the ‘melting-pot’ theory of assimilation. Oscar Handlin, for instance, portrayed migration as a linear process by which workers were “uprooted” from their native lands and forced to conform to life in a host country. See Handlin’s *The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migrations that Made the American People*, and his later study, *Boston’s Immigrants: A Study in Acculturation*. By the 1960s, however, scholars like Frank Thistlethwaite, John Higham, and John Bodnar offered more sophisticated analyses which acknowledged greater personal agency as migrants navigated global networks of movement and exchange. Thus, identity was complicated by ideas about class, community ethnic allegiances, and a multiplicity of experiences. See Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925*; John Bodnar, *The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Early America*. More current historiography emphasizes more migrant-centered, comparative approaches which explore the complexities of ethnic identity and the significance of such factors as gender, race, and class as they informed migrant experiences.



political framework in the native country that informed the manner in which migrants collectively fashioned self-identity and participated in the world around them.<sup>14</sup>

In many cases, the workplace served as the forum within which complex negotiations between ethnic traditions, class allegiances, and economic exigencies were conducted, disputed, and reconciled.<sup>15</sup> Conditions in Tampa's Latin enclave were no different in that respect. The cigar industry served as the primary draw for an international assembly of workers from the Caribbean and all over the world. This chapter retraces the paths taken by the Latin migrants as they departed from their native lands in search of economic opportunity abroad. In so doing, it also illuminates the interactions and experiences vital in the formation of identity and collective behaviors. Latins in the U.S. South exhibited fluid identities in continuous response to circumstances within the host society. What makes the circumstances so compelling is that while *Tampeños* gradually accustomed themselves to certain U.S. institutions and embraced select modes of expression, it was not altogether at the expense of tradition. The

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<sup>14</sup> Historiographical trends have emphasized the importance of considering sending as well as receiving countries in the global movement of peoples. Frank Thistlethwaite, for example, argues that a metaphorical "salt-water curtain" dividing east from west inhibits scholars from properly understanding the roots of European origins. See Frank Thistlethwaite, "Migration from Europe Overseas in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," in Rudolph J. Vecoli and Suzanne M. Sinke eds., *A Century of European Migrations, 1830-1930*, (1991):17-57.

<sup>15</sup> This idea is most clearly illustrated by James Barrett in his essay "Americanization from the Bottom Up: Immigration and the Remaking of the Working Class in the United States, 1880-1930," *Journal of American History* (December 1992): 996-1020; Jose Yglesias addresses the confluence of class and ethnic identity, writing that, "He was a Cuban. This sudden knowledge became one with his experience of working in the factory." From Yglesias, *The Truth About Them* (Houston: University of Houston, Arte Público Press, 1971), 32. See also Barrett, *Work and Community in the Jungle: Chicago's Packinghouse Workers* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987); Harmut Keil, "The German Immigrant Working Class of Chicago, 1875-90: Workers, Labor Leaders, and the Labor Movement," in Dirk Hoerder ed., *American Labor and Immigration History, 1877-1920s*, (1983): 156-176; Donna R. Gabaccia and Fraser M. Ottanelli, eds., *Italian Workers of the World: Labor Migration and the Formation of Multiethnic States* (Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001); See also David Montgomery's discussion of how immigration shaped class consciousness in, "Nationalism, American Patriotism, and Class Consciousness among Immigrant Workers in the Epoch of World War I," in Dirk Hoerder, ed., *Struggle a Hard Battle": Essays on Working Class Immigrants* (DeKalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1986), 327-351.

Progressive campaign of 1948 provides a suitable capstone for such processes, a moment of exposure in which complex identities were consciously employed towards specific ends. An explanation of political behavior and voting patterns in the mid-twentieth century, however, depends upon experiences, conceptions, traditions, and perceptions rooted deeply within the nineteenth century, and passed from one generation to the next.

Upon its establishment in the late 1880s, the Latin community of Ybor City, Florida, was immediately eclectic in its composition and cosmopolitan in its character. Though it also included a small number of Chinese and Jewish immigrants and African Americans, the enclave was overwhelmingly occupied by Spaniards, Italians, and Cubans.<sup>16</sup> Coming together largely around the burgeoning cigar industry that linked Tampa to Cuba, each of the respective groups maintained distinct, pronounced, and sometimes divisive, cultural characteristics and ethnic traditions. Though allied by common class interests and pecuniary objectives, the skilled workers juggled demands of and allegiances to family, to class, and to culture as they labored within the cigar factories of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and South Florida. For many, however, the journey began long before crossing the Atlantic.

The son of Antonio and Licata Providenzia (Fiorito) Licata, Philip F. Licata was born in Palermo, Italy, in November 1877. At just five years of age, young Philip and his parents left the northern coast of Sicily, bound for the United States.<sup>17</sup> Like many Italians

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<sup>17</sup> It is important here, as in the other cases cited, to recognize the importance of regional distinctions as opposed to a single national culture. Scholars of Italy's Risorgimento have in fact argued that a national identity emerged first among exile communities outside of the nation's formal political borders. See Donna Gabaccia and Franca Iacovetta, eds., *Women, Gender, and Transnational Lives: Italian Workers of the World* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002; Donna Gabaccia, "Class, Exile, and Nationalism at Home and Abroad: The Italian Risorgimento," and Pietro Rinaldo Fanesi, "Italian Antifascism and the Garibaldine Tradition in Latin America," in Donna R. Gabaccia and Fraser M. Ottanelli, *Workers of the*

before them, the Licata family settled first in the Gulf city of New Orleans. Depending upon his level of education and financial status, Philip's father Antonio may have worked on the waterfront, or perhaps on one of Louisiana's numerous sugar plantations. Nearly ten years later, however, the entire family moved again, this time to Tampa, Florida, where a prosperous cigar industry and established Italian community likely drew the migrant family. In Tampa, Philip received a public education and learned the highly regarded (and relatively profitable) trade of cigar making. There, he ultimately grew into adulthood, started a family, and lived out his years working in various businesses.<sup>18</sup>

In the mid-nineteenth century, Spaniards sought alternatives to unfavorable conditions in the northwest provinces of Asturias and Galicia, where a "regressive social system" and "unyielding environment" left the peasantry increasingly impoverished.<sup>19</sup> From the "little village" of Ferrol de Galicia in northern Spain, twelve year-old Fermin Souto set out with a friend for Havana, Cuba, in October 1870. They too followed established routes across the Atlantic as others had before them, "Although usually the people from Galicia – my province – went to Argentine and Uruguay; while the Asturianos ... went to Cuba."<sup>20</sup> It was the lure of the cigar industry which drew the two

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*World: Labor Migration and the Formation of Multiethnic States* (Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001).

<sup>18</sup> From Robinson, *History of Hillsborough County, Florida*, 302.

<sup>19</sup> Gary R. Mormino and George E. Pozzetta, *The Immigrant World of Ybor City: Italians and Their Latin Neighbors in Tampa, 1885-1985* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1987), 70; According to Mormino and Pozzetta, 820,000 Spaniards emigrated to the Americas between 1880 and 1920. Of those, 130,000 went to the United States.

<sup>20</sup> "The Life History of Fermin Souto," narrated and recorded as part of a WPA project, *Ybor City Papers*, Special Collections, University of South Florida, 599-601; WPA investigators gave the following description of Spanish migrants to Florida: "Asturias, on of the forty-eight provinces into which Spain is divided, is situated in the northern Cantabrian coast, a fertile and mountainous land where rich crops grow and with pastures where the best of cattle graze ... The commanding majority of the Spaniards that live in Ybor City are from this Spanish province ... There are, however, a certain small percentage of Spaniards from other Cantabrian provinces, Galicia and Santandor," From "A Study of the Typical Spanish Family in Ybor City," in *Social-Ethnic Study of Ybor City, Tampa, Florida*, WPA Project, USF Special Collections, 86.

countrymen to the western hemisphere, thousands of miles away from their homes and families. Once he mastered the trade in Cuba, Souto – and thousands of workers like him – followed the cigar industry into South Florida, where he may well have found himself rolling cigars in the factory owned by the Pendas brothers, perhaps even rubbing elbows or throwing *bolita* with the Sicilian, Philip Lacata.

Though they did not have the physical distance to cover, Cubans Domingo Genesta and Fernando Lemos faced difficulties and formidable obstacles of their own. Lemos fled from Havana to Key West in 1868, when “the revolution ... forced many Cubans to abandon their country and sail for the nearest place of refuge.” In 1886, he and Genesta both arrived in a little-known and rather desolate frontier town on Tampa Bay, where owners Ignacio Haya and Vincente Martinez Ybor had just moved their factories in an attempt to escape labor unrest. While Genesta and Lemos likely shared the benches with fellow Spaniard and Italian cigar rollers, neither Cuban ever forgot where he came from, nor to whom he owed allegiance. After all, as Genesta later recalled, it was Spaniards from Havana that came to Key West in 1891 to break a strike among Cuban workers at *La Rose Española*. Though part of an increasingly transnational labor force, workers continued to identify strongly with their native lands as *aves de paso*, birds of passage, in a newly industrializing world.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, common interests and shared

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<sup>21</sup> “History of Ybor City as narrated by Mr. Domingo Genesta,” WPA project, *Ybor City Papers*, Special Collections, University of South Florida, 44-47; “Early Days in Ybor, as narrated by Fernando Lemos,” WPA project, *Ybor City Papers*, Special Collections, University of South Florida, 49; In his study on Cuban identity, Gustavo Firmat writes, “Like the United States, Cuba is a land of immigrants; unlike the United States, it is a country of immigrants many of whom reached the island on the way to other places ... Cuba is a land of migratory birds, *aves de paso*.” Gustavo Firmat, *Life on the Hyphen: The Cuban-American Way* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1994), 6.

experiences of work gradually functioned to transcend, though not altogether eliminate, ethnic and national divisions.<sup>22</sup>

For a time in the late-nineteenth century, migrants and political exiles converged in Havana around the cigar industry. Such an environment fostered important transnational exchanges of people and ideas from around the world, while facilitating the development of a radical and markedly defiant working-class community.<sup>23</sup> When frequent strikes sabotaged production and profit, industry leaders moved their factories first to Key West then later to Ybor City in the 1880s and West Tampa in the 1890s. Despite elite efforts to escape labor activism within their factories, workers of Spanish, Italian, and Cuban heritage uprooted themselves and followed the cigar industry from one location to another. “Believe me,” one Latin cigar worker reflected years later, “in this life there are always means of escaping anything that prohibits one in obtaining a living. Only death, no one can escape that.”<sup>24</sup> Thus, survival required mobility. While crossing one border after another, working-class Latins relied upon developing notions of community rooted in common economic, social, and political priorities. With the introduction of the cigar industry, Tampa inherited a radical migrant culture inseparable from the business of cigar making, and consequently faced several decades of labor unrest and particularly tense social relations.

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<sup>22</sup> For a comprehensive and multifaceted discussion of labor-based migration patterns, see the collection of essays in Donna Gabaccia and Fraser Ottanelli, eds., *Italian Workers of the World: Labor Migration and the Formation of Multiethnic States* (Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001).

<sup>23</sup> In her book on popular social movements in Latin America, historian Susan Eckstein espouses the pragmatic value of collective identifications among immigrant populations, stating that, “When groups share strong distinctive identities and dense interpersonal networks, members are readily mobilizable: both the identity and the networks provide a base for collective incentives.” Susan Eckstein, ed., *Power and Popular Protest: Latin American Social Movements* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1994), 6.

<sup>24</sup> From “Interviews obtained by Mr. Marrero with persons leaving Tampa, translated from Spanish to English,” in *Social-Ethnic Study of Ybor City, Tampa, Florida*, WPA Project, USF Special Collections, 487.

Though drawn by the promise of work, immediate impressions of the Bay area were not entirely positive. “Several friends described Tampa to me with such glowing colors that I soon became enthused, and decided to come here and try my fortune,” explained Italian migrant John Cacciatore of his initial decision to move to Tampa Bay.

I was then twenty-seven years of age. I had expected to see a flourishing city, but my expectations were too high, for what I saw before me almost brought me to tears. There was nothing; what one may truthfully say, nothing. Franklin was a long sandy street. There were very few houses, and these were far apart with tall pine trees surrounding them ... Ybor City was not connected to Tampa as it is today. There was a wilderness between the two cities, and a distance of more than one mile between the two places. All of Ybor City was not worth one cent to me ... I was completely disillusioned with what I saw.<sup>25</sup>

Truly, as Cacciatore saw first hand, there was little to the town of Tampa, a former Civil War military outpost. With the arrival of the cigar industry in the 1880s, however, increasing numbers of migrants, and later Anglos, migrated to the Bay area. The industry “was here before they were,” author and long-time resident Jose Yglesias later wrote. “We cigarmakers put this miserable city on the map.”<sup>26</sup> As their settlement and behavior in Ybor City illustrated, persistent ethnic (and intra-class) distinctions remained a divisive element within the greater immigrant community.<sup>27</sup> “This was once a small Cuba,” recalled an early migrant to Ybor City. “Everyone [*todo el mundo*] aided each other, but Tampa began to [diversify] itself [*cosmopolitando*]. The Italians and Americans began entering here, and now it is a mixture.”<sup>28</sup> Animositities among ethnic groups were generated primarily by competition for the very thing that brought them together: work.

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<sup>25</sup> From “Life History of Mr. John Cacciatore,” in *Ybor City Papers*, WPA Project, USF Special Collections, 538.

<sup>26</sup> Jose Yglesias, *The Truth about Them* (Houston, TX: Arte Publico Press, University of Houston), 100.

<sup>27</sup> The ethnic distinctions within the Latin community were so pronounced, in fact, that Cubans struck on the opening day of Martinez Ybor’s factory in protest over the hiring of a Spanish foreman (January, 1887). See Gary R. Mormino and George E. Pozzetta, *The Immigrant World of Ybor City: Italians and Their Latin Neighbors in Tampa, 1885-1985* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1987).

<sup>28</sup> From “Life History of Mr. Pedro Barrios,” in *Ybor City Papers*, WPA Project, USF Special Collections, 530.

“The [cigar] workers were mostly Cubans at the beginning,” remembers immigrant Don Marti, himself a Cuban. “Then the Spanish came in. But the thing is, since the owners of these cigar factories were Spanish, you had a segregation deal there.” His perceptions of Spanish and Italian workers color his own memory and reflect the ways workers themselves discriminated against one another on the basis of social access, economic competition, and ethnic identity. “Italians came later. ... The majority were Sicilians. ... And there was a lot of animosity between the Italians and the Cubans and the Spaniards.” Marti further explained that the Sicilians were “crafty people” and “suspicious” because for many years they had been “stepped on” and oppressed in their native country. “They had a hard life in Sicily ... so they had to do everything they could.”<sup>29</sup>

The institutions of Jim Crow in the South also *imposed* divisions on incoming migrants, particularly among black and white Cubans. “When [black Cubans] came over here, they had this thing about segregation,” recalls Yolanda Casellas, an Afro-Cuban raised in Ybor City. “Once [Cubans] got over here, they weren’t as friendly with each other. ... So we were discriminated on both sides, first by the whites, then by the black Americans. ... That was the law here, so they had to go by the law in the South, you know.”<sup>30</sup> Such distinctions, however, were relatively relaxed within Ybor City, where individuals escaped surveillance and scrutiny by the Anglo population. “On walking from the downtown district of Tampa to Ybor City one is immediately struck by the contrast between the pedestrians encountered,” read one report from the 1930s. “In Tampa proper

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<sup>29</sup> Don Marti, 6 December 2000, Interviewed by Sandra Jill McCoy, Courtesy of USF Special Collections.

<sup>30</sup> Yolanda Casellas, 13 November 2000, Interviewed by Nikolai Thomas and Ryan McCracken, Courtesy of USF Special Collections; See also Susan Greenbaum, *More Than Black: Afro-Cubans in Tampa* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2002). Greenbaum suggests that black Cubans sought to distinguish themselves ethnically as Cubans in order to gain access and privileges traditionally denied to African Americans in the U.S. South. As such, significant divisions arose within the black community on the basis of ethnic allegiances.

the blonde haired, blue eyed, fair and ruddy complexioned Nordic predominates, but on walking down Broadway a heterogeneous procession of pedestrians are met; dark eyed, black haired, swarthy complexioned Spanish types predominate while dark-skinned Cubans, Italians, Sicilians, and Negroes with an infusion of Cuban and Spanish blood make up a motley procession.”<sup>31</sup>

Despite such distinctions, both internal and imposed, cigar workers recognized the strength of unity and empowerment through solidarity and collective bargaining. “*In Tampa we must seek other means that will make life possible, and these means must be at the reach of all,*” explained one immigrant. “Collective cooperation is necessary, and not the individual dogma, which reduces the road to well-being more rapid and necessary to all the community.”<sup>32</sup> Another migrant worker recited an allegory to illustrate the importance of unity within the Latin community. “I also remember a fox which we started to hunt,” he begins. “You can ask this of any of my friends. You may laugh at this story, but it is true.”

