

TESTIMONY OF PROF. ANGELO PELLIGRINI U. of W.

MR. HOUSTON: Has the witness been sworn, Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: Yes, and I would like to repeat the instructions that it is necessary to reply audibly so that the record may be made on our recording device as we proceed.

BY MR. HOUSTON:

MR. HOUSTON: Will you please state your name?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: Angelo Pellegrini.

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

PROF. PELLEGRINI: 6121 East 75th.

MR. HOUSTON: What is your occupation, Mr. Pellegrini?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: I am a teacher at the University in the English Department.

MR. HOUSTON: Where were you born, Mr. Pellegrini?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: In Italy.

MR. HOUSTON: When did you come to this country?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: In 1913.

Admits Party Membership

MR. HOUSTON: In 1913. I will ask you, Mr. Pellegrini, are you or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: I was a member of the Communist Party sometime in the middle '30's.

MR. HOUSTON: Do you recall the year you joined?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: I don't recall it exactly but it's somewhere in '35 and '36.

MR. HOUSTON: About how long were you a member of the Communist Party?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: I should say somewhere within a year.

MR. HOUSTON: Within a year.

MR. HOUSTON: You don't recall—

PROF. PELLEGRINI: —I don't recall—I don't recall exactly.

MR. HOUSTON: Do you recall who recruited you into the Communist Party?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: Yes, I do.

MR. HOUSTON: Have you any objection to telling us who that was?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: It was the organizer for this district. A fellow by the name of Roberts.

MR. HOUSTON: Roberts. Was that Bob Roberts?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: I think that was his name.

MR. HOUSTON: Of what unit were you a member in the Communist Party?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: I don't know that the unit had any particular name or number or designation. It was just a small group of people there in attendance.

MR. HOUSTON: Did you receive a card in the Communist Party?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: Yes, I did.

MR. HOUSTON: Were you given an as—alias?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: I—I think so but I've forgotten what it was.

MR. HOUSTON: You don't recall what it was?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: I'm pretty sure that I had one.

MR. HOUSTON: Was that the general custom of the Communist Party at that time for people to take names in the party other than their own?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: Yes, it was.

MR. HOUSTON: And this card was made out in this assumed name to you, was it not?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: I believe so.

MR. HOUSTON: Did you pay dues in to the Communist Party?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: Yes.

MR. HOUSTON: Do you recall anywhere near the amount of dues you paid in?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: No, I don't. I—I just have the faintest idea of the exact amount. I remember vaguely that it was some sort of a scale, proportionate scale of some sort.

MR. HOUSTON: With a percentage basis?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: I think so.

MR. HOUSTON: Did you hear the testimony of Dr. Winther yesterday?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: Yes, I did.

MR. HOUSTON: Did that appear to be about approximately right? About 5% of your salary?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: It may have been approximately right. It sounds reasonable.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, Professor, why did you join the Communist Party?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: Well, I was very much interested in the Fascist experiment in Italy at the time and made a considerable study of it, and I was aware that the Communists were fighting Fascism very vigorously and out of, I should say, a youthful curiosity and at the urgency of this organizer, I went into the party to see what it had to give, or partly for anything I could learn from it.

MR. HOUSTON: You had relatives in Italy that had been persecuted under Fascism, did you not?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: No, I didn't.

MR. HOUSTON: Did you have first-hand knowledge from them of how it worked over there?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: Oh, yes, from several.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, did you find the Communist Party to be what you thought it was when you joined?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: Well, I found it to be, very frankly, completely repugnant to my nature. I didn't feel, as I went into the matter a little further, that I could ever accept any sort of absolutist idea of history of the organizational society and I very much disliked the whole idea of secrecy. As a matter of fact it was very unpleasant, and I realized even sooner than I got out that I just simply couldn't go along.

MR. HOUSTON: And you did get out then, to the best of your knowledge, would be about 1936 or '37 and after a year in the party.

