Keynote address for the Progressive Party convention, July 4, 1952

Early typed draft with notes and corrections of the keynote address to the Progressive Party Convention explaining the party's platform. Consists of: peace, stopping the Korean War, offering friendship to the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China and to restore and rebuild the United States; discusses American propaganda, socialism, and colonial imperialism; urges voters to vote for Vincent Hallinan in the 1952 presidential election.

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The platform of the Progressive Party may be reduced to these planks:

PEACE
STOP THE KOREAN WAR
OFFER FRIENDSHIP TO THE SOVIET UNION AND THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA
RESTORE AND REBUILD THE UNITED STATES

War is a vicious human habit; a throw-back to primeval barbarism; an anachronism which shames religion and retards civilization; a crime which kills bodies and cripples souls. Before this century war may at times have been the lesser of two evils. Since world wars have come and the Atomic Age, this is no longer true. War is the supreme disaster. There is nothing worse.

The very power of our culture lets war bring us less than nothing. What did we get from the "War to End War"? More War! What did we get from the "War to Preserve Democracy"? Less Democracy! What are we getting from this "Cold War for Freedom"? Less freedom to think and more freedom to kill. What will come when war in Korea becomes war against China and flares into a Third World War? The end of European culture and a long return to barbarism. Peace, then! Peace now! Peace forever! NO MORE WAR!

This America of ours, hope of our dreams, refuge of mankind, land of peace and freedom, has before our very eyes and under the skill of our hands and ideals of our souls, become the greatest warmonger of all history. Never before in the annals of mankind has a nation planned death, disease and destruction on the scale now envisioned by the United States of America. With one burst of flame we killed at Hiroshima and Nagasaki 200,000 human beings, aged and infants; sick and helpless; unarmed and unwarned; — an attack as horrible as it was needless, — a deed which civilization will never forgive!

Today we are spending a billion dollars a year on preparation for similar attacks. Last year merely for asking Americans to protest against
Further use of the barbaric atomic bomb, I barely escaped five years in prison. We are deliberately planning greater means of death. Thirty-five leading powers of the world signed the Geneva Protocol of 1925 against bacterial warfare. Only Japan and the United States refused. Our military leaders have defended and experimented in germ warfare and ask of Congress next year $17 million for experiments in spreading the most horrible diseases among helpless mankind. We announce the approaching perfection of the Hydrogen Horror.

Neither Egypt under Ramses II, nor the Roman Empire; not Spain at her height of power; nor France of the 16th Louis; not even the British Empire when it ruled the world, ever planned death and destruction for mankind on the scale which we plan today, as we set aside seventy billion dollars for military might, join France and Britain seeking to dominate Asia, furnish Japan funds to enslave Africa, and force Europe to re-arm for universal war.

Out of the pockets of a nation unable to pay decent living wages to steel workers and miners; without funds to maintain our system of education; who annually let the crops, farms and homes of a million Americans be destroyed by floods which we find no money to prevent; who cannot build decent housing even for our crippled war veterans; this rich and successful nation of ours spent more for war in this past decade than we spent for schools, churches and social uplift in the last century!

This nation, the most secure from foreign attack of any in the world; the most protected from natural disaster; the most skilled in industry, and for years the best paid and best clothed; — why are we rushing to war? What
is it that has literally scared us to death and driven us insane? No foreign foe has touched or threatened our shores; no nation has planned our destruction. Our economy is sound unless we let War upset it; our technique is unsurpassed; our ability and talent have all the possibilities of the most favored nations of men. Why then have we gone completely out of our minds and embarked on a fantastic plan of world control at the cost of national impoverishment, moral ruin and the hate of mankind?

We seek to assure ourselves that our present hysteria is caused solely by the designs of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, a nation separated from us by the width of the world, which has never attacked us, never taken our territory, never killed an American citizen, but who some of us believe is so determined to ruin us that in sheer defense we must ruin ourselves!

