

I N D E X

Witness

Direct Examination

Arthur Strawn - *print*

2

~~Lee Townsend~~ *print*

~~15~~

In the Matter of
Investigation by the
UN-AMERICAN ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

Before a Special Sub-committee of the
Un-American Activities Committee, held on Thursday,
May 10, 1951, at Room 603, Drake Hotel, Hollywood,
California, commencing at the hour of 10:00 o'clock
a.m.

---oOo---

PRESENT:

Honorable John S. Wood, Congressman, 9th District,
State of Georgia, Chairman
of the Special Sub-committee
of the Un-American Activities
Committee.

William A. Wheeler, Investigator for the Un-American
Activities Committee.

Courtney E. Owens, Investigator for the Un-American
Activities Committee.

Reported by:

Mack M. Racklin.

1 CHAIRMAN WOOD: Are you ready to proceed?

2 MR. WHEELER: Yes.

3 CHAIRMAN WOOD: Mr. Strawn, will you rise and be
4 sworn, please.

5
6 ARTHUR STRAWN,
7 having been first duly sworn, deposed and testified as
8 follows:

9
10 (Robert W. Kenny and Ben Margolis, Esqs.,
11 appeared on behalf of the witness, Arthur Strawn.)

12
13 DIRECT EXAMINATION

14 BY MR. WHEELER:

15 Q Will you state your full name.

16 A Arthur Strawn, S-t-r-a-w-n.

17 Q You are represented by counsel; is that
18 correct?

19 A Yes, I am.

20 MR. WHEELER: Will you identify yourselves for
21 the record.

22 MR. KENNY: I am Robert W. Kenny from Los Angeles.

23 MR. MARGOLIS: I am Ben Margolis, also of Los
24 Angeles.

25 MR. WHEELER Q: Where do you reside?

26 A 7270 Woodrow Wilson Drive.

1 Q What is your occupation?

2 A I am a writer.

3 Q When and where were you born?

4 A I was born in New York City, September 29, 1900.

5 Q Will you give us a brief resume of your
6 educational background.

7 A You don't mind if I refer to a couple of notes
8 that I have brought, do you?

9 Q That will be perfectly all right.

10 A I have brought this with me in the interest
11 of accuracy. I was graduated from high school in St.
12 Louis in 1918. After volunteering for service in the
13 first World War, and the war ending before I could serve,
14 although I had been accepted, I then went on and attended
15 Washington University of St. Louis, from which I was
16 graduated. First, I should say, I did a year at Stanford
17 and then I got my A.B. degree from Washington University
18 in 1925 or 1926.

19 Q Does that conclude your formal education?

20 A Yes.

21 Q What is your occupational background after
22 leaving school?

23 A I began writing while I was still going to
24 college. I did newspaper work and then when I left the
25 university I continued on with that. I worked on the
26 St. Louis Post Dispatch, and from there I went to New York

1 and became, for a number of years, their New York
2 correspondent and began to write for magazines and had
3 books published and so on.

4 Q How long have you been associated with the
5 motion picture industry?

6 A Well, while I was in New York, and still while
7 I was doing newspaper work and contributing to magazines,
8 I did work on several pictures by an independent outfit.
9 I also wrote plays, but I would say that my first formal
10 connection with motion pictures was around 1935 or 1936,
11 when I came out to Hollywood.

12 Q Are you a member of the Screen Writers Guild?

13 A Yes, I am.

14 Q What stories or scripts have you written that
15 were made into motion pictures?

16 A Do you want them all?

17 Q Yes.

18 A Well, you have had, probably, more impressive
19 lists than mine. I did the original story and joint
20 screen play on "The Black Room" for Columbia. I did
21 a joint screen play for "The Man Who Lived Twice."

22 I also worked on a joint screen play called
23 "Lady In Distress." I also did added scenes for "Don't
24 Gamble with Love."

25 I did the original story "Here Comes the Girls."
26 I also worked on a joint screen play entitled "Road Agent."

1 Another joint screen play entitled "The Enemy Meets
2 Ellery Queen."

3 I did another joint screen play called "Eyes of
4 the Underworld." That brought me up to the war and I was
5 sick, recovering from a minor operation, when the Japs
6 hit us at Pearl Harbor, but I immediately began to
7 correspond to see if there was any way I could get into
8 the Service. By the time I had recovered from the
9 operation, and the Screen Writers Guild knew of my desire
10 to serve, I was notified that there was a representative
11 out here from the Air Force and I went to see him. I was
12 interviewed by him and he thought that he could use me
13 and could get me a commission, but he asked me if I
14 couldn't get a commission whether I would be willing to
15 serve in a civilian capacity.

16 I said that I would be willing to serve in any
17 capacity. So he wired me later and said that there was
18 no commission for me, but would I come on anyway. I
19 wired back, "Name the date and I will come on," and I did.

20 So I went back to Wright Field and worked in a
21 civilian capacity.

22 CHAIRMAN WOOD: What was the nature of your work?

23 THE WITNESS: I wrote, directed and produced motion
24 pictures for the war effort, and for the Air Force.
25 Someone in Washington, going over the work in that unit,
26 singled my work out as the most professional work and

1 wanted to know why I wasn't commissioned and came back and
2 said that they had better commission me before they lose me,
3 because as a civilian I wasn't obliged to stay there, so
4 they promptly put through a commission to keep me with the
5 unit.

6 I served for several years, until I was disabled
7 and discharged from the Service.

8 MR. WHEELER Q: What was your rank?

9 A I was a captain.

10 Q When were you discharged?

11 A I was discharged out of the Birmingham Hospital
12 here, I believe, around August of 1944.

13 Q From what period of time were you a civilian
14 employee of the Air Corps?

15 A I went in around June, following Pearl Harbor,
16 and they commissioned me about four months later, right
17 after my first scripts were seen in Washington. I remained
18 until my discharge, which was, approximately, August of
19 1944, I believe.

20 CHAIRMAN WOOD: Did you say that you were disabled
21 while you were in the Service?

22 THE WITNESS: Yes.

23 CHAIRMAN WOOD: What sort of a disability was that?

24 THE WITNESS: I had internal injuries and was
25 operated on. I volunteered for overseas duty; in fact,
26 I was seeking overseas duty and in the course of a routine

1 overseas examination they discovered that I had hurt
2 myself so they sent me to a hospital and I was operated
3 on. There they found other things wrong and discharged
4 me after four or five months in the hospital.

5 MR. WHEELER Q: What has your employment been
6 after your discharge from the Air Corps?

7 A I wrote a play which was produced in New York.
8 Let me refresh my memory for just a moment. Then I sold
9 several original stories.

10 Q What was the name of the play and the names of
11 the stories?

12 A The play was called "Sleep No More" which was
13 subsequently bought by Universal. That was a comedy.
14 Then I sold some original stories. One was called "Blossoms
15 for Effie" and another one called "Affairs of Geraldine,"
16 and for Monogram Studios I did a rewrite on "Bad Men of
17 Tombstone" and then I did an original, sold an original
18 screen play called "Hiawatha," and another one called
19 "Flight to Mars." That just about brings it up to date.
20 "Flight to Mars" was completed last December, I would say;
21 approximately that time.

22 Previously I had had another play produced in
23 the East, "See No Evil" and another play of mine which was
24 called "Anthony Nero." That was twice given a full length
25 hour and one half production by the British Broadcasting
26 Corporation, on television, which was an unusual

1 distinction to get a full length play like that shown.

2 I have contributed articles and stories to the
3 New Yorker and the American Mercury and the Herald Tribune
4 magazine section.

5 I have also contributed stories to the Screen
6 Writer, the Saturday Evening Post, and Esquire. Perhaps
7 there may be more.

8 Q As a writer, you register all manuscripts with
9 the Screen Writers Guild; is that correct?

10 A You mean original manuscripts?

11 Q Yes.

12 A As a rule, yes.

13 Q What manuscripts have you registered during the
14 year 1949?

15 A I would have to check with the Screen Writers
16 Guild records on that. What manuscripts have I registered,
17 you say?

18 Q Yes, in the year 1949.

19 A I frankly don't recall at the moment. I could
20 check their records and find out for you, if you want that.

21 Q Do you recall a manuscript entitled "Twilight
22 Street"?

23 A Yes, I recall that manuscript.

24 Q Do you remember registering that with the Screen
25 Writers Guild?

26 A I very likely did.

1 Q Did you write this manuscript in conjunction
2 with another author?

3 A Do you mind if I consult with my counsel?

4 CHAIRMAN WOOD: You have a right to confer with
5 your counsel any time you desire. You can retire from
6 the room if you care to.

7 THE WITNESS: I think these gentlemen are trying
8 to link me with someone else, who has been mentioned in
9 the hearings. I find that I must refuse to answer under
10 the Fifth Amendment, on the ground that my answer might
11 tend to incriminate me.

