

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.

Q. Why did you quit?

A. Well, they met the first few times at the Harpst Funeral Home near here. I learned from the first that those most active in the meetings, in other words, the ones who were directing all the activity of the meetings were Communists or fellow travelers and it burned me up.

Q. What caused you to think at the outset that they were Communists or fellow travelers, as you have called them, in charge of the Pension Union affairs?

A. Simply because the people who made all the motions and the people who made all the speeches and the people who presided at the meetings were all the time preaching Communist doctrine.

Q. Do you remember any specific instances in which the speakers preached the Communistic doctrine as you call it?

A. Yes, I do. I remember that there were a couple of men who attended regularly, one by the name of Riley—”

MR. WHIPPLE: That is spelled R-i-l-e-y.

“I have forgotten his first name. However, he was a University of Washington professor, and the other was a young man whose name I can't recall at this time. However, he too was a professor at the University. This Riley lived somewhere on 18th N.E. and I don't know where this young man lived, but both of these men were active like beavers preaching Russia this and Russia that. I asked this younger fellow why he didn't go back to Russia if he wanted that kind of a government and I told him that those rosy promises and aims for which they said they were working were only empty promises and that the minute the Communists gained control that those promises wouldn't amount to anything. He just laughed at me and told me that they would win me over yet. This was all about the time that Earl Browder was arrested and they were also talking about deporting a man by the name of Harry Bridges, and at one of these later meetings these Communists or fellow travelers, if they were not Communists, presented a resolution and railroaded it through the Pension Union Meeting, in which they petitioned the President of the United States demanding that the deportation proceedings be stopped against Harry Bridges and that Earl Browder be pardoned.

Q. Was any explanation made to the members of the Pension Union indicating wherein the passing of this resolution in favor of Browder and Bridges would in any manner be of benefit either directly or indirectly to the Pension Union, or the cause of the old age pensions?

A. No, there was not. I asked them once where this had anything to do with pension affairs and they just shrugged their shoulders and said that ‘as pensioners we should help all oppressed peoples whenever we could.’

Q. You refer to some of these people as being Communists. Was that just your own idea or did any of them admit it?

A. Well, some would admit it and some wouldn't. But the ones that didn't admit they were party members were just as loud in their talk as those that did. Sometimes more. There was a woman by the name of Mrs. Von Dosso—”

MR. WHIPPLE: That is spelled V—capital V-o-n capital D-o-s-s-o.

“—who attended the meetings regularly and she was definitely a Communist and she admitted it openly. Her husband worked in the Soil Erosion Department out at the University as an instructor or something out there. She made the statement to me one time that ‘Stalin was the only one in the world who wanted peace.’ I asked her why Russia had attacked Finland and she

said that could be easily answered, but she never did succeed in answering it. I got a little strong in criticizing them at some of these early meetings and they quit picking me up.

Q. After you quit attending this local did you later attend any other Pension Union meetings?

A. Yes, I later was invited to attend an uptown meeting at which Hugh DeLacy was in charge.

Q. Was there anything in particular about this meeting that you remember?

A. Yes, there was. The theme of this meeting was to bleed the American pocketbook and take everything overseas. Every time you attend a Pension Union meeting they are raising money for something or other. They certainly are bleeding the old people of this state. It is simply terrible the way that Bill Pennock, Tom Rabbitt and Hugh DeLacy get money from these old people—pensioners, I mean.

Q. Do you have any particular occasion in mind in which the pensioners were asked for money other than for strictly pension business?

A. Yes. There were dozens of instances. One I particularly remember was just a couple or three years ago when Tom Rabbitt was running for the State Senate and Hugh DeLacy was running for U. S. Congressman. They mailed all of we pensioners letters asking for contributions of one and two dollars for their political campaign. They were really out after the money.

