

ANTI-COMMUNISTS DIFFER ON DIFFERENCES IN CP

By ALAN MAX

The differences among Communists are matched, I discovered Tuesday night, by the differences among anti-Communists when they discuss the differences among Communists.

The occasion was the concluding seminar begun last year by the Jewish Labor Committee, on the subject of "Communist tactics."

The subject of Tuesday's seminar was "The Meaning of the Recent Convention of the American Communists—Is there a Fundamental Change?" It was held at the Atran Center at 25 E. 78 St.

No Communists had been invited to participate in the discussion on the Communist Party at Tuesday's seminar or at any of the preceding ones.

About 45 persons attended the seminar and were seated around a large horse-shoe table.

Before the affair began, Walter Kirschenbaum, public relations director of the Jewish Labor Committee, seeing me in the room, suggested I sit at the big table. "After all, you invited observers to your affair, he said.

The first speaker was Gus Tyler, political director of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. Tyler said that the recent national convention of the Communist Party was the first party convention whose outcome was "not predictable." A real clash of opinions took place, he went on.

Tyler said that when the first letters appeared in the Daily Worker criticizing party leaders and policies last March, he "was sure the letters were phony." After two or three weeks, he was convinced this was the real thing.

The world communist movement, he said, "is going through a crisis and we do not know what the outcome will be and neither do the Communist Parties."

Whatever the outcome, he predicted, in the long run the "conflict within the world Communist movement cannot be halted—they are human beings, subject to beliefs, disbeliefs and new beliefs."

Tyler was followed by Carl Rachlin, an attorney connected with the American Civil Liberties Union. Rachlin was an observer at the Communist convention, who disagreed with the findings of the Rev. A. J. Muste and 10 other observers and gave his own conclusions in testimony before the Eastland committee.

Rachlin accused Tyler of holding "romantic concepts of what is taking place in the Communist movement." He said that not a single important issue had been raised on the convention floor, that the debate was "tactical, not fundamental."

Kirschenbaum then rose to join in the criticism of Tyler's position. According to Kirschenbaum the

convention discussions were "only a smokescreen," all that was actually decided upon was to "infiltrate," and "all factions agreed on that." Even the "Howard Fast breakaway was a phony." Kirschenbaum climaxed his reply to Tyler by brandishing a pamphlet written by Tyler exactly 24 years ago in which Tyler, then a member of the Socialist Party, was supposed to have written that the Communist movement was declining. "Now Gus is telling us the same thing all over again," he roared.

Questions were then put to the speakers, all of whom discussed the party in terms of "factions," by those seated around the table. In reply to questions addressed to him, Tyler said that, yes, the "Gates" position is "pro-Soviet," since it "accepts the Soviet revolution as overthrowing the tyranny of the Czars and it adds that 'we don't like everything that is going on there' but you've made your revolution your way, please let us make ours our way."

In reply to another question Tyler said that he did not believe that the "Gates" position would ever find anything in common with the Trotzkyites since the "Gates" position is to fight sectarianism and wants to identify itself with mass movements, while the Trotzkyites are "hopeless sectarians."

Since Kirschenbaum had pounded away on the theme of Communist "infiltration" and how they attempt to "capture" organizations, I considered it my duty at this point to give a demonstration of infiltrating and capturing. Giving my name and mentioning the Daily Worker, I queried Kirschenbaum on his charge that a resolution on the Jewish question in the Soviet Union had been suppressed at the convention. I asked if it wasn't a fact that the New York State convention had almost unanimously adopted such a resolution and that it had been printed in full in the Daily Worker although suppressed by the rest of the press.

Kirschenbaum agreed that the State Convention had taken such action, called attention to a footnote in the latest Jewish Labor Committee to that effect, and agreed that the resolution, while denying the charge that the Soviet Union was "anti-Semitic," did in fact condemn certain past practices in the USSR and did express dissatisfaction with the slowness in remedying them.

I would add here, in view of the tendency of all three speakers to see the party in terms of "fac-

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tions" instead of in terms of convention actions as a whole, that the national convention referred the various resolutions on the Jewish question, both in the Soviet Union and in the United States, to the incoming national committee. The committee will act in accordance with convention directives, act upon them at any early meeting.