12 CHAIRMAN WOOD: You have not been asked to identify
13 any person at all. You were asked if you wrote it in
14 connection with any other person. No one has been named
15 as yet. Did you write it by yourself?

16 THE WITNESS: No, sir.

17 MR. WHEELER Q: With whom did you write it?

18 A I claim the Fifth Amendment on that, too.

19 Q Do you know J. Redmond Prior?

20 A Not that I recall.

21 Q Do you know a J. R. Prior, P-r-i-o-r?

22 A Wait a minute. I decline to answer that question
23 on the same grounds.

24 MR. WHEELER: I have a document here, Mr. Chairman,
25 which was subpoenaed from the Screen Writers Guild. It is
26 a registration certificate with the Screen Writers Guild,

1 where the writers in Hollywood register articles or
2 scripts with the Screen Writers Guild. It bears the
3 registration guild No. 41938. This form was filled
4 out on 2-25-49. It is registered in the name of Arthur
5 Strawn and J. R. Prior. The registration fee is
6 indicated here as one dollar and the name of the manuscript
7 is given as "Twilight Street."

8 I would like to show this to the witness and
9 ask him if he can identify it as a registration
10 certificate receipt, that he registered this at the
11 Screen Writers Guild.

12 THE WITNESS: Again I will have to claim the
13 same privilege in not answering the question. What was
14 the question again?

15 MR. WHEELER Q: I asked you if you recognize
16 that as a receipt you received when the manuscript was
17 registered at the Screen Writers Guild.

18 A I can only recognize this as a receipt. I had
19 better claim the same privilege on that.

20 CHAIRMAN WOOD: A moment ago, Mr. Strawn, you
21 stated in response to a question as to whether or not
22 you did register this particular script with the Screen
23 Writers Guild in 1949, you stated that you could
24 investigate the records up there and determine the
25 answer to that question.

26 Now, having refreshed your recollection by being

1 confronted with this record, do you state now that you did
2 not register this?

3 THE WITNESS: You are making an error, I am afraid.
4 I said that I would have to investigate. There could still
5 be this receipt and it doesn't necessarily mean that I
6 registered it or got the receipt.

7 CHAIRMAN WOOD: That is what I am trying to find
8 out now. Will you state whether you registered that or
9 not, after having refreshed your recollection.

10 THE WITNESS: I don't recall.

11 CHAIRMAN WOOD: Even after having seen this
12 receipt?

13 THE WITNESS: I really don't recall.

14 CHAIRMAN WOOD: Was it ever registered? -

15 THE WITNESS: Obviously it must have been.

16 CHAIRMAN WOOD: Did anyone else have any interest
17 in this except yourself, in this registration?

18 THE WITNESS: Wasn't that question asked before
19 and answered?

20 MR. WHEELER: Not the same question, I don't
21 believe.

22 CHAIRMAN WOOD: You were asked if you wrote it
23 by yourself and you said you didn't and now I am asking
24 you if anyone had any interest in it but you.

25 THE WITNESS: If someone else wrote it with me
26 then that person must, obviously, have an interest in

1 registering it.

2 CHAIRMAN WOOD: That does not answer my question.
3 Did anyone else have any interest in registering this
4 except you?

5 THE WITNESS: Yes.

6 CHAIRMAN WOOD: Could it have been possible the
7 other person interested in the registration of it actually
8 did the registering or did you do that?

9 THE WITNESS: It could have been done by the other
10 person.

11 CHAIRMAN WOOD: And it could have been done by either
12 of you; is that right?

13 THE WITNESS: Yes.

14 CHAIRMAN WOOD: You say you have no independent
15 recollection of who did it; is that right?

16 THE WITNESS: My answer was that I do not recall
17 having registered it myself.

18 CHAIRMAN WOOD: Do you recall anyone else having
19 registered it?

20 THE WITNESS: No, but I assume that it was
21 registered by someone else.

22 CHAIRMAN WOOD: Proceed.

23 MR. WHEELER Q: The logical person to register
24 this would have been J. R. Prior, he having an interest
25 in the manuscript?

26 A I will have to claim the same privilege because

1 I think this is an attempt to get me to incriminate
2 myself.

3 Q Isn't it a fact that J. Redmond Prior is Lester
4 Cole?

5 A In view of the fact that he has been rather
6 prominently labeled as subversive, and so on, by this
7 Committee, I will have to claim my privilege for the
8 reasons given because I think it is an attempt to link me
9 up with someone who has been incriminated and I am afraid
10 the answer to that question might tend to incriminate me.

11 Q Do you know Lester Cole?

12 A I will make the same answer to that question.

13 Q You mentioned previously --

14 A May I interrupt and say that any question which
15 I feel is in any way an attempt to link me with any
16 organization or any individual, that I understand to have
17 been listed as subversive by this Committee, that I do not
18 care --

19 CHAIRMAN WOOD: Let me set you straight about that
20 right now. This Committee has listed no one as subversive.

21 THE WITNESS: I have seen printed lists of
22 organizations.

23 CHAIRMAN WOOD: I am talking about individuals.

24 THE WITNESS: Individuals connected with those
25 organizations or who have been subpoenaed or cited for
26 contempt, any attempt to link me with any of those people

1 I am going to, in that connection, claim the same
2 privilege because I feel that it represents an attempt
3 to incriminate me.

4 MR. WHEELER Q: You previously stated, in
5 your testimony, that you were the author of a story
6 called "Bad Men of Tombstone."

7 A That is right, yes.

8 Q Was that sold directly to Monogram or do you
9 still have a percentage of the picture?

10 A I do not have any percentage of the picture.

11 Q In other words, you sold it outright to
12 Monogram?

13 A No, sir.

14 Q Then tell us the mechanics of that.

15 A Monogram had a picture with that title or some
16 approximate title, and they wanted rewriting done on the
17 version that they had. I was engaged to do some rewriting
18 on this.

19 Q Did you do the rewriting yourself or in
20 conjunction with another party?

21 A I did it in conjunction with another party.

22 Q Who was the other party?

23 A I will have to decline to answer that question
24 on the grounds already stated.

25 Q Wasn't J. R. Prior or J. Redmond Prior also
26 engaged on that?

1 A I will make the same answer to that question.

2 Q Mr. Strawn, have you ever been a member of the
3 Communist Party?

4 A I decline to answer that question on the same
5 grounds as heretofore stated.

6 Q Are you presently a member of the Communist
7 Party?

8 A I decline to answer on the grounds that I think
9 the answer might tend to incriminate me and therefore I
10 stand on my privilege not to answer.

11 MR. WHEELER: I have no further questions,
12 Mr. Chairman.

13 CHAIRMAN WOOD: I have no questions.

14 MR. WHEELER: Well, perhaps there is a question or
15 two that I should ask.

16 Q You are here under subpoena, are you not?

17 A Yes.

18 MR. WHEELER: Mr. Chairman, I would like to
19 introduce this document as Strawn's Exhibit No. 1 for
20 the record.

21 CHAIRMAN WOOD: It will be admitted as Strawn
22 Exhibit No. 1.

23 (The document referred to was marked as
24 Strawn Exhibit No. 1.)

25 CHAIRMAN WOOD: Is there anything further?

26 MR. WHEELER: I have nothing further.

1a/3/ MR. KENNY/ May this witness be excused now?

2/1/ CHAIRMAN WOOD/ Yes, he may be excused. 10

3 ~~MR. WHEELER/~~ Our next witness will be Leo

4 ~~Townsend.~~

5

6

LEO TOWNSEND,

7 having been first duly sworn, depose and testified as

8 follows:

9

10

DIRECT EXAMINATION

11

BY MR. WHEELER:

12

Q Will you state your full name?

13

A Leo Townsend. Gentlemen, I have written a fairly brief statement. I would like to read it, if I may. What is your policy on that?

15

16

CHAIRMAN WOOD: Our policy is to have them submitted at the conclusion of your testimony for the record.

18

19

MR. WHEELER Q: You say your name is Leo

20

Townsend?

21

A Leo Townsend, yes.

22

Q Where do you presently reside?

23

A 23008 Malibu Road, at Malibu Beach.

24

Q When and where were you born?

25

A In Faribault, Minnesota on May 11, 1908.

26

Tomorrow is my birthday.

1 Q What is your present occupation?

2 A Screen writer.

3 Q Would you give us a brief resume of your
4 educational background?

5 A Yes, I will. I graduated from high school in
6 my home town of Faribault, Minnesota, and attended the
7 University of Minnesota for two years.

8 Q What has your occupational background been
9 since leaving college?

10 A After I left college, I went to New York and
11 worked in the magazine field at a magazine publishing
12 house.

13 In 1935 I was sent out here by that publishing
14 house. In 1938 I left that to work in radio as a writer.
15 I started in motion pictures, I would say, in 1941. I
16 have been working in that field, more or less, ever since.

