

What They're Saying in the Governor's Race -- See Below

ADCI Doesn't Mention You-Know-Who

BY ROBERTA REISIG

MONTGOMERY -- From the sound of things at the semi-annual convention of the Alabama Democratic Conference, Inc. (ADCI), you might never have guessed that George C. Wallace is running his wife for governor.

During the Negro political group's two-day meeting here in the Jefferson Davis Hotel, no speaker mentioned the governor or his wife, Lurleen.

Instead, the Negro Democrats pointed to the dozens of Negroes holding public office in Alabama, and heard friendly messages from two white politicians.

Delegates to the convention received a warm greeting from L.B. Sullivan, Montgomery's commissioner of public safety and one-time enemy of civil rights groups. Sullivan hailed the group as "fellow Democrats."

On Sunday afternoon, Robert Vance of Birmingham became the first chairman of the Alabama Democratic Executive Committee ever to speak to a Negro audience. The head of the state Democratic party told the ADCI members:

"The time is past when you take one message to one group of people, and another message to another group."

Vance took the Negro Democrats a message of the state



ADCI HEAD TABLE: ROBERT VANCE AT LEFT, PETER HALL AT RIGHT

party's accomplishments in education, highways, industrial expansion, and tourist business. He said the Democrats had an "umbrella" party that excluded no one.

Some listeners thought Vance's praise of "our present Democratic administration in Alabama" was a quiet way of asking the ADCI to support Mrs. Wallace in November. But

the name Wallace never passed the chairman's lips.

Saturday night's guest speaker, E.T. Kehrer of Atlanta, Ga., Southern director of the AFL-CIO's civil rights department, didn't talk about Wallace, either. But he said Lester Maddox, the Democratic candidate for governor in his state, "has one foot in a strait-jacket."

Kehrer noted that the choice in Georgia is between Maddox and U.S. Representative Howard "Bo" Callaway, a conservative Republican. "Between whom do you choose?" he asked. "A Kluxer in a bedsheet or a Kluxer in a tuxedo?"

Kehrer claimed that the "so-called riots" in Atlanta last month "were stimulated by agent provocateurs to influence the election." The resulting "white backlash" gave Maddox the Democratic nomination, Kehrer said.

But the ADCI delegates seemed not to be bitter about the nominations of Mrs. Wallace and Maddox. Many speakers re-affirmed their belief in working within the Alabama Democratic party structure.

"We're moving," said Peter Hall of Birmingham. "It may be at a snail's pace, but that turtle, he got there faster than the hare."

It was announced that more than five dozen Negro Democrats hold elective and appointive city and county offices in Macon, Mobile and Jefferson counties.

"To those who would start a third party, I say 'Farewell.' History's overloaded with failures of this sort," said Joe L. Reed of Montgomery. "If you don't like what's going on in the Democratic party, the only way to change it is to work within the framework of it."

"We're Democrats. We've got to support the Democratic party and the Democratic candidates," said Hall. That was as close to an outright election endorsement as the convention ever came.

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