

# CP Convention Notes: Delegates and Issues

A SIGN of the changing times in the Communist Party was the first order of business at the national convention, the naming of a parliamentarian to settle disputes on procedure, speaking rights, legality of motions, points of order, etc. He was Detroit's Nat Ganley, veteran trade unionist familiar to readers of the Michigan Worker through his columns on autotown.

Ganley was one hard working man, and his flat, drily humorous delivery in making rulings, plus his adroitness, patience and common sense, made him a solid convention favorite.

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IN THE press room during a lunch break, reporters clustered

around Dorothy Day of the Catholic Worker for her impressions as one of the interested impartial observers. "Would you say, Miss Day", asked one, "That the Communist Party is getting more democratic or less democratic". The pacifist writer and editor replied mildly, "Well, when you have a convention where there is full and free discussion from the floor, with three microphones in the aisles in constant use, and where a vote this morning came out about sixty to forty, I would say there was definitely more democracy, wouldn't you?"

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THE ADMISSION of the observers from civil liberties, pacifist and socialist groups was put to the convention to vote on. Before the overwhelming vote in favor was taken, one delegate had expressed the fear that the convention would be inhibited before non-Communists, so he opposed it. Fred Blair, leader of the Wisconsin CP, won a roar of laughter and applause when he said: "In all my years in the Communist Party, I never met an inhibited Communist yet!" Blair said Communists could talk proudly and freely in front of the whole country and whole world, and had nothing to hide.

The dubious tactic of threatening to walk out unless a decision went a certain way was scotched right at the outset of the convention when one delegate, opposing the seating of the observers, said ominously: "If this is carried, I and others will leave the convention." He did not get a good reaction. It carried, and fortunately or unfortunately, the threatening delegate did NOT leave the convention.

Speaking in favor of seating the observers, former Councilman Ben Davis said this was "something new, a turn in the direction of answering the hoary

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# CP Convention Notes, Delegates and Issues

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conspiracy charge. It is a move toward good public relations, a move in the right direction."

THERE WERE several light moments breaking the tension of hard work and vigorous debate. One came during the nominations for the National Committee, when the nominator of Archie Brown of California inadvertently nominated "Archie Moore," the boxing champ. There was a roar of laughter and applause.

An Illinois delegate brought another gale of laughter when she declined nomination. In a seconding speech before that, someone else had been solemnly referred to as "National Committee timber." Said the Illinois woman, "Some of my fellow delegates may call me a blockhead, but I'm not timber."

At the New York State caucus for nominations held around midnight, the nominations came so thick and fast that at the first break for breath a delegate, who has acted as social director in summer resorts, leaped to his chair and boomed: "Is there anyone here who hasn't been nominated?"

But perhaps the funniest moment of all came when the chairman for one session, Bill Albertson, was being besieged hot and heavy for the floor, with cries of "point of order," "On procedure," and so on. Getting excited as he lost control of the situ-

ation, chairman Albertson leaned into the mike and bellowed: "MISTER CHAIRMAN!"

IN HIS KEYNOTE address, general secretary Eugene Dennis made news with a reference to the letter of greetings from Jacques Duclos of the French Communist Party, who had expressed concern at what he termed "dangerous departures" from Marxism-Leninism-Leninism by the American CP. Said Dennis: "In respect to the misgivings expressed in the greetings signed by Jacques Duclos, let me say that we American Communists firmly believe in our great majority that the main line of our convention resolution is Marxist-Leninist in content. . . . In any case, our decisions will be our own, made by the collective judgment of this convention, and will be based on OUR Marxist understanding of American reality and the needs of our people and nation."

Palmiro Togliatti, for the Italian CP, cabled: "The Italian Communists, engaged in the struggle for an Italian road to socialism, follow with lively interest the efforts and the experiences which the brother parties, having the same cause, carry out in the particular conditions flowing from their own traditions, from the class relationships and national characteristics of their own country."

SCRIBES IN the press room

decided they would like an interview with John Gates, and passed around a petition addressed to the Daily Worker editor requesting same. The reporter from another paper pushed the petition along to this reporter, saying jokingly, "Go ahead, you sign it too." To his amazement, I did, and Gates had a chuckle when the petition came to him signed by one of his staffers. He came to the pressroom to explain personally to the reporters that due to a gentleman's agreement among the leaders not to be interviewed during the convention, he would have to regretfully decline. The newsmen understood.

One however, took the opportunity to ask: "Mr. Gates, as the editor of a paper which says it stands for freedom of the press, and as one who presumably writes editorials against the State Department for banning reporters from China, how do you feel about this convention barring reporters from the floor?"

Gates explained the decision was of the delegates' own making, because of security reasons, adding: "If the other papers would join ours in guaranteeing the Constitutional rights of ALL Americans, this problem would not arise."

The resolution on Negro rights called for the Party to get into the fight full swing. It

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"I HAD a hot streak and won "I wasn't the best amateur in the enough matches in a row".

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"The Australians know tennis in good play they forget who they they were all for Kenny, which is we booked a match in Mexico Cit chased out of town". Gonzales, keenly in that country.

Promoter Jack Kramer was he two players. How big is Gonza Tilden's and Budges and maybe b "In that class".

Could Gonzales beat those all "I can only talk about Budge, look at Gonzales and you see he' have beaten anyone at all".

declared: "The Negro people's movement is today's standard bearer in the struggle to enlarge the now restricted areas of democracy. It is the decisive strategic ally of the working class." Among other things, the resolution held: "The American labor movement must be helped to understand that racism and unionism are fundamentally incompatible."

And lest we forget, the convention went heartily on record for a resolution to re-vitalize and rebuild The Worker, which needs help right now in gathering expiring subs. The paper also asks the views of readers, Communists and non-Communists, on how it can improve.

L.R.