Every time we stopped to rest, the fox would stop also and would look at us from afar. It really looked ‘like he wanted to take our hair’ (*nos quiera tomar el pelo*). Finally at nightfall we were able to corral him in a rabbit’s cave. We closed up the cave and left. The following day we came back, and my friend fired with his gun, and a rattlesnake came out; and when we thought that the fox was coming out, a rabbit came out. Finally we were able to tale the fox out, which we placed in a box. It seems that the rattlesnake, the rabbit and the fox lived there in the greatest harmony.<sup>33</sup>

Clearly, life in the U.S. South presented new challenges to migrant cigar workers and their families as they struggled to advance common interests against an often hostile and exclusive Anglo community. An editorial in the local labor newspaper, *El*

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<sup>31</sup> *Ybor City Papers*, WPA Project, USF Special Collections, 74.

<sup>32</sup> From “Interviews obtained by Mr. Marrero with persons leaving Tampa, translated from Spanish to English,” in *Social-Ethnic Study of Ybor City, Tampa, Florida*, WPA Project, USF Special Collections, 490 (emphases added).

<sup>33</sup> “Life History of Mr. Pedro Barrios by F. Valdez” From the *Ybor City Papers*, WPA Project, USF Special Collections, 535.



*Internacional*, espoused the need for unity in the face of elite capitalist oppression. “We must be closely united,” it read. “So that any time they dare try to attempt anything against our rights, against our interests, we should wrathfully raise up and tell them: ‘Go back, you tyrants; you cannot take anything more from us; but, instead, you will have to give us back that which you have stolen from us.’ And if we don’t want to do that, we have the means in our own hands to compel them to treat us as men – not as serfs ... WE GIVE YOU HERE THE WARNING: IT IS NECESSARY FOR US TO BE CLOSE UNITED OR WE WILL FALL MOST UNHAPPILY INTO A MISERABLE CONDITION.”<sup>34</sup>

Latins in Ybor City immediately employed familiar techniques of cooperation and socio-political activism to achieve security, incorporation, and ultimately survival. Cigar worker Pedro Barrios reflected such a philosophy when he spoke of his idealistic commitment to the welfare of others. “My religion is the following: do good to others. If I know of someone who has nothing to eat, I cannot sit at the table. The anguish of anyone is my anguish; I feel it as much as the one who is suffering it. ... This is my religion and the one which I impressed on my children.”<sup>35</sup> Perhaps as a result of his transnational experiences as a mobile industrial worker, Barrios, and others like him, came to equate individual survival with the collective well-being. Thus, community became (or rather, continued to be) a valuable and self-affirming dimension of migrant life which provided not only a common point of identification, but also the institutions

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<sup>34</sup> “Violent Situation,” *El Internacional*, 27 January 1922. *El Internacional* was among the most radical of papers produced by and for the local immigrant community. The material was primarily oriented around class interests and labor conditions in the cigar factories of Ybor City.

<sup>35</sup> From “Life History of Mr. Pedro Barrios,” in *Ybor City Papers*, WPA Project, USF Special Collections, 533.

and networks (both ideological and material) of collective security that workers drew upon in the interests of cultural preservation and individual survival.

This commitment to and reliance upon community also served as a primary method by which working-class migrants sought to ameliorate local experiences of discrimination and oppression through a common culture of opposition.<sup>36</sup> In a region characterized by Jim Crow segregation and Anglo vigilante violence, notions of and allegiances to community functioned as devices of mutual protection and security among the Latins of Ybor City. “One time the Ku Klux Klan paraded through Ybor City to break up a strike,” reflected one resident years later. “Everybody just got their shot guns and came out and sat on the porch with their guns and watched the parade. It sure was quite a parade, and it didn’t last very long. Man, it was a good thing the Klan didn’t start no trouble or there sure would have been revolution or something over here!”<sup>37</sup>

Subject to a hostile environment characterized by ethnic discrimination and working-class oppression, Latin cigar workers in Tampa attempted to “recreate” the long-standing traditions and familiar institutions of their respective homelands within the town’s immigrant enclave.<sup>38</sup> First-generation migrants in Ybor City turned inward toward

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<sup>36</sup> In his book on vigilante violence in Tampa, Robert Ingalls writes, “Nativism rarely figured in the public justification of vigilantism.” Instead, violent acts of Anglo oppression “largely followed class, not ethnic, lines.” In the early years of Ybor City, class and ethnicity were largely intertwined as the overwhelming majority of immigrants worked in the cigar industry. Thus, Latin workers as well as African Americans were the frequent targets of attack. However, as Ingalls argues, Latin elites often supported such acts of violence against working class migrants. See Robert P. Ingalls, *Urban Vigilantes in the New South* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1988), xix, 13, chapter 1.

<sup>37</sup> An interview with “Enrique and Amanda,” two long-time residents of Ybor City, interviewed on 3 January 1939, *Ybor City Papers*, WPA Project, USF Special Collections, 487.

<sup>38</sup> Gustavo Firmat writes of collective efforts among migrant populations to recreate their homelands within the less familiar, and often menacing, context of the host society. Other scholars have suggested that while first-generation immigrants identify more with their homelands, they do not do so as a means of romanticizing the past, but rather as “a means of defending their reputation in the face of popular derision.” See Gustavo Perez Firmat, *Life on the Hyphen: The Cuban-American Way* (Austin, Texas: The University of Texas Press, 1994) and Jose Moya, *Cousins and Strangers: Spanish Immigrants in Buenos Aires, 1850-1930* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), 4.

the security and familiarity of the cultures whence they came, “blending inconspicuously into [what would become] a familiar and supportive ethnic radical community.”<sup>39</sup> Don Marti later reflected that in Ybor City, “We had everything ... doctors, hospitals, clubs.” In fact, he was seventeen years old before he ever ventured into Anglo Tampa to see a show at the theatre. “We had everything ... we didn’t have to go downtown. ... [We] didn’t have to cross Nebraska Avenue for anything, because everything was there.”<sup>40</sup>

Among the primary institutions of immigrant culture in Ybor City were the mutual-aid societies, including *Círculo Cubano*, *Centro Español*, *Unione Italiana*, *Centro Asturiano*, and the *Marti-Maceo* Society. Organized along ethnic lines, these societies provided to generations of immigrants myriad services “from cradle to grave,” such as health care, entertainment, and continuous economic and social support. “They were very happy to have so many social groups [clubs],” explained Fernando Mesa. “[They] would make your life easy, to get along and meet people, and meet friends.”<sup>41</sup> While serving a necessary function for the community’s material needs, mutual aid societies also provided a center for communication, cultural maintenance, and social engagement. Clubs sponsored frequent picnics, festivals, dances, and athletic events which reinforced ethnic identity and class consciousness, while strengthening important personal connections within the enclave. The formation of a youth baseball league (announced in a local Latin newspaper) celebrated the benefits of such an endeavor, suggesting that athletics gave “young people an opportunity to play [their] favorite sport ... and at the

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<sup>39</sup> Fraser M. Ottanelli, *Radicalism and the Shaping of Ethnic Identity: Italian American Anti-Fascist Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War*, not yet published, provided courtesy of the author, 34.

<sup>40</sup> Don Marti, 6 December 2000, Interviewed by Sandra Jill McCoy, Courtesy of USF Special Collections.

<sup>41</sup> Fernando Mesa, 8 November 2000, Interviewed by Carrie Eskelund.

same time awakening in the young workers the interest in labor unity and its meaning to the workers as a whole.”<sup>42</sup>

In addition to cultural preservation, social clubs also served as vehicles of incorporation for migrant workers and their families. In the early years, such organizations provided an education to young and old residents alike. While the workers were familiarized with the radical works of such authors and political thinkers as Karl Marx, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, and Mikhail Bakunin, they also took courses in U.S. history and lessons in the English language. “As public instruction was very deficient at that time, the *Centro Español* placed two teachers during the day for the instruction of the English language, and two teachers during the night for the teaching of English to adults,” explained Fermin Souto, who later became secretary of the club.<sup>43</sup> By the 1930s, the Anglo community sponsored educational programs as important steps in the “Americanization” of the Latin immigrants. “These people are studying English very earnestly in order that they may better appreciate our country and become more worthy citizens,” wrote Emma Schmidt, the principal of the V.M. Ybor Evening School. “The need for evening classes in English and citizenship here in Tampa is great, and concerted effort should be made by those interested to have them established on a permanent basis.”<sup>44</sup> Perhaps the Anglo residents of Tampa understood assimilation only in terms of exchange: one culture, language, identity, for another; thus, by pushing “American”

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<sup>42</sup> “Young Workers Form a Workers’ Athletic Club,” *El Internacional*, 10 February 1939. This newspaper article, and countless others like it, suggest the extent to which work and class informed immigrant identity in Ybor City. The emphasis on youth organizations also suggests some effort to imbue successive generations with a common allegiance to class and community.

<sup>43</sup> “History of Ybor City as Related by Fermin Souto,” *Centro Español Papers*, USF Special Collections, 58.

<sup>44</sup> Letter from Emma Schmidt, principal of the V.M. Ybor Evening School to Ramon Fernandez, 25 April 1936. From the *Centro Español Papers*, USF Special Collections. See also excerpts from the by-laws of the respective mutual-aid societies, in which they address their concerns for education and courses in the English language.

programs, the Anglo community hoped to blunt the radical edge of socialist immigrant politics.<sup>45</sup>

While taking measured steps toward incorporation through, for example, learning English, Latin migrants in Ybor City maintained traditions of social and political radicalism, reflected through international solidarities and allegiances to class.<sup>46</sup> Allied through common economic interests and shared experiences of work, Tampa's cigar workers defiantly invoked socialist principles to protest perceptions of capitalist oppression, Anglo nationalism, and contradictions of U.S. democracy. "Sweet land of Liberty!" began one editorial in the local Latin press. "LIBERTY is one of the most highly praised and revered words in a man's vocabulary. LIBERTY, JUSTICE, and DEMOCRACY – three inspiring words that are hailed to the masthead of the ship of state and are indelibly inscribed in the minds and hearts of all upstanding, right-thinking men

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<sup>45</sup> Interestingly, Anglo officials in Tampa attempted to reclaim the images and rhetoric of American democracy as entirely antithetical to socio-political radicalism. For instance, the *Tribune* ran a story entitled, "How Lincoln Would Regard Situation in the Present Day," in which the following pronouncement was made by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior: "When people today talk of revolution in the United States ... they meet an answer in the words of [Abraham] Lincoln who said, 'In a democracy where the majority rules by the ballot through the forms of law, physical rebellions are radically wrong, unconstitutional, and are *treason*.'" From the *Tampa Morning Tribune*, 13 February 1920. As will be discussed below, Henry Wallace too appropriated Lincoln's figure to rally support for the progressive cause.

<sup>46</sup> Radicalism is, of course, defined and understood relative to contexts. From the mid-nineteenth century, the cigar industry was characterized by tenuous relations between factory owners and workers. When Martinez-Ybor moved his factory to Tampa in the mid-1880s, it was with the intention of escaping the working-class activism which undermined profits and closed factories in Key West and Havana. Much to his dismay, as well as that of local officials, the cigar industry in Tampa was immediately threatened by an opening day strike at the factory, setting an ominous precedent for the years to come. From the 1880s through the 1930s, strikes occurred regularly in the factories of Ybor City, exacerbating hostilities between local elites and factory workers and reinforcing claims of radicalism and un-Americanism. See, for example, Mormino and Pozzetta, *The Immigrant World of Ybor City*; Ingalls, *Urban Vigilantism*; Hewitt, *Southern Discomfort*; Maura Barrios, *Cien Años: Tampa y Cuba*, Master's Thesis. As this paper will demonstrate, Latin connections to global struggles were often perceived as inimical to U.S. interests and thus deemed radical. By the time of the Cold War, radicalism in the U.S., by definition, was primarily foreign, anti-capitalist, and un-American.

and women.”<sup>47</sup> In the summer of 1920, when cigar workers struck against manufacturers, they employed similar rhetoric in defense of their cause:

We, the cigar makers ... ALL AMERICANS, and with full knowledge of what AMERICANISM MEANS, knowing ALL the facts of the struggling that is going on; knowing that our brothers have been fighting for an AMERICAN principle and an AMERICAN RIGHT, unanimously voted not to work under the tyrannical rules of the Manufacturers' Association ... We ... are doing nothing more than our duty by joining out brothers in this fight for OUR American principles and ideas.<sup>48</sup>

Such pronouncements demonstrate that working-class immigrants understood the ideology of American democracy to be entirely consistent with their own radical politics, a point highly contested by local elites and conservative Anglo Tampanns. The English pages of Spanish-language newspapers often appealed to the white citizens of Tampa on the basis of class and resistance to a common capitalist oppressor. “All the wage earners must be united regardless of creed, race, or nationality to prevent the capitalist class from molesting them. ... Our *fellow Americans* can live assured that the Latin worker has nothing against any American worker.”<sup>49</sup>

As the evidence suggests, labor itself served as a means by which Latin cigar workers appealed to the class-loyalties of fellow migrants and native white Tampanns. “It is true that there is a certain psychological difference between the American workman and ourselves, but this is only another good reason why there should exist but one single labor movement,” read one article. “And it is extremely contradictory to speak of ‘proletariat emancipation’ which [if] it means anything means *human equality* and *fraternity*.”<sup>50</sup> The “single labor movement” also included – at least on paper – African

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<sup>47</sup> “Liberty and Organization,” *El Internacional*, 13 May 1927.

<sup>48</sup> “To the Workers and the Public in General,” *El Internacional*, 30 July 1920.

<sup>49</sup> “All Workers,” *El Internacional*, 6 August 1920; “Briefly Told,” *El Internacional*, 3 April 1925; The English language sections of the Spanish papers often contained appeals to Anglo workers, as well as direct addresses to local business owners, manufacturers, civic and law enforcement officials, and other elites.

<sup>50</sup> “Why We Make No Progress,” *El Internacional*, 14 March 1919 (emphases added).

Americans, based on united resistance to a common industrial oppressor. “We must stand by the white workers because their cause is also our cause,” urged one black Tampan. “If we betray them we will betray ourselves, our children, our families, and our race.”

Editorials in the local Latin papers urged immigrant and Anglo workers alike to “translate the struggle of *our* forefathers” into the labor disputes of present day. “They made a revolution against their masters, against oppression and tyranny ... that we should also guard and defend it against all enemies.”<sup>51</sup> Indeed, those institutions of labor organization deemed radical, threatening, and un-American by conservative Anglo elites in fact provided the very vehicles of Americanization by which workers came together and forged a collective identity around work.

Ongoing connections to international communities also informed constructions of identity and socio-political behavior among the working-class migrants of Ybor City. Latin cigar workers not only maintained associations with their homelands, but also invested energies and resources into mobile, extra-national groups of workers who, much like themselves, lived lives across and beyond borders, *sin fronteras*.<sup>\*</sup> “Our little globe is growing smaller with each passing year,” ruminated one editorial in 1920. “Since the war we have ignored that this is true and that the interests of the laboring class of America are directly related to those of the working class of the rest of the world: their problems and difficulties are exactly the same problems and difficulties we suffer.”<sup>52</sup> Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, migrants in Ybor City expressed solidarity

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<sup>51</sup> “To the Cigar Makers in General and to the Colored Race in Particular,” *El Internacional*, 7 May 1920; “Spirit of 1776...?” An editorial by John Blaine, *Ibid.*, 4 August 1939. Clearly, it served the purpose to print such columns in English, where they could appeal to a wider readership extending outside of the enclave.

<sup>\*</sup> Without borders

<sup>52</sup> “American Labor Must Cooperate with Labor of the World,” *El Internacional*, 2 April 1920.

with, provided aid to and received help from, both domestic and international workers. In 1919, for example, workers in Tampa invoked “the ideas of Justice and Liberty” in their efforts to assist fellow cigarmakers in Puerto Rico. “Let us then unite in an effort to assist these comrades,” urged an editorial in the local labor press. “Alike in the gallant struggle, they are making to resist the yoke of the bosses and their minions, as to keep them from starvation.”<sup>53</sup> Months later, the very same paper turned to the west coast, urging its readers to “Stay away from ‘Frisco ... while the strike is on.”<sup>54</sup> While understood by conservative Anglos to undermine U.S. institutions and the principles of republicanism, such transnational allegiances and identifications often had the opposite effect of galvanizing a uniquely “radical” and global definition of “true Americanness.”