Many Americans believe this threat. But others, many others, do not believe it. They see back of this belief the propaganda of a group of business men in America, who seek to revive a system of world industry doomed to extinction. Under this system, a class within a nation or a whole nation or group of nations lived in comfort, luxury and power on the land and labor of other classes or peoples too poor, ignorant, and sick to resist. This system, under its various forms of slave trade, chattel slavery, serfdom, class structure, colonialism and centralized regulation of prices and markets, has existed so long, yielded such fabulous profits, and supported such high civilization among a favored few, that many men believe that the subjection of most men to a powerful few is inevitable, and that its disappearance would mean the end of civilization as we now know it.
This system of human government and control of world industry reached its culmination in the colonial imperialism of the British Empire during the Nineteenth Century, and its spectacular success fired the imagination and envy of all Europe and particularly of the United States. British culture, British literature, British law and order, and particularly British Industry and Commerce, influenced peoples all over the earth and completely dominated American thought and imagination at the dawn of the century. We forgot the moral revolt which had brought the suppression of the slave trade and the abolition of chattel slavery; we ignored the labor movement which introduced universal suffrage and popular education among many European and North American workers, and we ignored the efforts to extend democratic control of the workers over industry and ever-dreams of including the mass of darker workers among the enfranchised workers of the world.

All this America forgot or ignored. After our Civil War, caused by human slavery, there arose in the United States a tremendous growth and integration of industry. With unlimited resources and unrivaled technique, we started to build the greatest industrial and commercial organization the world ever saw, and we made the British Empire our model. When a World War broke the vast power of that Empire, organized industry in the United States prepared to replace the British Empire in world power.

Curtailing the power of our own democracy by racial caste, the use of money in politics, and intricate political manipulation, we Americans assumed that the world was going to be ruled in the future as in the past, and quite ignored the rise and spread of Socialism in every modern nation. The so-called socialism of the 19th century was vague and uncertain and
aimed at the control of industry and wealth by democratic methods. Yet there was no modern nation which by 1900 had not attempted some such control: by factory laws and poor relief; by wage control and child labor laws; by building roads, regulating or owning railroads, telegraph lines and telephones. Some thinkers went further and asked actual ownership of capital and wider planning of production and distribution; but until the First World War, no nation had successfully attempted a completely socialistic state.

Such an attempt, in the face of the growing power of commerce which arose from the union of finance capital and industrial monopoly, was bound to come sooner or later; yet it was almost by accident that the attempt was made in Russia, and made when its most sincere advocates were least prepared for the experiment and in a nation where conditions were least favorable for success.

The effect of the Russian Revolution on the world was extraordinary. The liberal world welcomed it with joy. Here in America, despite fervent disclaimer today, there was scarce a man of vision or an independent thinker who was not overjoyed and eager with sympathy and applause. There were others who, while they rejoiced at the emancipation of the Russian peasant and worker, did not believe that the ensuing proposal of a socialist state was practical... They did not think it wrong, nor the attempt to establish it, evil. They merely regarded it as impracticable.

But other thinkers were of a different mind. They represented industry and were still swayed by the vision of restoring colonial imperialism. They induced America to follow Britain and fourteen other nations in
launching an attack on Russia to prevent any attempt to establish a communist state. This war waged from 1918 to 1928, with the excuse of defending the Russian people against inner oppression, was stopped by three unexpected events:

The Collapse of Capitalism
The Revolt of Colonies
The Rise of China

None of these world-shaking events were due to the Russian Revolution. The collapse of the capitalist world followed the expense and industrial upheaval of the First World War, and that war resulted from rivalry over control of colonial wealth. The colonial revolt followed the long brewing unrest of the chief victims of colonial imperialism and resulted eventually in the independence of India. The third was the direct result of the American attempt in China to restore the doomed Colonial Imperialism.