Q. You mentioned that you were mailed one of these letters. Did you later join the Pension Union?

A. No, I never joined the Pension Union but I did apply for a pension and am still receiving same. In other words, I am not on their—in other words I am on their rolls as a pensioner. I do, however, attend these pension union meetings every time I get a chance just to keep up with what program the Communists are trying to put over so I can work against it whenever and wherever I have the chance.

Q. What explanation, if any, do you have for the hold, if any, these Communists and fellow travelers, as you have described them, have on these old people?

A. They definitely do have a hold on these old people simply because they have sold them on the idea that they are the only persons responsible for their receiving pensions.

Q. Did you ever give the people of Washington and the—did they ever give the people of Washington and the Legislature credit for any of their benefits or for helping them in any manner as pensioners?

A. No, they don't. The only time the Legislature is mentioned is in condemning them and making fun of them. All the Pension Union speakers I've heard,—and I have heard dozens of them in the last few years, go to great lengths in damning the legislators, both individually and collectively. When they speak of the last old age pension laws that were passed at Olympia they refer to it as the “Hunger Acts”—they mention over and over again that the legislators who voted for this law “must be beaten at the next election” and that it was up to the old age pensioners to get out and spend their time—get out and spend their money and beat them. Going back to this question of the old people being bled for money, I recently attended a downtown meeting here in Seattle and it was shameful the way they dug money out of those people, especially when they knew these people depended to a large extent entirely on their pensions for their living. At this meeting the old

people were handed out all the way from—the old people were handing out all the way from one to five dollars each to Bill Pennock.

Q. For what reason was this money being raised?

A. I don't know exactly, but the reason that Pennock gave was that they needed this money to fight against the cut in pensions and to pay attorney fees with.

Q. Did they explain what fight they were going to put up that required money or what the attorney for which the money was to hire, was going to do?

A. No, they never did. Every time they would take up a collection, and I have seen dozens of them taken up, Pennock would announce the amount of the collection and then stuff the money in his pocket. At all the many meetings I have attended during the past five or six years, I have never heard Pennock or Rabbitt or anyone else make any kind of a report or give any kind of an accounting showing what those weekly collections were spent for.

Q. I hand you herewith an instrument for which—for which—an instrument which for purposes of identification has been marked as Committee's Exhibit—

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: Exhibit number 15.

Q. (Continuing)—number 15, and ask you to state if you know what it is.

A. Yes. That is a bulletin sent me by the Washington Pension Union from their offices at 303 Mutual Life Building, Seattle 4, Washington, under date of Dec. 9, 1946. This bulletin illustrates how pensioners of our states are constantly being asked for funds. You will notice in the third paragraph they use these words: 'In addition to supporting your local we solicit your support for your State Office through one of the two following means: (1) That you join the Pension Builders and make a regular monthly contribution of 50 cents or more, etc.—(2) That, if you do not feel you can make a monthly pledge at this time, you use the form in the lower left-hand corner of this page to make as generous a donation as possible to the PENSION-UNION-LEGISLATIVE-FIGHTING-FUND for "60 at 60." This fund will be used for our radio broadcasts on KEVR every Saturday, to keep a full time lobby in Olympia all during the legislative session, to organize more members in the Pension Union, and to mobilize labor unions and other allies in our fight at Olympia for increased pensions.'

The thing I have in mind is that it isn't sufficient that the pensioners just pay their annual dues to their Union, but they are constantly being circularized and pressure is being put on them many times a year for money. Although pensioners are constantly being asked for money, at no time have I ever received any literature from the Union office showing that this money is being spent and knowing the close tie-in of the Pension Union, or at least, or at least of most of its officers, with the Communist Party, I have reason to suspect that it was not all used in the interest of the old age pensioners.

Q. I hand you herewith a pamphlet which for the purposes of identification has been marked Committee's Exhibit 2"—

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: Exhibit 16.

Q. (Continuing)—"Exhibit 16, and ask you to state if you know what that is.

A. Yes. It came to me through the mail or was given me at the Washington Pension Union recently, and is called quote The Pension Builder, and is under date of December, 1946.

