

Government's Perjury-Conspiracy Case Against Harry Bridges Due To End Soon

(Editor's Note: The trial of CIO Longshore Leader Harry Bridges on charges of conspiracy is approaching its end. The following dispatch, written by the reporter who has covered the lengthy trial from its beginning last November, gives the background on the case.)

By Robert Blackmon
United Press Correspondent
San Francisco, Mar. 9.—(U.P.)—Harry Bridges, CIO longshore leader, testified again today to deny government charges that he lied in denying he was a communist when he became a citizen nearly five years ago.

Defense attorneys were expected to conclude their rebuttal with the Australian-born Bridges' final testimony. That will open the way for final arguments before presenting the case to the jury of eight men and four women.

That day may not come for another week. Defense Attorney Vincent Hallinan wants four days for his summation and James MacInnis wants a day or a day and a half. Prosecutor F. Joseph Donohue says he will take a day for his final arguments.

Expensive Trial
To date, the 67-day trial has cost the government an estimated \$500,000, the defense from \$100,000 to \$110,000. Bridges said 35 to 40 per cent of the defense money comes from non-union sources.

On trial with Bridges are two union aides, J. R. Robertson and Henry Schmidt, who acted as witnesses in Bridges' naturalization hearing in 1945. The government says they knew Bridges was a communist, although they swore then he was not.

If found guilty, the three men face jail sentences totaling seven

years and fines totaling \$15,000. In addition, the government has filed a civil suit seeking to revoke Bridges' citizenship and deport him to his native Australia. The success of that suit depends on the outcome of this trial.

Bridges, now 50, came to this country in 1920 and first became prominent during the bloody San Francisco longshore strike in 1934. He has been president of the powerful CIO International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's union for a number of years.

Two Attempts Fail
The government has tried to deport him twice before, both times unsuccessfully. However, this is the first criminal case against him.

This trial began Nov. 14, 1949. In the 67 trial days since then, the government called 13 witnesses in its case-in-chief and three in its rebuttal.

In essence, the government witnesses gave testimony to show that Bridges attended 59 communist party meetings. One witness, Mervyn Rathborne, said he attended at least 40 with Bridges.

Government witnesses also placed Schmidt at 15 party meetings and testified that Robertson was a member of the party.

Each of the defendants denied being a member of the party. Bridges testified he accepted the help of the communist party during the 1934 and 1936 longshore strikes, as he did any person or group that was on the side of the longshoremen.

The trial has been marked by bitter clashes between the prosecution, defense and the court.

Attorney Sentenced
Federal judge George B. Harris sentenced Defense Attorney Hallinan to six months for contempt of court, while he has cited MacInnis for contempt, with sentence to be passed at the end of the trial.

Sex entered the 1,462,000 words of testimony when two women, Mrs. Betty Teixeira and Mrs. Jean Murray, were accused of trying to tamper with Rathborne, the prosecution's chief rebuttal witness. They will be tried soon.

They are accused of threatening to tell Rathborne's wife he was intimate with them, if Rathborne persisted in his intention to testify against Bridges. Both women appeared yesterday to deny the charges. They will

deny them again at their own trial.

One government witness, Paul Crouch, testified that Strip Teaser Gypsy Rose Lee once kissed Bridges in public.

The government opened its case with testimony from John Schomaker, an ex-communist who said another longshoreman, Bruce Jones, talked Bridges into becoming a communist party member in 1934. Schomaker testified he saw Bridges pay party dues and heard Bridges solicit members for the party.

But Jones, testifying for the defense, called Schomaker a "liar."

Bridges On Stand
Bridges was on the stand for

10 days. During that time, the defense and the prosecution explored minutely his attitudes and beliefs on trade unions, the world situation and Russia. He accused government witnesses of "lying like hell" in calling him a communist and said they should be prosecuted for perjury instead of him.

He also charged the FBI was tapping his teletypes and telephones.

"Sometimes, on conference calls on the teletype, the operator says, 'wait a minute, the FBI isn't on yet,'" he said.

Bridges claims he earns \$135 a week as president of the union. He is married to the former Nancy Fenton, who once was a

professional dancer. They live in a modest home where they are bringing up two children, Robert Alfred, 22 months, and Julie, six-year-old daughter by Thursday, March 9, 1950

Mrs. Bridges' first marriage. They were married shortly after Bridges became a citizen.

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Presbyterians In Phoenix Plan To Dedicate Manse

Phoenix, Mar. 9.—Dedication of the new manse of the Phoenix Presbyterian church will be held Sunday, March 12, during the 11 a. m. service, according to an announcement by the minister, the Rev. E. J. Clark.

Sunday afternoon, between 3 and 5 p. m., and in the evening between 7 and 9 p. m., the minister and his wife will hold open house in the new home and all members and friends of the church and anyone in the community interested are invited to attend. The Rev. Mr. Clark and Mrs. Clark ask that there be no gifts.

Ground was broken for the new manse last October. Labor for the building was largely donated, and materials were furnished at a discount, resulting in a substantial saving to the church. It was reported that the minister and his wife said they wish to thank all those in the church and everyone, both in Phoenix and Medford, who contributed "so generously" to the building. Many who have seen the new manse have commented favorably on its construction and appearance.

Checker-Chess Club To Celebrate 1st Year

The Medford Checker and Chess club will celebrate its first anniversary this Sunday, with a checker tournament at the Carpenters' hall, 123 1/2 West Main street.

Winner of the tournament will be considered the champion of Medford. Prizes will be given to winners, and play will begin at 10:30 a. m. All checker and chess players in and around Medford are invited, according to Cliff Heeter, secretary.

FARM PLANTS AVAILABLE

The habitat improvement department of the state game commission announced today that 175,000 trees and shrubs are now available for planting on farms and ranches in eastern Oregon.

ONLY BIGGEST FOR HIM

New York, Mar. 9.—(U.P.)—The New York philharmonic symphony reported today that a thief had entered its instrument room and marched off with the biggest thing he could find—the bass drum.

Dead line Sunday Classified is at Noon Saturdays.

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