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Arab Hijackings Hide Red Theft

Plot, Expert Says

LONDON (AP).—The Arab skyjacking of four Western airliners last year was part of a worldwide Communist plot that delivered secret Atlantic Alliance documents to the Soviet Union, a British spy book claimed Monday.

Pouches containing top secret reports on a NATO air-sea exercise and the military budget were taken off the planes before they were blown up at Cairo airport and in the sands of the Jordanian desert, says "Spy Trade," by Edward H. Cookridge, a Vienna-born espionage specialist.

The September skyjackings—and a fifth attempt which failed in a blaze of gunfire above the English Channel—flashed the world spotlight on the Arab guerrillas of the Marxist-Maoist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, who did the job. The organization has now virtually vanished from the Arab scene.

The air piracy had little to do with Arab nationalism, claimed "Spy Trade," which contended: "It was, in fact, part of a worldwide Communist conspiracy, although not necessarily stage-managed from Moscow.

"Hardly any of the actual skyjackers were Palestinians or Arabs," said Cookridge.

The book is likely to provoke Arab denials from the Middle East, where the skyjackers are regarded as Palestinian heroes and bonafide Arabs.

Two of the air bandits were Africans from Senegal, said Cookridge, a World War II intelligence agent and author of half a dozen books on spying.

Another was Miss Cecilia

Martinez Fernandez from Colombia. A fourth was a Costa Rican student, Alvara Fuentes Iglesias, the book said.

Even Leila Khaled, the girl guerilla briefly jailed in Britain after she failed to capture an Israeli El Al plane over the English Channel, may have been born in Honduras, Cookridge indicated. The name on her passport, he said, was Maria de la Lux Chaves, and she speaks Spanish.

Leila's accomplice, shot dead by Israeli security guards while the plane was in flight, was Nicaraguan-born Patrick Anguello, an American citizen.

"He had nothing to do with Arab nationalism . . . he was a professional Communist agent and his involvement with the PFLP was only incidental," the book says.

Cookridge did not specify the precise purposes of the alleged Communist plot. But he said one effect of the hijacking was the seizure of the secret NATO papers.

From a Pan American Air-

ways jumbo jet, hijacked to Cairo on a Sept. 7 flight from Amsterdam to New York, "they captured" a mass of NATO documents concerning top-secret plans for the combined NATO air and naval exercises code-named "Wintex," set for 1971, said Cookridge.

The Central Intelligence Agency, he went on, later discovered that the Wintex plans had been delivered to Col. Samih Sharaf, the Egyptian intelligence chief, and given to the Soviet Embassy in Cairo.

The papers were photographed and the pouches slashed and burned to resemble explosion damage. Then they were delivered to the American Embassy in Cairo with formal Egyptian regrets. The Wintex maneuvers were

canceled. From a Trans World Airlines 707, hijacked and blown up in Jordan, the skyjackers took NATO documents en route from Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers in Europe (SHAPE) to the Pentagon in Washington, the book said.

These were given to Russian agents in Damascus, and Cookridge comments: "It was a good catch: They contained a complete set of documents of the NATO military budget for 1971."

"The great skyjack operation of September 1970, is already half forgotten," cautioned Cookridge. He warned that "in the area of intelligence and military limbs of government the drama remains an ominous pointer to the future."