

TESTIMONY OF HOWARD F. SMITH

HOWARD F. SMITH, called as a witness, after being first duly sworn was examined and testified as follows:

MR. HOUSTON: Now, Mr. Smith, you have heard the instructions that have been given to the previous witnesses, have you not, as to the method of testifying?

MR. HOUSTON: Will you please state your name?

MR. SMITH: Howard F. Smith.

MR. HOUSTON: Where do you live, Mr. Smith?

MR. SMITH: 1612 Boylston Avenue.

MR. HOUSTON: How long have you lived in the city of Seattle?

MR. SMITH: Since—18 years.

MR. HOUSTON: What is your business, Mr. Smith?

MR. SMITH: Oh, I'm a rancher and hotel operator.

MR. HOUSTON: I will ask you, Mr. Smith, have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?

MR. SMITH: Yes, sir.

MR. HOUSTON: When did you join the Communist Party?

MR. SMITH: Six months before the war was declared, World War II.

MR. HOUSTON: What was that, now?

MR. SMITH: Six months before World War II was declared, I think I joined the Communist Party.

MR. HOUSTON: About the middle of 1941 then, would that be about right?

MR. SMITH: I think it was in August.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, when did you leave the Communist Party?

MR. SMITH: I left, I think, in '46.

MR. HOUSTON: Nineteen hundred and forty-six.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, at the previous hearing of this Committee you put into exhibit your membership card, did you not?

MR. SMITH: Yes.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, I will ask you, Mr. Smith, if you know a man by the name of Ralph H. Gundlach.

MR. SMITH: Yes.

MR. HOUSTON: Will you state the circumstances of your meeting Mr. Gundlach?

MR. SMITH: I—I met him at the Gold Room of the Roosevelt Hotel.

MR. HOUSTON: Uh, huh! And was there a meeting being held in this room?

MR. SMITH: Yes, that was the Victory Forum held by the Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee?

MR. HOUSTON: Was he connected with the Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee?

**Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee Characterized
As Undercover Organization**

MR. SMITH: Yes, he was because when I came there I was told by the Communist Party to stay away from there—that that was kind of an under-

cover layout but I went anyhow and they signed me up for a year. Some girl that was—I noticed Communist girls were at the desk and so I bought a membership in the Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee for a year.

MR. HOUSTON: And paid your money there?

MR. SMITH: Yes.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, at that meeting did you meet Mr. Gundlach?

MR. SMITH: I might say—I attended a good many of those meetings and he was always there—

MR. HOUSTON: Well, then if you—that's where you first—

MR. SMITH: Well, his name was on this card that I was a member of the—he was the head person of that organization.

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Smith, do you know Mr. Gundlach personally?

MR. SMITH: No, I don't.

MR. HOUSTON: You don't?

MR. SMITH: No.

MR. HOUSTON: Then someone told you this man here was Gundlach, then?

MR. SMITH: I think somebody introduced me.

MR. HOUSTON: I could be all wrong, then. We might as well forget any testimony about Mr. Gundlach, then.

MR. SMITH: I don't know him as a chum—I know him as the head of the Anti-Refugee Committee and I was introduced to him one time.

MR. HOUSTON: Well, then you were introduced to him one time.

MR. SMITH: Yes.

MR. HOUSTON: Do you know Professor Joseph Butterworth?

MR. SMITH: Yes, sir.

MR. HOUSTON: Do you know Professor Joseph Butterworth personally?

MR. HOUSTON: Well, if there's any doubt or hesitation, Smitty, there's no—Mr. Smith, I don't want any testimony, because—

MR. SMITH: Well, what made you think there was any doubt?

MR. HOUSTON: Well, you're hesitating.

MR. SMITH: Well, all witnesses don't act the same, do they?

Joseph Butterworth was the fellow I saw in the Communist Party meetings for a long time and I didn't know who he was, I thought he was a—he looked like a fellow needed a bath, and he was from the skidroad until I asked one of the fellows, "Who is that character?"

