

Editorials in Nation's Press Show Lively Interest in CP Convention

THE LONG conference-type desk in the Communist Party offices was piled high and wide with clippings. They were newspaper comments from all over the land on the recent C.P. national convention. After hours of browsing and note taking, it became

clear that the only feasible perspective for this roundup would be to confine itself to representative sampling of editorial comment, skipping the paper mountain of columns, and the blizzard of news stories.

As might be expected, most of the editorials talked about the question of independence, just how much or how little was meant by the party's decision to interpret Marxist-Leninism for itself, in accordance with American realities. A convention action which struck a nerve in southern papers was the resolution addressed to the President calling for a new "Eisenhower Doctrine" to enforce the Supreme Court decision on desegregation.

The Charleston, S. C., News and Courier lengthily, entitled an editorial "Mr. Byrnes' Speech at Peoria Offers Fateful Contrast to Reds' Demand." It quoted from former Gov. James Byrnes' racist outcries against integrated education, from the C.P. Convention's call to Eisenhower to enforce the law, and said triumphantly "What more foreful contrast could anyone imagine than these two news stories contain?" What indeed!

The New Orleans States, in what we suppose is an ominous tone, notes "The United States Communists at their national convention a few days ago at New York heard a keynoter declare that the 'nation's No. 1 task is to democratize the South.'"

The San Antonio (Texas) News predicted that "The Negro Won't Be Impressed" by the call for "a new Eisenhower Doctrine for

enforcement of the Supreme Court desegregation decisions."

A little less certain on this score is the Beaumont (Texas) Enterprise, which writes: "With considerable trumpeting, the American Communist Party has broken away from rigid adherence to the Moscow line and decided to make its own interpretation of Marxist-Leninist principles. To be perfectly frank, this corner is not interested in ANY interpretation that might be made of Marxist - Leninist principles. . . . Everything in the future it seems will be done in accordance with the requirements of the American class struggle and democratic traditions. This means, perhaps that the Communists can be expected to stick their noses deeper into the tense racial picture in some parts of the country." In any case, the Beaumont Enterprise seems to clearly know, even if it opposes, the meaning of our democratic traditions.

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ON THE question of the old hoary myth of domination from abroad, there were several examples of pre-convention and early convention expectations and conclusions being abruptly changed in post-convention editorials. The Washington Post and Times Herald, after the convention's first day, said "It is plain that the Stalinist steamroller is already in full operation. . . . Many of the delegations seem to have been awed into conformity by the content of a secret letter from Comrade Jacques Duclos.

. . . Thus the possibility of further resistance to the Stalinist program . . . seems altogether remote. . . . The rest is mere formality."

Said the same paper after the convention "What seems actually to have happened is first of all that the American comrades, by resolution of their delegates, have reserved the right to determine for themselves what constitutes true Marxism-Leninism."

The Washington Star, in a pre-convention editorial, entitled "Moscow to Our Reds," said "The Kremlin . . . has laid down the line. However," it continued, "The New York Daily Worker has scoffed at the idea of any such dictate and proudly proclaimed that the weekend get-together will be a meeting of free minds voting as they see fit. Well, maybe so; but we shall see what we shall see."

"Our Rebel Reds" was the post-convention editorial title in the Star. "The mavericks among the comrades," it said, "despite having been sternly lectured and attacked in advance by the Soviet press, have done a most uncomradely thing . . . they have succeeded in pushing through to enactment a resolution not likely to endear them to Nikita Khrushchev and company. . . . Speaking for the mavericks, Joan Gates . . . hailed the developments as a 'historic' change because for the first time we have officially adopted a program of an American road to socialism along peaceful, constitutional lines."

Similarly with the Baltimore

Sun. Before: "It won't, of course, make much difference . . . the party's continuing reliance on Moscow has never been questioned." After: "The 'Titoist' Wing of the American Communist Party seems to have won a provisional or partial victory . . . would henceforth interpret the Marxist-Leninist doctrines for itself, without necessarily respecting the Kremlin exegetes. . . ."

There were more than one interpretation of the convention, however. The Dayton, Ohio News flatly proclaimed "Emergent Titoism Has Been Plowed Under on These Shores."

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SOME editorials concluded that there was really little change, and a split still existed. The Providence Journal said "the question of future leadership was simply passed to the new national committee. No wonder the American people remain unconvinced that this performance means any real change." The Salem, Ohio, News, calling a split "manifest destiny," said "the party is splitting into splinters. They never die. They just argue away." The Louisville Times, under the heading "The American Reds March Off in All Directions," said "To the outsider, the situation seems as fuzzy as ever. The three way split remains just that." The Waterbury American said "On the face of it, so far, the proceedings of the convention were to a fantastic degree inconsistent." It did, however, note that one "Maurice" Duclos had been rebuffed. Seeing the convention as proof that the party is unimportant, the Detroit News suggested an end to political persecution in order "to deprive the Communist Party of its last comfort: The sense of being important enough to be persecuted."

The Stockton, Cali., Record, said "Although the party is moving toward Americanization and

independence from Moscow, it remains authoritarian and revolutionary." The Oakland Cali., Tribune solemnly noted ". . . there is one thing for all non-Communists to remember. They are all of them still Communists. They intend to stay that way."

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HOLDING the convention unity to be unreal, the Bergen, N. J., Evening Record said "their differences are as basic and irreconcilable as any differences among old fashioned sectarians respecting the right way to go to heaven."

Only two papers, the Perth Amboy, N. J., News and St. Mary's (Pa) Press, said the convention shouldn't have been allowed.

Overall the clippings reflect a high, and often even a detailed interest, in what the convention was talking about. A good example is the Ford Dodge, Iowa, Messenger and Chronicle, which wrote before the convention that it would "have before it a proposed new constitution. . . . This document states the so-called Khrushchev doctrine that 'there are various roads to socialism.' It makes a bid for cooperation with 'all socialist minded Americans,' emphasizing that 'the Communist Party seeks no narrow partisan monopoly.' It says 'common bond' among workers of all lands is strengthened when working class movements operate in an atmosphere of independence and equality and exercise the right of fraternal and constructive criticism."

The New York City newspaper editorials alone make up a huge collection, far too formidable to tackle here. A full page editorial in the liberal New York Post said it was "absurd to pretend that nothing really happened," that it was "madness" to "minimize the news," of the party's affirmation of an independent position. The Daily News, needless to say, sneered. . . . L.R.