The collapse of capitalism in the Great Depression relieved the armed pressure on the Soviet Union and gave this experiment in socialism an opportunity to become an independent state owning all capital and planning all industry. It did not collapse from inner stresses, but in many respects began to prosper.

There followed the wide charge that the new Soviet government was grievously oppressing the mass of the Russian people. It was firmly believed that the Russian people needed only opportunity and some help from without to overthrow the Communist tyranny. This belief persisted until in the Second World War, launched by Germany, Italy and Japan in order to restore Colonial Imperialism for their benefit instead of that of Great
Britain. The West in that crisis had to rely on the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to overthrow Hitler. United like one great fist, the Soviets laid down 17 million of their lives and billions of their new industry in this unprecedented effort. The result was the freedom of India and revolt in Indonesia and Indo-China.

Here dawned the opportunity to face a new world: not necessarily a world of complete socialism or of private capitalism, but a world based on scientific study of every earnest effort at human progress, using the menace of Fascism as incentive to world unity and forwarding the complete disappearance of Colonial Imperialism. But this effort, earnestly undertaken by Franklin Roosevelt was overturned completely by Harry Truman. If a Buchanan before a Lincoln was a national calamity, a Truman after a Roosevelt was a world disaster which a thousand years may not retrieve.

Why did this happen? It was because in the years between 1900 and 1950 the character of the American people changed. The leadership of educators and scientists, of artists and thinkers, was supplanted by that of business men; our thought and action became commercialized and we saw life as buying and selling and America as Industry and Profit. Wealth took over education, science, art and literature; it bought up the news-gathering agencies, the publishing houses and radio and theatre. Back of this lay a perverted attitude toward Work and Wealth, born of our very prosperity. We ceased to think of labor in terms of health and happiness for all men, but in terms of accumulated wealth, even when built on poverty; and of goods for sale rather than for food and shelter. We regarded Money as the object of life, and not life as the reason for money. We talked loudly
of Freedom and Democracy, but by Freedom we meant freedom of industry to
make money and wield power without interference from government, and we
resisted any increase of democracy in industry. We insisted that industry
must be privately owned even when it was increasingly taking control
of public affairs by every method, legitimate and illegitimate, it could
devise.

The revolt against this philosophy of industry which had swept
Europe long before the Russian Revolution and which helped spread socialism
over all the world never penetrated American business philosophy. It
was true that this materialistic, philosophy of private profit and public
rule by those who control wealth did not convince all America; there were
teachers, writers and thinkers who protested, and it was against the voice
and increasing influence of such men that there was launched about 1946 in
this nation the most stupendous effort at propaganda which this world ever
saw. It was a direct imitation of Goebbels and Hitler, and based on the
latest advances in the science of psychology already widely used in advertis-
ing and salesmanship. It was financed by the united banking and in-
dustrial facilities of the nation in firm union; it engaged the best talent
of writers, thinkers and managers which was for sale, and it forced thou-
sands of trained men out of their current employment by making that em-
ployment impossible or dangerous, and offering only a choice between lying
or silence.

The real basic reason of the enmity of American business against
the Soviet Union was that its success withdrew from American investment
a vast area of land and labor where Britain and France had long reaped
profits of fifty percent, and where America was set to share both there and in the Balkans. Americans had profitable investments in the Americas and saw other millions of profits in Asia and Africa. Our foreign investments rose from two billions at the dawn of the 20th century to $30 billions at the opening of the First World War, 9 billions after the Second World War, and today 15 billions on the threshold of the Third World War.

To buttress and protect this huge investment we have allied this nation with tyrants and scoundrels: with South American dictators, with Mussolini and Hitler; with Bao Dai and Syngman Rhee. Our consul to the Union of South Africa reported in 1950: "This country has a greater future than almost any young country in the world. It is definitely going places. Capital investments and loans are not made by mere philanthropists, but by astute and far-seeing American financiers and business executives."

Thus today it is American capital which is enabling Malan and two million whites to force slavery on ten million colored folk in South Africa.