When the Spanish republican government came under attack in 1936, *Tampeños* again responded on the basis of democratic principles and international solidarity. Latin immigrants recognized early that the fight against fascism in Spain had potentially global ramifications, an acute reality considering their own transnational experiences. The Spanish Civil War, writes historian Ana Maria Varela-Lago, “galvanized the 30,000 members of the Tampa Latin community.”<sup>55</sup> *La Gaceta*, one of Tampa’s Latin newspapers, “served as the official organ of the Tampa Committee for the Defense of the Spanish Popular Front,” following the activities of and coordinating support for *la retaguardia de Tampa* as they fought in Spain. Within weeks of the uprising, 150 Tampans had volunteered to travel across the Atlantic in defense of the Republic. “If it were possible to go to Spain in a few hours,” wrote *La Gaceta*’s editor Victoriano

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<sup>53</sup> “The Porto Rico Strike,” *El Internacional*, 21 March 1919.

<sup>54</sup> “Stay Away from ‘Frisco,” *El Internacional*, 21 November 1919.

<sup>55</sup> Ana Maria Varela-Lago, Master’s Thesis, University of South Florida, 1996.



Manteiga, “hundreds of Tampans would take up arms in defense of the Popular Front.”<sup>56</sup> By 1937, the *Comité Popular Democrático de Socorro a España* was organizing relief efforts and coordinating the transfer of food and supplies across the Atlantic to the Iberian battlefields. “The Spanish Aid committee has two mens to stand by the factory door,” explained one worker in his broken English. “Everytime we get pay, one of the men takes a collection to help Spain, and the other man writes the receipts for whatever you give ... And they print in the paper the record of how much every man give [*sic*].”<sup>57</sup> Another resident of Ybor City noted, “Almost every shop [along Seventh Avenue] has a poster in its window, labeled: AID THE SPANISH VICTIMS OF FASCIST AGGRESSION.” For some the connection to Spain was personal; to all it was political. “Ybor City has sent plenty of money and clothes and stuff to Spain,” said another. “The Cubans, Spaniards, and Italians here all feel sorry for the Spanish people. Even the Italians boo Mussolini when he comes on the screen. The Italians here sure hate Mussolini all right.”<sup>58</sup> As such behaviors demonstrate, Latin identity embodied complex

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<sup>56</sup> Ana Maria Varela-Lago, Master’s Thesis, University of South Florida, 1996. Varela-Lago notes that, although it was illegal for them to do so, “At least twenty-four Tampa volunteers served in the Abraham Lincoln Battalion” in Spain. According to her study, more than a third of those from Tampa were of Cuban descent, all members of the Antonio Guiteras Company. “Although Tampa Latins’ support for Republican Spain often earned them charges of disloyalty and un-Americanism,” she writes, “they invoked the democratic principles of their adopted country to explain their position.”

<sup>57</sup> “Enrique and Amanda,” Interviewed on 3 January 1939 at 2315 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Ybor City, From the *Ybor City Papers*, USF Special Collections, 493.

<sup>58</sup> “Pedro and Estrella,” Interviewed on 1 January 1939, From the WPA Project, *Ybor City Papers*, USF Special Collections, 509. The archives of the respective social clubs contain a substantial amount of correspondence regarding relief efforts to aid in defense of the Spanish republic. There have been numerous studies focusing – in whole or in part – on Tampa’s response to the war in Spain. See, for example, Varela-Lago, Master’s Thesis (University of South Florida, 1996); Maura Barrios, “Tampa y Cuba: Cien Años,” Master’s Thesis (University of South Florida, 2001); Nancy A. Hewitt, “Economic Crisis and Political Mobilization: Cultures of Resistance in Tampa’s Latin Community during the 1930s,” Anthony Pizzo Memorial Lecture, Ybor City, Florida, 15 March 2005; and Fraser Ottanelli, who focuses more generally on the involvement of ethnic-American volunteers in the Spanish Civil War in, “Radicalism and the Shaping of Ethnic Identity,”; As early as 1938, *El Internacional* announced a “Protest meeting against Nazi terror at the Labor Temple,” 18 September 1938.

international allegiances not only to ethnicity, but also to class-based politics. The fight in Spain was also their fight on the streets of New York, San Francisco, and Tampa.

While Tampa's migrant population remained actively engaged in international affairs, the character of domestic political activism changed to meet the peculiarities of the U.S. experiences.<sup>59</sup> In addition to the major strikes and protests which served as benchmarks in the enclave's history, Latin activists also increasingly sought reform through traditional U.S. institutions. For example, citing a "deep interest" in the "moral welfare, happiness, and good health" of its members, the secretary of the *Centro Español* mailed a letter to President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1934 endorsing a candidate "of international experience" for a post in the federal government.<sup>60</sup> Also in the mid-1930s, *Tampeños* announced their intention to begin a formal political organization in order to advance distinctly Latin interests in the community. The *Tampa Morning Tribune* announced to its primarily Anglo readership that "Spaniards here will form a political club" with the intent to "work to prevent fraud" among local officials.<sup>61</sup> "I am not surprised that the Spaniards have finally concluded that they ought to participate in politics," wrote one civic leader. "They are a very substantial portion of this city and country and if they do not soon participate in the political situation and aid other well

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<sup>59</sup> Here I echo Mormino and Pozzetta, who conclude upon extensive research that, "The records show almost no direct Latin involvement in municipal politics before the 1930s ... The great majority of early immigrants perceived citizenship and its privileges as irrelevant." *The Immigrant World of Ybor City*, 301. As this paper will demonstrate, however, I draw different conclusions entirely concerning the nature of political radicalism and the ongoing expressions of ethnic identity by the Latins of Ybor City. See also Richard Oestreicher's article in which he argues that by the time of the Great Depression, "an enormous pool of potential voters – disproportionately young, working-class, and ethnic – rarely voted and had not developed clear partisan identities." From Oestreicher, "Urban Working-Class Political Behavior and Theories of American Electoral Politics, 1870-1940," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 74, No. 4 (March, 1988), 1263.

<sup>60</sup> From the "Correspondence" files of the *Centro Español Papers*, USF Special Collections. The endorsement was for Mr. Ernest Berger, a candidate for the position of Commissioner of Narcotics. Mr. Souto, secretary for the *Centro Español*, received a rather canned reply from the Treasury Department two weeks later.

<sup>61</sup> *Tampa Morning Tribune*, 29 March 1934.

intentioned people here in endeavoring to have a proper condition of affairs, the Lord knows what will happen.”<sup>62</sup> Though the letter applauds the effort, its language implicitly cautions against Latin radicalism and reveals ongoing anxieties about immigrant politics.<sup>63</sup>

The onset of depression in the late 1920s and Roosevelt’s New Deal programs in the mid 1930s provoked socio-political activism and revived appeals to socialism while simultaneously facilitating the entrance of Latins into formal local and federal institutional politics. “During the Thirties, it was like Russia down in Ybor City – everybody was Communist,” recalls Don Marti, a Cuban cigar worker. “When Roosevelt put up the WPA [we] went ahead and finally gave in and got into the WPA ... [The people of Ybor City] had parades and [were] singing in Spanish the *Internationale*.”<sup>64</sup> In the summer of 1933, a flyer from the Retail Tobacco Dealers of America was distributed to local businessman espousing the benefits of the National Recovery Act. “Your trade association is going to do a big job for you,” it asserted. “Join it at once and have a voice in the government of your business. The dues will be little but the benefits will be great.”<sup>65</sup> To assuage the effects of the Depression around the country, federal

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<sup>62</sup> *Centro Español Papers*, 29 March 1934, USF Special Collections.

<sup>63</sup> Local politicians also directly courted votes from the Latin (particularly Spanish) population in Ybor City and West Tampa. For instance, on one occasion in the mid-1920s, Florida Governor John W. Martin sent a letter to officials in Ybor City stressing his distinct sensitivity to their concerns. “I have the kindest feelings and the highest regard for the Spanish people of Tampa,” he wrote. “I am not unmindful of their support for me in my campaign for Governor.” Letter from Florida Governor John W. Martin to Mr. Ramon Fernandez in Ybor City, 26 January 1926, USF Special Collections. When Martin refers to the “Spanish people of Tampa,” it is likely that he intended the term to allude comprehensively to the entire Latin population. Among them, however, those from Spain generally held the most traditional political influence; thus, the statement may in fact be accurately interpreted either way.

<sup>64</sup> Don Marti, Interviewed by Sandra Jill McCoy, 6 December 2000. Marti later qualifies his remarks about the ubiquitous presence of communism in Ybor City, explaining, “It wasn’t [that] they were communists, they were just reaching for straws ... It was all just ‘lip’ communism really.”

<sup>65</sup> Letter from Wm. A. Hollingsworth, President of the Retail Tobacco Dealers of America, Inc. out of New York City, 22 July 1933, USF Special Collections.

political institutions empowered local trade organizations, offering space for Latinos to engage the national discourse and promote distinct class and ethnic interests.

Though many Latinos eventually expressed disappointment with the limits of Roosevelt's reforms, New Deal programs were important mechanisms in the entrance of first- and second-generation immigrants into formal national politics. When direct relief did come during the Depression, it was often a result of New Deal programs. "The relief station here gives away lots of good things," noted the mother of one Ybor City family in the late 1930s. "They give me nice clothes for the children, and they give us can meat, flour, and lots of things. It's real good stuff too, and helps out plenty."<sup>66</sup> Reform also extended to the workplace, where the federal government interceded on the workers' behalf. "All these kind[s] of insurance the Government had made the companies start for the workers is all right. There was a man in our factory got hurt with a saw not long ago, and he was in bed one week and that insurance pay him just the same as if he was at work. Man, that's all right; we never had nothing like that before."<sup>67</sup> When federal assistance was not enough, however, Latin workers sought relief through a variety of other outlets.<sup>68</sup>

As the Depression wore on, Tampa Latinos relied upon established (and newly developed) migration networks for aid and sustenance. Often, such networks provided

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<sup>66</sup> "Enrique and Amanda," Interviewed 3 January 1939, From the WPA Project, *Ybor City Papers*, USF Special Collections, 483.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 489.

<sup>68</sup> As the Depression dragged on, workers became increasingly disillusioned with the promises of aid and hopes of recovery. "There is a good deal of talk about the millions that President Roosevelt will give, and they say also that those of the 'shovel and pick-axe' will make as much as the office man," explains one immigrant worker. "*I no longer have faith in anything. I do not believe that that is true, too many things have been promised, but none kept.* In the meantime they are putting us to sleep with "fairy tales." From "Interviews Obtained by Mr. Marrero with Persons Leaving Tampa, Translated from Spanish to English," WPA Project, *Social Ethnic Study of Ybor City, Tampa, Florida*, USF Special Collections, Floridiana Collection, 499 (emphases in original text).

options and alternatives as workers struggled to find work, food, and some sense of security. The decline of Tampa's industry in the 1930s came as the result of a number of factors, not the least of which was the looming national depression. In addition to a declining domestic market for authentic hand-rolled Cuban cigars, the expansion of mass production by machines eliminated the need for skilled workers. "There is not much hope in Ybor City," lamented one local cigarmaker. "The people of Ybor City are orphans ... They cannot find work at the cigar factories because of the machines."<sup>69</sup> Another shared in his commiseration, noting that, "We used to make fifty-five dollars a week but now don't nobody make much more than about eighteen dollars. I guess it's mostly because the machines can make cigars so cheap; you can buy the best kind of cigar now, two for five cents. ... Cigars is going out of style."<sup>70</sup>

With these conditions, many of Ybor City's residents exercised their mobility as generations before them had done, and moved on to areas of greater promise and opportunity. "Families after families are leaving for the north," explained Domingo Ginesta to a WPA volunteer worker in Tampa. "This exodus is chiefly observed among the younger generation, who finding themselves without work, migrate to New York where they may find opportunities."<sup>71</sup> As Ginesta illustrates, Latin workers and their families continued to rely upon cultural networks and channels of migration in hopes of finding work. "Under present conditions the people of Ybor City have no other alternative but to leave for New York City," echoed John Cacciatore. "In New York they

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<sup>69</sup> "Life History of Mr. John Cacciatore," From the WPA Project, *Ybor City Papers*, USF Special Collections, 542.

<sup>70</sup> "Enrique and Amanda," Interviewed 3 January 1939, From the WPA Project, *Ybor City Papers*, USF Special Collections, 486.

<sup>71</sup> "Life History of Domingo Ginesta," From the WPA Project, *Ybor City Papers*, USF Special Collections, 557.

are given a home, groceries, coal to warm themselves in winter, and electric lights. Here they are not given anything.”<sup>72</sup> Others felt that, with the decline of the cigar industry and the failure of public relief, Latins had lost their foothold in Tampa. “We leave because we are superfluous here. We cannot find work; there is nothing in which we can be employed. We have families, and cannot support our homes from the ‘air.’ We have no funds to meet this situation; and are forced to migrate to other parts in order to try our fortunes.”<sup>73</sup> While family members, relief, and potential employment drew many to the northeastern U.S. urban centers, others, like Ginesta, hoped to return to their native lands. “We are now in contact with the Cuban government in an effort to have them take us back to Cuba, and allow us a pension for the few remaining years of our life.”<sup>74</sup> While it is unclear whether he made the trip back, his intentions are nonetheless an important illustration of transnational behavior and the persistence of ethnic identity among migrant workers.<sup>75</sup>

As a result of the gradual decline of the cigar industry in Tampa, many Latin workers found employment and opportunities for social mobility outside of the physical

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<sup>72</sup> “Life History of Mr. John Cacciatore,” From the WPA Project, *Ybor City Papers*, USF Special Collections, 542.

<sup>73</sup> “Information As Obtained by Mr. Marrero,” Interviewed on 4 April 1935, WPA Project, *Social-Ethnic Study of Ybor City, Tampa, Florida*, USF Special Collections, Floridiana Collection, 460. The anonymous interviewee believed that, as a Cuban, he faced greater discrimination by Anglos and Latins alike, and even fewer opportunities were available to him in Depression-era Tampa. Marrero provided the following estimates to the WPA volunteer concerning the departure of Latins from the area: From December, 1934 to March, 1935, a period of some sixteen weeks, the following number have left for Key West, 105; New York, 240; Philadelphia, 10; Cuba, 20; other ports of the country, 25. It is unclear whether these were only rough guesses, or whether they were grounded in some deliberate calculations.

<sup>74</sup> “Life History of Domingo Ginesta,” *Ybor City Papers*, 558.

<sup>75</sup> Anglo newspapers like the *Tampa Daily Times* published strong reprisals against the practice of repatriation, even during the height of Nativism and violent repression. One article in 1919, for example, told of “thousands of countrymen . . . turning their faces toward the land of their birth, and taking untold millions of American-made dollars with them.” Calling such men “professional agitators” intent upon “subverting the most perfect form of government ever devised by liberty-loving men,” the paper warned that, “We shall put up the bars which will make his return to this country difficult if not impossible.” *Tampa Daily Times*, 4 July 1919.

borders of the enclave and chose to remain in Central Florida. After the Second World War, Ybor City came to be inhabited increasingly by African Americans as upwardly mobile Cubans, Spaniards, and Italians decentralized and moved into traditionally Anglo neighborhoods and businesses.<sup>76</sup> Historians Gary Mormino and George Pozzetta contend that “in the end” the radicalism which so characterized Ybor City was “increasingly co-opted by middle-class American values” and the “material success generated by Latins blunted the radical messages in which they had once fervently believed.”<sup>77</sup> As the following pages will demonstrate, however, many immigrants and their children maintained a continuous tradition of social and political radicalism while simultaneously adapting to and investing in traditional U.S. institutions.

By the time Henry Wallace brought his Progressive Party campaign to Central Florida in 1948, Latins had witnessed the precipitous decline of the cigar industry; they had participated in local, national, and global struggles against fascism, capitalism, and discrimination; they had struggled, suffered, and survived the years of the Great Depression and the Second World War. They had also watched a second generation of *Tampeños* come of age, in whom they sought to inculcate the values, struggles, and collective spirit of the past as weapons to fight the battles of the present. Though the community had undergone enormous changes over the years, responses to Wallace’s Progressive message demonstrate some continuity between past and present, between the traditions, customs, and ideals of the former generation and the dreams, goals, and anxieties of the latter. “Remember,” Jose Yglesias cautioned fellow Latins, “We’re the

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<sup>76</sup> As Mormino and Pozzetta note, the population of West Tampa, a predominantly Latin neighborhood originally settled by the ‘overflow’ from Ybor City, doubled between the years of 1945 and 1955. See *The Immigrant World of Ybor City*, chapter 10: “World War II and Beyond,” 297-316.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 11-12.

children of cigar makers and we have to be on the side of the workers.”<sup>78</sup> What was Wallace’s message, and what appeal to it hold for first- and second-generation Latinos of Tampa? The following chapter explores just such questions, following the Progressive Party campaign and its reception among working-class immigrant populations of the U.S. South and around the country. Ultimately, it seeks to answer why Wallace held such enormous appeal among a specific group while so many others abandoned the campaign under Cold War scrutiny and experiences of discrimination and oppression.

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<sup>78</sup> Yglesias, *The Truth about Them*, 89.