17 Q For what studios have you worked?

18 A I have worked for Universal, Warner Bros.,
19 M-G-M, Columbia and Monogram. I believe that is it.

20 Q Are you presently employed?

21 A Not at the moment, no.

22 Q What pictures have you written that you received
23 screen credit for, either solely or in conjunction with
24 someone else?

25 A A picture called "It Started With Eve" at
26 Universal, starring Deanna Durbin. Another picture at

1 M-G-M called "Seven Sweethearts," which was a musical.
2 A picture at Warner Bros. called "Night and Day," with
3 Cary Grant.

4 Another picture at M-G-M called "The Black Hand"
5 with Gene Kelly. Also a picture at a studio which I
6 have forgotten to mention, Eagle-Lion, called "Port of
7 New York" and one at Monogram called "Southside 1-1000."
8 That is about it. There may be others but I am vague
9 about the whole list.

10 Q Well, that is complete enough. Have you ever
11 worked for the United States Government?

12 A Well, only in the sense that I was in the
13 Service in the Office of Strategic Services. You don't
14 consider that as working for the government, do you?

15 Q You were in the Army, were you?

16 A The OSS wasn't considered the Army, although we
17 were paid at the rate of captain's pay, but we were not in
18 the Army, although we had uniforms.

19 Q How long were you connected with the OSS?

20 A I applied for service there in 1943, late in
21 1943, and I was accepted in February of 1944, and left
22 almost immediately for training in and around Washington.

23 I was in the Service until, I think, about the
24 first of July of the same year and came back out here to
25 Hollywood.

26 Q For how long were you with the OSS?

1 A About six months would be about it.

2 Q What were your duties while you were in the OSS?

3 A The duties that I was spoken to about, when I
4 applied, those duties I was told involved considerable
5 personal danger; that I would join a group which would be
6 sent overseas after training. Our group would go along
7 with combat troops and, for instance, if the combat
8 troops took a town the OSS group would take over the
9 communications, radios, newspapers, and that sort of
10 thing.

11 On the battlefield our job would have been to
12 write leaflets to be shot over to the enemy. The OSS,
13 I understand, had some success with that. They took the
14 form of little leaflets saying "Surrender, your food will
15 be better," and that sort of thing.

16 I went through the training. I accepted this
17 job because I actually wanted to do something for my
18 country. I went through the training. I was about to be
19 shipped overseas when suddenly my orders were canceled.
20 I never could find out why, although I suspect and I
21 imagine I have good reason to suspect it was because of
22 my Communistic background, because my Communist background
23 was known, although I was evidently cleared out here by
24 the FBI before I was accepted but I don't really know
25 about that.

26 Q What do you mean by your "Communist background"?

1 A The fact that I had been in the Communist Party
2 before I joined the OSS. You see, I left the Party then
3 to go into the OSS.

4 CHAIRMAN WOOD: You mean before you went into the
5 OSS that you severed your connections with the Party?

6 THE WITNESS: Yes, but I had gone into the
7 Communist Party in 1943, the early part of 1943, and when
8 I applied for service in the OSS, as I recall, it was
9 probably November or December of the same year and it took,
10 oh, six weeks or eight weeks, the process of clearing by
11 the OSS.

12 MR. WHEELER Q: Do you recall how you became
13 a member of the Communist Party, the events leading up to
14 it, and who solicited your membership?

15 A Yes. I found myself as a person with some
16 education and conscience -- let me preface it by saying
17 there had been two wars and one depression in my lifetime.
18 I was trying to find answers or reasons for that. Was
19 there a way that this pattern could be stopped?

20 I found myself talking to other people around
21 here, writers mainly, and was surprised to find great
22 sympathy for these notions and I was quite impressed by
23 the fact that a number of well-educated people seemed
24 quite concerned about the welfare of others and that sort
25 of thing.

26 I then gradually discovered that a number of

1 these people were members of the Communist Party. It was
2 suggested to me that I read the People's World, which was
3 the Communist West Coast paper, although I don't believe
4 it ever said so on the masthead.

5 I bought copies of this newspaper on the
6 newsstands. At that time most large newsstands carried
7 the paper openly. I discovered that the policies of that
8 paper which, of course, were the policies of the Communist
9 Party, seemed to follow exactly the policy of our own
10 administration at that time. Of course, at that time too,
11 we were engaged in a war as an ally of the Soviet Union,
12 and, as a matter of fact, at that time it seemed to me
13 whenever I read in the press anywhere, not only in the
14 People's World but, say, the Los Angeles Times, that
15 anything I read about the Soviet Union was to the effect
16 that its problems and its aims were, roughly, the same as
17 those of this country.

18 Then one day Richard Collins, whom I was seeing,
19 asked me if I would come to a gathering. It wasn't called
20 a meeting, but a discussion group; people who were just
21 talking about the world situation. This seemed a
22 reasonable notion to me and I went.

23 Q Richard Collins is a person who previously
24 testified before this Committee.

25 A I would like to say here that I know definitely
26 that Mr. Collins has been out of the Party for some time.

1 I have seen a good deal of him, more so since we have both
2 been out of the Party than I ever did while we were in the
3 Party. I went to a place in Hollywood that turned out to
4 be the home of Waldo Salt. This discussion gathering
5 turned out to be a recruiting party.

6 Drinks were served and John Howard Lawson spoke,
7 after which those who wished could join the Party. They
8 had cards there. I signed one of them.

9 I was then told that I would be called in a few
10 days and told where to go for my first branch meeting. I
11 was told that I would be assigned to a branch and told
12 where to go. Now, I don't remember at this moment, at
13 least, any people there other than Salt and Lawson and
14 myself, of course. Perhaps most of the others were not
15 writers and, therefore, I didn't run into them beyond
16 that. I may be able to recall many more things than I
17 do now before August, if I have a chance to talk to
18 other people.

19 A few days later I was called on the phone by
20 a girl named Marjorie McGregor, whom I did not know.

21 Q Can you identify her any further?

22 A I didn't know her then. I can identify her
23 further now, yes. She later became the wife of a writer
24 named Arnold Manoff. Then she later, after that, became
25 the ex-wife of Arnold Manoff.

26 Q Did you ever know her under the name of

1 Marjorie Potts?

2 A No, I did not. She gave me an address, either
3 in Beverly Hills or in Westwood Village, but I don't
4 remember which at the moment. I went there. That was
5 the home of Harold Bachman. It seems to me there were
6 ten or a dozen people there, mostly writers. The names
7 that come to me now, who I am sure were there, are Nicholas
8 Bela, a man named Fred Rinaldo and a man named Robert
9 Rossen.

10 I remained in that branch, I am pretty sure,
11 until the time I left to go into the OSS.

12 Q In this first branch which you have mentioned,
13 do you recall who the officers were in it?

14 A At the moment I am not sure. I only remember
15 that at that first meeting reports were read by Rinaldo
16 and Bela. That is why I remember their names particularly.
17 Ring Lardner, Jr. may have been in that branch, but I
18 don't know. He was in a branch, at one time, with me. You
19 will have to excuse me if I don't know, from time to time,
20 which exact branch it was.

21 I, probably, was in about three branches during
22 my period in the Party and although they changed, although
23 the branches changed, the personnel was roughly the same.
24 For instance, I would be transferred to another branch and
25 then find several people who had been in the former branch
26 with me again in this branch. It is difficult for me to

1 be able to say so and so was in this branch and was not
2 in that branch.

3 Q Did you pay any dues while you were in this
4 first branch?

5 A Yes, I think at that time the dues were quite
6 nominal, a dollar a month or something like that. Later
7 dues were put on a tithing basis.

8 Q We will go into that later. We want to keep it
9 in chronological order, as much as is possible. Do you
10 recall to whom you paid your dues in this first branch?

11 A I am sorry I don't remember that.

12 Q How many persons comprised it again?

13 A It seemed to me there were never more than ten
14 or twelve people at once, although I was always told there
15 were more in the group, in the branch. There was never,
16 to my knowledge, full attendance.

17 Q Did they always meet at Harold Buchman's place?

18 A No. It was their policy, perhaps not so much
19 then, but later, to meet around at different places, to
20 alternate meeting at different homes.

21 Q You mentioned Nicholas Bala. Did you ever attend
22 a meeting at the home of Nicholas Bala?

23 ~~A~~ Yes, I did. That, again, I think was in 1943,
24 because as I recall now, it was shortly after I went into
25 the Communist Party. He lived in Beverly Hills, as I
26 remember it. That was quite a large meeting of, perhaps,

1 40 people, I might say.

2 Q Would that be a Communist Party meeting or a
3 fraction meeting?

4 A I understood it to be a meeting of the writers
5 who were in the Communist Party. I suppose you would call
6 that a fraction meeting.

7 Q That was in 1943?

8 A To my knowledge, yes, that was in 1943.

9 Q After your return from your training in Washington
10 with the OSS, how was your Communist membership, your
11 Communist Party membership, reactivated? Were you contacted
12 again?

