

Helene Elitcher

HELENE ELITCHER, called as a witness,
having first been duly sworn by the Foreman, testified
as follows:-

BY MR. LANE:

Q Mrs. Elitcher, you are married, are you? A Yes,
I am.

Q To Max Elitcher? A Yes.

Q When were you married? A May 8th, 1943.

Q Do you have any children? A Yes, I have two children.

Q How old? A My little girl who is the oldest is four
years old; she was born May 29, 1946. And my little boy is
eight months old; he was born on January 8th of this year.

Q Are you a college graduate? A Yes, I am.

Q What college? A Brooklyn College.

Q A year? A January of 1941.

Q Did you specialize in any particular thing? A Yes,
I did. I majored in psychology.

Q I trust you have used that on various people since
then? A It is something that most psychology majors are
accused of.

Q When did you first meet Julius Rosenberg? A He came
to my house on -- it was the first time that I met him, and
I believe that it was in the spring of 1944.

Q Where was your house at that time? A It was an
apartment in Washington, 247 Delaware Avenue, Southwest.

Q Will you tell the jury what transpired at that first

meeting? A It was I believe a week day evening, I am just trying to remember back what I was doing that particular evening, it was after dinner and there was a phone call which my husband answered, spoke for a brief while, and then hung up and said that someone by the name of Julie Rosenberg, a fellow that he had gone to school with, had called, was in town and was going to drop over to see us. And then shortly thereafter he arrived. I was introduced to him; he was a jovial, talkative kind of person, sort of a "hail fellow-well met", if that describes my own impression of the kind of person he was, not my idea of my own impression of my husband who is an engineer, if he was a technical person his personality did not give you the feel that he was, not a, well, like a sort of regular guy who might have been a salesman or something other than a scholarly type.

Q What did he talk about at that time? A Small talk -- "How long have you been living here, and how long have you been married, you have kids, your wife, my wife." Sometime during that evening Julie and Max, both -- Max being my husband -- said they wanted to talk together for a little while, would I mind being busy elsewhere. It was a three room apartment. We had been sitting in the living room, there was a kitchen and bed room in back. I do not remember exactly where I departed to, but I did leave the room, I did not leave the apartment but I went in the kitchen or went into the bed

room, I do not remember which really, for a brief while, and then I wandered back in again in just what I felt was an interval of some kind. He stayed a little while longer and he left.

Q Did you overhear the conversation between him and your husband? A No, I didn't. I questioned my husband about it to a limited extent afterwards. If I can enlarge upon this point a little bit. I met my husband in January, sometime in the middle of -- late in January, actually, of 1943. We were married on May 8th of that same year -- a very short courtship. My reason for bringing up this point is that we did not know one another too well, I didn't know too many people that he knew. When I asked him who is this guy and why did he want to talk to you, why was I sort of asked to leave, he said, "Oh, it was nothing; he just wanted to talk to me." Our relationship wasn't such, between my husband and myself -- the point I am trying to make -- that I would push it home. We had a lot of getting to know one another to do yet, since we went through subsequent to that, and at that point he did not tell me exactly what the score was on that particular situation. There were a lot of other things to my mind that I did not know the score of, in my relationship, which did not make it stand out.

(Cont by IFG)

September 20, 1950 .

IFG-1
II
(From LB)

Re: John Doe
(Mr. Lane)

H. Ellitcher

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Q Well, did he tell you what Rosenberg talked to him about? A No, he didn't. He just said, "Oh, nothing very much. He just wanted to talk to me," and never did answer it; and I didn't push it home.

Q When next do you remember seeing Julius Rosenberg? A The next occasion, which has been recalled to me, which I only remember very vaguely and do not even recall the date of, was that Julie came to our apartment again on a morning that I was leaving the house to go to the C. I. O. United Federal Workers headquarters, to have a picture taken, that was to be published in the FEDERAL RECORD.

It was concerning price control - the picture that was to be taken was to be with some other people - - there was a price control campaign on which I had been doing some work.

I know that he came as I was about to leave, and my husband and he drove me, in our car, to the union headquarters; that I went inside and had my picture taken, while Max and Julie stayed behind, and then I came out again; and Julie left us, and then Max and I went off to do some shopping.

