

# HENRY WALLACE

**R**EPUBLICANS will err if they think that Henry Wallace has relieved them of any responsibility to nominate the wisest and ablest candidate they can find. A strong tide is running against Henry. He can't do as much harm as he imagined to President Truman. He can't give Republicans such license as the party enjoyed in 1920 to nominate a Warren Gamaliel Harding of Marion, Ohio, or any other weak politician.

It is a very good thing, for the country first, and the Republicans second, that no such irresponsible freedom exists. What the Republicans did in 1920 explained much that the New Dealers did from 1933 onward. The violent political swings from black Republicanism to pink Democracy are not so good for our common country. Collier's hopes we can do better this time.

This year's Presidential race can be won and lost either by Republicans or Democrats. Two years ago the Republican turn seemed to have come, but President Truman has recovered friends that seemed to have been alienated in 1946. He can win more. Republican overconfidence can be a Democrat aid. We speak not as a partisan; Collier's endorses no candidates.

In retrospect, what Henry Wallace said is essentially what William Jennings Bryan said in 1916. But with a difference. Wallace like Bryan is for peace and plenty. Who isn't? Wallace like Bryan is a Middle Western product, but Wallace unlike Bryan follows the Communist line. In fact the Communist party provides his only important organized support. It is not enough.

Wallace is now against scarcity economics which, as Secretary of Agriculture, he invented. Henry was the official to advocate the killing of little pigs and the plowing under of growing crops to produce scarcity. Wallace is for aid to Europe but against the Marshall Plan on the thoroughly false assertion that the Marshall Plan is hostile to Russia. He adopts the Russian argument as completely as though it had been submitted to Moscow approval.

That is not persuasive enough for American voters. When the men's clothing unions and the automobile workers came out against the Wallace candidacy, the most effective union support for a third party was lost. Russia is not making it easy for the floating American voters to vote the Russian line. Henry Wallace's third party won't have the support or the respectability of the senior Robert La Follette's effort. La Follette, incidentally, did not defeat the Republican ticket as he hoped to do.

It is too bad to see Henry Wallace disintegrate, but that is his doing. His folly and confusion won't, however, excuse the blunders of any other politicians. He hasn't defeated President Truman, or made the nomination of Governor Dewey impossible, or made the nomination of Senator Bricker or any complacent smoothie possible. He has merely said his piece, and the country will be hearing from other wiser and more responsible citizens.

**WHY NOT TALK SHOP?** One of the favorite thou-shalt-nots among the multitude of people who write books or newspaper columns telling other folks how to be charming and interesting is: Don't talk shop. A businessman should never, never mention his own business, but should try to discourse on art, literature, music, etc.; a doctor should keep his mouth shut about medicine and be voluble on sports or the drama or politics; and so on.

We dissent, please. Some of the most horrific bores we've ever met were people who followed the don't-talk-shop prescription. Some of our most interesting friends and acquaintances talk about

virtually nothing but their own activities and the things that go on in their daily lives.

A working newspaperman, for one illustration, is usually at his best when he tells of the comic, tragic or mysterious things he runs across on his job. Any kind of scientist is likely to be fascinating when he discusses what he knows intimately—and likely to be a conversational flop on other topics.

Lawyers, teachers, politicians, real-estate people, dress designers or sellers, ministers, salesmen—all of these lead inherently interesting lives, and their shoptalk is virtually sure to be interesting in consequence. The same goes, for that matter, for truck drivers, apartment-building superintendents, doormen, cops, caddies, waiters, barbers and stenographers.

We're holding no brief for the I-I-I guy who talks about himself, instead of reporting his adventures in this interesting world. But we are asserting that good, impersonal, objective shoptalk makes good conversation which can find plenty of listeners. Why not give it a try, the next time you're stuck for something to say? (Or, in a real pinch, why not just shut up for a spell?)

**GOOD NEWS ON LYNCHING:** A few years after the Civil War, a half dozen or so determined and courageous Virginians, including a college president and a newspaper editor, got together and decided to combat the lynching of Negroes, then a popular custom throughout the South. They stuck by their resolve, and swung their weight against lynching in every way they could think of. From that time to this, the State of Virginia has been virtually free of this particular crime against morals and human decency, not to mention the law.

We were reminded of the episode when we read the record of U.S. lynchings in 1947, as compiled early in 1948 by Tuskegee Institute, famous Negro college.