And he said: "Why, that's a professor at the University," and I wouldn't believe him and then I saw him at different drinking parties; saw him at plenums of the Communist Party; saw him at the leadership training class of the Communist Party, and I was amazed that the University of Washington would have such a teacher—th—the—the man looked like he had got in there by mistake.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, you mentioned that you saw him at the Communist Party plenums. Was that the closed Communist Party plenums?

MR. SMITH: Yes, sir.

MR. HOUSTON: Could anybody have been in attendance that was not a member of the Communist Party?

MR. SMITH: Yes, sir.

MR. HOUSTON: Did you attend these plenums as a delegate?

MR. SMITH: Yes.

MR. HOUSTON: Did you carry credentials from some unit to this plenum?

MR. SMITH: Yes, sir. I explained that in the last hearing if you want me to explain it again—

MR. HOUSTON: Yes, sir, quite briefly.

MR. SMITH: The—I was Executive Secretary of a branch that was told at headquarters that they would have a plenum.

The plenum would be held at the Victory Hall at this particular time; that I would have an election in my branch and elect delegates, alternate delegates, and if any visitors, bring their names. These names of these delegates and alternate delegates I took to headquarters and they tabulated them; they wrote them down on a piece of paper. Then they said: "All right, Smitty, bring those people to the plenum; tell them to come."

Then when you came to the plenum you were tabulated and three girls stood at a table. The first girl asked you: "What's your name, what branch you from?" Then the—then the delegate—alternate delegate told them:

"I'm from branch 430 or 30—350."

She looked to see if his name was there. If his name was there she passed the man to the next delegate.

The next girl that sat at the table, and she asked them the same question and if his name appeared as a delegate, they pinned the delegate's card on him, and proceeded into the—after passing the third girl who inspected it. Three persons you had to pass and now I got the scholarship from the—from the Worker's School to attend one of these plenums and I didn't have the proper credentials so when I came up to these girls they just tell me to take a powder—that they didn't know me, so I saw somebody inside and—and—I motioned to them to come out and they took about half an hour to get in there so don't ever kid yourself that you get in a plenum unless you are—you're not only an authorized member of the Communist Party, you're supposed to be there, it's a must. You're a delegate, alternate delegate, or a visitor and a visitor is only there by orders from the headquarters of the Communist Party.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, it was at one of these secret plenums that you saw Joe Butterworth, is that right?

MR. SMITH: At several of the—

MR. HOUSTON: At several of them.

MR. SMITH: —secret plenums.

Communist School

MR. HOUSTON: Now, this—this leadership training class that you attended, was this restricted to Communists also?

MR. SMITH: After you had studied in the Communist Party and gone through all the schools you were invited to attend the leadership training class. You couldn't attend it unless you were invited and you were invited by the headquarters, the national Executive Secretary.

MR. HOUSTON: Now you were invited to attend one of these classes, is that right?

MR. SMITH: No, I was instructed—I was invited and then I was instructed to attend it—th—th—if you didn't attend it you'd be made fun of before the class. That was a—a frameup to attend it.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, you did attend it, then—

MR. SMITH: Yes, sir.

MR. HOUSTON: —at their instructions.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, did you see anybody there you knew?

MR. SMITH: Yes, Henry Huff, Carl Reeves—

MR. HOUSTON: Well—let's not name a group of people—

MR. SMITH: They were the teachers.

MR. HOUSTON: Oh, they were the teachers?

MR. SMITH: Yeah!

MR. HOUSTON: Uh, huh! Did you see anybody there th—as a student that you knew?

MR. SMITH: Well, if you are referring to Butterworth, I saw him there.

MR. HOUSTON: Butterworth was there.

MR. SMITH: I might say that these leadership training classes—the—the highest secrecy was there, they talked to—, they talked on the Marx theory, they talked on the national question, they talked on the international question and each person at that plenum was understood to be a highly trusted Party member and that what you heard in that plenum was for yourself.

MR. HOUSTON: Now you're talk—now you're talking about the training class or the—

MR. SMITH: Leadership training class.

MR. HOUSTON: The leadership training class.