As I say, this incident has been recalled to me, and I don't remember the date, and I don't remember any conversation about it.

Q Well, do you remember seeing Rosenberg with

William Perl? A Yes. That would be the third occasion. That occurred in the summer of '44.

Q And where did you see them? A I met him - - I was with my husband and with my sister-in-law, and we met Julie and Bill Perl and a young G. I., wearing khaki, whom I was introduced to as Bill Perl's younger brother - - I met him somewhere around Seventh Avenue and I would say - - I am under the impression that it was the corner of Macy's, but it might not have been actually the corner.

We were going to dinner, and we walked for quite some distance along either Seventh or Eighth Avenue, to a restaurant - - we eventually got to the Bird-in-Hand Restaurant, which was not our original destination; we were headed for some other restaurant, but we couldn't get in because the fellows were not wearing jackets, and we had dinner at the Bird-in-Hand.

Q How many were at the dinner - five? A There were six, including my sister-in-law.

Q What is her name? A Ruth Alscher.

Q Miss or Mrs.? A Mrs. - she is my husband's brother's wife. A seventh person joined us. I believe that Julie Rosenberg went to a 'phone - at least, it is my impression that he did, as best I can remember - that he called within the very restaurant; that he went to the 'phone and called someone by the name of Joel Barr, who joined us.

Q What did you talk about at the table? A At the table nothing, except the weather and the dinner and "Where do you live?".

Q At the conclusion of the dinner, where did you go? A We went to Joel Barr's apartment.

Q That is everybody? A Everybody. And I would say we spent about an hour on a sort of roof adjoining his apartment, sort of like a penthouse affair; and his mother and father and sister returned - they had been out during the evening - they came back and - -

Q Where was this apartment located? A I would say in the West Nineties, off Broadway, towards the river. It is my impression that it was west of Broadway.

And we left after his parents and his sister returned. We were introduced and stayed a very short while, and left. Some records were played - -

Q On that same evening, did you go to Alfred Sarant's apartment? A Yes, we did.

Q That same evening? A Yes. We took a cab from where we were, and took my sister-in-law home. She was pregnant at the time, and it was getting on to being quite late. Her husband was in service, and we took her to her house, which was in Manhattan also, around 100th Street and Madison Avenue, and it wasn't too far from where we were, and we continued down into the Village.

In the cab - - no - - yes, it probably was in

the cab, according to my memory of it -- we went to Alfred Sarant's place.

I had never been there before, and I remember it very well, because it was a very long climb up into his apartment; it was at least five stories, and it might have been more.

Joel Barr preceded the rest of us. I would say it was at least midnight that we got there, and it might have been later. I was under the impression that Al Sarant was a bachelor, and someone that Joel Barr knew very well, a sort of intimate friend; and he ran ahead on all of these flights, while we were plodding up; and he awakened Sarant from his sleep, and the man came out in a robe and quite groggy, and Barr treated it as a sort of gag, his awaking him at that hour, and he knew he could awaken him up at night.

Q Perl was there at that time? A Yes.

Q Was Vivian Glassman there? A There was no other woman except myself, at that point.

Q And you spent some time at the apartment?

A Yes.

Q Playing records? A Yes. And Sarant played a guitar.

Q Was he pretty good? A Not bad. The records he had was of a very well known classical guitarist. The name escapes me, but he is very well known, because he plays

classical music, like Bach and Beethoven, which is unusual for a guitar; and Sarant was studying along those lines, playing classical music.

Q Did you see Rosenberg again? A Yes.

Q When did you next see him? A My next recollection of seeing him was in the summer of '45, when my husband and I came to New York and spent a week-end. Prior to this, all of the week-ends that we spent in New York, we spent at my sister's apartment. My mother also lived with my sister, and my sister had a child; and it was an apartment with just one bedroom, and under very crowded conditions, and we were put up on a studio couch in the living room.

But that particular week we decided to stay at my mother-in-law's place, and my mother-in-law lived - and still does live - in a very run-down tenement on 101st Street and Lexington Avenue; and there were bed-bugs, and I spent a rather sleepless night the first night of the week-end, and I swore I would not spend another night there. - I still itch at the memory of it - - and the bed was very small, which was my other complaint about it, and the window opened on a shaft.

