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*Henry Wallace's 1948 Presidential Campaign and the Future
of Postwar Liberalism* by Thomas W. Devine (review)

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of course land is no longer the main form of wealth, even in the Midwest, and hasn't been for a long time. His excursions into such areas as the 2008 financial crisis and modern notions of intellectual property indicate that he understands that, and that he is trying to compensate, but he ends up simply adding a couple of lean-tos onto an already ramshackle structure. You can learn a lot of interesting things by reading *Owning the Earth*, but few of them will be relevant to the Midwest.

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Thomas W. Devine, *Henry Wallace's 1948 Presidential Campaign and the Future of Postwar Liberalism*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013. 408 pp. \$27.95.

Thomas Devine's profile of the presidential campaign of former vice president Henry Wallace in 1948 should be required reading for any student of political and social movements. Lucidly written, Devine has mined numerous archival sources to reconstruct the Iowan Wallace's failure to strike a chord with voters and his stark indifference to the fact that the Progressive Party, which he led, was dominated by members of the Communist Party (CP). Devine's convincing portrayal of Wallace's prophetic mission as the leader of Gideon's Army—as progressives referred to their own movement—showcases the limitations of prophetic leaders in politics, especially when their prophecies were screeds written and developed by CP members.

Wallace admirers and biographers have long lauded the candidate's stand on a variety of issues in 1948, including the emerging Cold War consensus on the need to contain the Soviet Union; the racial issues and segregation in the South; and Wallace's support for the working man and unions. But on all three of these issues, and with devastating effect, Devine shows how Wallace's mission failed to move the electorate. In fact, on almost every major issue, Wallace echoed the communist party line, sounding more like a red activist in New York's Union Square labeling Wall Street and their political supporters as fascists, segregationist Democrats as fascists, and Harry Truman and the supporters of a hostile policy toward the cold war as warmongers, and, you guessed it, fascists. Many of his speeches and statements were written by John Abt, a "concealed communist," as Devine describes those subordinate to party discipline while working for

the Progressive Party. His painstaking research reveals numerous CP activists in the service of Wallace at high levels of the campaign. To even fill the campaign's convention in 1948, hundreds, if not thousands, of CP members and fellow travelers were bused to Philadelphia to participate in the convention. Every attempt to move Wallace away from the Soviet line on foreign policy and on domestic policy was rebuffed, often by the candidate himself. Non-communist Progressives grew frustrated and the majority left active involvement in the party. With their defection ended the chance for a continuation of a Popular Front liberalism after World War II.

Support from labor unions, apart from communist dominated unions like the United Electrical Workers, never materialized. Unions remained wedded to the Democratic Party in 1948, especially after Truman's veto of the Taft-Hartley legislation the year before. Wallace also sought to appeal to minorities, and Devine illustrates how African Americans seemed to support the message of the candidate on race relations while turning away from his overall pro-Soviet line on foreign policy and economic justice. When Wallace toured the South in October 1948—a gutsy maneuver where he sought, but rarely achieved, integrated audience—the majority of African Americans expressed indifference. Truman had again trumped the Progressive candidate by endorsing a civil rights plank in the platform at the convention earlier that summer, thereby reducing the support Wallace may have achieved from black Americans. (But Devine is careful to note that Truman's endorsement of the civil rights plank had little to do with Wallace.) Wallace drew more ire from white racists, many of them the working class voters who Wallace thought Gideon's Army would appeal to in that election, describing in great detail how often the candidate was assailed by rotten eggs, tomatoes, and racist invective.

The Midwest was never represented in Progressive Party ranks, except for the candidate himself, who by the time he was fired from the Commerce Department, owned a farm in New York, not Iowa. Midwestern support for Wallace in 1948 was not strong, and Devine notes that the majority of support in the election came from New York City and Chicago, two strongholds of the CP. Wallace struggled to employ midwestern religiosity and biblical allusions in the campaign, but the effort was coopted by the CP Left and by Wallace's failure—although maybe laziness was the real problem—to distance himself from the party line he spouted on the hustings.

Devine's book is a marvelous example of scholarship on the failure of Wallace and the Progressives in 1948. Beyond that, it is an excellent com-

pendium of how Popular Front Leftism died and why a New Left had to be formed which expressed little concern, at least initially, with the old debates over labor and foreign policy, addressing instead “new” concerns like racism and poverty. Devine shatters a lot of the myths surrounding the campaign and Wallace and appropriately paints his campaign as the last gasp of the CP in American politics.

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Zan McQuade, ed., *The Cincinnati Anthology*. Cleveland:
Rust Belt Chic Press, 2014. 264 pp. \$20.00.

From the Ohio River basin that defines its urban core to its rural reaches in neighboring counties, Cincinnati encompasses a complex range of cultures, economies, and perspectives. *The Cincinnati Anthology*, edited by Zan McQuade, scratches the surface of some of those complexities with a new collection of articles, essays, and art that starts with a geology lesson and ends with a cartoon. The twenty-three disparate pieces in the book reflect many faces of the city, some famous and some rarely glimpsed, much less exposed. Of course there are the hillsides and bridges and big brand corporations, the disgraced baseball legend and elegant arts czar. But there’s also an alienated poet and a dissatisfied transplant and a stunning set of photo portraits that illuminate relationships in the neighborhood of Price Hill by cutting through stereotypes, one frame at a time.

The opening article, “Geology is Destiny” by Polk Laffoon IV, begins and ends, literally, with the writer’s personal views of the city’s hilly terrain. That is when the piece is at its most appealing. Though long and at times more descriptive than analytical, Laffoon details glaciers and mudslides and explains the inevitable conflict between development and nature that has shaped and reshaped both the city’s landscape and its history.

After “Geology,” an exuberant essay filled with raw passion, the essay “Love Letter to Cincinnati” reads like a breath of fresh air. Penned by local chef David Falk, the playful “letter” introduces the city’s chronic shyness and conservatism as parts of an endearing, and evolving, whole. “You are no longer that embarrassing girlfriend I don’t tell my friends about, insecure and self-conscious,” the prodigal chef concludes after returning