MR. SMITH: That was to give you the inside story of what the program of the Communist Party was and you were to later use that on—but you didn't tell everybody what you—what you—behind the scene. That was behind the curtain.

MR. HOUSTON: That's where they let their hair down—

MR. SMITH: They all let their hair down behind there.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, is there any question in your mind whether Mr. Butterworth was a member of the Communist Party?

MR. SMITH: No, there was no question. Mr. Butterworth, I watched him very closely because he looked like a peculiar character, he wheezed and he ha—he looked crumby and he seemed to be especially catered to by the highest Communist so I wondered if he wasn't putting on an act and I'd been on many drinking parties with him and I had tried to get under his skin but he was too smart and he was there hob-nobbing with all the high people that I considered high in the Communist Party and I figu—I could never figure him out, he was a question mark to me.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, have you ever attended any meetings of the District Executive Committee of the Communist Party?

MR. SMITH: No.

MR. HOUSTON: You haven't?

MR. SMITH: I have attended meetings, district meetings of the Executive Secretary.

MR. HOUSTON: Of the Executive Secretary.

MR. SMITH: Yes.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, will you describe one of those meetings? What do you do when you get there?

MR. SMITH: You get notified from headquarters that they are going to have an Executive Secretary meeting of all the branches of King County at Victory Hall, that's headquarters of the Communist Party and you go to—say seven o'clock tonight. There you'll meet all of the Executive Secretaries of all the branches of the—King County, if it is King County, if it's the State of Washington, you'll meet them from the State of Washington, if it's a northwest district you'll meet all of them from the northwest district, but we usually—we took King County.

Butterworth an Executive Secretary of Communist Party

And I saw Butterworth there and each Executive Secretary would give a diagnosis of his branch, as to recruiting; maybe they'd call you in there about recruiting, maybe they'd tell you about dues, or control, or some function that was coming on; and at these meetings you would get instructed by the Executive Secretary of King County, who was usually and has been, Barbara Hartle, and here they would give these Executive Secretaries instructions from the higher up people in the Communist Party, what you were to do in your branch.

This was—nobody but Executive Secretaries would be there, and Treasurers. Then you'd go back to your branch and tell them what you wanted to.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, did you see Professor Butterworth at these meetings?

MR. SMITH: Yes, I saw Professor Butterworth at these meetings, and he—each one would get—this was ah—reporting on recruits. At this time, I think Carl Reeves reported that he had been to Spokane and had gotten twenty-three recruits, and another one from another branch had got four or five, and I reported how many I got, and Butterworth got up and reported that his branch reported no recruits.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, was this meeting restricted to the secretaries of the different units?

MR. SMITH: Oh, yes, nobody wandered into it. Nobody in the Communist Party ever wandered into other meetings.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, did you attend a county-wide meeting of the Communist Political Association, when the Political Association was in existence?

MR. SMITH: Yes, that was—that was a plenum.

MR. HOUSTON: That was a plenum.

MR. SMITH: Yeah.

MR. HOUSTON: Can you give us approximately the date of this?

MR. SMITH: I don't know, I—I attended many of them.

MR. HOUSTON: You attended many of them?

MR. SMITH: I haven't any notes. I have many notes, but I didn't bring any notes with me.

Kept Notes on Many Communist Meetings

MR. HOUSTON: Now, you made these notes shortly after and during the course of the time you were a member of the Communist Party, is that right?

MR. SMITH: I made notes on seven hundred meetings.

MR. HOUSTON: On seven hundred meetings.

MR. SMITH: Yes, and every thing that took place and every person that attended those meetings.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, do you recall attending a county-wide meeting when Heinie Huff was sick, and Carl Reeves presided?

MR. SMITH: Yes, they said Heinie Huff had cost the Party fifteen hundred dollars to get him out of "hock." He owed a doctor bill, or something. They—they'd operated on him, and he had to pay fifteen hundred dollars, so we had to raise some more money.

MR. HOUSTON: Do you recall—did you see anybody there you knew?

MR. SMITH: I saw Butterworth there.

MR. HOUSTON: Joseph Butterworth was at this meeting?