13 A I was, yes. As a matter of fact, during my
14 service in the OSS I began to have qualms about membership
15 in the Communist Party, in spite of the fact that there
16 was nothing overt to frighten me. The thing that worried
17 me was that if this was an American party, which I was
18 told by everyone in the Communist Party, then why does it
19 meet secretly? Well, I should have been able to have
20 answered that question sooner than I did. I had planned
21 not to go back into the Party. I was approached after I
22 returned to Hollywood in July of 1944.

23 Now, by that time the name of the Party had
24 changed. It had then become the Communist Political
25 Association. I was told that it was concentrating, at
26 that time, on the reelection of President Roosevelt. I

1 discovered that was true. Since I was for that, I found
2 it reasonable for me to go back into this Political
3 Association.

4 Q Who approached you on the second occasion, do
5 you recall?

6 A I am sure it was a writer named Robert Lees.
7 Now, I am not positive of that. I think by August I can
8 get some of these things clearer.

9 Q He is the same individual that appeared before
10 our Committee?

11 A He appeared in Washington, yes.

12 Q Would you continue on in chronological order
13 about what happened there?

14 A I then rejoined the Communist Political
15 Association. I was assigned to another branch, a writers'
16 branch. People that I remember, at the moment, in that
17 branch, were Jay Gorney; he was one of them.

18 Q He is a writer, is he?

19 A He was a songwriter. Also his wife Sondra.
20 Then a writer named Henry Meyers. These three people may
21 be out of the Party at the moment; I don't know. I haven't
22 seen them in some time. Also Meta Reis; her name is now
23 Meta Reis Rosenberg. She testified in Washington. I
24 think she left the Party shortly after that, after I saw
25 her in that particular group. Then there was a girl named
26 Pauline Lauber, whose married name is Pauline Lauber Finn.

1 CHAIRMAN WOOD: Was she also a writer?

2 THE WITNESS: No, she was connected with
3 organizations out here. I think she was executive
4 secretary of the Hollywood Writers Mobilization. She
5 had some executive position there. Now, whether she was
6 ever connected with the Screen Writers Guild or not I
7 do not recall. I think she was, but I may be wrong.

8 CHAIRMAN WOOD: Do you know where she is now?

9 THE WITNESS: She is in town, as far as I know.
10 She was, I heard, in Paris and then I was told she had
11 returned.

12 I was in that group for about a year, possibly.

13 CHAIRMAN WOOD: Are those the only ones in that
14 group that you recall the names of?

15 THE WITNESS: At the moment. I have some other
16 names which may not be in that group, but I think they
17 are in a little later group.

18 MR. WHEELER Q: Would you give us more of a
19 background of this second group, where they met and the
20 organizational set-up, such as the president or the
21 chairman, rather, and the secretary or whatever titles
22 they may have had?

23 A Yes. I recall the Gorneys' home is one place
24 where this group met. It was a home in Beverly Hills. I
25 suppose the group met at my house from time to time; I am
26 quite sure the homes were alternated. There was a man

1 named John Weber.

2 Q He is an agent or a former agent out here?

3 A He was an agent, yes.

4 Q What agency was he associated with?

5 A The William Morris Agency.

6 Q The William Morris Agency?

7 A Yes.

8 CHAIRMAN WOOD: You met at his home, did you?

9 THE WITNESS: No, we never met at his home, but he
10 was in that group. We met more at the Gorneys more than
11 anywhere else, as I recall it now. Now, I think as to that
12 group, perhaps I should go into this small executive
13 group that each branch has. There is the chairman, the
14 organizational secretary, I believe it is called, the
15 literature director and the financial director. I think
16 that was the total personnel of what they called the
17 branch executives.

18 These people met between branch meetings and more
19 or less set up what was to be taken up at the branch
20 meetings, the agenda of the meetings and what was to be
21 discussed. Generally there was a report assigned to one
22 member of the branch. This report, as a rule, was on
23 current topics and always taken from some Communist source.
24 Usually it was taken from a magazine called Political
25 Affairs and the like such as that. It had been called
26 The Communist and then changed to Political Affairs.

1 There was always a flood of pamphlets and
2 leaflets distributed by the Party. These would be
3 brought to the meetings by the literature director. Now,
4 I am quite sure that I was the literature director in this
5 group. My job was to pick up these pamphlets every week
6 or every two weeks. I think meetings, at that time, were
7 held every two weeks.

8 I went to a place called the Lincoln Bookshop
9 on Highland Avenue, near Hollywood Boulevard, right down
10 the street here. This was, obviously, the bookshop for
11 the Communist Party. The bookshop was simply a front.
12 They did carry current books but I doubt if they pushed
13 them very much. The main purpose of this shop was the
14 back room where the pamphlets, the Communist literature,
15 was kept.

16 Q You were instructed to go to this bookshop, were
17 you?

18 A Oh, yes.

19 Q Was the back room open to the public or just open
20 for members of the Communist Party?

21 A That was open only to members of the Communist
22 Party.

23 Q Who ran the bookshop, do you remember?

24 A His first name was Jack. I may be able, later,
25 to furnish you the last name. I am sure I can find out
26 his last name from other persons.

1 Q Was he a member of the Communist Party?

2 A Not to my knowledge, but I took it for granted
3 he was or he wouldn't have been in this position, although
4 I had no proof. Obviously the Party must have set up this
5 bookshop as a distributing center for the Hollywood
6 section. There was another bookshop downtown on Seventh
7 Street somewhere, I think. I believe that was called the
8 Progressive Bookshop. That was, evidently, the distributing
9 center for the other part of town, for Los Angeles itself.

10 MR. OWENS: I think this question would be in
11 order at this time. What was the procedure when you went
12 there to the book store and how did you get into the back
13 room?

14 THE WITNESS: I was told that the operators of the
15 book store were friendly folk. I suppose they meant they
16 were Communists. I was simply told to identify myself
17 as the literature director of such and such a branch.
18 They all had names at that time and they were named for
19 dead Communists, for some reason or other.

20 I suppose I shouldn't say this, but I think it
21 was at this particular branch that they were searching for
22 a name and they couldn't think of any dead Communists and
23 I offered to shoot one of the present members. That was
24 not acceptable.

25 At any rate I went to this book store and
26 identified myself as literature director of such and such

1 a branch. I think it became Ralph Fox, the Ralph Fox
2 branch, who was, evidently, a dead Communist; I don't
3 know. I was then taken into the back room. If there
4 were other people around they were always very careful.
5 If there were people who weren't Communists, who had
6 come into the book store to buy a book, which people do
7 occasionally, they would have me wait until the coast
8 was clear. Then I would go into the back room. It
9 wasn't locked, however, it was simply a partition. In
10 there were boxes of pamphlets, all the current Communist
11 Party stuff. I would take whatever I thought was needed
12 for this particular branch and this stuff was sold at the
13 following meeting.

14 MR. OWENS: Would you openly identify yourself to
15 any employee at the book store or one given employee?

16 THE WITNESS: No, anyone.

17 MR. OWENS: Any employee at the store?

18 THE WITNESS: Yes, because I remember at one time
19 there was a girl, whose name I don't know, or, perhaps,
20 never did, but I simply identified myself to her and the
21 same thing happened and I was taken to the back room.

22 MR. OWENS: Did you identify yourself as Leo
23 Townsend?

24 THE WITNESS: No. I just said that I was the
25 -literature director of the Ralph Fox branch.

26 MR. WHEELER Q: Do you recall meeting anyone

1 else back there that you knew?

2 A The main thing that I recall is that they had
3 a sheet back there on which they were going to list all
4 of the people who had open charge accounts there. The
5 only name they had at that time was John Howard Lawson.
6 I suppose they got more names later. The sheet was taken
7 away after that. That was evidently when they started
8 this notion.

9 I suppose the idea was for people, and that is
10 what I heard, rather than having a charge account, people
11 would contribute money and they could take books if they
12 wanted to.

13 Q Who were the other officers of this particular
14 group?

15 A I am quite sure that Mrs. Gorney, Sondra Gorney,
16 was the organizational secretary, whose job was to see
17 that people came to meetings and to take care of the
18 membership. I wish I could remember the name of the
19 chairman.

20 MR. OWENS: Would it help you any if you tried to
21 remember who usually called the meeting to order?

22 THE WITNESS: Well, the difficulty there is that
23 the procedure was that each meeting had a different
24 chairman. If there had been one chairman all the way
25 through, it would be much easier to remember who was that
26 chairman.

1 MR. WHEELER Q: How long were you in this
2 second group, do you recall?

3 A I would say about a year. Then I was transferred
4 to a third one. Again some of the people from that group
5 were in the third group.

6 Q For what reason were you transferred to a third
7 group?

8 A It might have been geographical. I am trying to
9 think if I had moved. When I returned from the OSS, I
10 lived in Beverly Hills for about, oh, a period of maybe
11 six months or a little longer. Then we bought a house
12 in Hollywood. It may have been for that reason. These
13 groups were arranged geographically. I think there were
14 probably four of the so-called writers' groups in the
15 Hollywood section; I think there was three or four, or
16 there might have been more, but I think that is approximately
17 it.