There was only one indisputable lynching in the United States last year—the infamous beating to death of colored Willie Earle by a mob of taxi drivers at Greenville, South Carolina, followed by their equally infamous acquittal at the hands of a jury of persons who were clearly the killers' peers.

The most encouraging feature of the Tuskegee report was this: In 1947, there were 39 incidents which might have degenerated into lynchings but were kept from doing so by bold, resolute and conscientious public officials who, in one way or another, defeated the mobs' purposes and saved the potential victims' lives.

It was not ever thus. Time was, and not so long ago, when sheriffs, jailers, etc., in most of the Southern states knew that to lift a finger against a lynch mob was to endanger their own lives, physical or political.

Nowadays, more and more of the substantial and influential people in traditional lynch areas are frowning publicly on this old custom, denouncing it, throwing their weight against it in every practicable way—just as that handful of Virginians did long ago. As a result, public officials' backbones are stiffening and justice is being better and better served.

In our opinion, this is the only method whereby the lynch-law barbarity ever can be sponged completely off the American scene. Attempted compulsion from outside—a federal antilynching statute, for example—might easily retard rather than hasten the cleansing. Here is a heartfelt salute to the lynch-area people who are working this improvement from the inside and from the grass roots; and may their tribe increase.

## ANY WEEK

ONLY one communication appears in this column this week. The reason will at once be apparent. We are publishing it in spite of the fact that we shall doubtless be bothered by the F.B.I. which has been investigating the disappearance of this letter from the White House where it vanished as mysteriously as the anti-inflation bill.

Washington Square, New York City  
1 January, 1948

My Friend:

I have just seen your picture in the newspaper. You look unhappy. You have just arrived at the White House from Illinois where you had nothing to worry about except what Colonel Bertie McCormick might at a whim decide to do with the country. Now you are in Washington where doubtless you will begin to worry on a much broader scale. As a veteran of a number of years at the White House, I would advise you not to worry at all. After all, you may not be in Washington very long—not more, perhaps, than another year. And at your age you should be able to bear up under a mere twelve months if so it be. But should you be unable to cheer up, think of me, my friend.

All you will have to worry about—you and your new boss—are items like the national debt, where the money is coming from, where it is going to, political radicals and getting yourselves elected to a Presidential term you can call your own. We—my boss and I—worried about none of these things. We had Henry Morgenthau to worry about the debt and so long as he did not worry about it in our presence we didn't mind. As for where the money was coming from we just couldn't be bothered.

Radicals? My friend, the place was crimson with them. Wonderful people—revamped Populists, ideological heirs of William J. Bryan, eccentric economists, mixed Marxists, loose Leninists and tough Trotskyites and a great assortment of Bright Unbuttoned Boys whose only fear was that they'd be caught thinking today what they had thought yesterday thus falling behind the parade. As for getting ourselves re-elected, my dear Feller, we never gave it a second thought. We just ran. We ran so fast over the opposition that people seemed almost ashamed to vote for the other fellow.

So I advise you to cheer up. I, too, had to listen to a great deal of singing in the White House. Scarcely a day passed that some brain truster didn't sing on some other brain truster. And as for piano playing—my friend, you may already be tired of the Missouri Waltz, but having heard Harry Hopkins for years pegging out Happy Days Are Here Again with one finger, I may assure you that, as Jim Farley used to say, you don't know from nothing.

You are surrounded by men who are relatively colorless. These days you may sleep almost anywhere in the White House without interruption. I was forced to snatch what rest I got under beds. Twenty-four hours a day college professors on their way out were striding through the White House halls shouting defiance and colliding with bright young students, whom they had flunked, who were coming in shouting new revolutionary shibboleths.

Feller, my friend, cheer up. When hereafter you find yourself on the verge of a worry think of me. When I arrived at the White House we had the job of ripping the world apart and giving it the New Look. All you and your new boss have to do is to make something useful out of what's left, and aside from a few Communists who have to do something to hold on to their jobs, I think—yes, I know—that you won't have too much trouble. Feed them, my young friend, feed them. Not with the old political hamburger that I got so tired of, but beef, Feller, beef. That's all for now, my friend. Just take it easy. You'll last longer.

Doggedly yours,  
FALA

**COLLIER'S**

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