Lost from other side

Pilot 7/21/39

"Trial" Of Bridges Exposes Perjurers

Bridges' Defense Smashes Through Government Case

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he is now suing it, together with every waterfront union, for collection of lawyer's fees. Sapiro also enhanced his reputation by acting as attorney for the ILA Lost Battalion of phonies in San Pedro.

He claimed that Bridges once told him that he controlled the Communist Party and the Party controlled the West Coast marine unions.

Indicted With Al Capone

Under cross-examination the defense forced Sapiro to admit that he had been indicated with others in Chicago for monopolistic practices in the laundry industry. Al Capone was one of the persons indicted along with him. Sapiro was later acquitted.

The first government witness, Milner, a middle-aged, hawk-nosed and smooth faced man, testified that he had been associated with communists from 1933 to 1937 while acting as special agent for the military forces of Oregon.

The major's downfall came after testifying that he gave evidence in behalf of a Communist defendant in an Oregon trial five years ago.

He said that after appearing as a character witness for the defendant, he was mysteriously approached by Stanley Doyle, notorious middleman between employers and labor spies, who offered him a job and other assistance if he would reverse his testimony.

He immediately reported this to the defense attorneys, Milner went on, and was positive that he had spoken only the truth in his testimony in that case.

Bridges' defense then produced records of the earlier case which showed that in later testimony at that time he had sworn that Doyle had never made him any offers.

Confesses Perjury

Shorn of his notes, Milner became completely rattled. He forgot the outstanding facts of his previous testimony. He confessed perjury in the Oregon case, but said he had to do it to protect his activities as a secret agent.

At Bridges Deportation Hearing

Dean James M. Landis, right, presides at the deportation hearings against West Coast CIO Director Harry Bridges at Angel Island in San Francisco bay. At the defense table are Bridges and his 14-year-old daughter, Jacqueline, and with back to camera is his attorney, Carol King.

Federated Pictures

Pointing out that he had sworn in the Bridges case that he was now free to tell the truth, the defense cited the numerous contradictions in his current testimony and demanded to know if he were not again testifying falsely.

Milner "didn't understand." He couldn't remember. Dean Landis took him through a maze of questions that left him trapped, befuddled and speechless.

Finally, defense attorneys asked that steps be taken, on the basis of the record, to bring the Major to trial for contempt. The Dean disposed of this by referring it to the Labor Department's solicitor.

Loudly dressed and breezy in manner, Leech, the second witness, settled down to tell a tale about his adventures as a Communist from 1931 to 1936, during which time he was the party's organizer in Los Angeles.

He stated he had been at two meetings, which none but Communists could attend, and had heard and seen a man identified as Bridges make reports on various labor problems.

Under direct examination, Leech admitted arrest and conviction at the age of 19 for cashing a forged money order, and later for being caught in a raid at a resort.

He readily admitted that Doyle, who is, incidentally, a fugitive from Californi justice, had approached him with a request for an affidavit against Bridges. Doyle had given him a second hand car and had

[illegible] because he felt a "vague fear" if he did not do as the Communists requested.

Again things took a different tack when cross-examination began. Leech denied ever having been offered money, other than the sum from Doyle, for his anti-Bridges testimony.

Then defense attorneys produced a photostat of an affidavit purportedly signed by Leech. It stated Leech had been approached by Police Captain Browne and a man representing himself to be an official of the Oregon Associated Chambers of Commerce with offers ranging from $1,000 to $10,000 if he would place Bridges at Communist meetings.

Visibly shaken at the turn of events, Leech refused to affirm or deny that the signature on the photosta was his own. He was required to write his name and to do other handwriting, which Dean Landis and the attorneys pondered. It seemed identical to the signature on the photostat.

Leech was also asked if he had told a Mr. A. C. Bundy that Browne had offered him $10,000. He denied it and was warned that Bundy would be produced as a witness.