Q. Was there any thing in this issue of the 'Pension Builder' that attracted your attention, and if so, what was it?

A. You will notice in the upper column on the right hand side of the first page where Pennock talks about how people are granted pensions in Russia, and he says quote In the Soviet Union men are eligible for pensions at the age of 60 if they have worked for 25 years, and that women are eligible for pensions in Russia at 55 if they have worked for a period of 20 years unquote, and what he does not say about pensions in Russia though is the amount of pensions the men and women are granted.

Q. Do you have any knowledge concerning the pensions that they pay in Russia?

A. Only what reliable Russians who have fled that country and have come over here have said to me and have written about it.

Q. What do they say?

A. They say that the Russians who live long enough to get a pension get anywhere from fifteen to sixty rubles a month, depending on the class of work they have been doing all their life, and when you consider it would take 15 rubles to buy a decent loaf of bread in Russia, you have an idea of about how generous they are with their pensions—and that's a good illustration of how Pennock misleads his followers about Russian pensions, always praising and pointing out what he considers the advantage of the Russian system of pensions has over ours and trying to cause them to be dissatisfied with the pensions granted in this country when, if he wanted to make an honest comparison he should have compared them in dollars and cents and told his readers what could be bought in groceries and clothes with the pensions Russia grants as well as with the pensions that are granted in this state.

Q. Was there anything else in this issue of the 'Pension Builder' that particularly attracted your attention, and if so what?

A. Yes, there was. You will see on page two where Pennock as President of the Washington Pension Union states that it will be necessary to have a mass mobilization of several hundred members to stand ready to come to the State Capitol at Olympia to lobby at the legislature at a moment's notice. And he goes ahead and names some 30 or more people who he says he is going to count on for either full or part time at the State Capitol to act as lobbyists, and reading these names is like calling a part of the Communist Party roll. I don't know that I've heard all of them, but among others the names Etta Tripp, Rose Johnson, 'Dad' Pettus"—

MR. WHIPPLE: The word "Dad" is enclosed in quotes.

A. (Continuing)—"Nora McCoy, Phil O'Malley, Mollie Higman, Dr. Mary White, Tom Rabbitt, Mable Conrad, George Hurley, and of course, he includes himself and if all of them are not Communists or ardent fellow travelers, then I have been misinformed.

Then he goes ahead and tells the old folks that he needs their help to maintain this lobby and he says that and quote minimum of a thousand dollars, we estimate, is needed, and it is needed now, unquote. He also goes on to say quote We're counting on you not alone to contribute what you can yourself, but also solicit your friends and neighbors and your sons and daughters, too. unquote And it just struck me that all this lobby business and this forcing all these people to go to Olympia and insisting on them to go out and beg for this one thousand dollars from their friends and neighbors and taking it out of their own mouths was the way Communists would do things, pure and simple and that is one of the reasons I never joined the Pension Union.

If persons like Bill Pennock and Tom Rabbitt and Nora McCoy, who are known Communists or fellow travelers and also John Caughlan, were not running the Washington Pension Union as its officers, there would be a thousand—there would be thousands of conscientious old folks joining the Pension Union movement who now won't have anything to do with it. Also, a world of the old folks who are in it now are good American citizens who don't want anything—who don't want to have anything to do with Communism, but they stayed with it simply because they have no other place to go. They would welcome a house cleaning, but as it is they are in a minority and there is nothing much they can do about it. Most all the state and local officers of the Washington Pension Union are not pensioners at all, but younger people who control the organization for political purposes and for that reason the pensioners themselves have lost out and Pennock and his crowd are either out to run the Old Age Pension Union or they are out to wreck it.

Q. Mrs. Gilbert, going back to your testimony concerning this Mr. Riley whose name you mentioned at the beginning of your testimony, I would like to know if he at any time ever held any official position with the Pension Union local that you attended?