We went to see A BELL FOR ADANO at Radio City, which I asked some members of your staff to check for the date, because all I remember is that it was this particular night. I remember that we came out from Radio City, and I

said, "I am not going there to sleep. Period. You can go there, and I will go to my mother's house," so Max said, "Well, Julie's wife spends the summer away, and Julie 'baches' by himself in his apartment at Knickerbocker Village, and we could give him a ring and find out if he could put us up," which we did.

That was close to midnight, after theater time - say, about eleven-thirty or thereabouts - and he called up, and we went there. Julie was by himself, and the apartment was obviously not being cared for by a woman during these months. That is, you could see a man "baching" there.

And we spent the night there, and got up in the morning and had breakfast in a nearby drug store; and that is all of the next time that I saw him.

Q Did you see him again - - were you at his apartment? A Yes, I saw him again, the next time that I remember - - Helen and Mortie Sobell were in New York, from Schenectady, where they lived, and we met Helen and Mortie, and Julie Rosenberg and Perl and Barr in front of Sarant's apartment building, downstairs, and we were to have dinner together. Sarant was not there.

Q When was this? A This was approximately Christmas of 1946.

Q You say Julius wasn't there? A No; I said Sarant wasn't there.

Q But the two Sobells and Rosenberg and Perl and

Barr were all there? A That's right.

Q And Max? A Yes, and Max - my husband and myself. By this time I had a child. My child was born in May of that year. The reason I mention it is that it helped me to remember - it helps me to place it in time, because we were looking for Even-Flow bottles, which were hard to get; there was a shortage at that time, and we would drop into drug stores any time we passed one, to ask if they had any, and so I remember that.

We went to a nearby restaurant, within walking distance of Sarant's apartment, and as I remember the name of the restaurant vaguely, or it could be something like that, it was The Blue Mill - that sort of sticks in my head.

We had dinner and went up to Sarant's apartment very briefly - I am quite sure I didn't even remove my coat. There was a party going on in his apartment, and we were not introduced to the people who were present. It was a crowded place, because even if I had wanted to sit down and stay I don't think there would have been room.

We all trudged up these flights of stairs, and stayed a very short while, and we were not introduced to anyone. I have a feeling that there was an occasion going on in that household - that is, they were celebrating something of which I was not aware, and no one informed

me, because we had just dropped in and went out again; and all the people I mentioned then went to Rosenberg's apartment.

I there met Ethel, Julius' wife, for the first and only time. I remember the season of the year because there was a small Christmas tree, and a Chanukah menorah - - the two holidays generally occur at approximately the same time - - and the discussion was about ^{what} to do, about these holidays, if you have Jewish kids.

That is, do you honor both holidays, or does it confuse the children, if they are Jewish, to celebrate Christmas for them as Christmas, or would it be better to celebrate just Chanukah alone; or, if you are not particularly religiously inclined, and let us say would not celebrate Chanukah yourself, do you let Chanukah go by the board, and celebrate Christmas, because it has become a sort of national holiday.

Q Did Perl enter into the discussion? A Yes. I remember the discussion particularly, because the two bachelors were so sure of themselves, and all the married people with kids were so damned unsure of themselves. The bachelors had the feeling that you didn't have to worry too much about what the kids thought - - they said, "Why do you worry about that? If it comes Christmas, it is Christmas, and you don't bother about it," and here we all had been reading the best on the subject - you

know, Gesell and so on- and I had a brand-new baby and was sure I was going to run into a million and ten problems, and was trying to prepare myself unto the nth degree, and they were very blase about it.

Q Whose apartment was that? A Rosenberg's.

Q How about Sarant - was he there? A No, he was not there. The last time I saw him was in his apartment - the one time he played the guitar and the next time there was the party going on.

Q Now, is that the last time you saw Rosenberg?

A Yes.

Q Do you know the Danzigers - William and Sylvia? A Yes, sir, I do.

Q When did you first meet them? A When they came to Washington from the West Coast. I don't remember, really, the date, but I think it was in '45; but I don't remember whether it was early or in the middle or late.

Q Did you and your husband associate with the Danzigers in Washington? A Yes, we did.

Q Were you members of the Communist cell down there? A Yes, I was.