Chapter 2: “Am I in the United States?”  
Henry A. Wallace and the Progressive Party Campaign, 1947-1948

“We can carry California, Minnesota, New York, North Dakota, and the state of Washington in November. Yes, I’m radical about this ... and I will be whether in Memphis or San Francisco. Give me any kind of good thing, [but] deny me human dignity, and I can’t take it.”<sup>+</sup>

“Each time he started to speak, the crowd shouted him down. But he remained physically fearless as he stood in a sea of angry ... workers, any one of whom ... could have pulled a knife and slit his gut open.”<sup>\*</sup>

On 29 December 1947, in a speech delivered over the national airwaves of the Mutual Broadcasting System, Henry Wallace announced his intention to run for President of the United States on the Progressive Party ticket. “The people have a right to be heard through a new party,” Wallace declared to the nation. “I say a vote for a new party in 1948 will be the most valuable vote you have ever cast or will ever cast.” Wallace’s decision came at the end of nearly nine months of campaigning throughout the U.S., during which he gathered momentum for a formal assault on the domestic and foreign policies of the dominant U.S. political parties. “There is no real fight between a Truman and a Republican,” he warned. “Both stand for a policy which opens the door to war in our lifetime and makes war certain for our children.”<sup>80</sup> Turning Cold War rhetoric against itself, Wallace used the threat of military conflict as a means of advancing his own party’s campaign for both domestic and international peace. “Wallace’s candidacy,” an editorial in the Communist publication *The Daily Worker* asserted, “sounds the call for a

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<sup>+</sup> Paul Robeson speaking on behalf of Wallace’s Progressive Party campaign before an audience in Tampa just weeks before the election. “Paul Robeson Claims Five States for Progressives,” *St. Petersburg Times*, 5 October 1948, 17:1.

<sup>\*</sup> Palmer Weber, recalling Henry Wallace’s visit to Burlington, North Carolina, August 1948, from Patricia Sullivan, *Days of Hope: Race and Democracy in the New Deal Era* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina, 1996), 261.

<sup>80</sup> “I Shall Run,” Excerpts from a speech delivered over the Mutual Broadcasting System, Chicago, Illinois, *The Daily Worker*, 30 December 1947, 3.

national fight for peace, which will show where every progressive really stands, for peace and democracy.” Another observer mused that, “Wallace’s candidacy has had the effect of a lion marching into a cage full of monkeys. Such screeching, clatter, whistling, and hooting on all sides! Wallace ... has rocked the country with his announcement.”<sup>81</sup>

Henry Agard Wallace was born into an Episcopalian family in southwestern Iowa in the autumn of 1888. Raised on a farm, he took an early interest in agricultural science and production, a captivation that would occupy him in varying capacities for many years thereafter. After earning his degree at Iowa State University in Ames, Wallace quickly became a successful agronomist, businessman, and writer. When his father passed away in 1924, Henry served for a time as the editor of the family-run periodical, *Wallace’s Farmer*. His political career began in earnest in the late 1920s and early 1930s when he served as an activist for the state Democratic Party, working tirelessly for Franklin Roosevelt’s election campaign in 1932. Appointed to Roosevelt’s cabinet as Secretary of Agriculture, Wallace became an instrumental figure in the New Deal recovery programs of the 1930s. A testament to his success and popularity at the post, Wallace was selected as Vice President in 1940, an office which he held for a single term before accepting a new position as Secretary of Commerce. Perhaps as a result of his Episcopalian upbringing, Wallace perceived religion and social justice as inextricably linked, thus making him a fitting complement to the Roosevelt administration. When President Roosevelt died in 1945, Wallace lost a powerful ally in the White House and resigned over policy disputes with newly sworn President Harry Truman. Critical of Truman’s perceived departure from Roosevelt’s New Deal legacy, Wallace underwent a rigorous campaign throughout the United States in the spring and fall of 1947, espousing

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<sup>81</sup> “Wallace Stirs Nation,” Editorial, *Daily Worker*, 31 December 1947, 9.

alternative foreign and domestic programs. At the center of Wallace's rhetoric was a call for global peace and the immediate de-escalation of rising Cold War tensions.<sup>82</sup>

While Wallace emerged as a vociferous critic of the Truman administration, talk of a potential Wallace candidacy emerged in the latter months of 1947. By mid-December, the Progressive Citizens of America (PCA) had formally declared its intention to form a third-party; Wallace was favored to be their candidate.<sup>83</sup> "Henry Wallace has a wide if inchoate following in the country," said one *New York Times* columnist on the prospect of his candidacy. "He has the power of an evangelist in stirring the populace, or a part of it at least, to his point of view."<sup>84</sup> In fact, some went so far as to conclude that, "The drive to put a third party in the field for the 1948 presidential campaign" would be "abandoned" if Wallace failed to announce that he would "head the movement."<sup>85</sup> Should Wallace decide to run for president in 1948, the *Times* speculated, "those who followed him on domestic issues would be drawn almost entirely from Democratic ranks." The effect of such a movement "could have a high nuisance value for the Democrats ... but is widely discounted today."<sup>86</sup> In the waning months of 1947, Gael

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<sup>82</sup> Some of the most comprehensive and insightful commentaries on Wallace's political life include: John C. Culver and John Hyde, *American Dreamer: The Life and Times of Henry A. Wallace* (New York & London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000); Edward L. and Frederick H. Shapsmeier, *Prophet in Politics: Henry A. Wallace and the War Years, 1940-1965* (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1970); Richard J. Walton, *Henry Wallace, Harry Truman, and the Cold War* (New York: Viking Press, 1976); Graham White and John Maze, *Henry A. Wallace: His Search for a New World Order* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).

<sup>83</sup> As early as July 1947, the *New York Times* reported Wallace's "tacit approval of a Wallace-for-President meeting sponsored by a wing of the California Democratic party." "'Progressive' Rift Irks Democrats," *New York Times*, 20 July 1947, 17. Wallace, of course, would soon abandon the party to run on the Progressive ticket.

<sup>84</sup> "Wallace Boom for '48 is Threat to Truman," *New York Times*, 21 Dec 1947, E-10.

<sup>85</sup> "Third Party Fate Waits on Wallace," *New York Times*, 5 December 1947, 22.

<sup>86</sup> "Wallace Boom for '48 is Threat to Truman," *New York Times*, 21 Dec 1947, E-10.

Sullivan, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, warned party officials, “Wallace is a major consideration in 1948! Something should be done to combat him.”<sup>87</sup>

Echoing the calls of industrial workers and their representatives, Wallace sought to advance the cause of labor by attacking the Taft-Hartley Act as antithetical to the legacy of Roosevelt’s New Deal reform programs.<sup>88</sup> “Never in our history has the government been such a rich pork barrel for giant corporations.” Truman, he argued, “has put Wall Street and the military in the saddle. I sat in his cabinet and I saw them seize his hands and guide them.”<sup>89</sup> “The gains of the New Deal were always limited ... by the corrupt political machines of the old parties which remained in power,” Wallace later argued before a Progressive rally in Baltimore. “Those forces,” he continued “are now in complete control of the Democratic Party. ... Many people forget this little fact when they dream of regaining the New Deal easily by voting for old labels.”<sup>90</sup> In his ongoing and relentless critique of government policy, Wallace gradually built a case for a third-party movement in 1948, a notion that did not go unnoticed among his supporters and critics alike.

Wallace’s progressivism initially provoked the attention, curiosity, and tentative support of significant numbers of American voters disenchanted with post-war U.S. domestic and international policies under the Truman administration. As a vocal proponent of the working class, Wallace garnered support and aid from industrial and

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<sup>87</sup> Gael Sullivan to Clark Clifford, 6 June 1947, Harry S. Truman Library, From Culver and Hyde, *American Dreamer*, 445.

<sup>88</sup> On 14 October 1947, for example, the CIO undertook a concerted effort to obtain a repeal of the “infamous act and of the reactionary program of which it is a part.” Seven hundred members pledged their unanimous support to oppose those members of Congress who supported the act. See “CIO Vote Demands Taft Act Repeal,” *New York Times*, 15 October 1947, 30. Wallace attempted to discredit Truman and the Democratic Party by arguing that they had not done enough to defend the cause of labor and the interests of the “working-man.”

<sup>89</sup> “Wallace Challenges Truman to Fight Taft-Hartley Demos,” *Daily Worker*, 13 September 1948, 4.

<sup>90</sup> “Wallace Taunts Truman on Labor,” *New York Times*, 13 September 1948, 1.

agricultural laborers throughout the country, the efforts of whom ultimately proved instrumental in getting him on the presidential ballot.

Though labor leaders were never unanimous in their support for Wallace, many working-class individuals and organizations from around the nation expressed dissatisfaction with the Democratic Party and encouraged Wallace to run on a third-party ticket. From miners in West Virginia to steel workers in Pennsylvania to dock workers in San Francisco, laboring men and women allied in their support of the PCA. In mid-December 1947, just days before Wallace's nomination, "Workers and farmers drove as much as ninety miles on snow-covered roads" to see him speak in Albany, New York, "most of them to plead that he head a third party ticket."<sup>91</sup> In Minnesota, the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party vowed to "rededicate itself to the people's fight and make [Wallace] the DFL candidate for President in Minnesota."<sup>92</sup> In Louisiana, "between 4,000 and 5,000 packed the LSU auditorium" to hear Wallace speak of his presidential aspirations, while in Kentucky, "the largest mixed audience of whites and Negroes ever to assemble here" gathered peacefully to see the former Vice President. "If it is apparent that the Democratic Party is a war party," Wallace told the anxious crowds, "I shall do all I can to see that there is a third party."<sup>93</sup>

As a self-professed champion of labor interests in the U.S. and around the world, Wallace elicited considerable (though often conditional) support particularly from urban areas populated by first- and second-generation immigrants, industrial workers, and working-class communities and organizations around the country. "The principal strength

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<sup>91</sup> "Wallace Found Progressive Strength Rising in N.Y. State," by Bernard Burton, *Daily Worker*, 17 December 1947, 6.

<sup>92</sup> "Predict Minnesota Demo-Laborites Will Run Wallace," *Daily Worker*, 22 December 1947, 2.

<sup>93</sup> "3,000 Hear Wallace at Cornell U.," *Daily Worker*, 11 December 1947.

of the PCA today appears to be in the largest industrial areas,” the *New York Times* speculated in January 1948. “Its present strongholds are in New York, Illinois and California. It is gaining ground in the Northwest, New England and among the newly industrialized communities of the South.”<sup>94</sup> William Z. Foster, national chairman of the Communist Party, urged workers to unite behind third-party efforts. “The Miners’ Union now confronts a heavy responsibility of rallying the forces of labor to defeat reaction in ’48,” he proclaimed. “The miners must demand that their union steers toward a mass third party people’s movement. . . . It would be disastrous if they are lured into the Truman camp or to support a Republican in the coming national political campaign.”<sup>95</sup>

Under Wallace’s direction, the Progressive plan for reform began in the U.S. South, where he attacked the social, political, and economic disenfranchisement of African Americans through the decidedly “un-American” institution of segregation and the ongoing practice of lynching. “We must organize now our resistance movement to preserve democracy,” he urged a crowd of 4,500 in Pittsburgh, “or we shall have to organize underground later to win it back.”<sup>96</sup> Disappointed with Truman’s handling of the civil rights issue, many black Americans throughout the country initially rallied behind Wallace’s call for racial equality.<sup>97</sup> In late 1947, just as Wallace was completing an extended national speaking tour, “Fifty-one prominent Negro leaders from sixteen states

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<sup>94</sup> “Strength of Wallace is Unknown Quantity,” *New York Times*, 25 January 1948, E7.

<sup>95</sup> “Steel Workers Back Wallace, Foster Says,” *Daily Worker*, 25 November 1947, 4.

<sup>96</sup> “Wallace Warns Red Hunt Brings U.S. Close to Fascism,” *Daily Worker*, 12 November 1947, 4.

<sup>97</sup> In November 1947, Wallace charged that the House Un-American Committee was “lax in its duty for not investigating racial violence in the South and said the Civil Rights Commission should have ordered a federal probe of lynchings,” from *Daily Worker*, 20 November 1947, 5; Specifically, he urged Senatorial support of the Wagner-Morse-Case anti-lynching legislation. *New York Times*, 3 February 1948, 22.

...called on [him] 'to give New Year hope to our people and to all other freedom-loving Americans by declaring [himself] a candidate for election as president in 1948.'"<sup>98</sup>

Among those African Americans who came out publicly in support of the third-party challenger in 1948 were well-known artist, Communist Party member, and Progressive activist Paul Robeson, and W.E.B. Dubois. Calling Wallace the "only man" for African-American voters, Dubois wrote, "We Americans of Negro descent do not want to be put in the embarrassing position of having to choose between fools and demagogues, or giving up our right to vote in 1948."<sup>99</sup> In September 1947, the Progressive Citizens of America sponsored a meeting that included Wallace, Robeson, Lena Horne, and Aubrey Williams to discuss a possible "Progressive counterattack" the following year.<sup>100</sup> In Tampa, as in other cities around the nation, the Progressive Voters League undertook aggressive efforts to register prospective African-American voters for the November elections. "Our main goal," explained City Chairman C. Blythe Andrews, editor of a local black newspaper, "is to get 10,000 Negroes registered in Hillsboro County." Through the cooperation of the Ministerial Alliance, clubs, fraternal societies, and business and civic as well as social organizations, I am sure we can attain this goal." Echoing Dubois' call, Andrews added, "We hope every citizen will not forget this important duty."<sup>101</sup>

In addition to his assault on Jim Crow, Wallace proposed an economic recovery plan that would channel federal money (at the rate of \$1 million/year for four years) and

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<sup>98</sup> "51 Leaders of Negroes Back Wallace," *Daily Worker*, 29 December 1947, 2.

<sup>99</sup> "Dubois Backs Wallace, 'Only Man' for Negroes," *Daily Worker*, 2 Jan 1948, 2.

<sup>100</sup> "Will Speak with Wallace," *New York Times*, 4 September 1947, 30. Williams was the former director of the National Youth Administration.

<sup>101</sup> "Progressive Voters League Maps Plans for 10,000 Negro Voters," *Florida Sentinel Bulletin*, 24 January 1948, 14.

resources into struggling southern industry, agriculture, and education. Collectively deemed the “Southern Plan,” such recovery efforts were to be financed by taxing national corporations which most profited from southern agricultural and industrial production. Wallace’s racial policy and economic solutions were enormously unpopular among white southerners, many of whom resurrected the vehement images and rhetoric of northern Reconstruction efforts. Incensed by the perceived encroachment upon conservative southern ideology, Governor Lewis Wright of Mississippi “issued a call to the South” to follow his leadership in an “all-out fight” against what he called “south-haters.”<sup>102</sup> Wallace clearly challenged conventional conservatism with his liberal definitions of American republicanism and democracy. Such pronouncements fueled strong opposition on many fronts, as racial prejudices and Cold War anxieties conveniently dovetailed into the anti-Communist fervor that characterized the times.

Witnessing the gradual escalation of hostilities between East and West, Wallace advanced a foreign policy plan which insisted upon the amelioration of Cold War tensions and the de-militarization of post-World War II society.<sup>103</sup> Following Wallace’s attack on U.S. policy overseas, newspapers across the country (and around the world) frequently printed accounts of the third-party candidate’s scathing diatribes. “The bipartisan foreign policy [*la política extranjera bipartidarista*] of the United States,

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<sup>102</sup> “A Call to the South,” *Lakeland Ledger*, 6 February 1948, 4.

<sup>103</sup> With the formal announcement of his candidacy, Wallace articulated a seven-point plan for world aid in the post-war era. His plan called for the following: (1) The establishment of a United Nations reconstruction fund and (2) administration of the fund by a UN agency; (3) Contributions to the fund “appropriated by [the U.S.] Congress and other nations possessed of the means, in an amount sufficient to finance an over-all five-year plan”; (4) Priority in the allocations of the fund “to those nations which suffered most severely from axis aggression”; (5) Scrupulous respect for the national sovereignty of all beneficiary nations in the allocation of funds; (6) The entire fund to be used exclusively for peaceful purposes and no moneys shall be available to finance the purchase of military supplies or armaments; (7) The German industrial heartland in the Ruhr Valley should be placed under international administration and control by the Big Four. From “Wallace Gives World Aid Plan,” *The Daily Worker*, 31 December 1947, 1.



which supports kings, fascists, and reactionaries around the world, is creating and spreading new fears to destroy democracy in an atmosphere of terror,” declared Tampa’s leading Spanish-language newspaper.<sup>104</sup> Churchill’s “Iron Curtain,” Wallace mused, was rather more of a “paper curtain” constructed and maintained in part by the national press to obfuscate the “facts of life” from the American people.<sup>105</sup> Among those issues concealed and misrepresented was the Truman Doctrine, which, according to Wallace, was above all else “intended to protect American oil interests” in the Middle East. “It is the reason for arms to Turkey and Greece, for American air bases in Africa, [and] for the British fortification of Cyprus.” Wallace added that while the plan promised peace and national security, it actually served principally to support big business interests around the world. “The American people cannot afford to support the promise of oil companies with billions of dollars in arms,” he concluded. “The wedding of Republican big business to Democratic militarism ... can only lead to an unprecedented war.”<sup>106</sup> Unfortunately for Wallace, because the majority of Americans equated security with an aggressive, global campaign against communism, the mainstream U.S. electorate failed to unite behind his call for peace.