18 Q Just continue now and tell us what happened
19 after you became a member of the third group.

20 A That would be in 1945. Now, towards the end
21 of 1945 the romance, so-called, between the Party and
22 the administration -- I don't mean the administration had
23 any part of this romance -- it was a one-way thing and
24 that began to end. This, of course, coincided with the
25 war being over. It was during this period that the letter
26 from the French Communist was published. That is the

1 Duclos letter.

2 May I go back for a moment?

3 Q Yes.

4 A Starting with the Political Association, when
5 I rejoined, at that time Earl Browder was the national
6 chairman. He had written a book expounding the theory
7 that Communism and capitalism could exist peacefully in
8 the same world. As I see it now, this was obviously
9 propounded to him by Moscow. Of course, I don't know, but
10 I am giving my own opinion.

11 Now, late in 1945, when the war was over, came
12 this letter from the French Communist Duclos, in which
13 this letter was published in a Paris Communist magazine
14 or paper and then published in the American Communist
15 press. Duclos denounced Browder and the American
16 Communist Political Association for harboring the notion
17 that Communism and capitalism could exist peacefully in
18 the same world.

19 Now, as I look at it now, Duclos' letter must
20 have been inspired by Moscow; that the Kremlin had reversed
21 its position that it had set down a year before, for its
22 own convenience in both cases, and it now no longer needed
23 the capitalist help of the United States so they chopped
24 it off. Browder, who was a hero one day, became a villain
25 the following morning. Browder was deposed, but at the
26 same time the executive personnel, under Browder, in the

1 National Committee who had been so fervently for Browder,
2 and then suddenly as fervently against him, were not
3 deposed. That personnel, as I recall, remained largely
4 unchanged.

5 That gave me my first real uneasiness about the
6 Communist Party. Now, at the same time this was all
7 discussed in the branches. We were asked to vote on
8 whether Browder should be retained or deposed. We voted
9 that he be deposed. I realize now that this vote was
10 a farce because this decision had been made long before
11 the vote was taken. Browder was simply deposed because
12 Moscow wanted him deposed.

13 Q How do you know the vote was arranged before it
14 was taken?

15 A I didn't know it then. As I see it now, and as
16 I have had more chance to watch Soviet tactics since then,
17 and this again is my own opinion, I am quite sure that this
18 is the way the thing operates.

19 CHAIRMAN WOOD: Let me get this straight, in my own
20 mind, if I can.

21 THE WITNESS: Sure.

22 CHAIRMAN WOOD: Immediately after Duclos' letter
23 was published, did this unit you were connected with bring
24 up the subject at its next meeting?

25 THE WITNESS: When the letter was first published
26 in the American Communist press, as I recall, the individual

1 members of the Party out here were stunned. They didn't
2 know what to think. Well, as I see it now, they never knew
3 what to think until they were told. Anyway, to go back,
4 someone had told me that he had spoken to John Howard
5 Lawson, who had not as yet seen this letter, and Lawson
6 laughed at him and said that it was ridiculous.

7 A couple of days later the same person saw
8 Lawson and by this time Lawson had read the letter and
9 evidently had his instructions and he defended it at
10 great length, which he can do.

11 CHAIRMAN WOOD: When did you have your next meeting
12 of the group you were connected with after the Duclos
13 letter?

14 THE WITNESS: It was probably several days later.
15 I imagine meetings were called sooner than ordinary, but
16 by this time there was printed, I believe, Browder's
17 answer to Duclos and also then the Party, and by that I
18 mean -- and I think this is right -- the executive
19 personnel under Browder, they published their answer to
20 Browder. They were already on Duclos' side. Now, it
21 seems to me this couldn't have happened unless that whole
22 thing was arranged before, because we hadn't taken a vote
23 as yet.

24 CHAIRMAN WOOD: I am trying to get down to the
25 mechanics of your group itself, how they operated at the
26 next meeting you had following the release of the Duclos

1 statement or letter, denouncing the Browder philosophy that
2 Communism and capitalism could exist side by side. What
3 happened at the next meeting to influence the minds of you
4 people who were in the rank and file, to influence your
5 vote?

6 THE WITNESS: By that time, Congressman Wood, we
7 had available the letter from Duclos, the reply from
8 Browder, the rebuttal of Browder by, I think, a man named
9 Eugene Dennis. Yes, that was it. We already had all of
10 that. Now, the emphasis was immediately on the fact that
11 Browder was wrong; that these other people were right.

12 CHAIRMAN WOOD: I understand that. Who advanced
13 that emphasis? Who put the emphasis on that before your
14 particular group?

15 THE WITNESS: The emphasis came from the Party press,
16 which we took to mean that it came from the national
17 committee, that is the national committee minus Earl
18 Browder, who was still chairman.

19 CHAIRMAN WOOD: How did the matter come under
20 discussion when you had your next meeting? Who brought it
21 up and who led the discussion?

22 THE WITNESS: Well, let me see. The way it began
23 was everyone was asked to read all this material before
24 any discussion took place. Some of the people, I think,
25 had not read all of the material. Some had only seen the
26 Duclos letter. We were asked, and again I am not sure but

1 I am quite sure -- I think this is how it was: we were
2 asked by the leadership in the section, that would be
3 by John Howard Lawson, to read all of the material before
4 we went into any discussion. The reading of this material
5 pretty well slanted the discussion. It was obvious that
6 the Party line had switched.

7 MR. WHEELER Q: In other words, you followed
8 the dictates of the People's World; is that about it?

9 A Absolutely, yes.

10 Q That was the deciding factor that switched the
11 thinking of the membership of your group?

12 A That is right, yes. So the vote taken was really
13 a mechanical thing and actually the vote was against
14 Earl Browder. There was no such thing as individual
15 thinking. This was my first realization of that. After
16 that, as I said once before, I began to have my first
17 real uneasiness.

18 CHAIRMAN WOOD: There again, may I interpose?

19 THE WITNESS: Yes.

20 CHAIRMAN WOOD: From the reading of the Duclos
21 letter and the Browder response, and the rebuttal from
22 Dennis and others that you found in the periodicals of
23 the Party, I am trying to find out what was in your mind.
24 Did you become convinced that Browder was wrong about his
25 position or did you simply accept what you were told to
26 read and what the Party itself had dictated to you?

1 THE WITNESS: I simply accepted it and that is one
2 of the reasons why I later went out.

3 CHAIRMAN WOOD: Is it your opinion the other members
4 also did the same?

5 THE WITNESS: Yes.

6 CHAIRMAN WOOD: It did not really reflect your
7 individual opinions, but something dictated to you that
8 you just accepted?

9 THE WITNESS: Yes.

10 CHAIRMAN WOOD: Was that part of the procedure that
11 caused you to have some misgivings as to the efficacy
12 of this philosophy?

13 THE WITNESS: Yes. This was my first real
14 indication that the fact that this philosophy allowed
15 no individual thinking.

16 CHAIRMAN WOOD: You may proceed, Mr. Wheeler.

17 MR. WHEELER Q: A moment ago you mentioned
18 John Howard Lawson as head of the section. What do you
19 mean by the word "section"?

20 A There was what they called the Hollywood Section,
21 and I believe that is correct, which included these
22 writer groups and included all of the groups connected
23 with the motion picture industry, and most of the groups
24 outside of the downtown Los Angeles area.

25 Q The word "section" or the term "section" means
26 that it was the primary board or the council of all the

1 groups in Hollywood and under this section there were
2 groups broken down into branches; is that correct?

3 A Yes. This branch that I was in was part of
4 the Hollywood Section, which was part of the County
5 organization, or whatever the name was. I don't think
6 that was called a section. This section was a section
7 of the County organization.

8 CHAIRMAN WOOD: May I interpose again, at this
9 point?

10 MR. WHEELER: Yes.

11 CHAIRMAN WOOD: I do not think it has ever been
12 made clear, and certainly not to me, but what was John
13 Howard Lawson's position outside of his connection with
14 the Communist Party? What employment did he engage in?
15 What connection did he have with the motion picture
16 industry?

17 THE WITNESS: He was a screen writer. I don't
18 imagine that he was a paid functionary of the Party. I
19 think he was doing this as a Party member. I may be wrong,
20 but he was professionally engaged as a screen writer.

21 MR. WHEELER Q: Do you have any knowledge as
22 to how many groups comprise a section in Hollywood?

23 A No; I could only guess. As I say, I thought
24 there were three or four or probably four writers'
25 groups in this section.

26 CHAIRMAN WOOD: You served in three of them; is that

1 right?

