

Q. Recognized their platforms?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Any doubt in your mind that it was controlled by the Communist Party?

A. Not a one.

Q. That is all.

MR. HOUSTON: I think that is all now, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much for coming down, Mrs. Angel.

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: Can she be excused?

MR. HOUSTON: Yes, she can be excused.

(Witness Excused)

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Chairman, I wish to put a witness on at this time to merely at this point in the record, clarify a point that was testified to this morning. I will not take this witness' full testimony at this time. I would like to put them on for that one point and then recall them some time next week if it is agreeable with you.

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: It will be.

MR. HOUSTON: Will Sonia Simone take the stand.

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: Will you stand and be sworn, please.

SONIA SIMONE, called as a witness, having been first duly sworn, testified on direct examination as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

BY MR. HOUSTON:

Q. Now, Miss Simone, we have a large group of people here that wish to hear you. We want to take it down with our recording devices, so speak slowly and very distinctly and spell any unusual names. Now will you please state your name?

A. Sonia Simone, S-i-m-o-n-e.

Q. Of what country are you a citizen, Miss Simone?

A. Canada.

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: Perhaps you had better spell your first name, too, for the record.

BY MR. HOUSTON:

Q. Will you spell it, Sonia?

A. S-o-n-i-a.

Q. Where were you born, Miss Simone?

A. In Odessa, Russia.

Q. When were you born?

A. In 1913.

Q. When did you leave Russia?

A. I left eleven years ago—eleven years ago.

Q. That would be 1937, then, is that right?

A. No, it's the end of '36.

Q. The end of 1936. Why did you leave Russia?

A. Because the conditions there were too unbearable to live in. There was no freedom, nothing to eat, nothing to wear, and general privation and personal liberties, hard work and nothing else.

Q. Now, what did you do in Russia?

A. I used to work in office, and then I worked as an interpreter in the Intourist Bureau.

Q. For the Intourist Bureau?

A. That's right.

Q. And what was the nature of that work, were you a guide?

A. Oh, yes, I was a guide.

Q. You would guide foreigners around?

A. That's right.

Q. Now, where did you perform this work?

A. In Vladivostok.

Q. Somebody else will have to spell that, I can't.

A. Vladivostok—I think.

Q. Now, did you go to school in Russia?

A. Oh, yes.

Q. Where did you receive special intrainee training to be an interpreter?

A. Well, while I was in Russia I studied English at the Academy of Foreign Languages in Vladivostok, and there, as a student to begin with, and in the second year I was sent to practice in clubs for sailors and so on and therefore—then later, I took course for interpreting and later I was attached to Intourist.

Q. Now you say you were sent to the clubs to practice. To practice what?

A. Oh, different things. It was supposed to be practice of English, but since in the club where I worked were sailors from foreign ships, and mostly Negroes and minorities and so—I was sent there, and of course in Russia when you work as an interpreter you are forced—you go to work. You sign rules and obligations. In other words, there are certain things only that an interpreter can say to a person, and in those clubs to begin with, we were drilled to say how wonderful Russia was, what conditions—splendid conditions there were in Russia, how free people were, especially minorities, how wealthy and comfortably they lived in Russia.

Q. Now did you use the term clubs in the plural or singular? Is there one club, or more than one?

A. I worked, particularly myself, I worked in the Woiovsky Club.

Q. You will have to spell that, I am sure none of us can.

A. I never have learned spelling. In Russian schools we don't learn spelling, as you do here. W-o-i-o-v-s-k-y.

Q. Now, will you describe this club for us?

A. It was a very large club, greystone building on the main street of the city of Vladivostok,—very important building from outside and no less important inside. It was beautifully furnished, carpeted, luxurious thick carpets, the best of entertainment was there, the best of silverware and curtains and everything that was the best procurable, was there.

Q. And it was to this club they would bring the sailors from the foreign ships, particularly the Negroes, is that right?

A. That's correct.

Q. And you girls would be interpreters and hostesses to these Negroes?

A. That's correct.

Q. And what were you instructed to tell these Negro foreigners that were brought directly there?

A. Well, we were instructed to say that—to show them in comparison—life in their own country, no matter where they came, and life in Russia, bringing this club as average person—a Negro you speaking to, for instance—it might be Chinese, or whatever it is, as average person's home and conditions,—living conditions.