Much like the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan fell under frequent attacks from Wallace and his Progressive Party supporters. Critical of private wealth and big business interests, Wallace accused the federal government of privileging capitalist enterprise over national – and indeed international – security. The plan, Wallace opined,

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<sup>104</sup> “Wallace Attacks American Policy,” (from Spanish), *La Gaceta*, 16 February 1948.

<sup>105</sup> “Wallace Asserts He Ended Cold War,” *New York Times*, 27 October 1948, 1.

<sup>106</sup> Wallace was one of the most vocal critics of the Truman Doctrine. The desirable alternative, he urged, was United Nations’ control over international oil reserves in order to “lessen the possibility of war.”; “U.N. Oil Control Urged by Wallace,” *New York Times*, 20 February 1948, 3; “Wallace Raps Military in High Places,” *Tampa Morning Tribune*, 15 February 1948, 4-A: 4.

positioned postwar Europe as a bastion of private monopolies. “If we are truly concerned with economic rebuilding,” he told a crowd in Buffalo, New York, in the winter of 1947, “we shall have to accept the fact that a large section of the workers in Western Europe are Socialists and Communists and distrustful of this great capitalist country. We must give them evidence that we will not interfere in their *politics*, if we want a *rehabilitation* program to work.”<sup>107</sup> Clearly, such pronouncements spoke to the Cold War confluence of economic recovery and personal security with, above all else, national politics.

In addition to the demilitarization and economic restoration of postwar Europe, Wallace felt a normalization of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union was essential in restoring global peace and preventing a third world war. “Conflict with Russia is the excuse,” he warned. “It is the alibi for using the resources of our country to back up the same kind of cartels which contributed so greatly to the start of World War II.”<sup>108</sup> Because of his amicable attitude towards Stalinist Russia, many Americans perceived Wallace as being “soft” on communism. “There is evidence that Stalin is able to learn and change his opinions,” Wallace told an audience in southern Georgia in response to reactionary U.S. politics and policies. “Some propagandists here delight in quoting some of his earlier writings which spoke of the inevitability of conflict while conveniently ignoring other more hopeful signs.”<sup>109</sup> While espousing the improvement of U.S. – Soviet relations, however, the Progressive Party candidate often turned a blind eye to Stalinist aggression, offering ammunition to his opponents who worked relentlessly to undermine his political campaign and personal credibility.

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<sup>107</sup> “Wallace Calls Dewey GOP Version of Truman,” *Daily Worker*, 12 December 1947, 16.

<sup>108</sup> Quoted in Graham White and John Maze, *Henry A. Wallace: His Search for a New World Order* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 269.

<sup>109</sup> “Wallace Hits Un-Americans’ Failure to Probe Lynchings,” *Daily Worker*, 20 November 1947, 5.

Wallace advocated collective global security as an alternative to Truman's postwar containment policy, idealistically advancing the cause of peace by encouraging immediate and ongoing negotiations with and among European nations. He believed the role of the newly formed United Nations to be instrumental in the peace process, favoring the value of an international political body over potentially antagonistic and hostile nationalist interests and agendas. While a laudable effort, Wallace's critics feared that such a plan would subordinate U.S. interests to international – and Soviet – agendas. In a syndicated column, former first lady Eleanor Roosevelt voiced her opinion of the Progressive Party platform. "Many of the people who write me advocating world government are Wallace followers largely because they desire peace, and Mr. Wallace promises them peace. I desire peace too," she explained, "but here we are with Russia having taken a very decided step towards war in closing her consulates and demanding that we close ours too."<sup>110</sup>

As an ardent proponent of labor interests at home and peaceful diplomacy abroad, Wallace quickly drew the attention and support of the U.S. Communist Party, which included members (and fellow-travelers) who were immigrant workers with international connections and investments of their own. Nearly a year before the elections were to be held, Illinois state Communist Party chairman Gil Green followed William Foster's lead and encouraged Progressives to offer a third-party alternative "to a reactionary Truman and a reactionary Dewey" in 1948. The effort, he explained, would necessarily unite Communists alongside Progressives in their efforts to defeat the major party candidates. "The Communists alone ... cannot establish a third ticket. ... Therefore, the key task

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<sup>110</sup> "Many Wallace Supporters Favor World Government, According to Mrs. FDR," *Miami Herald*, 28 August 1948.

before us is the job of convincing progressive non-Communist forces of the indispensable need for such a policy in 1948.”<sup>111</sup> Two days after Green’s proclamation, Wallace defended the CP endorsement, arguing that its support in the 1930s “didn’t seem to prevent Roosevelt from getting elected.”<sup>112</sup>

Celebrating Wallace’s “historic candidacy” in the final days of 1947, a *Daily Worker* editorialist defended Communist Party support of the Progressive bid for the presidency by invoking venerated U.S. figures, symbols, and rhetoric. “Wallace, of course, is not a Communist,” he wrote, “but a believer in what he calls a ‘democratic, progressive capitalism.’”

But Communists, who believe in socialism, for a hundred years have always been ready to cooperate sincerely with every forward-looking social movement. American Communists backed the non-Communist Abraham Lincoln when he was the candidate of the “third party” of the 1860s. They backed the non-Communist Roosevelt in the fight against the Economic Royalists. They are an integral part of the new people’s movement to carry forward the anti-monopoly fight begun by Franklin Roosevelt, a fight now waged under new conditions and with a new alignment of political forces. Wallace’s candidacy, and the platform on which he makes his fight, sounds the call for a national fight for peace which will show where every progressive really stands, for peace and democracy, or for witch-hunts and war.

Communist Party Secretary Eugene Dennis also parried criticisms, suggesting that while the CP was “not dictated by partisan considerations,” it was nonetheless determined to support the Progressive Party’s “peace and anti-monopoly program” in the November elections.<sup>113</sup>

Both Wallace’s domestic and foreign policy programs provoked voluble (and often violent) opposition and strident Cold War reactionism from Democrats and Republicans alike. Following the end of the Second World War, the threat of a rising Soviet power reinvigorated anti-Communist rhetoric and fueled strong nationalist

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<sup>111</sup> “Gil Green Asks 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Ticket in ’48 Election,” *Daily Worker*, 9 December 1947, 6.

<sup>112</sup> “3,000 Hear Wallace at Cornell U.,” *Daily Worker*, 11 December 1947.

<sup>113</sup> “A Historic Candidacy,” editorial, *Daily Worker*, 30 December 1947, 9; “CP Plans Biggest Election Drive in Its History – Dennis,” *Daily Worker*, 4 August 1948, 2.

sentiments in the United States and abroad. Evidenced by Churchill's Iron Curtain speech and the U.S. adoption of the Truman Doctrine, contemporaries divided the world into two ideological camps explicitly manifest in an uncompromising "us-versus-them" mentality which fueled both foreign and domestic policy for decades to come. Competing voices clamored to advance their respective visions for the future of the nation. From Hollywood to New York City, South America to Southeast Asia, nations and individuals clashed over the contested discourse of freedom and national allegiance. "We are fighting for old-fashioned Americanism at the polls in 1948," Wallace announced over the airwaves from a studio in Chicago.

We are fighting for freedom of speech and freedom of assembly. We are fighting to end racial discrimination. We are fighting for lower prices. We are fighting for free labor unions, for jobs, and for homes in which we can decently live.<sup>114</sup>

In addition to the polarization of international politics, individuals faced important challenges within the context of U.S. society. Viewed as a matter of national security, conservative conformity became synonymous with patriotism, an issue that served as a litmus test for determining "Americanness."

While Wallace attacked Truman's aggressive foreign policy of containment as inevitably leading towards war, his own platform drew considerable ire from the Democratic Party, sabotaging potential support and alienating liberal allies. Because the Progressive Party demanded a repudiation of both the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, popular economic recovery and military assistance programs that Wallace critically

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<sup>114</sup> Quoted in John C. Culver and John Hyde, *American Dreamer: The Life and Times of Henry Wallace* (New York: WW Norton & Co., 2000), 457.

described as “unconditional aid to anti-Soviet governments,” he lost much of the support of former New Dealers.<sup>115</sup>

Moreover, Wallace’s call for racial equality also divided the Democratic Party, particularly after Truman endorsed civil rights measures. In February 1948, Truman petitioned Congress to pass federal laws against discrimination “in voting or employment” on the basis of race or ethnicity. Eschewing southern claims of state-level autonomy, he asserted, “The federal government has a clear duty to see that constitutional guarantees of individual liberties and of equal protection under the laws are not denied or abridged anywhere in our Union.” Paul Robeson attributed “Mr. Truman’s stand in the civil rights battle” to “strong pressure” from the Wallace campaign in addition to coercion from the United Nations. While many African Americans and industrial workers celebrated Truman’s move, southern leaders reacted unfavorably to such pronouncements from Washington. The same month, in fact, Governor Wright of Mississippi organized a meeting of five thousand members of the Democratic Party to “[blast] the leadership of Northern Democrats in backing so-called ‘anti-Southern’ legislation.” Said Wright, “They have stolen from us the Democratic Party, and we are going to run those scalawags out and keep them out.” Perhaps a local reporter was correct in declaring that, as a result of his civil rights agenda, Truman risked the wrath of the South.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Robert Divine, “The Cold War and the Election of 1948,” *Journal of American History* 59 (1972), 92.

<sup>116</sup> *Tampa Morning Tribune*, 3 February 1948; *Tampa Morning Tribune*, 13 February 1948. A coalition of governors from the Deep South led by Strom Thurmond formed an independent States’ Rights Party to “emphasize the broader issue of centralization and federal paternalism of which civil rights was only one, albeit the most objectionable, offshoot.” Rallying around Thurmond’s commitment to the historical principles of the Democratic Party, southerners grew increasingly critical of the perceived “liberalization” of mainstream U.S. politics. As such, the Dixiecrat cause became a defense of Southern convictions regarding the social, economic, and political organization of the region. Though couched in the rhetoric of rights and regionalism, race was the paramount issue around which disparate groups of southerners united to endorse Thurmond’s bid for the presidency. “It was impossible to create a mood of solidarity and

In his perceived deference and suspected allegiance to Moscow, Henry Wallace was vilified by bipartisan contemporaries as an antagonist to U.S. interests, a notion further underscored by his behavior during the Berlin Crisis of 1948, when he opposed U.S. attempts to airlift food and supplies into the besieged European city. Heretically, Wallace blamed the overthrow of the Czech government not on the Communists who usurped power, but on U.S. policies against the Communist Party. “The Czech crisis is evidence that a get tough policy only provokes a get tougher policy. ... Only peace with Russia will stop the march towards war.”<sup>117</sup> In a domestic environment increasingly weary of and hostile to the spread of communism, most Americans patriotically united behind Truman’s foreign policy, a program the Republicans did not dare contest, and a rock upon which the Progressives were broken.

Just as Wallace faced unrelenting criticism and hostilities from his political adversaries, so too did his supporters meet concerted oppression in the form of Cold War reactionism. For example, as the Wallace campaign gained momentum in the early days of 1948, Progressive Party officials demanded investigation of an alleged blacklist “being compiled by Washington police from names of persons” attending public meetings in support of the third-party. The blacklist, said Wallace for President committee chairman Elmer Benson, was “being used against applicants for civil service jobs ... and was made

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defiance without emphasizing the very issue that had sparked off the issue in the first place – that is, race.” Determined to halt increasing compromises to minority constituents and the “socialization” of big government, the Dixiecrats hoped that the Solid South would win enough electoral votes to swing the November elections to their favor. See Robert Garson, *The Democratic Party and the Politics of Sectionalism, 1941 – 1948* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1974), 285, 283; For a comprehensive and effective analysis of Thurmond and the States’ Rights Party, see Kari Frederickson, *The Dixiecrat Revolt and the End of the Solid South, 1932 – 1968* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

<sup>117</sup> Culver and Hyde, *American Dreamer*, 473.

available to other private employers.”<sup>118</sup> On another occasion in March, Progressive advocates were arrested at a rally in New York City and charged with “advocating the overthrow of the Government by force and violence.”<sup>119</sup> Clearly, government officials prosecuted progressivism as a manifestation of Communist revolutionaries in the United States. The defeat of progressivism, then, was in patriotic defense of a very narrow and exclusive brand of Americanism reliant upon mainstream conformity.

By mid-summer, the effects of Cold War persecutions had largely disarmed a once threatening Progressive Party campaign. As party members increasingly fell under attack, Wallace spoke out against Red Scare politicking. “It is interesting and highly significant,” he argued, “that these red scares over the past two or three years have been timed to silence opposition to new turns in the bi-partisan get tough foreign policy. ... Both the administration and ... Congress make allegations to make headlines, make headlines to make fear, and make fear to stay in power.” In his own defense, Wallace cited the international and historical precedent of those defending liberty against tyrannical suppression. True democracy, in his opinion, required that all peoples, perspectives, and agendas, however unpopular, had a right to be expressed.

Defense of the civil rights of Communists is the first line in the defense of liberties of a democratic people. ... The history of Germany, Italy, Japan, and Franco Spain should teach us that the suppression of the Communists is but the first step in an assault on the democratic rights of labor, national, racial and political minorities, and all those who oppose the policies of the government in power.<sup>120</sup>

Such arguments surely found a receptive audience in the Cold War U.S. Wallace himself recognized, “Today the witch-hunt is on, and ultimately no man is safe.”<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> “Police Blacklist of Wallace’s Friends Charged,” *Tampa Morning Tribune*, 5 February 1948, 1:3.

<sup>119</sup> “Arrests Seen Aimed at Wallace,” *New York Times*, 1 March 1948, 13.

<sup>120</sup> “Wallace Hits Arrests of Communists,” *Daily Worker*, 22 July 1948, 3.

<sup>121</sup> “End ‘Un-Americans’ to Save Democracy, Wallace Urges,” *Daily Worker*, 2 December 1947, 5.



Though Wallace initially welcomed their support, the Communist Party's endorsement ultimately served to undermine the Progressive campaign by validating ongoing suspicions of socialist infiltration and presumptions of foreign allegiances. "Henry Wallace is a Benedict Arnold to everything the American people stand for," read one letter to a newspaper editor in Tampa. "I consider him a disloyal member of the American family of freedom because he is backed by the Communist Party."<sup>122</sup> Wallace addressed such allegations of Communist infiltration as he campaigned through the summer of 1948. "I will not repudiate any support which comes to be on the basis of interest in peace," he announced at the Progressive Party convention in June. "If you accept the idea that communists have no right to express their opinions then you don't believe in democracy."<sup>123</sup> While advancing his own idealist vision of American democratic principles, Wallace experienced the consequences of Communist support and took measured steps to distance himself from the Party's revolutionary rhetoric. "If there are any communists who do believe in violent overthrow of the government, I certainly don't want their support. Or if any group put their allegiance to some foreign capital first, whether it be Moscow or any other place, I would not want their support."<sup>124</sup> Such a statement underscores the very limits of democratic rhetoric during the Cold War era. Any challenge to the established system, be it economic, social, racial, sexual, or

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<sup>122</sup> "God Bless America," Letter to the Editor by Max Howard of Tampa, *Tampa Tribune*, 8 February 1948, 18-A:6.

<sup>123</sup> Guenter Lewy, *The Cause That Failed: Communism in American Political Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 207.

<sup>124</sup> From Richard Walton, *Henry Wallace, Harry Truman, and the Cold War* (New York: Viking Press, 1976), 269.

otherwise, was dismissed as Communist treason, thereby providing the vehicle through which such activities were suppressed and prosecuted.<sup>125</sup>

Though Communists championed the interests of workers alongside AFL and CIO officials, communism proved an insurmountable rift between the organizations. When Secretary of Labor Lewis Schwellenbach spoke out against the “infamous” Taft-Hartley Act, he did not miss the opportunity to decry Communist radicals. Asserting that Communists put their politics ahead of trade unionism, Schwellenbach also exploited suspicions of foreign allegiances and “un-Americanism” within the organization. The Communist Party, he contended, had no right to participate in the U.S. political arena because “they took orders from a government outside the United States.”<sup>126</sup>

While some workers initially found favor in the Progressive platform, many labor leaders were vocal and influential critics of the third-party candidate. When the American Federation of Labor’s executive council met in Miami, Florida, in February 1948, they proclaimed themselves “completely and unanimously opposed to the presidential candidacy of Henry A. Wallace.” A spokesman publicly urged Federation members not to be “misled by the false liberalism of Mr. Wallace,” explaining that the “only organization back of Mr. Wallace is the Communist Party.”<sup>127</sup> AFL president William Green declared his belief in “America first,” asserting that by election day, “genuine

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<sup>125</sup> While the suspicions surrounding Wallace’s foreign policy programs were not altogether superfluous, his relegation to the position of a malleable dupe for Communist interests was very much an attempt to rally political opposition against the Progressive Party. Regardless of their accuracy, exaggerated allegations of communist subversion and threatening foreign allegiances drastically undermined personal credibility while jeopardizing public careers and political campaigns. “Those who doubt that the Communists have taken over Henry Wallace,” began one Atlanta editorial, refute the “undenied fact that every important committee in the Wallace party is headed by a known and admitted Communist or one who has been established as a fellow traveler and associate of them.” “How the Reds Snatched Wallace,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 13 September 1948, 6.

