

FBI FRAME-UP ON BRIDGES

Defense Presents Evidence Against Enemies of CIO

SAN FRANCISCO.—The prosecution completed its case this week against Harry Bridges, president of the CIO International Longshoremen's & Warehousemen's Union and California CIO director.

In so doing, the prosecution admitted the weakness of its evidence by making a last minute change in charges against the CIO leader.

The new charge was that Bridges had one time been a member of an organization which "advocated, believed in and practiced unlawful damage of property and sabotage—the IWW."

Trial Examiner Charles B. Sears adjourned the hearing three days to allow Bridges' counsel time to prepare his defense. FBI attorneys objected strenuously to the brief adjournment.

The trial resumes this week with Bridges and his lawyers confident they can puncture the mass of lying testimony entered against the CIO leader.

The original charge was simply that Bridges was "a member or affiliated with" an organization that advocated the violent overthrow of the government.

At the outset of the trial the prosecution made it clear that, according to its interpretation of the law "one single gift" would constitute affiliation.

Yet, after putting 18 witnesses on the stand and presenting several hundred alleged documents and pamphlets, the prosecution indicated the strength of its "proof" by bringing in an altogether new charge.

'GOT OUT QUICK'

In the 1939 first Bridges hearing before Dean James M. Landis of the Harvard law school, Bridges admitted membership in the IWW "for a couple of months" back in 1922, but testified that he "got out quick, as soon as he found out" what its trade union policies were.

This statement was read into the record of the hearing this week by the prosecution, showing that those attacking the democratically elected CIO leader are willing to deport him for membership 20 years ago "for a couple of months" in an organization he resigned from immediately in disagreement on principles!

Of special interest was the admission made during the course of the prosecution's presentation of its case on the question of violent overthrow of the government, that Bridges is not charged with this.

"We are not charging Mr. Bridges with belief in or advocacy of force and violence to overthrow the government," asserted Chief Prosecutor Del Guercio in a slip of the tongue made during the course of an objection to a defense question of a witness.

Then why, union men ask, is the effort being made by the FBI and other anti-labor elements to deport Bridges? The answer lies in the word: anti-labor.

SENSATIONAL BACKFIRING BY WITNESS

The conclusion of the prosecution's case followed a sensational backfiring from a prosecution witness—James D. O'Neil, former west coast CIO publicity director—who revealed in examination and cross-examination a sinister FBI plot to frame a case against Bridges.

Full details of O'Neil's testimony and description of the methods used by the FBI in an effort to force O'Neil to agree to a false statement against Bridges, is contained on Page 2 of this issue.

O'Neil on the witness stand this past week denied sentence by sentence the statement the FBI asserted O'Neil had made to them several weeks ago.

The method used by the FBI in compiling the statement was exposed by O'Neil when he testified that "some of these questions were asked of me and I answered 'no' . . . and now they are all pieced together into one fabric to appear as a statement."

"WOULD HAVE DROPPED DEAD"

The statement the FBI attributed to O'Neil quoted him as saying that Bridges was a Communist and that he had seen Bridges put stamps in a book the FBI said was a Communist membership book.

The prosecution asked O'Neil: "Didn't you tell us you told Bridges you were amazed at him doing that openly?"

"I wouldn't have been amazed," O'Neil stated on the witness stand, "I would have dropped dead . . . I never made such a statement and I never saw such a thing."

The final witness for the prosecution was one aimed at bolstering its charges that the IWW advocated unlawful damage of property and sabotage.

He was Algia E. Reese, a WPA worker, who was a member of the IWW from 1918 to 1920—before Bridges was even in this country.

Reese testified that "I was a member of the IWW and I didn't believe in destruction of property or sabotage."

He also said he had never heard of action taken by the IWW national executive board and by a IWW convention during the World War in publicly disavowing such tactics.

Mr. Murray to One is An Injury to All

WORLD

OF THE FEDERATION



"It is my considered judgment that our affiliated unions and members should lend every practical support in defending Bridges in this case."

PHILIP MURRAY.

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