

CP Planned Return to Chicago Draws Flurry of Comment Here

CHICAGO.—In its decision to move its national headquarters back to Chicago, the Communist Party stated its desire to get "closer to the heartland of industrial and agricultural America."

The move is in keeping with a series of changes made by the party in its recent convention, changes aimed at reversing the trend of isolation, of declining strength and influence.

To thousands of Chicagoans, for whom the Communist Party still symbolizes struggle for many important gains, the announcement was interesting. Many remembered when the party was founded in a union hall on Throop Street back in 1919 and had offices on Washington Boulevard.

IT surprised no one that the newspapers, the police and public officials greeted the announcement with dismay.

Chicago newspapers had a week earlier predicted that the Communist Party would disintegrate and disappear. To their amazement, the National Convention ended in unity, adopted a forward-looking program.

The commercial press reacted by trying to work up a new hysteria against the party and to halt

the planned move to Chicago.

One paper virtually threatened anyone who would rent or sell space to the party in Chicago. It was a blatant assault on the civil liberties of a legal political party.

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THESE attacks also betrayed an ignorance of Chicago's history as the cradle of countless political parties and movements, going back to the 1860 convention of the new Republican Party of Abraham Lincoln.

For a century, Chicago has been a center of farmer, farmer-labor, radical and socialist parties.

In 1897, Eugene V. Debs and other socialists gathered in Chicago to form what was to be the forerunner of the Socialist Party.

In the years following World War I, Chicago was again the center of minority and third party activity. In 1918, an Independent Labor Party was launched by the Chicago Federation of Labor. This was the nucleus for the Farmer-Labor Party which ran candidates in the 920 elections.

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THE LaFollette Progressive Party movement of 1924 and the main farmer-labor currents which preceded it also had their center in Chicago.

It was in 1919 that The Com-

munist Party and the Communist Labor Party were formed by former Socialists. These two parties merged to form the Communist Party of the United States, headed by Charles E. Ruthenberg.

The party's decision to return its headquarters to Chicago after many years in New York City drew off a flurry of angry statements from Mayor Richard J. Daley and a few others who were called on by the newspapers to make comments.

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SAID Claude Lightfoot, Illinois state chairman of the Communist Party:

"The real issue is not whether the Mayor and the press agree or disagree with the Communist Party. We have already seen through the long period of McCarthyism what hysterical and irresponsible smear campaigns can do to the fabric of American democracy."

Lightfoot said that a revitalized Communist Party, "returning to the center where we came from," can not fail to have a strengthening effect on the struggle for civil rights, for peace, for the broadening of the nation's liberties and its economic welfare.