A. Yes, he did. He was a president of the local which I attended.

Q. Do you remember any particular statements made by this Mr. Riley at any of the meetings you attended?

A. Yes, there were two things in particular that always stuck in my mind. About the second or third time I attended one of their meetings and this was about eight years ago at Mrs. Harpst's place, this man Riley was making a talk and he said that he was a Communist, and he said quote, I make a motion that we not ask the President of the United States, but that we demand that he release Earl Browder from jail and that he stop the deportation hearings against Harry Bridges unquote. I jumped up and told them I was against this motion because Earl Browder and Harry Bridges were both Communists and I said that I wouldn't be for anything that favored Communism, and when I made this statement they all jumped up and hollered me down.

Then, on another occasion shortly after that the subject came up in the local as to whom they would have for their next week's speaker, and this same Mr. Riley, who, as I said before, admitted that he was a Communist, asked this question quote: Who will we get for our speaker for our next meeting? Shall we get a Communist? unquote, and they discussed the matter a minute or two and then they agreed to leave the matter up to him.

Q. Do you know any more about this Mrs. Von Dosso than what you testified to previously?

A. Yes. On one occasion, and that would be about six or eight years ago I asked Mrs. Von Dosso why she was so interested in the Old Age Pension movement because she had solicited my membership in the Old Age Pension Union, and I noticed at the time that this was a young woman, only about 24 years old, and she said to me quote We Communists want to show the old people that we will do more for them than the Democrats will do or the Republicans will unquote. At the time she made this statement to me, this same Mrs. Von Dosso as the secretary of this particular old age pension local.

On another occasion soon after this, Mrs. Von Dosso wantel me to contribute some money to them, and I told her that if I had an extra dollar I would give it to my church, and she looked at me quite sternly and said quote If they knew you gave anything to the church instead of to the Pension

Union, you would get your pension cut. unquote They were all the time talking against our donating anything to churches, or any kind of charity except to turn it over to the officers of the Pension Union.

Q. At the time you attended these local meetings presided over by this Mr. Riley and this Mrs. Von Dosso, who you say admitted membership to the Communist Party, had Germany as yet declared war against Russia?

A. No, those meetings and those conversations were had before Germany had declared war against Russia.

Q. What was the attitude at this time concerning our entering war with Germany?

A. They were against our getting into any kind of war; they were against our lend-lease program; they were against any kind of military training, and at practically every meeting some speaker would jump up and denounce war and denounce the capitalists in this country who they said were trying to get us into war.

Q. Did you have occasion to learn their attitude concerning this same problem after Germany had attacked Russia?

A. Yes, I did at one of their meetings.

Q. What was the situation then?

A. After Germany jumped on to Russia they spent all of their time crying for an all-out effort in our support of what they called our glorious allies, as they called them. In fact, there wasn't anything that they could say strong enough in urging our country to jump in and make an all out fight against Germany. For several months before it happened they were crying at the top of their voices for a second front, everything directly opposed to what they had been preaching before Germany started this fight with Russia."

MR. WHIPPLE: And it is duly sworn, as provided in the statute.

Now I would like at this time, Mr. Chairman, to introduce these Exhibits referred to, and also introduce the deposition itself into the record.

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: I understand that was Exhibits No. 15 and 16? Have you numbered them for identification?

MR. WHIPPLE: Yes. The first exhibit introduced here was No. 15. That would be the letter she testified she received; the second exhibit is numbered Exhibit No. 16, the Pension folder that she referred to.

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: That completes your case for the time?

MR. WHIPPLE: Yes.

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: There will be a—we will adjourn until 9:30 tomorrow morning. You are planning, are you not, to continue tomorrow? 9:30 tomorrow morning.

(WHEREUPON, exhibits referred to were received and marked EXHIBITS Nos. 15 and 16, respectively.

(WHEREUPON adjournment was taken until 9:30 o'clock a. m., Jan. 31, 1948.)

(9:40 o'clock a. m., January 31, 1948)

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: The hearing will be in session.

WALTER W. CHURCHILL, SR., called as a witness, having been first duly sworn, testified on direct examination, as follows: