

TESTIMONY OF PROF. SOPHUS K. WINTHER English Dept. University of Washington

By MR. HOUSTON:

MR. HOUSTON: Doctor, did you hear my instructions to the previous witness?

DR. WINTHER: Yes, I did.

MR. HOUSTON: And you will follow them.

DR. WINTHER: Yes.

MR. HOUSTON: Please state your name.

DR. WINTHER: Sophus Keith Winther.

MR. HOUSTON: And your occupation?

DR. WINTHER: I'm a professor at the University of Washington.

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

DR. WINTHER: About 25 years.

MR. HOUSTON: Are you responding here today, as a result of being subpoenaed to this hearing—

DR. WINTHER: Yes, I am.

MR. HOUSTON: —is that correct? Well, Doctor, I will be glad to give you instructions. You can deposit that subpoena with Mr. Robinson over there and receive your witness after you leave the stand—and receive your witness fee—two dollars which the State allows witnesses.

What do you teach at the University?

DR. WINTHER: English literature.

Admits Party Membership

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

DR. WINTHER: Yes, I was.

MR. HOUSTON: Do you know about when you joined the Communist Party, Doctor?

DR. WINTHER: I am a little bit indefinite about the date of joining. I think it was in the spring of '35.

MR. HOUSTON: Spring of 1935.

DR. WINTHER: It may have been earlier. I can't remember, it's so long ago, but I think that's approximately correct.

MR. HOUSTON: And about how long did you remain a member of the Communist Party?

DR. WINTHER: I left Seattle for the summer in June 1936. I don't think I attended a Party meeting after that. I returned in October. Except, I remember there being an open meeting late in November. I know definitely the date when I withdrew from the Party, which was—that is, it was late November or December, 1936.

MR. HOUSTON: Of 1936. Well, one answer to—this is as good a place as any other doctor—you say you know definitely when you withdrew. Will you tell us the circumstances of that?

DR. WINTHER: Well, it was an accumulation of dissatisfaction with the Party. The realization that I no longer wanted to belong. Something, I suppose, I should have realized earlier, but I didn't.

MR. HOUSTON: Speak loudly, doctor, this is being recorded.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, what mechanics did you go through to get out of the Party?

DR. WINTHER: None, whatsoever, except I notified one of the members that I would no longer attend meetings.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, do you know to what group you belonged when you were in the Communist Party?

DR. WINTHER: Well, it was a group—a University group, or a group associated with the University.

MR. HOUSTON: Other faculty members were—

DR. WINTHER: Yes.

Names Associates As Former Communists

MR. HOUSTON: —Party members there with you. Now, do you know **Professor Garland Ethel**?

DR. WINTHER: Yes, I do.

MR. HOUSTON: Was he a member of the Communist Party at the time you were, doctor?

DR. WINTHER: Yes. I would like to make the same sort of qualifications that the previous witness made. That is, I assume he was—and so that I can answer yes to your question, I was a member—at least I thought I was—I assumed that these others were.

MR. HOUSTON: They attended meetings—

DR. WINTHER: Yes.

MR. HOUSTON: —you attended meetings and you attended Party business?

DR. WINTHER: Yes.

MR. HOUSTON: **Mr. Rapport** appears—

DR. WINTHER: Yes.

MR. HOUSTON: —at meetings to give instructions and they'd be followed out?

DR. WINTHER: Yes.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, was **Garland Ethel** at such meetings?

DR. WINTHER: Yes, he was.

MR. HOUSTON: Do you know his wife, **Mrs. Clarissa Ethel**?

DR. WINTHER: Yes, I do.

MR. HOUSTON: Was she also at these meetings?

DR. WINTHER: I don't think so. I don't recall having seen her at any meetings.

MR. HOUSTON: But you do recall, distinctly **Dr. Garland Ethel** was?

DR. WINTHER: Yes, I do.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, was **Garland Ethel** at the meetings when you first attended?

DR. WINTHER: I think so.

MR. HOUSTON: And was he still a member when you left?

DR. WINTHER: I think so.

MR. HOUSTON: Do you know **Professor Harold Eby**?

DR. WINTHER: Yes, I do.

MR. HOUSTON: Was **Professor Eby** at these meetings, too?
 DR. WINTHER: Yes, he was.
 MR. HOUSTON: Was the professor at the meetings when you first attended?
 DR. WINTHER: Yes.
 MR. HOUSTON: And was he at the meetings when you ceased—last one you attended?
 DR. WINTHER: Yes.
 MR. HOUSTON: And Professor Eby was a member of the Communist Party all during the period of time that—
 DR. WINTHER: That's what I assumed.
 MR. HOUSTON: Do you know Professor Eby's wife?
 DR. WINTHER: Yes.
 MR. HOUSTON: **Mrs. Lenna Eby**—was she at these meetings, too?
 DR. WINTHER: Yes, she was.
 MR. HOUSTON: And was she a member of the Communist Party?
 DR. WINTHER: Yes.
 MR. HOUSTON: Do you recall whether or not you attended any of the meetings at Professor Eby's home?
 CHAIRMAN CANWELL: Just a moment. Dr. Winther will you respond a little louder. Your answer to the last question was "yes"?
 THE WITNESS: Yes, it was.
 CHAIRMAN CANWELL: I caught it, but I do not believe the recording device did.
 MR. HOUSTON: Now, do you know **Professor Herbert J. Phillips**?
 DR. WINTHER: Yes, I do.
 MR. HOUSTON: Was Dr.—was Professor Phillips in attendance at these meetings?
 DR. WINTHER: Yes, he was.
 MR. HOUSTON: Was Professor Phillips a member of the Communist Party?
 DR. WINTHER: Yes, on that same basis.
 MR. HOUSTON: On that same basis. Do you know Professor Phillips' wife?
 DR. WINTHER: Yes, I do.
 MR. HOUSTON: Was she in attendance at any of these meetings?
 DR. WINTHER: Yes, I think she was.
 MR. HOUSTON: Now, do you know **Professor Angello Pellegrini**?
 DR. WINTHER: Yes, I do.
 MR. HOUSTON: Was Professor Pellegrini present at any of these meetings?
 DR. WINTHER: Yes, he was. I would like to make one qualifying remark since I recall him very well, and that is that he was a reluctant and uncooperative member of the unit.
 MR. HOUSTON: He wasn't a good Communist?
 DR. WINTHER: No. He was not.
 MR. HOUSTON: But you still attended meetings—
 DR. WINTHER: Yes, sir—that is right.
 MR. HOUSTON: Was Mr. Pellegrini still a member when you left the Party?
 DR. WINTHER: I think he was but I could not be sure.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, do you know **Professor Melville Jacobs**?
 DR. WINTHER: Yes.
 MR. HOUSTON: Was Professor Melville Jacobs a member of the Communist Party—
 DR. WINTHER: Yes, he was.
 MR. HOUSTON: —at the time you left? And he attended these meetings?
 DR. WINTHER: Yes.
 MR. HOUSTON: Do you know Professor Jacobs' wife?
 DR. WINTHER: Yes.
 MR. HOUSTON: And was she a member of the Communist Party—
 DR. WINTHER: Yes, she was.
 MR. HOUSTON: —at the same time? That's the woman known as **Bess Jacobs**?
 DR. WINTHER: Yes.
 MR. HOUSTON: Do you know Professor **Joseph Cohen**?
 DR. WINTHER: Yes, I do.
 MR. HOUSTON: Was Professor Cohen a member of the Communist Party at the time you were?
 DR. WINTHERS: Yes, he was.
 MR. HOUSTON: I will ask you if you can identify or know this party?
 DR. WINTHER: Yes, that is Professor Joseph Cohen.
 MR. HOUSTON: And that is the man that sat in the Communist Party meetings with you?
 DR. WINTHER: Yes, sir.
 MR. HOUSTON: And he is a teacher at the University of Washington?
 DR. WINTHER: Yes.
 MR. HOUSTON: I would like, Mr. Chairman to introduce this picture as an exhibit one.
 CHAIRMAN CANWELL: Will be—set this in the record and identified as exhibit number three.
 (WHEREUPON picture referred to was admitted into evidence as Exhibit No. 3.)
 MR. HOUSTON: Now I will ask do you know Professor **Joseph Butterworth**?
 DR. WINTHER: Yes, I do.
 MR. HOUSTON: Was he a member of the Communist Party at the time you were, doctor?
 DR. WINTHER: Yes.
 MR. HOUSTON: And he attended these meetings with you?
 DR. WINTHER: Yes.
 MR. HOUSTON: And, do you know this Professor Joseph Butterworth, well?
 DR. WINTHER: Yes.
 MR. HOUSTON: He's in the same department that you—
 DR. WINTHER: Yes.
 MR. HOUSTON: —are, is he not? There'd be no question but what that's the same—
 DR. WINTHER: No.

