

BUSIEST MAN AT THE CONVENTION

THE BUSIEST delegate at the Communist Party convention last week was one Nat Ganley of Detroit. Ganley, who has studied Roberts-Rules-of-Orderism as well as Marxism,



was the convention parliamentarian. By the end of the four-day convention he was completely exhausted.

If Ganley's display of skill was notable, even more notable was the fact that for the first time a Communist convention had a parliamentarian. And that fact symbolized the change that has taken place over the past year in the Communist Party.

In a "monolithic" organization, the one thing you don't

need is a parliamentarian. There were always various currents of thought within the Communist Party but they were not supposed to exist, and every one pretended that they did not.

In this convention, the party recognized frankly and openly that there existed various currents of thought and of emphasis. Therefore the election of a parliamentarian as the first order of business!

Curiously, the delegates were fully familiar with this kind of situation in unions and other political organizations. But they were not used to it in their own organization.

To understand this convention, it is necessary to see the currents that emerged in it (I am not referring, of course, to factions which are the opposite of and antagonistic to currents of thought). The newspapers for months had been picturing three currents in the Party with

the usual labels of Left, Right and Center, with which they identified Foster, Gates and Dennis. Many Communists also shared this estimate.

In my opinion, the names of Left, Right and Center are worse than useless when applied to the Communist convention. In fact, even the arithmetic is wrong. I counted not three currents at the convention but four. These four included two main currents and two lesser ones. In speaking of currents of thought, I do not mean organized groups of Communists, for the currents are not that well defined and at points some of them merge.

Moreover, an individual delegate could express himself through one current on a particular question and through another on some other question.

The two main currents agreed on the need for the party to make important changes in line with the Draft Resolution if it

was to survive. One current, however, emphasized the care that must be taken in any change for fear of going off the deep end. This current had been particularly determined to re-affirm the name and form of the organization.

The other main current emphasized the extent of the change that needed to be made and the fear that the party had already lost much time. This current was reflected in the determination to establish the party's independence and equality in connection with the interpretation of the universals of Marxist-Leninist theory and in relations among Communist parties.

The first current emphasized that to make needed changes required unity. The second emphasized that to achieve the needed unity required changes. These two currents were not antagonistic to each other but

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rather complemented each other.

Of the two lesser currents, one of them—heard on the floor out of all proportion to its actual strength—was in basic opposition to the Draft Resolution and to all proposed changes as undermining Marxism-Leninism. The other—hardly heard on the floor of the convention—was actually opposed to the Draft Resolution from another direction, viewing it as irrelevant to what it considered the needs of the situation.

Had either of these two lesser currents become a major factor, even the skill of Parliamentarian Ganley could not have avoided a rupture. As it was, the convention was largely successful because the two main currents both supported the main line of the Draft Resolution, in spite of at times sharply differing emphasis, and each gained many of its objectives.