

Trial of Seven in Plane Smuggling to Israel Opens in U.S. Court Here

Testimony that 10 C-46 Curtiss Commando planes which had been service at the Schwimmer Aviation Co. quarters at Lockheed Air Terminal later were seen in Zatek, Czechoslovakia, yesterday was heard at a trial of seven individuals and a corporation on charges of conspiracy to violate the Neutrality Act by smuggling planes to Israel.

The trial opened before a jury in U.S. Judge Peirson M. Hall's court yesterday. Those on trial are Adolph W. Schwimmer, former president of Service Airways, Inc., of New York, which is the defendant corporation; Herman M. Greenspun, of Las Vegas, Nev.; Ray Selk, of 741 S Curson Ave.; Sam R. Lewis, 133 S Orlando Ave.; Abe Levin, 6216 Whitsett Ave., North Hollywood; Leo Gardner, North Hollywood; and William Sosnow, New York.

Count Dismissed

Judge Hall dismissed one count of conspiracy to violate the export control law against each of the defendants on the motion of Defense Atty. William Strong before testimony began.

Charles E. Phillips Jr., an airplane mechanic employed by the Schwimmer company, was the first of more than 50 scheduled witnesses to be called by the government.

He told of seeing the C-46 planes at the Schwimmer plant and later observing the same planes at the airport at Zatek, about 40 miles east of Prague, Czechoslovakia.

Government Charges

The government charges the defendants conspired to fly the planes from the United States to Israel via Czechoslovakia, where they were serviced by Communists behind the Iron Curtain and arms and ammunition were loaded aboard them.

Under questioning by Asst. U.S. Atty. Hershell E. Champlin, who is prosecuting the case, Phillips testified that he saw the 10 C-46 planes in Burbank in April, 1948, and that they were flown away shortly afterward.

He said that he and a group of three other mechanics and a man

he learned later was a pilot subsequently were sent to Rome by commercial air lines to service planes.

Subsequent Travels

When he reached Rome, Phillips said, he was told the planes were held up in Switzerland and might be delayed for a few days.

Later, he and the others in his group were asked if they would go to Switzerland and work on

the planes, Phillips testified, and they agreed. One morning they took off on what they supposed was a trip to Switzerland and learned after they had been in the air two hours that they were on their way to Zatek, where they landed a short time later. It was about that time, in June, 1948, that he saw the C-46s which he had previously observed at the Lockheed Air Terminal.



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Wednesday, November 2, 8:00 P.M.