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The tone of the convention was set by its keynote address, delivered by AFL-CIO Vice-President Walter Reuther, long one of the most politically-minded of all union leaders, an organizer of ADA and now its vice-chairman.

"If the Democratic Party attempts to compromise the civil rights question...it does not deserve the support of the American people," said Reuther, adding that it "cannot compete with the Eisenhower Administration in the middle of the road."

Such an all-embracing, sweeping generality (I know a good many Americans who disagree heartily with that view) is about on a par with Reuther's sweeping generalities during his recent trip to India, when he told dozens of audiences that the American people support and believe in the Nehru government. (Most of us don't.)

The ADA delegates, to the surprise of absolutely no one, roared their voice-vote approval of a resolution saying the anticipated Eisenhower-Nixon ticket "must be opposed by all (ADA's) resources."

The resolution raised questions about Mr. Eisenhower's health and his "inordinate delegation of responsibility," and criticized the Vice President's "conduct in political campaigns," as well as terming him "unqualified."

Mr. Nixon, I trust, accepts the ADA description as a compliment to his campaigning ability which should aid thousands of wavering minds to decide to vote Republican.

ADA claims a membership of only about 45,000. Its influence in Democratic National Conventions, however, is far greater than would be indicated by this relatively-small figure, because of the repute and influence of some of its leaders, including such leftists as Reuther, Michigan's Gov. G. Mennen Williams, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt and others.

In 1948, ADA, functioning for the first time, forced through the Democratic Convention a harsh civil rights program which precipitated the famous walkout of Southern delegates. In 1952, it compromised the issue sufficiently to allow the Southerners to stay in attendance.

This year, no compromise. Will they succeed in their admitted plan to drive away Southerners? Probably.

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