Q Who else were in there with you? A Bill and Sylvia were both. None of these people I have mentioned. There were other people I could attempt to recall.

Q What did they call that - the Navy Department

cell? A Yes, it was.

Q And did Rosenberg ever discuss it? A No. Certainly never with me.

Q Now, I understand you were a member of the Communist Party at that time? A Yes, I was.

Q Were you registered? A There was no registration.

Q I thought there were registered voters -- you weren't? A No.

Q And was Max also a member? A Yes.

Q How about the Danzigers -- were they members, too? A Yes, they were.

Q And how often did the cell meet? A Either twice or once a month, depending upon the season of the year, or the -- various things that would determine it; but I would say roughly every two or three weeks.

Q Who was in charge of the particular cell that you were associated with? A Well, it varied -- there were elections that were held once a year, and some member of the group would become the chairman of the group. I don't remember offhand who exactly it was at one particular time.

Q How many members were in the cell? A That also varied, and it would be roughly seven, eight, or maybe nine.

Q Where did they meet? A In members' homes.

Q And what was the purpose of the cell? A The cell was, generally speaking, a continuation for some people of previous Communist affiliations - education, largely; that is, maintaining a contact with what Communist thought was on various matters.

We would, for instance, have at every meeting a news report. Someone would try to get up all of the DAILY WORKERS during the period intervening between meetings, and would read the papers, since they were difficult to obtain by all members, and would give a digest of the news.

There would be sometimes a report on the part of the chairman, from his contact with a person whom none of the other members of the group knew.

Q Did you have cards, too? A No, there were no such things as cards.

Q Did you have to take any oath or anything?
A No, none whatsoever.

A JUROR: Were there any dues paid?

THE WITNESS: Yes, there were.

Q What were the dues? A The dues were not uniform. It worked something like this: There was an amount, roughly seventy-five cents to a dollar, or maybe a dollar and a quarter, that was a basic amount to be paid per month.

Then there was something above that, which would become the total figure, of a contribution which was put up

to you as a person, to decide as to how much you wanted, but it was suggested that in some way it be commensurate with your salary; so that if you were earning two thousand dollars, you would give perhaps no contribution, if you had a family, but if you were earning five thousand dollars, and were single, you might give five dollars.

A JUROR: What was done with that money after it was collected?

THE WITNESS: The chairman of the group took that money, and that money went on to a person who was called "the contact." That was the way it was used. It was someone that the members of the group did not know.

Q Just how did the cell work - how did it operate? A I am not sure I know what you mean. If I am not answering the things you want to know, tell me. Well, the membership was largely static, because the fact that you were a member was not supposed to be known by anyone else, so that you couldn't go around and recruit people. That is, you couldn't just know somebody quite casually, and say, "How would you like to join the Communist Party?"

So that there was a static membership. Occasionally, someone such as Bill Danziger, to use an example, who had formerly been a member and had been known in that city to other people and just came back to live there again, would be picked up - - he might come to see you socially,

and say, "I am back; how about putting my name through?" Which meant that at the next meeting someone would speak to the chairman privately, the person who knows, say, that Bill was back, and say, "Danziger is back in town. Will you pass his name on and let us know when he can come to his next meeting?"

And that is what would happen. The chairman, on seeing the contact next, I presume, would pass the information on, as I have just described. What happened to it after that, I don't know.

Q How long were you and Max a member of the cell? A Max was when I married him. I wasn't a member until, I would say, either very late '43 or early '44. I would be pretty sure that it was early '44.

Q And how long were you a member, how long did it last? A Until we left Washington, which was October, 1948.

Q And how about the Danzigers - how long were they members of the cell? A Well, to actually tell you of my own knowledge of how long he was a member, it was from the time that Danziger came back, and for as long as it took for him to be picked up, which might have been two months or something around there.

If that was some time in 1945, which I can't tie down too tightly, but I am sure you can probably inform yourselves as to when he came back to Washington - - that

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was until I went on maternity leave in April, 1946. That is of my own knowledge.

MR. LANE: Mr. Foreman, at this juncture would you temporarily excuse Mrs. Ellitcher, because we have some work here.

Q Would you wait outside, Mrs. Ellitcher, please? A Certainly.

[WITNESS LEAVES ROOM]