PROF. PELLEGRINI: It was very shortly after Professor Winther got out,

MR. HOUSTON: After Professor Winther got out.

MR. HOUSTON: And you have had no connection with them from that day to this.

PROF. PELLEGRINI: I have not.

MR. HOUSTON: Did you meet other faculty members at some of these Communist Party meetings?

Secrecy Promised

PROF. PELLEGRINI: I think I should explain for it's already known anyway, generally, but I would like to make this rather clear that you know, of course, that membership was an absolute secret, as a matter of fact secrecy was promised upon joining, secrecy from your friends, your fellow associates and the members there were divided into small groups. The members of one group would not belittle the members of another. Each group had a contact man with other groups and also, I suppose, with the central organization. I was never myself, in any position of leadership whatever, so I did not know from first-hand information anything that went on outside of the little group to which I belonged, and furthermore, I really didn't care because I was more or less simply a spectator. Then, when I got out, I severed my connections completely and proceeded to forget an experience that had been very unpleasant.

I remember two of these very vividly.

MR. HOUSTON: You what?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: I remember two meetings very vividly, because what happened at those meetings was rather decisive in alienating me from the group; and one was a meeting where the district secretary of the Communist Party gave an analysis.

MR. HOUSTON: Was that Morris Rappport?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: Rappaport. Gave an analysis of a labor problem, I think, that was then current, and I—now, that was a large meeting. There were many people there, I don't know whether it was a meeting of the units or whether it was an open meeting; furthermore, I don't—I don't recall a single individual there. I just have a vague memory of a very large meeting. My attention riveted on this man who was giving the analysis of the problem, and I shall never forget it because it seemed to me quite honestly, and I haven't changed my mind in that respect, that the analysis seemed to be inspired by hatred, it seemed to overexemplify the issues, and to take the position that there were simply one right and one wrong. Now, that meeting I do remember and that's all I remember about it.

The other meeting, I remember again because it concerned me very explicitly. I gave a review of a book upon that occasion, and I thought myself that the book was quite Marxian; but when I was finished I was attacked for the review, and the book was attacked for being insufficiently Marxian, and the two men whom I remember in the attack, who really made the attack, just by a very unfortunate coincidence are deceased, and at any rate have had no connection with the University for ten or twelve years.

MR. HOUSTON: Pardon me. I didn't understand the last statement.

PROF. PELLEGRINI: No connection with the University.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, you know the names of practically all of the professors that were mentioned here yesterday, do you not? You know those professors?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: Yes, I do.

Professor Cannot Remember

MR. HOUSTON: Did you meet with any of these men in the Communist Party meetings?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: **I can't remember** having met in a closed meeting with any one of these individuals that was named.

MR. HOUSTON: Was Harold Eby present at either one of—any of these meetings that you attended?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: **Not that I can recollect.**

MR. HOUSTON: Not that you can recollect. Would you remember if a faculty member was present at these meetings?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: **I'm not sure that I would.** There were many meetings, open meetings, closed meetings, there were long Communist meetings, and the whole thing is just a vague blur in my mind.

MR. HOUSTON: Yes, but now, Mr. Pellegrini, had you joined an organization and none of your associates or fellow teachers were there in it, you would remember that, would you not?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: If none of my associates had been there?

MR. HOUSTON: Yes.

PROF. PELLEGRINI: Well, the—I presume that they were all my associates.

MR. HOUSTON: That were in this Communist Party meeting, then.

PROF. PELLEGRINI: Who were in that particular group.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, practically all then, were your associates there at the University of Washington in this particular unit you belonged to.

PROF. PELLEGRINI: **That is, they were connected with the University.** I don't know whether they were my associates, some I didn't know so well.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, I would rather you wouldn't name them right now if they come to your mind, but **do you mean to tell me that you cannot name a single man that you sat in Communist Party meetings with?**

PROF. PELLEGRINI: I—I don't recollect any that I can say for sure.

MR. HOUSTON: **Now do you recall the first meeting that you ever attended in the Communist Party?**

PROF. PELLEGRINI: **No, sir, I don't.**

MR. HOUSTON: Do you recall Mr. Roberts recruiting you in the Communist Party?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: Yes, sir.

MR. HOUSTON: Do you recall did you sign anything?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: So far as I can remember, I signed the card that he gave me.

MR. HOUSTON: You signed the card that he gave you; and did he give you any instructions then, at that time? That you would hear from him, or anything else?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: I—I really don't—

MR. HOUSTON: You don't know?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: I really don't remember.

MR. HOUSTON: You don't know whether he told you to be at a certain place at a certain time?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: No.

MR. HOUSTON: Do you recall where any of these Communist Party meetings were held?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: One I re—the two that I recall, one was held at my house.

MR. HOUSTON: At your house.

PROF. PELLEGRINI: Yeah. And the other one was held at Winther's house.

MR. HOUSTON: Well, now, your previous statement is in error, then, if you attended a meeting at Winther's house. Certainly Winther was there, wasn't he?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: Well, he must have been there, I—but, I couldn't say for sure that I really saw him there.

MR. HOUSTON: You went to the man's house to a meeting and the man wasn't there, wouldn't that impress itself on your memory?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: Yes, it would.

MR. HOUSTON: But you don't remember that Winther was or was not—

PROF. PELLEGRINI: Well, indeed, I really—I don't recall having made a special point of seeing him or talking with him. I just assumed that he was there with the rest of them.

MR. HOUSTON: Are you sympathetic with the Communist Party today, Mr. Pellegrini?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: No, sir.

MR. HOUSTON: Are you a member of any of their front organizations?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: Not to my knowledge.

MR. HOUSTON: **If you could recall some of these people that you met with, you would testify to that fact from this witness stand?**

PROF. PELLEGRINI: **Well, I think that's a hypothetical question. It really isn't involved, is it?**

MR. HOUSTON: Well, let's approach it this way, then. Didn't you make a statement to one of our investigators that you would not inform on any member of the faculty there, who was a member of the Communist Party with you?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: What I did say was that informing on other people is reluctant, and it was obnoxious to me, **and when I said that, of course, I was thinking of these people whom I do remember.**

MR. HOUSTON: Well, now, we—we've mentioned that fact before, so we might as well just get that right in the record, too, here. There are two people that you distinctly remember in the Communist Party, both of whom are now dead, that you don't want to testify to, and that I have said I wouldn't ask you about, haven't I?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: Yes, sir.

MR. HOUSTON: That's right. Now, that's so there are no secrets here between us or anybody else. Now, that's not the thing I'm discussing. I have agreed not to ask you about any dead people; that is because of their widows

and children and those who are left. That part is all agreeable, but didn't—you have not made the statement, then, that you would not testify about any of the members that are on the faculty at the present time?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: No, I said that I disliked being an informer, talking about other people, and when I did say that, I didn't have in mind any people whom I could identify now, as being members of the Communist Party, but I was—I had in mind these—the people whom I did remember seeing at the time.

MR. HOUSTON: And you are—

PROF. PELLEGRINI: That's the reason—I mean, that's the reason I made that statement.

MR. HOUSTON: You don't recall sitting in any Communist Party meeting at all, then, with Harold Eby?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: No, sir.

MR. HOUSTON: With Ralph Gundlach?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: No, sir.

MR. HOUSTON: With Joe Butterworth?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: No, sir.

MR. HOUSTON: Garland Ethel?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: No, sir.

MR. HOUSTON: Joe Cohen?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: No, sir.

MR. HOUSTON: Herbert J. Phillips?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: No, sir.

MR. HOUSTON: Could you have sat in Communist Party meetings with them and have forgotten it?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: I may have.

MR. HOUSTON: How many meetings did you attend while you were a member of the Communist Party, Mr. Pellegrini?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: Pardon?

MR. HOUSTON: About how many meetings did you attend while you were a member of the Communist Party?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: Well, I didn't attend very many. I—I was—as I told, I was rebuked for being lax in attendance, and for being disinterested; but I couldn't say for sure how many. Maybe a half a dozen.

MR. HOUSTON: You attended a half a dozen meetings of the Communist Party, and you don't recall a single person that was there except two dead people, huh? I want these—I want this clearly, and I want a meeting of the minds now between you and I on this.

PROF. PELLEGRINI: Yes, sir, I remember those things very vividly that made a very deep impression on me.

MR. HOUSTON: Well, when you first join an organization and attend a first meeting, the people that are there, don't they make a vivid impression on you?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: Not necessarily. That is, unless one is—is interested in who the people are and wants to know them, wants to find out all about them, unless one makes some kind of an effort, and I just don't happen to function in that way.

MR. HOUSTON: Now do you recall the house, the general lay-out of the house that you met in? Did you meet in the front room or the kitchen?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: In which—

MR. HOUSTON: In Mr. Winther's house.

PROF. PELLEGRINI: Oh, I think it must have been the front room.

MR. HOUSTON: In the front room.

(Laughter)

MR. HOUSTON: Do you recall about how many people were there?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: No, I don't. I—as I said before, it seemed to me that there was a big crowd.

MR. HOUSTON: Big crowd. Did they stand up or did they sit down?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: Oh, they were sprawled all over.

MR. HOUSTON: Sprawled all over. Did anybody—did there appear to be a head to it—was there a chairman, some kind of a presiding officer?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: **I don't recall.**

MR. HOUSTON: You don't recall. Do you recall were there any books, whether anybody took any minutes or anything?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: **I don't recall that.**

MR. HOUSTON: Who rebuked you for your laxity in attending Party meetings?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: I wasn't rebuked personally. I was rebuked in my absence, I was told.

MR. HOUSTON: Rebuked in your absence—now who told you that?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: Mr. Winther.

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Winther. After Mr. Winther's testimony, yesterday, you remember quite a little about Mr. Winther, don't you?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: Well, Mr. Winther was—was initially, at least, in that group, and he was a very close friend.

MR. HOUSTON: Did you have any other friends in that group?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: These two that I mentioned who are deceased.

MR. HOUSTON: If you had and could recall any of the details of this would you testify to them here, today?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: I think I would.

MR. HOUSTON: Do you want to make that stronger than say "I think I would"—is there any doubt in your mind? Is there any doubt in your mind?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: No, there isn't.

MR. HOUSTON: Well, if there is no doubt then, would you testify to them or would you not?

PROF. PELLEGRINI: I would, sir.

MR. HOUSTON: You would.

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Chairman, I suggest that this committee—that this man not be excused from the subpoena—that he be asked to step aside from the witness stand now and it may be possible that the crowd and the group of people here that—has this loss of memory, may be before the hearing is over be able to recall some of the details of these meetings.

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: It is the opinion of the Chair that this witness should not be excused at this time—am I correct in assuming that you are a historian?

THE WITNESS: No, sir.

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: Are you not writing a book on history?
THE WITNESS: No, sir.

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: I'm incorrect in this—I just wondered. **Your testimony is substantially that you are unable to identify any member or past member of the Communist Party at the University of Washington other than Dr. Winther and this person who—**

THE WITNESS: **Yes, sir,** with any degree of certainty—**just simply don't recall** so that I could be able to place a specific person at a specific meeting.

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Chairman, I want to interrogate with this gentleman further, and in connection with some of the front organizations as late as 1946, and I want to ask that he not be excused from the subpoena.

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: The witness is directed to step aside and remain in attendance for future call to the witness stand. You may step aside now, Mr. Pellegrini.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, Mr. Chairman is it your wish to recess for lunch now—

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: Yes.

MR. HOUSTON: —or, Mr. Stith is standing by and it will take him about 15 minutes to read his chart.

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: Well, I believe that we will recess for lunch at this time. There will be a recess until 2 o'clock.

(Recess)

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