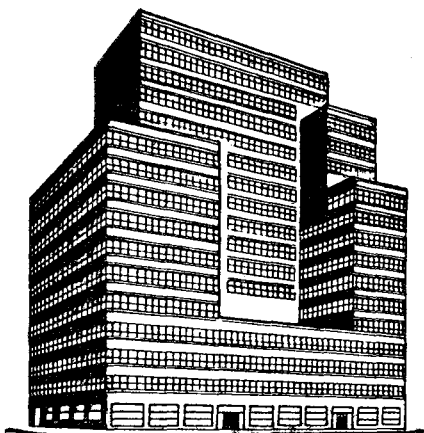
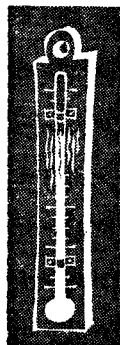


ADA:

A Democratic Problem



By Ralph de Toledano



WHEN the Democratic Party holds its Presidential convention next summer, the sweating delegates will be forced to cope again with a group of hardcore troublemakers and crypto-Fabians which calls itself Americans for Democratic Action. This curious organization — collectivist in principle and unprincipled in politics — considers itself the “conscience” of the Democratic Party.

That it is a hair shirt few will dispute. For ADAers are cantankerous, doctrinaire in the worst sense, and fired with a zeal to take over the nation's majority party by driving out all conservative and right-of-center Democrats. Professional politicians, therefore, have begun to wonder out loud if ADA is worth in votes what it costs in the disruption

of party equanimity. It is, they believe, a combination of the albatross and the Ancient Mariner rolled into one.

For ADA, like the Communists, insists on acting like “the man who came to dinner.” With fewer than 45,000 members and an annual budget of about \$200,000, it has infiltrated the top echelons of the Democratic Party, given an anti-anti-Communist slant to the party's thinking, and antagonized millions of voters. In its heyday, it controlled 77 members of Congress, a scattering of governors, and a strategic percentage of the Federal and state bureaucracy. It has used these forces to tremendous advantage, so that to many people it is hard to tell where this “nonpartisan” group ends and the Democratic Party begins.

Through such media as the New

York *Post* (never give an anti-Communist an even break), the Washington *Post* (no Communists around here), radio Commentator Elmer Davis (no one is a Communist, you fascist), TV guide Edward R. Murrow (what security risks?), and a host of others in the communications field, ADA can mobilize public opinion and stir up passions out of all proportion to the issues involved. This has been a potent weapon in stifling opposition within and without the Democratic Party.

The future of ADA may well be settled at the 1956 convention. What action is taken there, however, may depend less on ADA's powers of persuasion and/or political blackmail, more on ADA's genesis, its record and its program. For all the liberal talk about America's soul, this nation has a stomach. And it may be that this stomach can no longer digest ADA's logic — or ADA's excuses for a laundered totalitarianism. A look at the documented facts will tell the story best.

IN 1947, the wartime honeymoon with the Soviet Union, sanctified by the New Deal and the Roosevelt idolaters, had come to a terrible end, and for a brief period of time anti-Communism was nonpartisan. Association with Communists and Sovieteers had an expensive price tag, and those who had frolicked in the Red mud were looking for a cleansing bath. Americans for Democratic Action was organized as a kind of

purification rite for liberals. Francis Biddle, then ADA chairman, put it somewhat more turgidly:

"The ADA was largely founded to split from the liberal movement in America those elements of communism and fellow travelers which, in my opinion, certainly up to 1945 did great harm to the liberal movement by permitting, with some justice, the accusation of fellow travelers to be pinned on persons before the sheep and the goats had been separated."

The phrase "with some justice" remains to plague Biddle, for the current ADA line is that the Communists never had any toehold on the liberal movement in America. In 1947, however, it was clear that the liberals had to make a dramatic dissociation from the Communists — and ADA was the answer. Among the prime movers were such people as James A. Wechsler, now editor of the New York *Post*, who had been traveling a zig-zag course away from his prior Communist affiliation; Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, who separated sheep from goats by continuing to laud Howard Fast and by giving continuing aid and comfort to Communist fronts; Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., pundit in knee pants and Artful Dodger; Joseph Rauh, Jr., the ink still wet on a check for legal services rendered to Communist Poland; and a group of exiled New Dealers, labor people, ambitious politicians, and leftish newspaper columnists.