MR. SMITH: Yes.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, was this, again, a closed Communist Party meeting?

MR. SMITH: Oh, yes. This was a plenum.

MR. HOUSTON: This was a plenum. Now, in the fall of 1934, did you attend a class sponsored by the Communist Party at the Workers' School?

MR. SMITH: Yes, in the day.

MR. HOUSTON: That's 1944. Did I say '34?

MR. SMITH: '44. I attended many schools at different places. I attended them—there was a Swedish club, the Bay Building, and at Communist Headquarters, Victory Hall.

MR. HOUSTON: The—when you refer to Communist Headquarters, do you mean 910½ Third Avenue?

MR. SMITH: Yes. Yes.

MR. HOUSTON: Do you recall attending a class there when Ralph Hall was the instructor?

MR. SMITH: Yes.

MR. HOUSTON: Well, did you see anybody there you knew?

MR. SMITH: Yes, Butterworth attended that class.

MR. HOUSTON: And Joseph Butterworth was there, too, then?

MR. SMITH: Yes.

MR. HOUSTON: Was this class restricted to Communist Party members, also?

MR. SMITH: Yes, I never saw anybody in any of those classes, that—

MR. HOUSTON: You had to be a Communist to get in, is that what you are trying to say?

MR. SMITH: The leadership, or anybody.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, I will ask you if you know a man by the name of Phil Davis?

MR. SMITH: Phil Davis was the fellow I seen around in early times, around—he was kind of a shadow, all around there. I'd saw him around different movements in Seattle.

MR. HOUSTON: Do you know whether or not he was a member of the Communist Party?

MR. SMITH: Oh, I've been told so, and I—I looked up his record one time, he was a doubtful character, but I couldn't ever—I never sat in any meetings with him.

MR. HOUSTON: Did you know a man by the name of H. J. Phillips?

MR. SMITH: In the same category. I—I knew he was connected with the Communist Party.

Party Backs Florence Bean James for School Board

MR. HOUSTON: Did you attend any sessions of the Northwest Labor School in December of 1946 and January of 1947?

MR. SMITH: I don't think so. I wasn't in the Communist Party then.

MR. HOUSTON: Did you know a woman by the name of Florence Bean James?

MR. SMITH: Yes.

MR. HOUSTON: How did you know Mrs. James?

MR. SMITH: I knew her as the lady who run the Repertory Playhouse.

MR. HOUSTON: Did you have any business transactions with her?

MR. SMITH: Oh, I used to go to the Repertory Playhouse quite a bit, and I know when she—was running for the School Board, I was the Executive Secretary of Branch 430, and Barbara Hartle had given me a lot of pamphlets that she was going to run—she was the Executive Secretary of King County—that she was going to run for the School Board, and I had these piles of pamphlets ready to shoot out, and all at once she said, "Don't give out any pamphlets, Smitty, we're going to run James for the School Board," and so then I had a new set of pamphlets; it was Florence Bean James for the School Board.

So, I didn't deliver any right away, and the next I heard from her she came out to the Branch and said could she hold a political meeting out there. I says, "Well, I guess you could," and she came out and talked, and then her daughter—company had come over to their house, she lived over down—down the bank from where the—over there somewhere, I think it was Howell Street, or somewhere, I forget the address; but I went over, and her daughter and I delivered her pamphlets all over the Forty-third District.

I asked in headquarters about Florence Bean James, she says, "She's all right."

MR. HOUSTON: Well, you asked in headquarters of what?

MR. SMITH: I says, "Who is this character who wants me to deliver pamphlets?" I had delivered so many pamphlets I got dizzy. I'd covered the waterfront for years, and here was another one, and I was kind of mad because I had these others and I got a new batch. So I went down and I asked, "Who is this Florence Bean James?" And she says, "Well, she's all right, she's one of our brothers and sisters from the Repertory Playhouse."

MR. HOUSTON: Now this was at the Communist Party headquarters that you went and asked who she was?

MR. SMITH: Yes. Yes, I didn't do nothing without orders.

MR. HOUSTON: Now you mentioned that her daughter and you delivered them over the Forty-third District, is that right?