But it was our experience in China which led us into the Korean War, the war against China and the threat of a Third World War. We started before the First World War to supplant Britain in China. We allowed Japan to spoil and rape her. Then we bought her half-dead corpse from Chiang-Kai-Shek for six billion dollars, 1700 planes, 750 war vessels, and arms and ammunitions for 166 military divisions. Our troops invaded China 40 times, and we helped by treaties to subordinate China to foreign controls.

When China, rising from the dead, found refuge in Communism, we laid the blame on the Soviet Union, refused to recognize New China as a nation, permitted Chiang still to speak for her and to support a China Lobby on our
funds to influence Congress. We bought up the great business monopolies of Japan and encouraged civil war in Korea so as to recapture lost China.

The Korean War was the most indefensible attack on a people ever concocted. It has never been proven that the Soviet Union either started or wanted it. It is more probable that John Foster Dulles and his friend Syngman Rhee, backed by the American New Development Company which was buying the trusts of Japan, started this war, and now stubbornly refuses to stop it.

We have committed in Korea every atrocity that man ever did to man. We pour millions of gallons of flaming gasoline on shrieking Korea to turn one helpless little land into a stinking desert. A stupid and callous administration with a careless wave of the hand murders 100,000 young Americans and a half million Koreans without consent of Congress, with no popular vote, as "a little Police Action" to scare the Soviet Union, to re-capture China, to enslave Asia and Africa for the profit of American Capital in its mad rampage to rule the world and to supplant the dying British Empire with an American slavery.

The United States is not only keeping the monster nations and its tool, the United Nations, at bay, but is starting a program to spread communism in the world. In order to align public opinion in the United States predominantly behind a program so repugnant to our traditions, organized business propaganda organized a new attack on the Soviet Union and Communism. Turning from the first argument that a socialist state could not be made to work; and
passing beyond the charge that the Russian people were not in support of the Soviet Union, the attack was now concentrated on the charge that the Soviet Union was a conspiracy against civilization and that communism in itself was inherently so evil that it could not share the same world with Americans.

Here was the opportunity for a real America. If it is true that the Soviet Union by its very existence threatens civilization, a crusade to extermination may be our only resort; but is this true and how has this been proven?

What is the truth about the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics? Was the testimony of Trotsky reliable? Was the punishment for treason justifiable or tyrannous? Was the reannexation of the Baltic states and the close alliance with Poland, Czechoslovakia and the Balkans a communist colonial imperialism or the expropriation of landlords and aristocracies supported by western capital? Above all was communist imperial expansion the cause of civil war in Korea and China and other parts of Asia?

That there may be two, opposite and strongly contradictory opinions on these controversial matters is all too clear. But what we are today asked and ordered to believe about the Soviet Union are not conclusions based on calm scientific inquiry and conclusion. Our newspapers and periodicals, our present government, most of our universities and churches, paint the Soviet Union as a tyranny, enslaving labor, allowing no freedom of opinion, without democracy, under dictatorship, and preparing for world-wide mastery by war.

On the contrary there is another picture, not painted by idiots, of
a nation, oppressed and exploited for years, which in a generation has abolished illiteracy, fed and housed its people; raised the status of women and protected family life. The Soviet Union gave the lives of 17 million of its children to protect the world from Hitler; it has built factories and controlled rivers; it has driven from power an evil, corrupt and superstitious church and established one of the best systems of free popular education on earth. It has launched war on no nation but has offered the world Peace.

Those who deny all this and regard the Soviet Union as anti-Christ, as threatening war and confiscation; as enslaving labor and preaching hate, have a right to their belief, if the proof in their hands satisfies them. But they have no moral right or scientific justification to enforce this belief on others by arrest, inquisition, unjust punishment, loss of jobs, mobs and jail.