With the wheels greased by labor funds (the United Auto Workers and other unions have given ADA some \$500,000 of their members' money), and happy cries of "Li'l liberal git on board," the bandwagon began to roll — and as it rolled, Mr. Biddle's sheep jumped on. (In time, so did some of the goats, though the ADA indignantly denies this.) ADA served a useful purpose, for those who joined could say that they belonged to an "anti-Communist" organization. This somewhat overstated the case; in its early days ADA was satisfied with the claim that it represented the "non-Communist left" — and its anti-Communist acts since then have been precious few and far between. In time, the anti-Communist claim was slightly compromised by the loud plaudits of the *Daily Worker*.

FROM THE START, it was also clear that ADA's claims of nonpartisanship were as phony as its rhetoric. Though it protested its determination to support good men in either party, its hatred of Republicans was obvious. Equally apparent was its designs on the Democratic Party, into whose affairs the ADA plunged zealously. ADA loudly expressed its intention of keeping the New Deal alive — and Schlesinger, the group's ideologue-in-chief, frankly stated that the New Deal and socialism were virtually synonymous. Collectivism and the welfare state were

the core of ADA's body of beliefs.

Though ADAers railed against those who called them socialists, this was merely political window-dressing. The fact, as *The Saturday Evening Post* reported in September 1952, was that at "the May meeting of ADA a resolution affirming belief in free and competitive enterprise was soundly beaten by a voice vote."

Further indications of this politico-economic bent can be found in a statement by Paul Appleby, New Deal economist and an ADA founder: "Nothing can be decentralized properly which has not first been centralized," a shockingly close approximation of the Marxist-Leninist tenet: First the dictatorship of the proletariat, then the withering-away of the state.

By the 1948 election, the ADA was rampaging over the Democratic Party. It had sought to stab President Truman in the back by dangling the Democratic nomination before General Eisenhower. When it became clear that Mr. Truman would be the Democratic candidate, ADA joined him with a rush. The ADAers engineered the 1948 showdown on civil rights which drove a group of Southern states out of the convention. Again in 1952, they imposed a "party line" on that year's convention, demanding an oath of party allegiance from all delegations.

During and between campaigns, the ADA fought vigorously for higher taxes, more government regulations,



more controls, the expansion of Federal power over the states and over the individual who needs "the strength of his government to keep his head above water," subsidies for farmer and worker, and a ballooning bureaucracy — all in the name of liberalism.

On the key issue of our time, the ADA demonstrated its anti-Communism by fighting vigorously *against* the exposure of Communists, *against* the Smith Act trials of top Communist leaders, *against* the Truman loyalty program, and *against* Congressional investigation of Communism, but *for* investigation of Senator McCarthy. ADA, moreover, woke up screaming whenever the law approached a Communist, a spy, or a traitor. When the spy-perjurer William Remington received a temporary clearance (later rescinded), the *ADA World* hailed the event as a "major civil liberties victory."

Having pledged itself to "moral clarity," ADA joined in the smear attack on Elizabeth Bentley, a former Communist who exposed Remington. But when the true facts became a matter of court record, vindicating Miss Bentley, the ADA did not apologize to her for its calumnies — nor has its leadership made amends to its own membership.

Instead, ADA saved its fire until Attorney General Brownell told the story of Assistant Treasury Secretary Harry Dexter White, who was promoted by President Truman subsequent to detailed reports from the

FBI outlining White's espionage activities. In ADA eyes, this long-delayed report to the American public on Democratic blundering made the U. S. "the laughing stock and despair of the entire free world" — a White herring as ridiculous as it was effective. Still separating sheep from goats, Mrs. Roosevelt stood up for another spy-perjurer, Alger Hiss, and never retracted the Communist-inspired smears of Whittaker Chambers which she had printed in her column. In the 1952 campaign, moreover, ADA was parent to Adlai Stevenson's sneers about searching for Reds in the "Bureau of Wildlife and Fisheries."

ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, ADA's views were singularly divorced from American thinking or from that of most Democrats. During the Korean War, for example, ADA was clamoring for relief aid to Red China, which was supplying the arms which killed American troops. It was advising on the need for recognizing the Communist government of China as a "fact" but agitating against aid to Spain — obviously not a "fact." It was calling for "world government with powers adequate to prevent war."

What kind of world government, and how it would "prevent" war, remained a matter for conjecture. But it is curious that ADA has always plumped for General Marshall's peace methods in China — cutting off all military aid to the National-

ists for eighteen months, thereby allowing the Communists to win. This, it seems fair to say, may have been an indication of what ADA had in mind on a world scale.