MR. SMITH: That's right.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, was the daughter a member of the Communist Party?

MR. SMITH: Yes, I think she was out in 325, Branch 325.

MR. HOUSTON: Did she hold any position? Did she subsequently become the Executive Secretary?

MR. SMITH: Yeah, I heard she crowded me out there.

MR. HOUSTON: In other words, she succeeded you as Secretary of your branch, is that—

MR. SMITH: Well, it's funny in the Communist Party if I can take a moment to tell you, between all this seriousness. In the Communist Party they work you to death, and they figure in three years you're no good, you couldn't even testify against them, you're worn out; and they had me run a—handle the waterfront, the distribution of pamphlets for years. That didn't kill me off, so then they tried to educate me, and they sent me to school in leadership training classes, and I was always a kind of a stumble-bum in there, because I had the—I was living in a vacuum, I had to fool them, and you can't get caught in the Communist Party, they'll clip you.

I made them mad and when I left the Communists they still thought I was pretty good, but I was third degreed many times in the Communist Party; and it's a peculiar situation you get into.

MR. HOUSTON: All right. Now, did Mrs. James ever speak at your branch of the Communist Party?

MR. SMITH: Yes, she spoke on her candidacy for the School Board.

MR. HOUSTON: But this was a closed branch meeting of the Communist Party?

MR. SMITH: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

MR. HOUSTON: And she knew that when she spoke there.

MR. SMITH: It was in Rev. Edminston's house up on—up on Summit Avenue. He was a preacher, he preached by day, and attended Communist meetings by night. He was a kind of a "crackpot" that had got the Communist "bug."

Says Repertory Playhouse "Was Their Baby"

MR. HOUSTON: Now, how did the Communist Party regard the Repertory Playhouse?

MR. SMITH: That was—that was their "baby."

MR. HOUSTON: Their "baby." Well, what kind of films did they say they could see out there?

MR. SMITH: Well, the Repertory Playhouse, a branch of the Communist Party, consisted of all the actors and actresses, and they always were at these main meetings of the Communist Party, and they were always selling tickets to the Repertory Playhouse, and if you didn't show up there you wasn't a very good Communist, and they served coffee, and showed you films of the Great Soviet Union. They showed films in the Polish Hall, the Finnish Hall, all the labor union halls they could get into, and always of the Soviet Union.

MR. HOUSTON: If—were you able to take prospective members of the Communist Party back stage and introduce them to—

MR. SMITH: Not back stage, no, I—

MR. HOUSTON: What?

MR. SMITH: Not back stage. Oh, you had reference to a meeting I had back stage one time.

MR. HOUSTON: Well, tell us about it.

MR. SMITH: Well,—

MR. HOUSTON: Very briefly.

MR. SMITH: —they were always—I think they used me because I give them—I give them donations all the time, not for any ability I had. They were after—they used me for a "sucker," and they invited me to many of these things, and this particular time they invited me to attend a—hootenanny be—

MR. HOUSTON: This might be a good moment, before we go into any such discussion, if we could to have a recess. I think we are pretty well along in this thing.

MR. HEWITT: I would like to make a motion. First, I wish to state I understand that forces beyond your control will cause certain things to happen. However, as servants of the government, coming here to Washington, I know the seriousness of a hearing of this nature. Therefore, and I would like to propose that either a retraction or a rejection of the remark "nigger," used by the witness, be publicly stated for record by the leadership of your legislature.

MR. HOUSTON: I would like to concur.

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: **I think the point is well taken, Mr. Holmes. I am certain the witness did not intend that slur upon the Negro race, under the heat and tension of testifying perhaps such things happen and we were going to ask that that be stricken from the record, and also the reference to a church there that had no bearing on the testimony.**

MR. HOUSTON: I think it would be in order for the witness to apologise at this time. I am sure he did not mean—

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: I am certain that the witness did not intend to refer to the Negro race in a way that is objectionable to them and most people, and I would appreciate, and I think Mr. Smith would appreciate the opportunity to say that is not what he had in mind.

