

11 Rank-and-File Communists Ousted by Party for Rebellion

Group Charged With Believing Official Line Was Not Radical Enough, Provoking Fights and Disorder in Club

Eleven rank-and-file members of the Communist party have been ousted for attempting open rebellion within the party ranks because they believed the official Communist line was not radical enough, it was announced yesterday.

The party's indictment against those it expelled charged, among other things, that they were guilty of making exaggerated and "one-sided" attacks on the Democratic party and the Truman Administration while sparing the Republicans, whom the Communists regard as "the main centers of reaction."

The ouster, which hit "small fry" members of one of the party's Bronx clubs, was the first announced wholesale expulsion of leftist heretics since the party began ridding itself of influential members, one and two at a time, for the same reasons. As such, it was the first indication that the top-level heresies had filtered down to the Communist rank-and-file and had enlisted some of them in defiant opposition to the party.

Four Previously Ousted

Victims of the purge held views substantially the same as those for which four members were recently ousted. The four were William F. Dunne, who once shared leadership of the party with William Z. Foster and Earl Browder; Vern Smith, a leading West Coast Communist; Ruth McKenney, author of the "My Sister Eileen" stories, and her husband, Richard Branstain, who wrote for The New Masses under the name of Bruce Minton.

Spokesmen at the Bronx County Committee of the party declared that, though evidence was lacking, it was believed that the eleven dissidents had been tied up with the Dunne-McKenney group or at least had "some contact" with them. Only four of the eleven were identified by name in the statement in which Isidore Begun, chairman of the committee, explained the ouster.

These were Sylvia Price, her two sisters Eileen Rechtman and Bea Rechtman, and a Jerry Schwartz. This group was linked to an Earl Price, who, the statement said, was at the core of the faction and was dismissed from the fold several months ago.

All Reported to Be Young

"All the eleven are younger individuals," said a Communist spokesman, declining to give any other names. "None of them has had very exciting careers."

Using much the same words with which the four more influential Communists were recently read out of the party, the statement accused the eleven of carrying on "disruptive anti-party activities of a left-wing sectarian, semi-Trotzkyist nature."

As it emerged from the wording of the statement, the belief of the eleven dissidents was that the Communist party should return to the uncompromising radicalism

that it espoused around the world from 1928 until the creation of the "popular front" idea in 1935.

On this basis, they attacked the current regime of William Z. Foster in the party as lacking in Marxist zeal and being conciliatory to capitalist elements—which are pretty much the same grounds on which Mr. Foster attacked Mr. Browder and took his place at the party helm.

The eleven were accused of trying to woo new party members to their point of view, of stirring up factionalism and provoking fights and disorder in their club. The faction even put out a printed circular accusing the party of "betraying the working class."

Over a period of months, the party statement said, the faction was able to "deceive" many members of the club, so that members of the State committee had to make special visits to indoctrinate those who had fallen.

The visiting powers from the higher party levels were successful, the statement added, in winning over "the overwhelming majority" of the club members and in isolating and exposing "this little group of ingrained factionalists."

In its criticism of the faction's stand in domestic politics, the statement declared:

"This faction has made the Truman Administration the exclusive and main center of attack. It has exaggerated the degree of fascist development in the United States, erroneously considering the Truman Administration as virtually a fascist government. By [this and by] its one-sided attacks on the Democratic party, this faction diverts attention from the danger of the main centers of reaction, represented by the Hoover-Dewey Republicans."

The statement also chastised the eleven who strayed for their silence about "the dangers of a Dewey Republican victory" and their little attention to the building up of an American Labor party vote.