Attend Communist Party Meetings With Federal Housing Administrator

MR. HOUSTON: —same Professor **Joseph Butterworth** still at the University of Washington?

Now, do you—did you know a young man by the name of **Jesse Epstein**?

DR. WINTHER: Yes, I did.

MR. HOUSTON: Was Jesse Epstein a member of the Communist Party at the time you were?

DR. WINTHER: Yes, he was.

MR. HOUSTON: And he attended these Communist—

DR. WINTHER: Yes.

MR. HOUSTON: —Party meetings with you?

DR. WINTHER: Yes, sir.

MR. HOUSTON: Is that the Jesse Epstein who is now Regional Director for the **Federal Housing Administration**—

DR. WINTHER: I think it is.

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: Is that the Jesse Epstein that was associated with the Federal Housing here in Seattle for a number of years.

THE WITNESS: Yes.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, did you attend more than one meeting with Epstein?

DR. WINTHER: Oh, yes.

MR. HOUSTON: Many meetings. No possibility of a mistake then, was there?

DR. WINTHER: Not in my opinion. I make the same qualification I made before—that is, I assume that he was.

MR. HOUSTON: Do you know a **Professor Maud Beal**?

DR. WINTHER: Yes.

MR. HOUSTON: Was—is that a Miss or a Mrs.?

DR. WINTHER: Miss.

MR. HOUSTON: Was she a member of the Communist—

DR. WINTHER: Yes.

MR. HOUSTON: —Party at the time you were?

MR. HOUSTON: And did you attend more than one meeting with her?

DR. WINTHER: I'm sure I did.

MR. HOUSTON: No question as to her—

DR. WINTHER: I don't think so.

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: What was the answer again on that?

THE WITNESS: That I didn't think there was any question about it belonging to that organization at that time.

MR. HOUSTON: Now professor, I don't want to quibble with you or words—I don't want to think that—that's what we want to watch the record because the person who reads it doesn't get to see the emphasis with which you may speak.

Now, there isn't any question in your mind about any of these people testified about, is there?

DR. WINTHER: No sir, there isn't.

MR. HOUSTON: They—in your opinion—were Communists. They met there with you and they handled Communist business.

DR. WINTHER: I assume that they were, and I thought I was.

MR. HOUSTON: Well—you paid dues in the Communist Party, didn't you? And you received a card in the Communist Party, didn't you?

DR. WINTHER: I think I had some sort of an identification—I believe it was a book.

MR. HOUSTON: A book. A little book with stamps in it.

DR. WINTHER: Yes.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, doctor, I want to ask you do you know a man by the name of **Selden Menefee**?

DR. WINTHER: Yes, I do.

MR. HOUSTON: Was Selden Menefee a Communist—at the time you were?

DR. WINTHER: I doubt very much that I was ever in a meeting—a group meeting—with Selden. I don't think I was.

MR. HOUSTON: You don't think you were?

DR. WINTHER: I don't think I was.

MR. HOUSTON: Did you ever hear him discussed in Party circles?

DR. WINTHER: Yes.

MR. HOUSTON: And how was he discussed?

DR. WINTHER: I don't think I could recall after thirteen years how he was discussed.

MR. HOUSTON: In other words, you can't recall whether or not he was accepted at the meetings?

DR. WINTHER: I certainly could not give that evidence, no.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, do you know Professor **Melvin Rader**?

DR. WINTHER: Yes, I do.

MR. HOUSTON: Did the Party give you any instructions concerning Professor Rader while you were a member? Did you have any—

DR. WINTHER: No.

MR. HOUSTON: —assignment to recruit him into the party?

DR. WINTHER: No—I—No, I don't think I did.

MR. HOUSTON: You were not told to try to recruit him into the Party?

DR. WINTHER: No, I'm sure of it.

MR. HOUSTON: You don't recall any discussion then concerning—

DR. WINTHER: Yes, I do.

MR. HOUSTON: Will you tell us what that is?

DR. WINTHER: I recall Melvin Rader being discussed—and I think more than once because of his liberal position, I think they thought it would be desirable to get him into the Party, but he refused. And I think, what they didn't realize was that he drew a very sharp line between accepting the Communist philosophy and that of an honest liberal.