The United States, facing a world-wide revolt of labor, an upsurge of the darker races which was foreshadowed by the Negro problem in this land; and a refusal of most men to believe that the majority of mankind must submit to poverty, ignorance and disease in order that industry and civilization progress, has first of all poisoned the sources of popular information. Great newsgathering and press associations can and do utterly distort truth in every part of the world at the order of monopolized directors of public opinion. A press controlled by big business is ready to suppress, distort and invent news or falsehood at the command of its owners, at any time, any place, under any circumstances. Book publishers and booksellers follow the orders of organized factory
owners and manufacturers as to what can be published and read. Let us concede that some newspapers today at times try to tell the truth; that the Associated Press often transmits unbiased news; that radio commentators and lecturers can sometimes repeat their own beliefs; it still remains true that never in modern history has a national press dealt so brazenly in lies; never has the news been so distorted and suppressed; never has it been so impossible for the average citizen to obtain an honest picture of mankind and its deeds as today in the United States of America. No American today can rise from his morning newspaper, much less his evening tabloid, without feeling sick and disgusted, not merely with what is happening, but with what he does not know and cannot find out.

Why do investment bankers like the House of Morgan want to own a Saturday Review of Literature? Have they suddenly become fond of Shakespeare, or do they want to be sure that Literature does not interfere with their profits in South Africa? What interest does the Ford Motor Company have in higher education? Do they plan to study Kant's Critique of the Pure Reason, or are they determined that American reason shall never interfere with American profits in automobiles?

We have so mechanized and commercialized our whole philosophy of life that we are trying to turn art into advertising, science into manufacture of arms, religion into defense of property, and education into moneymaking. We have gone completely money-mad.

This is the day of all days when we need the leadership of Science in History, Economics, and Sociology, and this is the day they are all with one accord, deaf and dumb, or at best, furtive. Professors, teachers and college presidents can be depended upon to keep silent or render service to
any cause from universal military service to ousting honest professors who
dare think, at command of the industrial leaders who dominate their trustee
boards.

Authors, writers, lecturers, actors, broadcasters, and columnists,
whose brains and talents can be bought and used in return for income,
popularity and power, have sold themselves, while liberal and radical thinkers
are silenced.

In Babylon, dark Babylon
Who takes the wage of shame?
The scribe and singer, one by one,
That toil for gold and fame.
They grovel to their masters' mood.
The blood upon the pen
Assigns their souls to servitude —
Yea, and the souls of men!

We are helping to drive Britain into bankruptcy. We are driving
France into dictatorshipt; we are impoverishing Italy; we are embracing
France; and have torn Germany in two. When Acheson marches home, leaving
the world on the brink of a Third World War, it would be Harry Truman who
greets him for launching a last blow for peace!

This picture may be disputed in some details and excused and de-
defended, but every honest American must admit it is in the main true, and
if so is a caricature and contradiction of all that America once stood for.
It is sheer insanity and crazy distortion of our own souls, of our widely
professed religion, and grim betrayal of democracy and freedom, and our
grandchildren, looking back on these days of disgrace, will use far harsher
words than mine to describe this age as the most shameful in all our history,
the most inexcusable, unjust and hateful; a time when we sacrificed our own
decent and self-respect in order to help ruin civilization.

Our current waste of wealth is frightening; our waste of life
and health is sickening. But far worse than these is our waste of abil-
ity, of talent, and genius; our discouragement of the young, punishment
of original thought, and crucifixion of the rebel and the prophet. We
are furiously pounding the brains of a nation into flat gray uniformity
and dogmatic submission. This is shown in our literature, our sculpture
and painting; on the stage, in the new art of radio and television. Our
schools are filled with frightened students taught by silent, evasive
teachers. Our science is turned to mass murder and endless destruction;
our preaching is sterile dogma. We have not only killed a hundred thou-
sand bodies of our youth in Korea, but murdered right here many a million
souls.