<sup>126</sup> “CIO Vote Demands Taft Act Repeal,” *New York Times*, 15 October 1947, 30.

<sup>127</sup> “Wallace Hit in Repudiation of AFL Council,” *Miami Herald*, 3 February 1948.

liberals and progressives who think clearly and soundly will not be for [Wallace].” In making such charges, AFL leaders set themselves apart (alongside the Democratic Party) from Progressives as the true, patriotic Americans, acting in defense of democratic idealism against perceived foreign subversion in the United States. Such claims, however, were not exclusive to the AFL, but also dominated the CIO. In April, CIO president Philip Murray joined Green in his denouncement of Wallace’s Progressive Party, echoing charges of a Communist conspiracy. By September the CIO Executive Board too had endorsed the Truman ticket by a vote of 35-12, leaving Wallace with fewer allies in his unrelenting struggle for peace and progressivism.

Striving to repair the divisions within the Democratic Party, President Truman waged a war against Communists and fellow travelers through such organizations as the Americans for Democratic Action (ADA), and an aggressive FBI under director J. Edgar Hoover. In 1947, liberal Democrats formed the ADA chiefly to counter and discredit the newly formed Progressive Citizens of America and attempt to preserve the structural integrity of the Democratic Party.<sup>128</sup> In August 1948, as the election neared, ADA national chairman Leon Henderson, representing more than 28,000 members, “‘emphatically’ endorsed” Truman’s candidacy for president, citing his “courageous fight for civil rights in America.” ADA spokesmen were also vocal in their condemnation of the Progressive Party, which they equated with Communist subversion. “It must by now be abundantly clear that ADA regards the so-called ‘Progressive’ party as a dangerous and irresponsible adventure,” Henderson warned voters. “We are unanimous in rejecting Henry A. Wallace’s pursuit of the Presidency under the banner of this party. ... We hope

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<sup>128</sup> Historian Allen Yarnell reports the primary difference between the PCA and the ADA to be “centered on the communist issue.” See Yarnell, “Liberals in Action: The ADA, Henry Wallace, and the 1948 Election,” *Research Studies* 40-4 (1972): 260-273.

that those who through ignorance or innocence have so far failed to recognize that this party is controlled by Communists and their collaborators will soon abandon it.”<sup>129</sup>

In at least one respect, Henderson was right. As a result of contentious Cold-War hostilities and pervasive red-baiting, Wallace had indeed lost much of his support, no longer representing a significant threat to Truman’s hopes of reelection.<sup>130</sup> Wallace’s campaign, mused one newspaper editorialist, “is hitched to the ghost of President Roosevelt and it is among the most leftish of Roosevelt followers that he is going to find his support. He has nowhere else from which to pull his political strength. There are not enough Republican mavericks to help him, leaving only the Communists, radical labor and the Roosevelt ‘liberals’ of the Democratic Party to furnish him votes.”<sup>131</sup>

As opposition grew stronger and individual risks ever greater, the Party ranks themselves began to splinter.<sup>132</sup> Louis Francis Budenz, a former editor of the *Daily Worker* newspaper who later became the U.S. government’s chief Communist Party “expert,” came out with an article entitled, “How the Reds Snatched Henry Wallace,” in which he revealed concerted Communist efforts to take Wallace “‘into custody’ as a valuable mouthpiece and front man.”<sup>133</sup> Implicit in such accusations was an indictment of foreigners (primarily eastern and southern European, as well as many Latin Americans), perceived as anti-American subversives intent upon socialist revolution. The dangers, according to such lines of reasoning, were contained within those “un-American”

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<sup>129</sup> “Truman, Barkley Endorsed by ADA,” *New York Times*, 30 August 1948, 10.

<sup>130</sup> See Norman Markowitz, *The Rise and Fall of the Peoples’ Century: Henry A. Wallace and American Liberalism, 1941-1948* (New York: Free Press, 1973).

<sup>131</sup> “Candidate Wallace Proves He is Threat to Democrats,” Editorial, *Tampa Times*, 18 February 1948, 8.

<sup>132</sup> For example, Michael Straight, a close friend, advisor, and speechwriter for Wallace, repeatedly urged him to moderate his rhetoric, and eventually quit the campaign trail to return to his post at the *New Republic*. Culver and Hyde, *American Dreamer*, 440.

<sup>133</sup> “How the Reds Snatched Wallace,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 13 September 1948, 6. The actual article written by former *Daily Worker* editor Louis Francis Budenz appeared in *Collier’s Magazine*.

interests for whom Wallace spoke. “When alien radicalism is imported into a free country,” wrote another southern editorialist, “where there is *no reason for it* and no established way to combat it ... it grows abnormally and makes itself a menace or a nuisance.”<sup>134</sup> As such explanations well illustrate, alternative social and political discourses, such as those offered by the Wallace campaign and many of his supporters, were ironically perceived to be entirely at odds with freedom and democratic principles.

Despite the turning political tide propelled by Cold War hostilities and fierce regional antagonisms, Wallace boldly embarked on a campaign into the U.S. South in the fall of 1948, where he faced his most strident opposition only months before the elections. “That renowned hospitality of the South is about to get its severest test since Sherman marched to the sea,” a *Miami Herald* reporter wrote on the eve of Wallace’s southern tour. “Henry Wallace is headed for Dixie, for an intensive, one-week campaign.” While the Progressive Party expected an unprecedented display of support in the region, the column continued, the tour “may also reveal some raw nerves in the South, where tempers have already been inflamed by President Truman’s civil rights program,” and likely to be further exacerbated by Wallace’s “abolitionist fervor.”<sup>135</sup> Wallace, his campaign manager C.B. Baldwin announced, intended to “defy what he terms the ‘criminal practice of Jim Crow,’” by speaking only to integrated audiences throughout the South. According to a *Daily Worker* editorial, Progressives confronted the “Four Horsemen of 1948: those who advocate war, high prices, Jim Crow, and attacks on labor and democratic rights.”<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> “We Must Curb Radicals,” Editorial by Robert Quillen, *Atlanta Constitution*, 13 September 1948, 8.

<sup>135</sup> “Wallace Will Test South’s Hospitality; Whirlwind Campaign Jaunt May Aggravate Raw Nerves,” *Miami Herald*, 28 August 1948, 4-A.

<sup>136</sup> “Wallace Will Open Southern Tour Aug. 29,” *Daily Worker*, 16 August 1948, 4.

Launched from New York amid throngs of supporters, the Wallace entourage occupied planes, automobiles, and trains as they ventured into Dixie. In Durham, North Carolina, spectators witnessed “a dramatic scene never before witnessed in the history of the South.” Wallace appeared before “a cheering crowd” of 1,500 people – both black and white – defended by National Guardsmen. The following day in Greensboro, the Wallace entourage was “pelted with eggs, tomatoes, and rocks” as the candidate “tried in vain to preach ‘peace and prosperity’ to hostile crowds across the Piedmont.” In Burlington, “Wallace gasped with seeming unbelief” as unreceptive protestors physically and verbally assailed the procession. Placing his hands upon the shoulders of an elderly man in the crowd, Wallace asked, “Am I in the United States?” “Take your damn hands off-a me,” the man threatened in response, abruptly withdrawing from Wallace’s frenetic grip. As he advanced through the hordes, verbal volleys assailed Wallace from the gathered masses. “Go back to Russia” and “Get the hell out of here!” they called out to the procession. Despite the obvious enmity and rancor expressed by his opponents, Wallace refused to be driven out of the area, choosing instead to stay for a (highly guarded) picnic lunch meeting with “a group of Negroes in a glade on the edge of the city.”<sup>137</sup> Throughout the day, the *New York Times* reported, “Mr. Wallace, coatless and with the stains of eggs and tomatoes marking the collar and sleeves of his shirt, marched coolly and smilingly through milling groups of men, women, and children who jeered and shouted, ‘Hey, Communist,’ and ‘Hey, nigger-lover!’”<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> “Angry Crowds Pelt Wallace with Eggs,” *Miami Herald*, 31 August 1948.

<sup>138</sup> “Wallace Pelted with Eggs, Fists Bang His Car in South,” *New York Times*, 31 August 1948, 1. While a number of smaller, local papers throughout the country gave tertiary attention to these incidents, their appearance on the front page of the *Times* indicates some interest nationally. Second perhaps only to the *Daily Worker*, the *Times* carried the most consistent and comprehensive coverage of the Progressive campaign.

From Greensboro, the Progressive entourage paid visits to Charlotte and Asheville before crossing into Tennessee. More than half of the 2,500 rain-drenched spectators in Charlotte, newspapers reported, “were Negro tobacco workers who listened earnestly as Wallace expounded his program for aid to southern agriculture.”<sup>139</sup> Though race proved the most incendiary issue in southern politics, class was clearly a significant arbiter as well, evinced by workers’ and farmers’ vocal support of Wallace’s efforts. Often, the two categories were inextricably linked, as race often informed – if not determined – one’s social and economic status. Speaking out on behalf of progressivism, as Wallace himself found out, elicited violent resistance and retribution from those seeking to preserve the region’s social and racial hierarchy. In their protests, white southerners too were advancing their own contested ideas of Americanism and democracy.<sup>140</sup>

Days before his scheduled appearance in Gadsden, Alabama, Wallace received a telegram from Mayor J. Herbert Meighan decrying his integration efforts and warning against a stop in Gadsden. “Your presence is not desired here,” the mayor began in his letter to Wallace. “You advocate peace but your appearance in the South is creating a breach of the peace. We are a peaceful people in Gadsden and your presence is not desired here. If you carry out your plans to speak here, our people, both white and Negro,

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<sup>139</sup> “2,300 Silence Hoodlums at Wallace Rally,” *Daily Worker*, 1 September 1948, 1.

<sup>140</sup> When President Truman learned of Wallace’s experiences campaigning in the southern states, he denounced the violent protests as “a highly un-American business” in violation of “the national spirit of fair play.” Here again, we see a discourse of Americanism which, in this case, rhetorically acknowledges the freedoms of speech and expression. Certainly, Truman and Wallace faced a common adversary in those white southerners resistant to federal action. See “President Assails Wallace Egging,” *New York Times*, 1 September 1948, 1. In some symbolic attempt to maintain order (or at least the impression of it to a national audience), Charlotte, N.C. judge E. MacCurrie fined three local men \$25 each for egging the Wallace entourage. “I disagree with Wallace 100 per cent, too, and maybe more,” MacCurrie explained. “But that is no excuse. It was a silly thing to do and the action of the crowd *did not reflect any honor on Mecklenberg County.*” From “Judge, Foe of Wallace, Fines 3 Egg Throwers,” *New York Times*, 2 September 1948, 15.

will follow their accepted custom and abide by the laws of the community.” Interestingly, Mayor Meighan understood Wallace to be responsible for the violence and unrest surrounding his campaign, antagonizing and upsetting otherwise peaceful communities of Americans (here again, the term has meanings very specific to region and context) throughout the South.<sup>141</sup>

When a “boisterous crowd” of nearly two thousand gathered on the steps of the county courthouse in Birmingham and hurled eggs and insults at the third-party candidate, Wallace remained in his car and drove on without making his scheduled stop in the city. Instead, J.P. Mooney, campaign director of the Progressive Party in Alabama, read a prepared message before the raucous gathering. “We believe in free speech and free assembly without police restriction or police intimidation,” Mooney announced, as protestors banged their fists upon Wallace’s car and repeatedly bombarded the entourage with more eggs and tomatoes. The Progressive Party, he explained, “would not take part in gatherings it considered constitutional violations.”<sup>142</sup>

As Wallace was making his tour of the U.S. South, prominent southern leaders and citizens alike spoke out publicly against his progressive (and presumably threatening) brand of Americanism. Defending southern race policies, Governor Strom Thurmond of South Carolina (and candidate for the States’ Rights Party) branded civil rights efforts as “red inspired,” and emphatically denounced “so-called” fair employment practices and efforts to impose anti-poll tax, anti-lynching, and anti-segregation laws upon the states of the U.S. South. “In my opinion,” he explained, “the FEPC ... is a most-vicious *un-American* proposal to break down state lines and turn America into a socialist, fascist, or

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<sup>141</sup> “Not Welcome, Says Gadsden Mayor,” *New York Times*, 1 September 1948, 13.

<sup>142</sup> “Wallace Avoids Cities in Alabama; Birmingham, Gadsden Invoke Segregation, So He Cancels Talks as Crowds Jeer,” *New York Times*, 2 September 1948, 1.



communistic state.”<sup>143</sup> Writing from Atlanta, editorialist Gladstone Williams argued that Wallace was “getting what he wanted” from protestors on his southern campaign tour. “There is no reason to believe that Mr. Wallace ... is any too unhappy about the rough treatment he has received on his egg-splattered itinerary through the South,” he wrote. “It must be evident that he preferred to wear the [broken egg shell] as a badge of honor – or something. Mr. Wallace, in undertaking his southern tour, deliberately set out to flaunt the laws, the customs, and traditions of the South as regards the issue[s] of race and segregation. ... Already his followers in the East are making a hero of him because of the discomfiture he has been subjected to.” Such pronouncements indicate a clear attempt to vilify Wallace as a troublemaker, instigator, and political opportunist, *bringing* problems to the South rather than exposing them. In all cases, the South was portrayed as being provoked (and indeed, victimized) to action by the “vileness abhorrent to the moral and religious sense of a given community.”<sup>144</sup> Wallace and his Progressive Party campaign became the very targets of regional nativism as he challenged democratic principles denied to ethnic and racial minorities in the South and throughout the United States.

When he returned to New York following his tour of the South, a rally was held at Yankee Stadium in the Bronx, where the atmosphere was one of “a weird combination of the old fashioned open-air church revival meeting, of chanting and song-fest, and of evangelical fervor in mass.” The crowd of 48,000 “listened in silence” as Paul Robeson

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<sup>143</sup> “Thurmond Brands Civil Rights as Red Inspired,” *Atlanta Daily World*, 1 September 1948, (emphasis added).

<sup>144</sup> “Wallace is Getting What He Wanted,” Editorial by Gladstone Williams, *Atlanta Constitution*, 3 September 1948, 18; “The Egg-Throwers Showed Restraint,” Editorial by Westbrook Pegler, *Atlanta Constitution*, 7 September 1948, 23. Pegler argued that, in fact, the “polite” southern people actually demonstrated restraint in their protests of the Wallace campaign, “and their patience is seen to be majestic under dire provocation.

performed such tunes as “Let My People Go” and “Old Man River.”<sup>145</sup> Wallace emerged from his odyssey bruised and battered, but the small victories he achieved in reaching out to the socially silenced and politically disenfranchised affirmed his own idealistic vision for the future of the nation. “People ask me if I have lost my faith in the South as a result of my trip,” Wallace told an audience in Tennessee. “My answer is that my faith has been renewed by the great, glorious, and God-loving people of the South.”<sup>146</sup> As political, social, ethnic, and racial minorities throughout the South were well aware, however, and as Wallace witnessed firsthand, speaking out against the established order had serious, and potentially devastating, personal consequences.

Thus, relentless attacks from all sides effectively disabled the Progressive threat and obviated Wallace’s idealistic plan to recover U.S. democracy, as he intended it to be, in the name of Roosevelt liberalism and international peace. Despite his concern for labor and his utopian vision for social and racial equality (or perhaps *because* of it, depending on the audience), the Iowa farmer ultimately failed to achieve the lasting cohesion and mainstream support necessary to secure the presidency. As discussed in this chapter, many factors accounted for his meteoric rise and decline in the hearts and minds of American workers, not the least of which was an era of tremendous consensus and conformity with little tolerance for dissention or ideological divergence. Clearly, just as much, if not more, was at stake for those who dared support Wallace’s “radical” brand of Americanism. Throughout the South in the months preceding his tour, the Ku Klux Klan appeared, donned in hoods and sheets, in an attempt to “influence” voters and dissuade potential Progressive supporters. For African Americans, Truman’s civil rights program

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<sup>145</sup> “Rally Combines Revival, Song Fest,” *New York Times*, 11 September 1948, 5. The article also said that, “A curious thread of scriptural quotation ran through the speeches and the music.”