MR. HOUSTON: You would class Professor Melvin Rader as an honest liberal then, in 1936?

DR. WINTHER: Yes, I would.

MR. HOUSTON: By the same token would you class these other people as dishonest liberals?

DR. WINTHER: No.

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: Let's not draw any conclusions here.

MR. HOUSTON: Do you know **Burton James**?

DR. WINTHER: Yes, I do.

MR. HOUSTON: During the period of time that you were a member of the Communist Party did you receive any information concerning **Burton James**?

DR. WINTHER: Not that I recall. Not that would have any bearing on this issue.

MR. HOUSTON: Do you know **Mrs. Burton James**?

DR. WINTHER: Yes, I do.

MR. HOUSTON: Now did you receive any information while you were member of the Communist Party that would lead you to believe that she was or was not a member of the Communist Party?

DR. WINTHER: Giving testimony as I am under oath, I certainly couldn't say that I had any evidence that she was a member of the Communist Party.

MR. HOUSTON: I didn't ask you—I don't want to quibble with you, shouldn't ask you—in other words you formed no opinion then as to whether or not **Burton James** or his wife were members of the Communist Party?

DR. WINTHER: I think I formed all sorts of opinions, but in that respect they are opinions that I wouldn't trust. I would like to limit my testimony to what I believe to be facts.

MR. HOUSTON: Well we certainly want the facts, and only the facts, Doctor.

MR. HOUSTON: In your Communist Party meetings was the **Repertory Playhouse** discussed from time to time.

DR. WINTHER: I do not recall that phase.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, will you describe one or two of these meetings for us? They were held in various houses, were they not?

DR. WINTHER: Yes, they were.

MR. HOUSTON: And different of you people would be given different assignments to perform?

DR. WINTHER: The most that I recall about those meetings, they concerned themselves with the discussion of—discussion of books—reports on various books that concerned themselves with national and international affairs. It was—in that respect it was, I suppose, a typical professor's organization—a great deal of talk.

Cost Him 5% of Salary

MR. HOUSTON: Does it cost any amount of money to belong to the Communist Party?

DR. WINTHER: Yes, sir.

MR. HOUSTON: You say it did?

DR. WINTHER: Yes, it did.

MR. HOUSTON: About—well, was it a small amount, or quite a little bit considerable?

DR. WINTHER: Oh, I think it varied—perhaps five per cent.

MR. HOUSTON: Five per cent of your salary?

DR. WINTHER: Yes, perhaps.

MR. HOUSTON: Did they make demands on you for additional money from time to time?

DR. WINTHER: Occasionally, yes.

MR. HOUSTON: Did **Garland Ethel** take any lead in any of the Communist Party work?

DR. WINTHER: I can not recall a single specific thing that **Garland Ethel**—I think he must have had discussions on various books and problems, but I can't recall anything specific.

MR. HOUSTON: Now what about his wife, was she more active than he was?

DR. WINTHER: I don't think his wife was in the party, when I was in it. I don't think she was. Maybe it is a matter of forgetting, but I can't recall her.

MR. HOUSTON: That is my fault. I have mixed two of them up here, for the minute, Doctor.

MR. HOUSTON: You testified that you don't believe **Mrs. Ethel** was a member of the party at the time you were.

DR. WINTHER: I didn't think so, no.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, was **Harold Eby** very active in the party?

DR. WINTHER: It's an almost impossible question to answer, because there's nothing specific to point to as an action, because—

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: Just a moment, may we ask the State Patrol to do something about this heckler outside (Referring to noise caused by a motorcycle on outside of the building).

Now proceed.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, by being active, I mean they identified themselves clearly as a part of it.

DR. WINTHER: Oh, yes, there is no doubt about that.

MR. HOUSTON: And that is true of his wife, too, **Lenna**?

DR. WINTHER: Yes, I think so.

University Members Instructed to Vote for Browder

MR. HOUSTON: Do you remember when **Earl Browder** ran for President, in 1936?

DR. WINTHER: Yes.

MR. HOUSTON: And did the Communist Party support **Earl Browder** at that particular time?

DR. WINTHER: Yes, they did.

MR. HOUSTON: And was that discussed and carried on in your meetings there at the University?

