

“We Want Peace. The World Cries Out”. Henry Wallace

“Not for an American crusade in the name of hatred and fear of communism, but for a world crusade in the name of brotherhood of man”

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I want to thank [Matt Ehret to pointing out the speeches](#) by Henry Wallace, Franklin Roosevelt’s vice president and later Secretary of Commerce under Harry Truman, concerning Russia and the threat of a world war, and a cold war.

Although I do not fully agree with Henry Wallace’s arguments, I find his speeches inspiring and think they offer us great potential at this dangerous moment in history. There is also an argument to be made that another world was possible that did not include the Cold War of the 1950s, or the Cold War of 2023 (the second “cold war” works on the basic principle that “Cold Wars repeat: first as tragedy and again as farce”).

The first speech of 1946 was the one that led to President Truman demanding his resignation. The second speech of 1947 was made once he had positioned himself in explicit opposition to the Truman administration. Wallace suggests a “competition of ideas” for mutual benefit that has strong appeal for us today.

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Henry Wallace, Secretary of Commerce

September 12, 1946, Madison Square Garden, New York

[“He who trusts in the atom bomb will sooner or later perish by the atom bomb”](#)

Tonight, I want to talk about peace—and how to get peace. Never have the common people of all lands so longed for peace. Yet, never in a time of comparative peace have they feared war so much. During the past year or so, the significance of peace has been increased immeasurably by the atomic bomb, guided missiles and airplanes which soon

will travel as fast as sound. We cannot rest in the assurance that we invented the atom bomb—and therefore that this agent of destruction will work best for us. He who trusts in the atom bomb will sooner or later perish by the atom bomb—or something worse.

To achieve lasting peace, we must study in detail just how the Russian character was formed—by invasions of Tartars, Mongols, Germans, Poles, Swedes, and French; by the czarist rule based on ignorance, fear and force; by the intervention of the British, French and Americans in Russian affairs from 1919-1921; by the geography of the huge Russian land mass situated strategically between Europe and Asia; and by the vitality derived from the rich Russian soil and the strenuous Russian climate. Add to all this the tremendous emotional power which Marxism and Leninism gives to the Russian leaders—and then we can realize that we are reckoning with a force which cannot be handled successfully by a ‘Get tough with Russia’ policy. ‘Getting tough’ never brought anything real and lasting—whether for schoolyard bullies or businessmen or world powers. The tougher we get, the tougher the Russians will get.

We most earnestly want peace with Russia—but we want to be met half way. We want cooperation. And I believe that we can get cooperation once Russia understands that our primary objective is neither saving the British Empire nor purchasing oil in the Near East with the lives of American soldiers.

On our part we should recognize that we have no more business in the political affairs of Eastern Europe than Russia has in the political affairs of Latin America, Western Europe and the United States. The Russians have no more business in stirring up native communists to political activity in Western Europe, Latin America and the United States than we have in interfering in the politics of Eastern Europe and Russia. We know what Russia is up to in Eastern Europe, for example, and Russia knows what we are up to. We cannot permit the door to be closed against our trade in Eastern Europe any more than we can in China. But at the same time we have to recognize that the Balkans are closer to Russia than to us—and that Russia cannot permit either England or the United States to dominate the politics of that area.

Russian ideas of social-economic justice are going to govern nearly a third of the world. Our ideas of free enterprise democracy will govern much of the rest. The two ideas will endeavor to prove which can deliver the most satisfaction to the common man in their respective areas of political dominance. Under friendly peaceful competition the Russian world and the American world will gradually become more alike. The Russians will be forced to grant more and more of the personal freedoms; and we shall become more and more absorbed with the problems of social-economic justice.

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Henry Wallace

March 31, 1947, Madison Square Garden, New York

[“Not for an American crusade in the name of hatred and fear of communism, but for a world crusade in the name of brotherhood of man”](#)

We are here tonight because , not for an American crusade in the name of hatred and fear of communism, but for a world crusade in the name of brotherhood of man.

The name of crisis facts is withheld, time is denied, hysteria is whipped up, congress is asked to rush through a momentous decision, as if great armies were already on the march. I hear no armies marching. I hear a world crying out for peace. The truth is that the president and his republican backers are less concerned with the need of the free people, for food than with the need of the American navy for oil. The plan to contain communism is really secondary to the push for oil.

For every glamorous admiral, who boasts “it’s nobody’s damn business where we go”, there are 10 drab, but practical, procurement officers to add “and we’ll get there with the oil from the middle east.” If we took the matter to the United Nations, and the Russians exercised their veto, the moral burden would be on them. When we act independently, outside the framework of the United Nations, the moral burden is on us.

(Both speeches are redacted and I have not found the original texts yet)

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