<sup>146</sup> “Tennesseans Give Wallace Cheers,” *New York Times*, 5 September 1948, 4.

offered an appealing – and socially acceptable – alternative to Wallace’s platform. For others, particularly working-class immigrants struggling to make America home, the Progressive Party seemed a sinking ship upon which many refused to go down. As the following chapter will illustrate, however, some never compromised their belief in Wallace’s America: *their* America. Oddly, it was in the deepest South where some of his most spirited and dogged proponents boldly defied the local ethos and stood to be counted for a more progressive America.

Chapter 3: “*La Verdadera Lucha*”  
The Progressive Campaign in Tampa, 1948

Henry Wallace’s campaign tour brought national attention to the U.S. South, further exacerbating ethnic, racial, and economic antagonisms among an ideologically diverse and divided electorate. Progressive Party efforts, read one *Washington Post* commentary, were responsible for a number of subversive efforts, including “the exploitation of the general desire for peace,” the persistent attempts to “put communistic individuals in ... national public offices,” and “the stirring up of racial tensions aimed at undermining *our* confidence in *our* traditions, *our* way of life, and *our* Government.”<sup>147</sup> Such rhetoric functioned quite effectively to vilify Progressive leaders and supporters as un-American subversives working to undermine domestic peace (wherever it may have existed) and to enforce conventions of “true” patriotism.

Amidst talk of allegiances – Democrat, Republican, “American” – were individuals: people with histories, experiences, and expectations of their own. Many did not so easily fit into simple categories, but instead navigated fluid ideological, social, and political boundaries according to context. For African Americans, particularly in the U.S. South, the mutual experiences of repression and histories of socio-political disenfranchisement compelled many individuals to vote on behalf of black equality and empowerment. First-, second-, even third-generation immigrants sought an America that included them without denying their own traditions, customs, and heritage. For the working class throughout the country, wages and fair representation were paramount. In

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\* Translated, “The Real Struggle,” and coined in reference to Wallace’s Progressive campaign by one of Tampa’s Latin newspapers, *El Internacional*, 25 June 1948, 2.

<sup>147</sup> Letter to the Editor, *Washington Post*, 4 November 1948, emphases added.

the atmosphere of the Cold War at mid-century, all were forced to come to terms with their own circumstances and identities. Just what made an “American” remained an ongoing, and truly contested, construction at the center of the political discourse.

When Wallace appeared in Tampa in February 1948, his audience consisted of local Spaniards, Cubans, Italians, African Americans, and some Anglos. Many among them, to borrow from historian Greg Dening’s discussion, were occupants of an abstract and somewhat nebulous space termed the *limen*: a space of “thresholds, margins, boundaries,” of “ambivalence” and “unset definition.” “Edginess is what one feels about the *limen*,” Dening explains. “It was in between, always in defining rather than definition mode, always on the edge of being something different.”<sup>148</sup> As the voices in the preceding pages have illustrated, immigrant identity was an ongoing reconciliation of past with present, of native customs and traditions with local experiences. Such tensions, ever-present in the individual, were most exaggerated between generations, where occupants of the latter often held markedly different outlooks than those of the former.

While liminality might well describe the fluidity of immigrant identity, particularly during the initial years of migration and resettlement, such is the nature of individual being: never so easily categorized or compartmentalized, always dynamic and circumstantial. While others struggled to understand, define, and order this incoming “group” of cigar workers, Latins maintained and advanced a distinct sense of self and community contingent upon their transnational experiences.<sup>149</sup> It was in their definition

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<sup>148</sup> Greg Dening, “Introduction: In Search of a Metaphor,” in Ronald Hoffman, Mechal Sobel, and Fredrika J. Teute, eds., *Through a Glass Darkly: Reflections on Personal Identity in Early America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1997), 2.

<sup>149</sup> I qualify the term “group” here because the migrant cigar workers were far from homogenous, and maintained distinct ethnic identities which distinguished them from one another. “Latin” came to be a common, shared identification centered primarily upon the experience of work in the cigar industry. It was only to outsiders that such distinctions went unrecognized.

by those outside the enclave that they were marginalized and collectively identified in terms of “otherness.” But to the Latin workers of Tampa, they were Spanish, Italian, Cuban; they were socialists, anarchists, democrats, and republicans; they were many things to many people; they were Americans. The success of Wallace’s progressivism was his ability to tap into that spirit and embrace a vision for an America entirely compatible with that of its socially and politically marginalized communities. Ironically, conservatives eschewed his vision as inherently threatening, seditious, and un-American.

Though he was not without his Anglo supporters locally, Tampa Latins and African Americans particularly reacted with great enthusiasm when Wallace brought his presidential campaign to Central Florida in mid-February of the election year. Following Wallace’s *verdadera lucha* with great interest nationally, local Latin newspapers eagerly announced the anticipated arrival of the Progressive Party candidate. “Henry Wallace to speak in Tampa tonight,” *La Gaceta* announced to its readers. “He is going to be in the tobacco factory ‘*El Paraiso*’ and other places. ... It is rumored that he will make a tour around the Latin neighborhoods ... with the intention of speaking with whites and blacks.”<sup>150</sup> Both of the city’s major Spanish-language newspapers ran coverage of Wallace as he toured the cigar factories of Ybor City and West Tampa and met informally with workers and their families. One photo in *El Internacional* showed a contemplative Wallace examining a newly rolled cigar, while two smiling workers – a man and a woman – looked on from their seated workstations. The “*ilustrado líder*” of the Progressive Party, the paper announced, toured the Perfecto Garcia factory, where he

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<sup>150</sup> “Henry Wallace to Speak in Tampa Tonight; Henry Wallace Visits Ybor City,” *La Gaceta* (from Spanish), 17 February 1948.

spoke with workers and received “*centenares de ellos le ovacionaron.*”<sup>151</sup> According to *La Gaceta*, which also reported extensively on the event, the unexpected demonstration of support moved Wallace (*conmovio a Wallace*), who spoke in Spanish with many of the workers.<sup>152</sup>

Wallace also traveled across the Bay, where he stopped briefly in St. Petersburg as a guest of his brother, a local resident. “St. Petersburg is happy to welcome Henry A. Wallace, the third party candidate, for a luncheon talk today,” the *St. Petersburg Times* warmly announced. Not to confuse southern hospitality with political endorsement, however, the editors were careful to make their positions clear on the issue of his candidacy. “While *The Times* will not support Wallace and while we believe that he will find little strength in Florida, we are still glad to hear what he has to say.”<sup>153</sup>

Responses to Wallace’s appearance were as varied as the population from which they came. In a letter to the *Tampa Tribune*, Armando Valdes applauded the Progressive candidate and the attention his campaign brought to Tampa. “The most important development,” he wrote, “is in keeping with the fact that a potential candidate for President of the U.S.A. addressed us, this being the first time our fair city has been so honored. We are glad people showed their appreciation by extending a most cordial, heartfelt welcome to our distinguished visitor, Henry Agard Wallace.” Valdes, likely aware of the *Tribune*’s predominantly Anglo audience, then urged support for the third-

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<sup>151</sup> “Wallace en ‘El Paraiso,’” *El Internacional*, 19 February 1948.

<sup>152</sup> “Wallace Visito Ayer La Fábrica ‘El Paraiso,’” *La Gaceta*, 18 February 1948.

<sup>153</sup> “Wallace in ‘Spring Training,’” Editorial, *St. Pete Times*, 17 February 1948.

party in November. “Now let us return the compliment,” he concluded, “by solemnly pledging ourselves to support his candidacy in every way, manner and form.”<sup>154</sup>

Among those who answered Wallace’s call for financial support were Leon Claxton (an African American), Nick Garcia, John Perry, and Alonso Ramirez, all of whom contributed \$100 each to the Progressive campaign. Sam Albury, a member of the National Maritime Union, also pledged an equal sum, amounting to an estimated \$1000 by the end of the evening of Wallace’s speech. “Send that message back to Franco of the money that’s going to fight fascism,” said William Gallimor, a New York radio commentator and Progressive Party supporter. Clearly, Wallace’s message resonated among the eclectic audience of transnational workers who called Tampa home. Local labor leaders, many defiant of their national unions, also pledged their support to the Progressive candidate. Among them, the Cigarmakers Union and the Maritime Union both vowed to obtain at least 5,000 new registrations for the third party. If Tampa was any measure, Wallace had reason to be somewhat optimistic.<sup>155</sup>

Others were more skeptical of the Progressive message, yet not altogether dismissive of his candidacy. J.G. Locke, a Tampa merchant, told reporters that his curiosity was “always worth fifty cents,” for admission to the speech at Plant Field, but he “did not expect to be convinced.” Another expressed his loyalty to Roosevelt’s legacy as he prepared to see Wallace speak. “I’ll string along with [Wallace] if I’m convinced he follows F.D.R.’s principles.” Such a remark indicates that perhaps he, and others like him, were increasingly disillusioned by the direction Truman had taken the Democratic

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<sup>154</sup> “Welcome to Wallace,” Letter to the Editor, *Tampa Tribune*, 18 February 1948. Valdes was indeed correct: none of the other three leading candidates for President in 1948 (Truman, Dewey, or Thurmond) visited Tampa, with both Truman and Dewey avoiding the Deep South altogether.

<sup>155</sup> “Crowd Shouts Viva Wallace As He Strolls Into Park,” *Tampa Morning Tribune*, 18 February 1948; “Wallace Group Plans Active Florida Drive,” *Tampa Morning Tribune*, 11 February 1948.



Party since 1946, and sought some alternative in 1948. Another, A.J. Jimenez, defied Cold War scare tactics and attempts to exaggerate claims of communism and foreign allegiances within the Progressive Party, arguing that, “The Communist charge against Wallace is propaganda spread to scare the people who are easily led. To me he is just another candidate like Truman, Taft or Stassen.”<sup>156</sup>

While Wallace’s reception in Tampa went off smoothly and without incident, his appearance created a minor stir among conservative Anglo Tampanns, many of whom reacted with some vehemence to his idealistic campaign for racial equality, working-class empowerment, and international peace. When Mariano Rodriguez, district vice chairman of the People’s Progressive Party, announced Wallace’s intention to speak to an integrated audience, Major General Sumter L. Lowry of the Florida National Guard publicly urged the “right-thinking people of Tampa to boycott the meeting” in defense of true Americanism and patriotic duty. “I think it is a terrible thing that a former vice president of your country has been adopted as a leader by a party made up of enemies of our country,” Lowry argued. “Communists are agents of Russia and Russia is our enemy.”<sup>157</sup> Quite accustomed to opposition, particularly in the U.S. South, Wallace was not dissuaded. “It’s just like when they ban books,” he commented to a reporter at a press conference in nearby Lakeland. “It immediately increases circulation.”<sup>158</sup>

While the air was electrified with talk of Wallace and the upcoming presidential election, renowned columnist Dorothy Thompson, a regular in the *Tampa Tribune*, delivered a well-timed and highly vitriolic diatribe denouncing the ideology of

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<sup>156</sup> “Wallace’s Listeners Eager to Give Opinions of Him.” *Tampa Times*, 18 February 1948, 1.

<sup>157</sup> “General Lowry Urges Tampanns to Boycott Wallace Speech,” *Tampa Morning Tribune*, 17 February 1948, 1:6

<sup>158</sup> “General Calls for Boycott of Wallace Speech,” *Lakeland Ledger*, 17 February 1948, 10:6.

communism and its incompatibility with U.S. democracy. The intention of the Communist Party, she wrote, “is not to secure ‘agreements’ or ‘compromises,’ but to use the tribunes of governments for disruptive agitation, and destroy the representative system *from within*.” In light of their revolutionary philosophy, Thompson concluded, “how can it be argued that Communists have the ‘right’ to participation in government institutions which they have pledged themselves to destroy, into whose legislative halls they go only to agitate and wreck, which they describe as ‘enemy camps’ and where they are not free agents *but subject to international control?*”<sup>159</sup> Such Cold War fears of Communist infiltration and foreign allegiances were projected onto Wallace’s presidential campaign and further exacerbated by immigrant support of the Progressive Party. Further inciting political tensions, the *Tampa Tribune* published an AP story in early February announcing Communist Party support of the Progressive campaign for president. The third party, said Communist Party General Secretary Eugene Dennis, “is a new type of people’s anti-war and anti-imperialist and democratic people’s coalition which is being created within the U.S.A. and reflects in its own way the struggle between the world camps of progress and reaction.”<sup>160</sup> The alleged threat, articulated in Thompson’s column and demonstrated by Dennis’s endorsement, was one of foreign subversion and revolution, both perceived as formidable menaces to the success of democracy in the United States, and both linked to the Wallace campaign.

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<sup>159</sup> “Communism is Intolerable to U.S. Manner of Living,” by Dorothy Thompson, *Tampa Morning Tribune*, 23 January 1948, emphases added.

<sup>160</sup> “U.S. Communist Party Supports Henry Wallace,” *Tampa Morning Tribune*, 12 February 1948. As many perceived it, the impetus now lay on Wallace to “clear himself with the nation by affirming the fact or repudiating their support.” See also “Red Document Reveals Party Backs Wallace,” *Tampa Morning Tribune*, 7 February 1948. Following the election, Wallace would later lament his unapologetic support for the CP endorsement, something which had dire consequences for his campaign.

When the *Tampa Tribune* randomly polled a handful of local residents, as they did on a regular basis, all expressed concern with Wallace's "radical policies," his "non-segregated platform," and his perceived connections to Soviet Communism. "Wallace will get few votes from his speech in Tampa," speculated one woman, "but not enough to make a difference." Another suggested that while his policies might be well received in the North, he would find little support among southerners. The *Tribune* also told of a local housewife who refused to attend the speech in protest against the integration of Wallace's audiences. "I didn't hear [the] speech, but I did not approve of both Negroes and white people sitting together at the rally." While his domestic program garnered significant animosities from white southern audiences, his foreign policy further aggrandized such opposition. "I believe Wallace is supported by the foreign element all over the country and I don't like him," one man adamantly declared. "I think Wallace is definitely on the Communist side, so I didn't go to the speech or read about it in the paper."<sup>161</sup>

Wallace's February appearance would be the only visit he made to the Tampa Bay area during that election year, but other prominent Progressive Party supporters also brought his message to the people of Central Florida. In October, just one month before the national elections, Paul Robeson spoke to Tampanans on Wallace's behalf. Standing before nearly 500 Tampanans (again integrated), Robeson performed more than a dozen songs (including an encore of "Old Man River") and urged listeners to vote for Wallace in the upcoming presidential election. While Robeson certainly appealed to African Americans, he was also popular among Latin immigrants, many of whom rallied behind

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<sup>161</sup> "Tribune Talkies," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, 21 February 1948.

his social activism and involvement in international struggles against fascism.<sup>162</sup>

Robeson, according to the *Tribune* report, “did little speechmaking,” and left the “political football” to Clark Foreman, president of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, who spoke to the attendees after Robeson’s performance. “For the first time in this century,” Foreman predicted, “the people of the South will join with the rest of the country in deciding their political future in the November elections rather than in the Democratic primaries.”<sup>163</sup>

As Progressive support dwindled over the months preceding the election, southern opposition to social reform and civil rights legislation grew more vocal, visible, and menacing. In Southwest Florida, for example, as Wallace was speaking before the crowd at Tampa’s Plant Field, a “fiery cross” was burned near the site of an African-American voter registration meeting.<sup>164</sup> Several months later, a “crude wooden cross some eighteen inches tall” was found burning in the front yard of a St. Petersburg resident, the “first recorded cross burning in Pinellas County in the last seven years,” according to local law enforcement officials.<sup>165</sup> In late October, the Ku Klux Klan announced plans for election eve demonstrations throughout Central Florida. “The evident purpose,” one commentator opined, “is to deter Negroes from voting in the election – a right granted them by the

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<sup>162</sup> For example, during the Spanish Civil War, Robeson himself traveled across the Atlantic to visit with and perform for the troops of the International Brigades fighting in defense of the Spanish Republican government and its people. In his struggle against fascism, Robeson garnered the attention and respect of ethnic Americans who identified with such causes through political and social activism, and ongoing connections to their native countries and peoples.

<sup>163</sup> “500 Hear Robeson, Negro Singer, at 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Rally,” *Tampa Morning Tribune*, 5 October 1948. Interestingly, the photo accompanying this story places Robeson – back turned to the camera – at the very left edge of the frame, while the focus is on the unsegregated audience of Anglos, African Americans, and Latins. Robeson was well known both as a performer and as an advocate of the working-class in the U.S. and around the world. In fact, during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), Robeson had traveled to Spain to entertain the troops of the International Brigade. His involvement in such activism, however, made him a popular target for Cold War reactionaries who denounced his link to Communism.

