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# Generation Gap Pointed Up at Party Convention

## Impatience of Young, Cautiousness of Old Shown at Session of Michigan Democrats

CPYRGHT BY STUART H. LOORY  
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DETROIT—The reality of the generation gap shone through all the celebration and monotony of the Michigan State Democratic Convention last weekend with unmistakable brightness and so the convention became a microcosm of one of the nation's problems.

Sen. Eugene J. McCarthy, almost all observers agree, has harnessed the emotions of youth and has brought the disaffected young back into the fold of traditional politics.

He probably won two of Michigan's 96 votes at the Democratic National Convention in August and one of those is said to be wavering.

Vice President Humphrey, the observers say, has the greatest problem in reaching youth, who view him as a conservative supported by a conservative establishment.

He will almost certainly carry a majority—maybe even a 2-1 majority—of Michigan's delegation.

### Son at College

The generation gap problem was expressed by a central Michigan delegate in a phrase when he described how his son had gone off to college to study philosophy.

"You know what he's studying? He's studying extra-tensionalism, that's what he's studying," the delegate said in bewilderment.

The problem was expressed in a sotto voce debate that took place on the convention floor between Neil Staebler, the bushy-browed, squeaky-voiced Democratic national committeeman, and a small band of young delegates from Kalamazoo.

In a private conversation on the floor, Arthur Hilgart, 32, an economist working in big business in Kalamazoo, was telling Staebler he wanted to "struggle" but that the old pros of the party in his city had shunted him aside.

"They just don't care about issues," Hilgart was saying. "We try to talk Vietnam with them. The people who favor the war in Vietnam just won't debate. All they care about is 14B, the repeal of 14B (the Taft-Hartley Act's right to work provision). That's the only issue there is for them."

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Staebler, who is 62, then explained to Hilgart, a thin, thoughtful, pipe-smoking representative of the concerned middle class, the need for understanding human nature, for going slow, for expressing ideas in a manner that would not irritate all those around him.

Hilgart and his friends ripped into the Johnson Administration for not sending enough food to feed the poor people of Mississippi.

"You are trying to be millennial," Staebler replied.

The younger men compared President Johnson to Hitler and the U.S. role in Vietnam to that of Nazi Germany in World War II.

"We are trying to save the world from World War III, which you guys will have to fight," Staebler said.

Finally, Don Moore, a young philosophy professor at Kalamazoo College, joined Hilgart in complaining about the way the party had alienated the young people.

"My wife worked full time for McCarthy in Indiana," he said. "My students went out and pounded the streets for him. Meanwhile back here in Michigan we elected a full slate of delegates to our county convention and ex-

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pected to elect some McCarthy delegates to the national convention.

"But what happened? The old guard came here and stole it away from us. What do I tell my students when they get back from California?"

Staebler replied:

"Tell them that in 10 years they'll be running the party. This is a bruising business and a lot of good purposes get frustrated . . . These kids want 10 times more progress in one quarter of the time than we can sell."

"These kids won't be in

the party next year," Hilgart told Staebler. "They are fed up."

If the "kids" were fed up so were Hilgart and Moore. For 11 years now, Hilgart said, he has been fighting the clubby atmosphere of the Democratic Party in Kalamazoo and

has not been able to move the regulars beyond a discussion of the Taft-Hartley right to work provision.

"I sat down and drew up my own platform of about 40 items," he said, "things like the FBI and the subversion that the CIA

practices. There has been an accretion of power in this country against liberty and the party doesn't care."

Finally Staebler broke away and returned to the speakers' platform where he discussed the encounter with his colleagues.