2 THE WITNESS: Yes.

3 CHAIRMAN WOOD: You think there was, at least, one
4 other?

5 THE WITNESS: I think so, yes. Let me guess that
6 there were from ten to fifteen branches in the Hollywood
7 Section. I didn't have very much contact with those
8 branches outside of the writers themselves.

9 MR. WHEELER Q: Will you continue on about the
10 third section that you belonged to, the organizational
11 set-up and the members of that third section?

12 A There were some new people in that branch whom,
13 as I recall, had not been associated in these other
14 branches with me. There was John Weber; I mentioned him
15 before. Also there was John Wexley, Paul and Sylvia
16 Jarrico; Abe Polonsky, who has also appeared in Washington.
17 There was Joe Losey. Also Karen Morley, Morris Carnovsky
18 and Mike Wilson. I wasn't sure, the other day, about that
19 name.

20 Q Who is Mike Wilson?

21 A He is a screen writer. I think that is a list
22 of the new people in that branch.

23 Q Did that comprise the whole group or were there
24 other individuals in it who had been members before?

25 A Most of the other individuals were most of the
26 people I have named from other branches. As I say, these

1 branches as they changed the personnel remained largely
2 the same.

3 Q Do you recall the organizational set-up of this
4 group?

5 A Well, by this time, this is now the Communist
6 Party again. This was the group that I was in from that
7 time until I left the Party.

8 CHAIRMAN WOOD: Right at this point, when did you
9 finally leave?

10 THE WITNESS: I left the Party in 1948. It seems
11 awfully easy to get into this Party but hard to get out.

12 CHAIRMAN WOOD: How did you finally get out?

13 THE WITNESS: I got out because this was the lever
14 that pried me out, this Browder-Duclos controversy.

15 CHAIRMAN WOOD: I said how and not why.

16 THE WITNESS: I am sorry. I simply left. I was
17 about to be assigned to a new branch. I told them that
18 I had left the Communist Party and was no longer to return.
19 No one came to me after that. Evidently they were
20 convinced because over the period of the couple of years
21 between this Browder-Duclos thing and the time of my
22 leaving, it was pretty evident to the people in the Party
23 that I was going out. I suppose in some cases people who
24 left the Party were called upon by Party officials to try
25 to get them back in. I was never approached. I was out
26 and that was it.

1 CHAIRMAN WOOD: When you announced your severance
2 from the Party then they let you alone from then on, did
3 they?

4 THE WITNESS: That is right, yes.

5 MR. WHEELER Q: Will you continue with the
6 organizational set-up and where the meetings were held.

7 A Most of the meetings of this group were held
8 at the home of the Polonskys in Hollywood. Some were
9 held at the Jarrico home and some at my house and some at
10 John Wexley's house. That is mainly where they were held,
11 I think.

12 Q Who were the officers, do you recall?

13 A I was then the financial director. I am trying
14 to think who was the chairman. I think Mrs. Polonsky was
15 the organizational secretary..

16 Q What is Mrs. Polonsky's first name?

17 A Sylvia. Sylvia Marrow was her maiden name.

18 Q M-a-r-r-o-w?

19 A Yes.

20 Q Now, you collected dues from these individuals
21 whom you have mentioned?

22 A Yes.

23 CHAIRMAN WOOD: Are you going to explore that?

24 MR. WHEELER: Yes, I am.

25 Q You previously mentioned the tithing system.
26 Were you using that at this time?

1 A Yes. It seems to me that the basis of payment
2 of dues was, roughly, the same as the Screen Writers
3 Guild system. It seems to me it was one per cent or one
4 half of one per cent. There was some percentage of salary.
5 I know that. At this time it seemed to me that most of
6 the high-salaried writers were not working because I never
7 collected much money. I must say I didn't try very hard
8 because by now I had become opposed to the Communist
9 Party. I had not quite resolved in my own mind -- it is
10 very hard to do your own thinking, as I said before. That
11 is why it is hard to get out because you are constantly
12 barraged by propaganda. You find yourself after you get
13 into the Party seeing only Communist people socially, more
14 or less, so you can see that it is hard to go out of such
15 an area.

16 You have to make a clean-cut decision by
17 yourself. You have to face the fact that these people are
18 going to be your enemies; that you are cutting yourself
19 off from them. I am just giving my reasons why I think it
20 is difficult for people to get out of the Party. I think
21 this committee is making it easier, however, because of
22 the way you have handled your hearings.

23 It seems to me that if I were still in the Party
24 today, I would certainly get out as a result of what I have
25 read about the conduct of these hearings. It would be a
26 real eye opener to me, as a present Communist member; that

1 I would get out and come to the Committee and aid them
2 in any way I could, because I think your Committee is doing
3 a very thorough and a very good job, without any so-called
4 fireworks.

5 CHAIRMAN WOOD: Thank you, sir. I am concerned
6 somewhat about the financial end of this set-up, as it
7 appeared here, because this was probably one of the best
8 sources of revenue that they had. Was the tithing system
9 that you spoke of, during the time that it was in force
10 while you were in the Party, was the percentage static
11 or did it fluctuate from time to time? Did they have a
12 certain percentage that you adhered to all the time or did
13 it go up or did it go down?

14 THE WITNESS: As I recall the percentage, the
15 percentage was static but there were periods when people
16 were asked for additional money.

17 CHAIRMAN WOOD: Voluntarily, you mean?

18 THE WITNESS: Yes. I was told that at one point
19 someone from the National Committee, probably the national
20 treasurer -- maybe you know the name -- I had heard this
21 man had come out here to Hollywood to raise some large
22 sum like \$60,000 for some emergency in the Party. I was
23 told that part of this was raised by Communist Party
24 members who owned homes, who owned them free and clear,
25 taking mortgages on those homes. For instance, a member
26 would take a \$5,000 mortgage on his home and he would turn

1 that \$5,000 over to the Party and then pay a monthly
2 payment like rent on his house. I ran into no proof of
3 it, but I heard it talked around. It sounded logical,
4 though.

5 MR. WHEELER Q: How much money did you collect
6 from these people in your group?

7 A I never collected very much. As I say, I never
8 tried very hard. I think -- let me see now -- payments
9 were made on a quarterly basis rather than on a monthly
10 basis. I think I was financial director for only two of
11 these quarters, I believe. I may have turned over each
12 time between \$100 and \$200, so it wasn't very much. As I
13 say, a number of the high-salaried writers, as I recall
14 at this time, were unemployed. Now, around the time that
15 I was financial secretary that was, I believe, around
16 1947. It was probably around the period of the original
17 hearings and a number of suspected Communists were not
18 working at that time.

19 CHAIRMAN WOOD: Was any portion of the money that
20 you collected as dues or as voluntary contributions --

21 THE WITNESS: The money that I collected was all
22 dues.

23 CHAIRMAN WOOD: Was any portion of that money
24 retained by the group you were in for personal expenses
25 or was it all turned over to the national organization?

26 THE WITNESS: Ten per cent was to be retained by

1 the group.

2 MR. WHEELER Q: To whom did you give the money
3 after you collected it?

4 A To a man named Mortimer Offner.

5 CHAIRMAN WOOD: Who was he?

6 THE WITNESS: He was a screen writer.

7 CHAIRMAN WOOD: He was a screen writer here
8 locally, was he?

9 THE WITNESS: Yes. The financial directors of the
10 various branches met once in every quarter, every three
11 months, at someone's home, at which time each branch's
12 money was turned over to this man, who was evidently the
13 financial director for the Hollywood Section.

14 MR. WHEELER Q: This would be a caucus of the
15 groups within the Hollywood Section?

16 A Yes.

17 Q How many of these did you attend?

18 A Two, as I recall.

19 Q Do you recall who was present at these meetings?

20 A I can recall one or two. There were only five
21 or six people at each of these meetings. They were held
22 at the home of a girl named Joy Pepper.

23 Q Is that George Pepper's wife?

24 A I think his former wife. She, of course, was
25 there and I was there. Offner was there. Let's see if I
26 can recall anyone else. It seems to me the other people

1 were representatives of branches outside of the writers'
2 groups. We weren't introduced to each other. I knew
3 the name of Joy Pepper because that is where we were asked
4 to go, you see, so she was identified.

5 MR. OWENS: I think the record should be clear that
6 all these people were all financial secretaries or
7 financial directors.

8 THE WITNESS: That is right, yes. Now, where the
9 money went from there I don't know. I suppose it was
10 given to the County financial director and where it went
11 from there I don't know. I suppose it went to New York.

12 MR. WHEELER Q: Have you attended any fraction
13 meetings of the Communist Party?

14 A Yes, I have. I was trying very hard to think of
15 names and places and what went on at them. At the moment
16 I am not very good on that. I will, fortunately, have the
17 opportunity to check on that. Most of these fraction
18 meetings were meetings of Communists within the Screen
19 Writers Guild and were generally held shortly before some
20 important Guild meeting, before an election, for instance.
21 Then the fraction meeting became a campaign meeting, more
22 or less.