MR. CAUGHLAN: Mr. Chairman, is the record to be falsified?

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: We will hear no more from Mr. Caughlan. If we have any more trouble from you we will take care of the situation in a most direct manner. Now we are taking up a question here which created an unfortunate impression, and we do not want this hearing to develop that sort of thing. It is not the intention of this hearing to slur any people, or race, or church. We are trying to get at the facts. We cannot control entirely the vernacular of a witness. We don't wish to do that, nor do we wish to encourage anything of that kind, and I am certain Mr. Smith would like to retract that. If not we will at least suggest that a notation be put in the record to that effect.

MR. SMITH: I would like to ask you and this committee why you are so afraid to have me testify?

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: I think we better dispense with this—we feel that an unfortunate reference to the Negro people was made; that it is not the wish of this committee that that sort of thing be done, and the record will show that we disapprove of that particular allusion, and we will let the record stand as it is now, if you wish to go on with the witness. Otherwise we will dispense with it.

MR. HOUSTON: No, I suggest we recess.

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: We'll be in recess for about ten minutes.

(Recess)

Chairman Canwell Advises Caughlan

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: Before you call your first witness I wish to make a statement for the record regarding one John Caughlan.

MR. CAUGHLAN: Yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: You will be seated, Mr. Caughlan.

Mr. Caughlan has been permitted to appear here as counsel for some of the principals named in this hearing. He has been advised specifically what his standing is in that regard. Personally, Mr. Caughlan was mentioned many times as a Communist Party member in our former hearing. He at the present time is under indictment for perjury in the federal court. If he persists in trying to disrupt these hearings he will be removed, regardless of his—the wish of his clients to represent them.

We are not going to tolerate a typical Communist demonstration or disturbance at this hearing. We have gone far beyond what we feel we should do in permitting Mr. Caughlan to disrupt these hearings. Personally, before this Committee, he has no standing as an attorney or as a citizen, or as a man. We have a very poor regard of Mr. Caughlan, but we are permitting him to represent his client here but only on the terms which we specify. Now if Mr. Caughlan wishes to conform to those terms he may remain here. Otherwise he will have to be removed and will have to stay out of here. Now that is the opinion of this Committee, and we will have no more foolishness about it.

Attorney O'Brien Is Advised

MR. O'BRIEN: May I ask a question as counsel for a witness?

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: You may direct your questions to the Committee in the way that was directed before. You may put it in writing.

MR. O'BRIEN: I want to inquire, Mr. Chairman, whether the Committee is presuming to instruct counsel in their duty to their clients?

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: We are not even going to discuss the thing further here. Counsel will conform to the rules of procedure set down by the Committee. We are going beyond the usual committee procedure of this kind in permitting counsel to represent their clients while they are on the stand, and if counsel does not wish to conform to that procedure then they will be removed and will not be permitted to represent their clients in this hearing. Now that must be understood once and for all. Your position in this hearing is merely as a consultant with your client while he is on the stand, and we will tolerate no more interference from counsel in the back of the room.

This hearing is conducted for the Legislature, and not for the Communist Party, or their counsel, and we will tolerate no more interference from counsel from the back of the room. Now, if that is not understood we will direct the State Patrol to remove said counsel from the hearing room.

Now we will tolerate absolutely no more discussion from counsel in the back of this hearing room, and I am instructing the State Patrol at this moment that if we have any more such demonstrations, or attempts of counsel to inject their opinions, or ideas or whatever they have in mind into this hearing from the back of the room that they will be removed and kept out of this hearing. Now if that is not plain enough, why, we will have to depend on the State Patrol to take it from there.

MR. O'BRIEN: I bow to force.

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: Will the State Patrol take those youngsters back there who are demonstrating, out of the room, and the instructions of this Committee is if anyone who demonstrates in similar circumstances again, will be removed and will stay out of the hearing room.

Now we are not going to tolerate much more foolishness.

The boy with the yellow sweater there, take him out!

Mr. Smith will be temporarily—will temporarily step aside because of our schedule, and we will proceed with the testimony of witnesses as scheduled.