We are boasting to the world of our democracy as peculiarly Ameri-
can, and place at the head of a congressional committee to ferret out un-
American activities, first a convicted thief and now John Wood from Georgia,
whose district has 150,000 voters. Wood has been elected to Congress six
times. In no single election have more than a fifth of the voters dared go
to the polls, and not a single vote has ever been cast against him. Wood
has been publicly accused of misuse of public funds, but the Department of
Justice has been too busy with the Peace Information Center ever to prose-
cute him.

This is our plight. What can we do about it? We can vote. Do
not laugh. The United States is still a democracy, no matter how cur-
tailed our rights are becoming. I know how many of you have stopped going
to the polls in sheer disgust. But come with us this time -- your country needs the 50 million voters who annually fail to vote, in order to balance the gamblers, the bribed and bought and the congenital cowards who will be cut in force. The flimsiest excuse for voting wrong is that the Right cannot win. The right has won in the past and will win in the future. It loses only when you let it lose.

Let us look at the candidates. If you want peace, do not elect to the presidency a man trained for war. If you want war, elect Eisenhower as president because war is all he knows. Despite his effort to be reasonable and likable, Eisenhower shows in every word his lamentable ignorance of modern progress and inability to grasp the meaning of the modern world. All he knows is war and the one thing he will not and cannot promise is peace.

We see in the modern anonymous incorporation of wealth the most dangerous power ever loosed on mankind. It is above and beyond the law. It flouts the Legislature and the Executive. It plans production, orders distribution, makes war and stops peace. Corporate wealth in the United States carries out the secret plans of those who control industry, so that even men who own and receive the profits do not and cannot know how the profit is made, and can be blamed only for not insisting upon the knowledge which is withheld. Corporate wealth, under the most statute law advice, escapes taxation and shifts its burden.

Robert Taft represents this corporate wealth, both as lawyer and as owner. He inherited wealth accumulated by the least defensible method of sequestering land values due to population and not to work. He is a corporation lawyer, and his contempt for the brains of the mass of Americans
leads him impudently to contradict himself time after time, without apology and without excuse. If this is the type of man you decide to give the vast power of the presidency, you might as well replace Congress with the National Association of Manufacturers and declare those truths to be self-evident that all business men have the right to set wages and that property however gotten is the gift of God.

Who else can you elect? Who, what, and why is Stassen? Do we want television vaudeville in Kefauver, or shall Russell represent Negro slavery and the Georgia Light and Power Company? Complete the sorry list with Warren and his never fulfilled promises; Kerr stoned in oil; Stephenson, coy and silent; and Harriman, heir of Railway manipulation who has helped European capital regain its grip on labor, and American capital to fasten its claws on Europe. And finally, the unspeakable menace of more Truman!

The Progressive Party is your only alternative for doing what the world must do, and that is increasingly control the power of corporate wealth over the production and distribution of goods -- a task which we would have even if the Soviet Union had never existed.

In 1948 we sought a great leader on a noble platform. He got frightened and ran out on us to bathe in the blood of Korea. But the platform did not run. It stands and lives and grows and by the eternal God shall yet triumph. This year vote for Vincent Halliman, a lawyer and labor leader who is in jail because today prison is the highest accolade this nation can bestow on its heroes; and for Charlotte Bass who represents black America and American womanhood. As if one crown of thorns were not enough she dares wear two!
This year there has been no Spring in America; no daffodils have bloomed nor tulips reddened the morning. All we saw was death and waiting prisoners in Korea, atom bombs in Arizona, and war in the world. We hail death and take life and thank God that we are richer than the poor and safer than the damned.

Yet we are not devils; we do not will evil; only today we are distraught, misled, and for a season quite insane. We can be cured. We can cure ourselves if only we will. If once we but turn our backs on ghosts and shadows, on witches and fears, and look up and out. If we can once again believe in humanity and close our ears and hearts to lies; and say to American Industry of which once we were so proud -- so foolishly and inordinately proud -- Peace! be still! And cry to the world:

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, 'Thy God reigneth!'"