<sup>164</sup> “Cross Burns At Ft. Myers Negro Rally,” *Tampa Morning Tribune*, 14 February 1948.

<sup>165</sup> “Cross Burning In Pinellas Still Mystery,” *Tampa Morning Tribune*, 1 June 1948.

Constitution of the United States. . . . As long as they *peaceably* and *decently* exercise that right, no attempt to intimidate or terrorize them in that exercise should be permitted.”<sup>166</sup>

Because social activism and political radicalism were equally threatening to nativist organizations like the Klan, immigrants too fell victim to such intimidation and demands for conformity.

As election day drew closer, criticisms against Wallace became more pronounced, obdurate, and especially virulent. Wounded by a national Cold War campaign against alleged foreign infiltration and political subversion, Wallace was decried as un-American, even anti-American, and eschewed by many as a danger to national interests. His reluctance to denounce Communists in the United States served only to further estrange him from mainstream American society. “Whatever you do today, Mr. And Mrs. Good American Citizen,” one man instructed his fellow Tampan on the eve of the elections, “don’t vote for Henry Wallace and Joe Stalin. Of all the candidates for President of the United States, Wallace is the only one who is anti-American, the only one who is a public enemy, the only one who is supported by the Kremlin, the only one Stalin hopes to see elected, the only one who follows the Moscow line. . . . Henry Wallace is not only unfit for the presidency – he is a menace to the nation. Stop him now. Vote for America. Don’t vote for Wallace!”<sup>167</sup> Indeed, Wallace was perceived by such critics not only as a poor candidate for the nation’s highest office, but also as a poor citizen, and a threat to democratic principles (and, presumably, the capitalist spirit). As the letter’s author effectively illustrated, a vote for Wallace was supposedly a vote *against* the America.

Although his opinion may well have represented a majority, many in Tampa perceived a

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<sup>166</sup> “Fomenting Racial Feeling,” Editorial, *Tampa Morning Tribune*, 28 October 1948; “Ku Klux Klan Plans Election Eve Tour In Florida,” *Tampa Morning Tribune*, 27 October 1948, emphases added.

<sup>167</sup> “Don’t Vote for Stalin,” Letter to the Editor, *Tampa Morning Tribune*, 2 November 1948.

vote for Wallace as the *only* vote for America. To *Tampeños*, the Progressive Party represented true democratic spirit and an accessibility otherwise denied them as working-class immigrants, African Americans, and the otherwise economically and socially disenfranchised.<sup>168</sup>

On the eve of the election, Klan activity around Central Florida also became more vocal, visible, and menacing. In Wildwood, northeast of Tampa, “a caravan of 50 motor cars, containing hooded klansmen, toured Negro sections of several towns.” As recounted by the *Daily Worker*, “At a number of points the kluxers planted burning crosses [and] the leading car of the motorcade carried an electrically lighted cross.” The paper also reported that African-American voters throughout the South received letters warning them against going to the polls the following day. “Keep away from the polls,” the flyers read, “the Klan knows YOU.”<sup>169</sup> Clearly, voting had potentially severe, if not fatal, consequences for ethnic, racial, and political minorities throughout the South.

With the sunrise on election day, record turnouts were expected at polls across the United States. Wallace, who planned to cast his vote at a public library near his farm in

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<sup>168</sup> Though newspapers across the state were divided in their endorsement of the presidential candidates, there was little support for Wallace in the mainstream presses. Those endorsing Truman included the *Miami Daily News*, the *Orlando Sentinel-Star*, the *Daytona Beach News-Journal*, and the *St. Petersburg Times*. An African-American newspaper, the *Miami Tropical Dispatch*, announced its support for Truman, illustrating the success of his controversial civil rights platform among disenfranchised minority populations. Thomas Dewey’s following was by no means insignificant, however, for he found support from sources such as the *St. Petersburg Independent*, the *Sanford Herald*, and the *Ft. Lauderdale News*, among others. Though there was little mention of Progressive candidate Henry Wallace, a number of papers endorsed the Dixiecrat representative Strom Thurmond, including the *Ft. Myers News Press* and the *Gainesville Sun*. While endorsements varied by region, many of the state newspapers predicted that ultimately the Republican challenger Dewey would carry the state. Though the *Tampa Times* declined to make a prediction at all, the *Tampa Morning Tribune* declared the fight to be between Truman and Thurmond, while the *St. Petersburg Times* expected a battle between Truman and Dewey. Clearly, there was little consensus among the potential outcomes predicted for the election. On one thing, however, they agreed: Wallace would lose. *Tampa Morning Tribune*, 29 October 1948; Those papers predicting a victory for Dewey were: the *Bradenton Herald*, *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*, *Miami Beach Sun*, *St. Augustine Record*, *Lakeland Ledger*, *Lake Worth Leader*, and the *Winter Haven News Chief*; Interestingly, even the *Clearwater Sun* could “not see Florida going for Truman.”

<sup>169</sup> “KKK Burns Cross to Scare Voters,” *Daily Worker*, 3 November 1948, 1.

South Salem, New York, told reporters he would “spend the better part of the day working with his poultry and chrysanthemums.”<sup>170</sup> Throughout much of the country, Thomas Dewey was the favorite to win the presidency from the incumbent Harry Truman, while Henry Wallace and Strom Thurmond had distinct and committed followings of their own. “Dewey has demonstrated that he is a good administrator and I believe he will make a good president,” said one Tampan, while another expected a Truman victory. “I believe [Truman] deserves another term,” said a Tampa housewife. “He has carried on well after Roosevelt.”<sup>171</sup>

In New York City, officials announced they would flash election results by lights from a tower in Times Square. If the beacon swept north, Dewey was leading; if it swept south, Truman was ahead. Meanwhile, the *Chicago Tribune* attained infamy overnight for its erroneous prediction of a Dewey landslide victory at the polls. The *New York Times* predicted fifty million votes for the presidential candidates, ten million of which Progressive Party leaders optimistically expected would go to Wallace, while in Hillsborough County (Tampa, Florida) officials expected a turnout of 40,000 at the polls. Indeed, even international audiences closely followed the developments as election day approached. “Mr. Wallace’s Progressive party has secured places for its candidates on the ballots of forty-five States,” wrote the *London Times*. “This is a feat which last January was considered impossible. It has been achieved in spite of the steady growth of the

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<sup>170</sup> “Wallace Votes, Then Tends Farm,” *New York Times*, 3 November 1948.

<sup>171</sup> “Tribune Talkies,” *Tampa Morning Tribune*, 7 October 1948. Tampan in the day’s column were asked to respond to the contradictory campaign speeches offered by Truman and Dewey, and for whom they planned to vote.

belief that Progressive policy is dominated by the Communists, and a continuing decline in the forecasts of the number of votes Mr. Wallace is expected to win.”<sup>172</sup>

In fact, the final number of voters nationwide on November 2 approached thirty million, a significant total, though well short of expert predictions (Appendix, Figure 1). In the state of Florida, nearly half a million people voted, with Truman receiving a plurality (Appendix, Figure 2). As he did across the states of the U.S. South, Strom Thurmond and his States’ Rights Party made a rather impressive showing among primarily white populations weary of the perceived liberalization of American society and subordination of distinct southern interests. Though he had his pockets of support in such international, cosmopolitan urban centers as New York City and San Francisco, Wallace did not come close to the idealistic conjectures of his supporters and party officials. “The vote for Wallace, it must be admitted,” the *Daily Worker* observed, “fell below not only the unrealistic quotas assigned to him by certain forces, but even below what his most sober supporters, including this paper, had expected.”<sup>173</sup>

Progressive Party support was particularly scant in the South where his controversial brand of Americanism met with fierce nativist resistance. Despite his abysmal showing around the nation, Wallace garnered 10,293 votes among Floridians, amounting to the sum total of nine other southern states combined. When investigated at the local level, the Wallace vote in Florida was concentrated in Hillsborough and Dade Counties (Tampa and Miami, respectively), both areas with active working-class

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<sup>172</sup> “Vote of 50,000,000, Record for Nation, Is Expected Today,” *New York Times*, 2 November 1948; “Wallace Is Far Short Of His Party’s Expectations,” *New York Times*, 3 November 1948; “40,000 Expected to Vote in Hillsborough County Today,” *Tampa Morning Tribune*, 2 November 1948; “The American Elections,” *London Times*, 2 November 1948; In fact, Thomas Dewey was the only candidate to be on the ballot in all forty-eight states.

<sup>173</sup> “Small Wallace Vote Irks Daily Worker,” Editorial reprinted in *The New York Times*, just two days after the election, as the final votes were being reported and counted among national totals, 4 November 1948.



immigrant populations (Appendix, Figure 3). The majority of Progressive votes in Hillsborough County came from the precincts of Ybor City and West Tampa, where vibrant Latin communities had thrived since the late nineteenth century (Appendix, Figure 4). In Ybor City and West Tampa, *La Gaceta* commented, “residents applauded in the factories when the ex-vice president visited.”<sup>174</sup> Drawing upon their rich histories of socio-political activism and transnational experiences, the people of Ybor City and West Tampa defiantly endorsed the beleaguered Progressive candidate and his (their) idealistic vision for the future of the United States, and their own places in it.

In the Latin districts of Tampa (delineated by Buffalo and Fourth Avenues to the north and south, and Nebraska Avenue and Thirtieth Street to the east and west), Wallace handily won seven of eleven precincts, averaging over fifty percent of the total votes from the area (Appendix, Figures 4 & 5). On the day following the election, as the major regional and national papers followed Truman’s upset of the Republican challenger Dewey, *La Gaceta* reported to its readers that the “*mayoría a favor de H. Wallace*” in Ybor City and West Tampa, an important local victory over “*la débil campaña hecha por los jefes del partido democrático en esta ciudad.*”<sup>175</sup> Of the more than 10,000 Floridians who voted for the Progressive candidate for president, nearly 4,000 of them came from Hillsborough County, the population of which (over 200,000) amounted to approximately one-tenth of the entire state. Interestingly, while he gained more actual votes in New York City, a locus of Progressive activism and campaign coordination, the concentration

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<sup>174</sup> “Harry Truman Victorious; Majority Favor Henry Wallace in Ybor City and West Tampa” (from Spanish), *La Gaceta*, 3 November 1948.

<sup>175</sup> “Mayoria a Favor de H. Wallace en Ybor City y West Tampa,” (from Spanish), *La Gaceta*, 3 November 1948. At the time of this publication, all votes had not yet been accounted for. Based upon the information they had on seven Ybor City and West Tampa precincts, however, the newspaper reported 1,995 votes for Wallace, 1,153 votes for Truman, and 440 votes for Dewey.

of Progressive Party supporters relative to the population was significantly higher (in fact more than double) in Tampa.

Though perceived by many as a political revolutionary, Henry Wallace sought to work *within* the established system to reform social, economic, and political policies throughout the country and around the world. Often taking largely unpopular positions on issues of great contention, Wallace fell victim to Cold War fears of international conspiracy and socialist revolution, as well as strong domestic resistance to racial reform. Despite the widespread reaction against Wallace's progressivism, he found a sympathetic audience among the Latins of Ybor City and West Tampa, a community with deep transnational roots and traditions of political defiance and social activism. Viewed by many as inimical to American culture, the Spaniards, Cubans, and Italians of Central Florida found a voice in the Progressive Party campaign of 1948. In part, it was their chorus of voices that validated Wallace's candidacy to a nation largely unwilling to recognize its legitimacy; it was through his campaign that first- and second-generation working-class immigrants demonstrated their citizenship to their adopted country, to one another, and to themselves. Ironically, for many of the immigrant "radicals" of Ybor City, the expression of dissent itself, perceived by many as un-American, became their own vehicle of incorporation, the manner in which they expressed their identities: a reconciliation of culture, tradition, and ethnic memory with contemporary demands, experiences, and expectations. The thread of radicalism, while dramatically altered, persisted yet.

## Conclusion

With few exceptions, scholars of the mid-twentieth century largely relegated Henry Wallace's 1948 Progressive Party campaign to the footnotes of U.S. history, where it most often serves as a trivial anecdote to more sensational accounts of Harry Truman's surprise upset victory over Thomas Dewey. Wallace, branded a New Deal reformist by some and subversive revolutionary by others, diplomatically conceded the election to his former superior and quietly withdrew into the annals of history. While his longstanding impact on U.S. policymaking and social reform remains an arguably peripheral and somewhat marginalized issue, Wallace's Progressivism was central to many contemporaries as an alternative – and more inclusive – expression of Americanism which provided equal space for ethnic, racial, and working-class voices. This thesis demonstrates the significance of his campaign as a valuable tool through which to analyze immigrant identities: the reconciliation of ethnic tradition, culture, and memory with the experience of life in the U.S. South. When first- and second-generation *Tampeños* defiantly endorsed the controversial Progressive candidate for President in 1948, they did so both as immigrants with rich cultures and native traditions and as Americans with vested interests in the system under which they worked, danced, laughed, and lived.

Like Philip Licata, Fermin Souto, and the Pendas brothers, countless other migrants followed transnational networks from Europe and the Caribbean in search of steady work in the cigar industry. Before settling in Tampa, many of them lived and worked in communities of industrial workers from all over the world, rubbing elbows

with fellow laborers and sharing common ambitions of ameliorating the harshness of industrial life while establishing some security for themselves and future generations. In the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, Tampa saw tremendous growth as Latin workers and their families settled around the cigar factories of Ybor City and West Tampa. With the migrant workers came new customs and behaviors, many of which were perceived as “foreign” and “radical” to the established Anglo population. As Latins adjusted to life in the U.S. South, they invoked traditions of mutual aid, socio-political activism, and a common working-class consciousness to contest experiences of discrimination and oppression in the factories and on the streets of Tampa. Success, indeed survival, became contingent upon the reconciliation of past and present, the amalgamation of ethnic and social conventions with industrial labor and the collective experiences of “otherness.” In so doing, Latins challenged American idealism and rhetorical democracy to recognize its espoused principles. The struggle, most clearly demonstrated by frequent labor unrest in the factories, bled into the streets and neighborhoods of Ybor City and West Tampa, where the concept of Americanism was engaged, debated, and contested.

When Henry Wallace brought his Progressive Party campaign to Tampa in 1947 and 1948, first- and second-generation Latins stood together in unprecedented numbers to endorse the controversial candidate. In Wallace, *Tampeños* found a proponent of the working-class, a champion of the struggle against discrimination, and a man who recognized *their* place in America. His campaign against discrimination was their struggle. The Progressive call for international peace resonated among a transnational community of people with ideological and cultural roots across the Caribbean, the

Atlantic, and throughout Eastern and Western Europe. While the Cold War stigmatized radicalism and dissent, Latins of Tampa celebrated them as democracy in practice.

Wallace's politics were their lives. Wallace's America was in many ways their America; in him, they found an ally in the U.S. political institutions and processes, and a vehicle to advance their goals, achieve their aspirations, and advance a distinct brand of Americanism consistent with their lives, struggles, and experiences as transnational, working-class migrants.

Appendix

*Figure 1*  
*National Votes for Wallace*

	<b>Wallace votes</b>	<b>Percent of Total Votes</b>
<b>New York</b>	508,542	8%
<b>Florida</b>	10,893	2%
<b>California</b>	112,749	4%
<b>Combined</b>	632,184	7%
<b>National Total</b>	986,571	2%

*Figure 2*  
*Votes by Party in the U.S. South*

	<b>Republican</b>	<b>Democrat</b>	<b>States' Rights</b>	<b>Progressive</b>
<b>Alabama</b>	20,570	~	104,321	1,019
<b>Arkansas</b>	20,748	64,115	21,595	319
<b>Florida</b>	160,481	215,337	66,250	10,293
<b>Georgia</b>	51,670	170,776	66,644	1,576
<b>Louisiana</b>	43,199	62,601	87,770	2,905
<b>Mississippi</b>	2,356	9,291	84,594	3,207
<b>N. Carolina</b>	213,648	418,368	61,073	2,843
<b>S. Carolina</b>	5,101	30,498	89,440	178
<b>Tennessee</b>	155,326	215,014	59,813	1,162

*Figure 3 Wallace Votes in Florida*

<b>County</b>	<b>Votes for Wallace</b>	<b>Percent of Total Votes</b>
Hillsborough (Tampa)	3,776	36%
Dade County (Miami)	3,097	30%
Duval (Jacksonville)	1,318	13%
Combined	8,191	
Statewide Total	10,475	

*Figure 4 Winning precincts for Wallace*

<b>Precinct</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Wallace Votes</b>	<b>Total Votes</b>	<b>Percent</b>
9	Main & Albany	255	502	51%
10	3109 Armenia	367	695	53%
18	1801 9th Avenue	178	431	41%
22	1709 26th Avenue	359	705	51%
24	1822 12th Avenue	264	430	61%
25	2507 16th Street	357	549	65%
26	Columbus & 12th	215	385	56%

Figure 5 Map of Ybor City Precincts

