

French Trial Ordered In a War Crimes Case

PARIS, Nov. 19 — A French appeals court today overturned a ruling that the case of an aging Frenchman accused of crimes against humanity in World War II should be handled by a long-defunct special court and ordered his trial by an ordinary criminal court.

The move followed protests that a decision by the Prosecutor General's Office last month to send the case of the Frenchman, Rene Bousquet, to the Special High Court of Liberation was tantamount to postponing his trial indefinitely and avoiding a new airing of French collaboration with Nazi occupation forces.

Mr. Bousquet, a former police chief in German-occupied France who is 81 years old, has been charged with approving the deportation of 194 Jewish children who later died in Nazi concentration camps. He was tried as a collaborationist in 1949, but new evidence against him has now been presented,

Serge Klarsfeld, the Nazi-hunter who brought the case against Mr. Bousquet, said a trial could take place within a year, but he noted that the Prosecutor General's Office still had five days in which to file a new appeal to the French Supreme Court.

"Today's decision reflects the determination of the judges to exercise their independence, but we'll have to see if the political power abandons its pressure," Mr. Klarsfeld said.