23 Q In other words, to get members of the Communist
24 Party elected to the Board of the Screen Writers Guild?

25 A Yes, and to have members of the Communist Party
26 talk to people outside of the Communist Party --

14 1 electioneering -- in other words.

2 Q In other words, you were planning your strategy
3 on behalf of the Communist Party?

4 A That is right. As a matter of fact, as to the
5 elections, it was done on this basis: there was a member-
6 ship list of the entire Guild. Each person in the fraction
7 was given a list of, say, ten or twelve people. These
8 were people outside of the Communist Party, you understand,
9 and they were asked to see them and to call them. It was
10 just plain electioneering.

11 Q But it was quite a well-organized program?

12 A Yes, it was.

13 Q Do you recall how many of these fraction meetings
14 you may have attended?

15 A I would say a half dozen offhand.

16 Q Do you recall where any of them were held?

17 A I recall at the moment only one home specifically.
18 That was at the home of Ring Lardner, Jr.

19 CHAIRMAN WOOD: Was he there?

20 THE WITNESS: Yes, he was.

21 MR. WHEELER Q: How many people attended this
22 particular fraction meeting, as an estimate?

23 A 20 to 25, I would estimate.

24 Q They were all members of the Communist Party?

25 A Yes.

26 Q And all members of the Screen Writers Guild?

1 A Yes.

2 Q What is your estimate regarding Communists within
3 the Screen Writers Guild?

4 A My estimate is that at one time, let's say at
5 the peak, it was between 50 and 60. I would guess it is
6 considerably less than that at this moment and will be
7 considerably less as these hearings continue.

8 Q Do you recall the names of any individuals who
9 attended these fraction meetings? At this time don't
10 try to pin it down to that one meeting, because I know it
11 would be difficult for you, but of the five or six that
12 you attended, tell us the people that you knew were
13 present.

14 CHAIRMAN WOOD: You mean other than those he has
15 already named?

16 MR. WHEELER: Including the ones he has named.

17 THE WITNESS: Well, there was Alvah Bessie; Robert
18 Lees, whom I have previously named; Robert Rossen; a writer
19 named Edward Huebsch, he is now one of the people or persons
20 in hiding. There was Fred Rinaldo, who I mentioned before;
21 Ring Lardner, I believe I said he was there; Arnold Manoff,
22 John Howard Lawson, who, as a rule, was the chairman. He
23 acted as the leader of this fraction. Now, you also asked
24 me about people who I named in the branches that might have
25 been there; is that right?

26 MR. WHEELER Q: That is right. Would most of the

1 people that you have named in branches be present?

2 A They were asked to be there so they should have
3 been there.

4 Q Do you know Guy Endore?

5 A Yes. I was never in a branch with him. I can't
6 positively say I have seen him at a fraction meeting. You
7 wouldn't want me to say if I wasn't sure; is that right?

8 Q Yes, that is correct.

9 A I think there is a danger here, as you will
10 agree, for both myself and for you, in my naming someone
11 and I might be mistaken.

12 CHAIRMAN WOOD: We only want those that you know.

13 THE WITNESS: By August I may have additional people
14 because I will have a chance, I think, to think about this.
15 I will have a chance, perhaps, to go over the Guild history
16 so I will remember what the fraction meetings were all
17 about.

18 MR. OWENS: These fraction meetings, then, were a
19 compilation of all the writer groups in the Hollywood
20 Section of the Communist Party?

21 THE WITNESS: Yes. I might add that all of the
22 Communist writers in the Guild were not asked to all of
23 these fraction meetings. Sometimes they would be composed
24 of delegates from these writer branches, so on occasions
25 a fraction meeting would have, maybe, a dozen people or
26 less.

1 MR. WHEELER Q: During the time you were a member
2 of the Communist Party, did you ever meet any executive
3 or County officials of the Communist Party?

4 A Yes; I have made a little note here. I met
5 Elizabeth Leech, who I believe at one time was more or
6 less an executive assistant to Lawson.

7 Q Would she be a member of the section to which
8 you previously referred or would she be an official of
9 the County set-up of the Communist Party?

10 A She may have been an official of the County
11 set-up delegated to this section. She never attended, as
12 far as I know, any branch meetings that I attended. She
13 was an official.

14 Q Who else did you meet as an official of the
15 Party?

16 A A man named Charles Glenn. He was the husband
17 of Elizabeth Leech at that time. I guess they are
18 divorced now.

19 CHAIRMAN WOOD: Identify them a little further, if
20 you will.

21 THE WITNESS: He had some official position with
22 the Hollywood Section. Evidently he went from branch to
23 branch in the Hollywood Section. I would call his job
24 that of a coordinator, perhaps.

25 CHAIRMAN WOOD: What was his business?

26 THE WITNESS: He said he was a writer. I don't know.

1 he wasn't a screen writer. George Pepper, I am not sure
2 whether he was in this official league or not. He was
3 always secretary of some front organization; the A.S.P. --
4 well, that is the only one that I am sure of. I am not
5 sure that he was an official in the sense that Leech and
6 Glenn were.

7 MR. WHEELER Q: What is his occupation?

8 A Pepper, you mean?

9 Q Yes.

10 A That seemed to be it, being secretary of these
11 organizations. As far as I know he did nothing else. Then
12 there was a man named John Stapp. He, as I recall it, was
13 delegated by the County organization to the Hollywood
14 Section. He was, I guess you would call it, the liaison
15 between the County set-up and the Hollywood set-up. Then
16 there was a man named Carl Winter. I think I met him only
17 at that meeting at the home of Nicholas Bela in 1943. I
18 believe at that time he was the County Chairman of the
19 Party. Then there was a man named Nenny Sparks. I don't
20 recall whether I ever met him at any gatherings. I knew,
21 of course, that he was the County Chairman, who I believe
22 succeeded Carl Winter.

23 Then there was a man named Max Silver. I don't
24 recall what his position was. It had something to do with
25 the County set-up.

26 Q These individuals whom you have named attended

1 the branch meetings occasionally; is that right?

2 A Once in a while it seemed to me that Stapp would
3 attend a branch meeting; possibly Charley Glenn.

4 Q How did you meet these people?

5 A At a fraction meeting, for instance, Elizabeth
6 Leech would sometimes be present. I am trying to recall
7 exactly where I met her.

8 Q Do you consider Elizabeth Leech as being a paid
9 official of the Communist Party?

10 A I would consider her so.

11 Q Then a paid official of the Communist Party
12 was attending these fraction meetings where individuals
13 attended who belonged to the Screen Writers Guild?

14 A I am not positive of that point, but I am quite
15 sure in the case of Stapp that was true, and it might have
16 been true in the case of Elizabeth Leech. I may be able
17 to check that further.

18 Q Did Stapp talk to you about it?

19 A Yes.

20 Q Did he tell you what you should do, what course
21 should be followed?

22 A He generally spoke; it seemed to me the course
23 was laid out between him and Lawson.

24 Q Mr. Townsend, why do you think a person in the
25 high bracket salaries would become involved in Communism?
26 What is the appeal that Communism has for a man like you,

1 or had for a man like you; I will put it in the past
2 tense.

3 A More or less what I have already told you, as
4 to what appealed to me. I felt that at that time there
5 were inequalities here in the United States; that here was
6 a rich country where some people were miserably poor and
7 I felt also other people were being discriminated against.

8 It seemed to me that a person looks around for
9 some organization to belong to. The Communist Party on
10 the face of it is for that, they are for the underdog. I
11 thought so at the time that I went in, but, of course, I
12 no longer believe that. I think the Communist Party is
13 for the underdog, if it suits the purposes of the Communist
14 Party at that particular moment.

15 Q In your opinion, what were the objects of the
16 Communist Party in Hollywood?

17 A The real objectives?

18 Q Yes.

19 A Well, I would have to give you that from my
20 position now, from my objective viewpoint. I think that
21 the Communist Party came in to Hollywood hoping to gain
22 control of the Guilds and the Unions in the industry,
23 hoping that through that they could eventually gain control
24 of the medium, that is, the creative part of the medium,
25 and control propaganda. What they didn't realize, I
26 guess, that in order to control what the screen said they

1 would have to control the executives.

2 CHAIRMAN WOOD: That is what I was intending to
3 ask you, and I think this would be a good time to ask it.
4 Did you ever know or have any information that led you
5 to believe that any responsible executive in the motion
6 picture industry was ever in the Communist Party?

7 THE WITNESS: Any responsible executive?

8 CHAIRMAN WOOD: Yes.

9 THE WITNESS: No. I had heard of some motion
10 picture directors but, again, that is not what I would
11 call a responsible executive, because a script passes
12 through many hands in the process of going from the
13 writer to the screen. It goes from the writer to the
14 director to the producer, and in some cases to several
15 executive producers and then beyond that to the head of
16 a studio. Certainly Mr. Mayer or Mr. Freeman are not
17 Communists and I am sure they keep close watch over all
18 scripts.