Recently, the ADA has begun to snap the whip among those of its members who do not conform completely to its party line. Mrs. Dorothy Schiff, who doubles in brass as owner and weekly columnist of the New York *Post*, expressed the views of the ADA leftwing when she made a verbal assault on two of its vice chairmen — Senators Hubert Horatio Humphrey and Wayne Morse. Their crime, in her eyes, was excessive anti-Communism — which she characterized as a “disgraceful demonstration of political opportunism” by the “demagogic twins.”

These factional fights disturb the very Democrats who sought ADA support in the late 1940's. The entire record is one which the Democratic delegates at the 1956 convention will have to face. For the most part these delegates are accustomed to operate along standard American political lines. They are trained to think in terms of elections, not ideological battles. Having grown up in a political system based on intra-party coalition, they are shocked by statements such as that of Louis Hollander, president of the New York State CIO, in which he boasted that “we can force the reactionaries of both old parties to form their own third party. Then labor can sit down and rebuild one of the two

remaining parties, supporting the liberals who stay on.” This smacks of the splintering tactics of Europe's rump parties and America's Marxist groupings. It is an attempt to destroy a party system based on regional arrangements, not ideological conformity.

WHAT action, if any, the Democrats will take against ADA is problematical, despite growing signs of impatience among those Democrats who make politics a profession. Governor Averell Harriman, certainly no rightwinger, has followed the promptings of New York party leaders and has made it very clear that he will not allow ADA to dominate him. An attempt by ADA National Chairman Rauh to force Harriman to appear at an ADA Roosevelt Day dinner ended in a bitter fight — and Harriman stayed away.

Everywhere, on the local and national levels, Democratic leaders have made it plain that they are embarrassed by ADA help. They privately wish that the man who came to dinner would realize that he has outgrown his welcome. But they are aware that ADA, with a substantial portion of the press behind it, can still muster significant forces for a slow but massive retaliation against those who cross it. Though the Steelworkers and a few other unions have pulled out, CIO President Walter Reuther is still one of the kingpins in ADA. The AFL-CIO merger makes him even more potent.

Politicians, moreover, live in a world where public reputation is a touchy matter. And they may be loath to challenge an organization which has reduced to a science the tactics of smear which Communism brought to this country. The concerted whispering campaign, the divide-and-rule and rule-or-ruin strategy, the organized assault cannot be underestimated. The half-truth, the distorted fact, and the outright lie are all in ADA's arsenal, and when it is caught *in flagrante* it shouts, "Stop, McCarthyite!"

But there are signs of change, both large and small. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., the outstanding practitioner of these ADA tactics, has been placed slightly *hors de combat* since he was fired from the New York *Post* for taking a tentative step off the reservation. (He advocated German rearmament.) The Congressional ma-

chinery is in the hands of Southern Democrats, who abominate ADA. With no powerful Democratic President to run the show in 1956, the Southerners may well declare their independence. Party regularity has become more respectable in urban centers like New York and Chicago — from which ADA drew much of its strength.

If these signs have any meaning, the Democratic delegates at the next convention may tear off the ADA hair shirt and follow the dictates of their own, and more responsive, consciences. The American people, who have been victimized by the dreary doctrinaires, will breathe a sigh of relief.

And in the convention hall, a voice — but not from the sewers — may announce that the Democratic Party has rid itself of an entangling misalliance.

» A man who'd only recently moved to a certain New York neighborhood was struck by the fact that each day a brand-new Cadillac was parked in front of the neighborhood's shabby-looking candy-store and he inquired about this. He was told that the store's owner was also the owner of the Cadillac. Thinking this rather odd, he went into the store, bought some cigars, struck up a conversation with the owner, and soon got around to asking about the car.

"Oh that," laughed the candy store man, "It's like this. This store doesn't have a telephone and I always use the phone of the Cadillac agency down the block and also get all my calls there. And, you know, you can't go in there a dozen times a day without buying something!"



KING OF THE SQUARE DANCERS

By Elsa Edwards

JUST 25 minutes from downtown Los Angeles is the largest open square dance in the whole wide world. Usually limited to 80 sets of eight dancing at any one time, on Jamboree dates there have been as many as 125. People come from all over — even from England, Australia, Canada, Hawaii and Alaska — to Sunny Hills Barn to dance. It has acres of free parking, and traffic officers direct the cars to the nearest vacant spots.

The promoter of this greatest of

square dances is Ed Smith of Fullerton, California. Quiet and unassuming, dressed in modest attire of Western cut, he does not appear to be the smart businessman that he must be.

When the square dance fad started gaining popularity in 1949, Mr. Smith's wife urged him to learn to dance. They started a group of people dancing in a garage, and continued regularly for several months. More and more of their friends became interested until it seemed nec-