

# Observer Sees Democratic Beginnings in C. P. Parley

ROY FINCH, chairman of the War Resisters League, found in the recent Communist Party convention the "beginnings of a trend toward democracy." Finch expressed his reactions to the convention in a statement which The Worker requested. It is published below.

In contrast, Bernard Rosenberg, a sociologist, market research director, and editor of "Dissent," an anti-Communist magazine, disputed the belief that this gathering had been democratic.

Finch and Rosenberg were members of a group of observers who had been invited to the convention on the initiative of A. J. Muste, a leader of the Fellowship For Reconciliation.

Eight of the observers, including Finch and Muste, issued a statement after the convention which described the discussion as free and democratic, and recommended that the public suspend judgment on the party until it demonstrated its future course by deeds as well as words.

Rosenberg issued a protest against the statement of the eight.

The text of Finch's statement follows:

WE WITNESSED at the recent Communist convention the beginnings of a trend toward democracy. For a non-Communist observed this was bound to be an encouraging sign. People ask: "Was it genuine or was it only a new tactics?" It is too early to say. My own impression was that there was a genuine ferment which went beyond any question of tactics. There was evidence of fundamental reevaluations which did more than touch the surface and perhaps were the stirrings of new life.

Because even the intelligent public is so badly informed, it is necessary to say that the convention itself was carried on in a democratic fashion. There was

no indication, visible from the observers' table, of "rigging" or "steam-rolling." Delegates who wanted to speak did. And they were listened to. And there was variety of points of view. Observers were given all conference documents and shown every consideration. We owe thanks to those who took care of this and patiently answered our questions.

There was one serious omission. That was the failure to discuss the Hungarian question. Whatever differences or splits might have been revealed, whatever the price might have been, it still would have been healthier to have discussed this. I personally feel that the Soviet action in Hungary should have been condemned. But whatever the convention might have decided, the matter at any rate should have been brought up. No party or political group—particularly one which aspires to leadership—can afford to sidestep this issue. Apart from other possible consequences, this evasion may return to plague Communists in years to come.

---

## Joe North Recovering

Since our first report about the illness of Joseph North, many readers have inquired about his welfare. We are glad to report that he is recovering from the acute attack of bursitis which he suffered. He expects to be back on the job in a few weeks.