19 CHAIRMAN WOOD: Let's not confine it entirely to
20 them because you have many other producers here; you have
21 Warner Bros., Fox and many others. Did you ever know, of
22 your own knowledge, or have any information that you
23 considered reliable that any top executive or producer,
24 in the whole industry, was ever in the Party or influenced
25 by the Communist Party?

26 THE WITNESS: To my knowledge, there never was such

1 a condition in the Party, as the Party hoped for.

2 CHAIRMAN WOOD: Was anything ever said to you that
3 led you to believe that it was ever so?

4 THE WITNESS: That there was such an executive?

5 CHAIRMAN WOOD: Yes.

6 THE WITNESS: No, I have never heard that there was
7 such a person in a position of responsibility, that is, in
8 a position of controlling scripts and controlling what went
9 on the film, which is the final process.

10 CHAIRMAN WOOD: In addition you say that you now
11 feel that they tried to gain control of the ultimate
12 production? What other purpose did they have?

13 THE WITNESS: Another purpose, it seems to me,
14 obviously was to get money for the Party. This was a
15 rich field. There were many high-salaried people, some
16 of whom, I suppose, appealed to on an emotional basis,
17 or were appealed to on an emotional basis, for contributing
18 large sums of money. As I said, this thing I heard about
19 people mortgaging their homes to give large chunks of
20 money; there were things that happened like that that I
21 heard. I don't think there is any other section of the
22 country in which that prevails, in which that situation
23 prevails, where the Communist Party had hopes of getting
24 any large sums of money.

25 CHAIRMAN WOOD: What about the question of the
26 prestige that it would give to the Party to have big-named

1 writers and actors identified with the Party? Do you think
2 that was ever a controlling factor?

3 THE WITNESS: I think absolutely that it was. Not
4 only the prestige it would give within the Party to
5 prospective members, let's say, but the fact that they
6 were important people whose names they had read or seen on
7 the screen, and I think there was also the business of
8 the prestige outside of the Party, not the fact that these
9 people were Communists, but that it was possible, in the
10 front organizations, to get sponsors for various projects.
11 I have seen these letterheads with a list of sponsors
12 on them. Now, I have seen many people listed on these
13 letterheads who, I am sure, had no knowledge that they
14 were sponsoring something that was run by the Communist
15 Party. Names of actors were always, I am sure, more
16 desirable than names of writers because actors are better
17 known.

18 Edward G. Robinson, for instance, whose name,
19 I believe, appeared as a sponsor on several things, he
20 would be a good example. I never heard from anyone that
21 he was ever a member of the Communist Party.

22 CHAIRMAN WOOD: Is it true that there were frequently
23 people who were being used in the front organizations that
24 were carrying out the purposes and the designs of the Party
25 itself?

26 THE WITNESS: I am sure that is true.

1 CHAIRMAN WOOD: That there were persons that the
2 Communist Party did not want to be members, but they
3 thought they could use their names to better advantage
4 outside of the Party than inside of the Party; would you
5 say that might be true?

6 THE WITNESS: I am sure that is also true, yes.

7 MR. WHEELER Q: You have previously stated the
8 events leading up to your withdrawing from the Party. I
9 wonder if you would like to go into more detail about
10 that.

11 A If you wouldn't mind I have written down about
12 three points. Would you mind if I read them?

13 CHAIRMAN WOOD: That would be fine.

14 THE WITNESS: I have mentioned my first feelings
15 of uneasiness following the Duclos letter. Now I will
16 read these last few paragraphs:

17 "This feeling grew gradually stronger in the
18 course of the next two years, although it wasn't
19 until late in 1947 that Russia's cold war against
20 the United States began really to take form. From
21 that time on my suspicions of the Party grew
22 deeper and deeper, and by 1948 I had come to
23 several conclusions, arrived at not hastily, but
24 over a period of doing my utmost to think for
25 myself, to reason things out on my own in spite of
26 the constant barrage of propaganda from the Party.

1 The conclusions I arrived at were these:

2 "1. The Communist Party is not an American
3 organization. It follows every move, twist or
4 shadow of a twist of the men in the Kremlin.
5 Whether this is by direct order or not I don't
6 know, but that makes little difference since the
7 result is the same. The Party was all-out for
8 the American war effort simply because our war
9 effort happened at that time to coincide with
10 the goals of the Soviet Union. When the two nations
11 later took different paths, the Party played follow
12 the leader with the Soviet Union.

13 "2. The Communist Party is a conspiratorial
14 organization. While it shouts its claims that it
15 is an ordinary, decent political party on a level
16 with the Democratic and the Republican organizations,
17 it meets secretly, issues its directives secretly,
18 and plans its moves secretly. Yet when some
19 legally constituted government body, such as this
20 Committee, attempt to bring a Communist into the
21 open he will hide behind the Bill of Rights and
22 the Fifth Amendment and claim to be as American
23 as the founding fathers. It might be pointed out
24 here that in the Soviet Union which they seem to
25 love so dearly, opposition to the government is
26 permitted in the Soviet Constitution, but in

1 actuality does not exist at all.

2 "3. The Communist Party is a treasonable
3 organization. The Party stands ready to carry
4 out the wishes of the Soviet Union, and this I
5 believe extends to the overthrow of our government
6 by force and violence. This belief has been
7 strengthened a hundredfold by events which have
8 occurred recently. The Hiss, Coplon, Rosenberg
9 and Greenglass cases, to cite some. Whether these
10 people were members of the American Communist
11 Party or the Communist International I don't know.
12 The important fact is that they were Americans who
13 were willing to commit treasonable acts against
14 their country for a foreign power.

15 "For these reasons I left the Communist Party
16 in 1948. I firmly believe that as of now -- 1951 --
17 the Party is walking much more closely in the
18 footsteps of the Soviet Union. And if those steps
19 should lead to war, I, as a loyal American, feel
20 that we have a potential menace in our midst which
21 must be removed. I believe the Communist Party
22 should be outlawed, or that its members be forced
23 to sign as agents of a foreign power.

24 "I have heard it said that in the main the
25 individual American Communist is a perfectly
26 harmless person. Yet I imagine Alger Hiss seemed

1 perfectly harmless to his friends, and so did Julius
2 Rosenberg and the others. The point to remember is
3 that a Communist is not an individual. He is
4 trained to think as he is told to think, and for
5 that reason I believe that any person who is a
6 member of the Communist Party today is a potential
7 threat to the security of our nation, and should be
8 dealt with as such.

9 "In closing, let me say I believe that this
10 Committee has taken great strides in ridding
11 Hollywood of Communism, and that it has acted in
12 a dignified, diligent, thoroughly American way. If
13 I have been of any assistance to it, I feel it has
14 been no more than my duty, and a duty for which I
15 have gladly volunteered."

16 CHAIRMAN WOOD: Thank you, sir.

17 MR. WHEELER Q: You mentioned Sidney Benson
18 the other day. Did you know him as a member of the
19 Communist Party?

20 A Yes.

21 Q Would you state how you knew him and the
22 circumstances?

23 A He came to a branch meeting at the home of
24 Abe Polonsky, I think, late in 1947. To my knowledge he
25 was a Communist functionary sent out from the national
26 organization in New York. He appeared at this one branch

1 meeting. He was called in, as a matter of fact, about a
2 report prepared in this branch, a report which made the
3 claim that the Communist Party was not an American party.
4 This was a sign of revolt within the Party. That it
5 spoke in a language that the American people did not
6 understand; that it had isolated itself from the American
7 people. The Party was no longer a part of America. Well,
8 that raised hell.

9 CHAIRMAN WOOD: Who made that remark?

10 THE WITNESS: My wife was one of the reporters.
11 This met with considerable opposition within the branch,
12 as you can well imagine. Mr. Jarrico took great exception
13 to it and several others did. At this point this fellow
14 Benson was called in, evidently to crush the thing. At
15 the time the report was supposed to go on to a section
16 convention and they succeeded in stopping it. Well, that
17 was about my last meeting; that did it for me.

18 MR. WHEELER Q: That actually is one of the
19 reasons why you completely got out of the Party?

20 A Of course, yes. That was proof enough that the
21 Party was everything I had thought of it by that time.

22 Q Do you know any other individuals to be members
23 of the Communist Party that you haven't mentioned? Let
24 me refresh your memory. How about Larry Parks?

25 A He was in one of my branches and attended one
26 meeting, I believe; but only one meeting.

1 Q You have previously mentioned the name of
2 Joe Losey and his wife.

3 A Yes.

4 Q Do you recall his wife's name at the present
5 time?

6 A Louise. I don't believe I mentioned her
7 before.

8 MR. WHEELER: I have no further questions.

9 CHAIRMAN WOOD: I do want to express to you my
10 personal appreciation for your cooperation and your very
11 valuable information that you have given us here. Until
12 such time as the Committee may desire you to appear before
13 the full Committee we will excuse you at this time.

14 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

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