DR. WINTHER: Yes, we were urged to vote for **Earl Browder**. **Mrs. Wintther** and I did not, and it happened that there was only one vote for **Mr. Browder** in the **Montlake** district where I lived. This, I think, **Mr. Rapport** discovered, because in an open meeting discussing the election he made invidious remarks about people who had not voted for **Mr. Browder**. Having a guilty conscience, I thought he was referring to me, on that particular issue.

MR. HOUSTON: Now you kept certain of the books of the members of your unit, is that right?

DR. WINTHER: For a short time I think I did.

MR. HOUSTON: You collected some dues?

DR. WINTHER: Yes, I think so. I think perhaps for a month or so,—I can't recall.

MR. HOUSTON: You were in a position to know who was and who was not members, as a result of that?

DR. WINTHER: Yes, I was.

MR. HOUSTON: These people you have testified to—

DR. WINTHER: Yes.

MR. HOUSTON: —you did collect dues from?

DR. WINTHER: Yes.

Should Get Party Consent for Vacation

MR. HOUSTON: You testified that you took a vacation in the year 1936 was that right?

DR. WINTHER: Yes, I left Seattle right after school, in 1936.

MR. HOUSTON: And did you have any conversation with **Mr. Rappoport** when you returned, concerning this vacation?

DR. WINTHER: I'm not sure. I know the general attitude was that a man was not supposed to take a vacation without the consent of the Party which meant **Mr. Rappoport**.

MR. HOUSTON: They had quite iron discipline then, did they not, in the party?

DR. WINTHER: It didn't work very well.

MR. HOUSTON: It didn't work very well?

MR. HOUSTON: **Mr. Chairman**, I believe that is all from this witness, unless you and the Committee have some questions, I suggest that he be excused from the subpoena,—that's up to the committee.

You don't intend to leave town in the next week or so, do you?

THE WITNESS: No.

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: On the understanding, **Doctor Winther**, that you will be on call if the Committee wishes to hear from you again, I will release you from the subpoena and wish to thank you sincerely for your appearance here.

MR. HOUSTON: Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, I suggest that we have about a ten-minute recess.

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: The Committee will be in recess for ten minutes.

(Recess)

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: The Committee will be in session. Will you call your next witness?

TESTIMONY OF MRS. MABEL WINTHER

MRS. MABEL WINTHER, produced as a witness, after being first duly sworn, was examined and testified as follows:

BY MR. HOUSTON:

MR. HOUSTON: You have heard the instructions that were given to the previous witnesses, that this hearing is being recorded, did you not, **Mrs. Winther**?

THE WITNESS: Yes.

MR. HOUSTON: If you will comply and try to speak distinctly.

MR. HOUSTON: Please state your name.

MRS. WINTHER: My name is **Mabel Eline Winther**.

MR. HOUSTON: How do you spell **Eline**?

MRS. WINTHER: **Eline**.

MR. HOUSTON: **Eline Winther, Winther**.

MRS. WINTHER: Yes.

MR. HOUSTON: You are the wife of **Dr. Winther** that preceded you—

MRS. WINTHER: Yes.

MR. HOUSTON: —on the stand? How long have you lived in the City of **Seattle**?

MRS. WINTHER: Since 1924.

MR. HOUSTON: 1924. **Mrs. Winther**, have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?

MRS. WINTHER: Yes, I have.

Names Associates As Former Members

MR. HOUSTON: Do you recall when you joined the Communist Party?

MRS. WINTHER: Well, it's a long time ago, but I believe—it's my belief that I attended my first unit meeting in **June of 1935**.

MR. HOUSTON: **June of 1935**.

MRS. WINTHER: Yes, that's what I believe.

MR. HOUSTON: That's the closest you—

MRS. WINTHER: Yes.

MR. HOUSTON: —can fix the date. Now did you attend very many meetings of the Communist Party?

MRS. WINTHER: I was in the Party until the fall of 1936, and I believe that we had two absences from **Seattle** during that time. That's my belief. I think that we were away in the summer of 1935, and also in the summer of 1936. That's what I think; it could be checked, because I could really—

MR. HOUSTON: With the exception of these two vacations, though, you attended your meetings quite regularly?

MRS. WINTHER: Yes, I think I attended rather regularly. I was taking classes at the University, and I was very busy, and I may have missed meetings, I don't recall.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, where would these meetings be held?

MRS. WINTHER: They were held, I think, turnabout at various homes of the members of the unit.