Q. Now this was a very fine club, very beautifully furnished?

A. Yes, that was one of the best.

Q. Were there others like it?

A. Well, I don't know. I know I have been in the course of my work with foreigners later on, in hotels—special hotels for foreigners, and that was very luxurious place, but this club didn't have anything the hotels didn't have.

Q. Now was that a true picture of the conditions in Russia?

A. No, very far from true, because myself, personally, I lived, since I belonged to the country I lived in a room with my friend and we were allowed only four square yards per person to live in. Then we had a room that was eleven yards—they wanted to put somebody else, because if there was another extra yard they were supposed to put somebody else in. However, since I was doing such important work to tell the foreigners that it was all well and so on, on that account they allowed us two to live in that room.

Q. Were you lying to these foreigners when you told them what you did?

A. Well, since your life depended upon it, I suppose it was truth in solid sense of the truth. Everything in Russia is built on lies.

Q. Everything in Russia is built on lies?

A. Definitely so.

Q. And what was the purpose of your telling this story to these minority groups that they would bring there?

A. Well, to show them—I suppose to foment the trouble in the end of it, but to show them that wherever they lived, it couldn't be any better than in Russia. If they got the idea and decided to stay in Russia, or carry out their work of life in Russia, spread about wherever they went from port to port that the conditions in Russia were so much superior to anywhere else.

Q. But what you showed them and what you told them was not the truth?

A. No, it was not.

Q. In reality, conditions were very bad, weren't they?

A. Yes, they were terrible.

Q. And these people were not permitted to see the true conditions, were they?

A. Oh, no. They were taken from the—by special men to the club from their ships, or wherever they met, you know—certain spots prearranged, and when we were through with them in the club they were taken by the same men to the ships.

Q. Is there any such thing as democracy in Russia at the time you were there?

A. Unfortunately, no.

Q. What kind of a government do they have?

A. Of course it is Communistic—Communistically dominated country and it's a dictatorship—slavery.

Q. It is slavery?

A. Slavery,—nothing else but slavery.

Q. That is your testimony after having lived under it for twenty-three years?

A. That's correct.

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Chairman, that is all I wish from this witness at this time.

For the corroboration of the testimony of Mr. Honig this morning. I would like the privilege of excusing her now to be recalled at a later date, to take up some more points.

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: That is acceptable. Thank you, Miss Simone.

(Witness Excused)

MR. WHIPPLE: Pursuant to an order of the Chairman, the deposition of one Mary L. Gilbert has been obtained and it was obtained in pursuance to Statutes 8180, 8182 of the Revised Statutes of the State of Washington, which makes it possible and lawful to obtain the testimony of persons while they are ill or due to any physical infirmity is unable to attend—to be in attendance at a hearing of this kind. By reason of physical infirmities, and extremely old age of this witness, we found it impossible to bring her here in person, and consequently her deposition was taken, and I would like to read it into the record, at this time.

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: It is the ruling of this committee that the deposition of Mary Gilbert—is it?

MR. WHIPPLE: Yes, Mary L. Gilbert.

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: —be admitted into the record.

MR. WHIPPLE: The witness, being first duly sworn, testifies as follows: (Reading deposition.)

“Q. You may state your name.

A. Mary L. Gilbert.

Q. Where do you live, Mrs. Gilbert?

A. At 7515 31st N.E., Seattle, Washington.

Q. How long have you lived in Seattle?

A. Since October of 1927.

Q. With whom do you make your home?

A. I live alone by myself. My husband died a little over eight years ago.

Q. How old are you, Mrs. Gilbert?

A. I'll be eighty-three years old my next birthday.

Q. Are you a member of the Washington Pension Union?

A. I'm not a member but I have attended many of their meetings.

Q. When did you first become interested in the Pension Union?

A. Some eight years ago following the death of my husband, I was approached by a neighbor in regard to joining the Old Age Pension Union. Just at that time I didn't exactly need help as my husband left me a little insurance, still I thought it might be a good idea to learn what it was all about because I realized it wouldn't be long until I would have to depend on a pension or some outside help for a living. They were just getting the Old Age Pension Union organized at that time, and I attended several meetings, but soon quit.