

HARRISBURG, Pa., March 10—Two weeks before J. Edgar Hoover announced on Nov. 27, 1970, that there was an "insidious plot" to kidnap a high official, the government informer in the plot wrote Sister Elizabeth McAlister and asked her to ask the Rev. Philip Berrigan's opinions on a project in Washington, D.C.

"I was wondering where Phil saw the D.C. project and if further thoughts concerning the 'K' thing was feasible at this time," wrote Boyd Douglas, the informer and chief government witness in the trial here of seven antiwar activists. Sister McAlister and Father Berrigan are among the defendants.

The "K" in his letter, he testified today during cross-examination by defense lawyer J. Thomas Menaker, was presidential adviser Henry A. Kissinger, the object of the alleged kidnap plot.

In his letter of Nov. 11, 1970, Douglas also wrote, "I really have not talked much to Joe about the D.C. project." That reference, he said, was to his infrequent conversations with the Rev. Joseph Wenderoth, a Baltimore parish priest who also is a defendant, about an alleged plot to bomb tunnels under federal buildings in Washington.

Sister McAlister, whom Douglas has testified was supposed to coordinate both the tunnels and kidnap plots replied to him that same month: "I really don't know where the project is—or isn't—at to brief Phil." Father Berrigan had been transferred the previous August from Lewisburg prison in Pennsylvania to Danbury, Conn., federal prison.

The defendants are charged with conspiracy to kidnap Kissinger, blow up heating tunnels under buildings in Washington, D.C., and raid federal offices.

An inmate at Lewisburg, Pa., Federal Penitentiary, Douglas was a fulltime student at Bucknell University on a study-release program beginning in February, 1970. During the summer of 1970 he smuggled letters in and out for Father Berrigan and Sister McAlister, had them copied by coeds and sent to the FBI.

On Dec. 18, two days after Douglas was released from

prison, he threw a "coming-out" party in Lewisburg to which he sent invitations, embellished with a bold black peace symbol, to all the persons who are now defendants in this case.

Douglas testified that he told the FBI in advance who would be at the party and gave them a copy of the invitation. "I don't know," he answered when asked how many FBI agents sat outside the party in cars that night.

But he said "approximately" 10 agents were with him in early January, shortly before the defendants were indicted by a grand jury here, when he met Sister McAlister in a New York coffee shop and recorded a conversation with a recorder encased in what appeared to be a money belt.

Douglas testified that in the fall of 1970, he asked for a financial grant for a "Jan. Plan," an off-campus program at Bucknell every January.

He said today that he asked the FBI for a grant for the same program, \$400 a month for six months. But the purpose of the project as presented to the FBI, Douglas testified, was to contact members of the East Coast Conspiracy to Save Lives and to work on matters related "to this case."

However, he told university officials that his project was entitled, "Field Survey of the Federal Penal System," Douglas said, and that it would entail his visiting federal prisons on the East Coast.

Both Father Philip Berrigan and his brother, the Rev. Daniel Berrigan, were then at Danbury Federal Prison in Connecticut. FBI Director Hoover, in his November testimony before a Senate Appropriations subcommittee, said the kidnap plot was being planned by a group called the East Coast Conspiracy to Save Lives and was led by Fathers Philip and Daniel Berrigan.

Resistant to defense questions that imply that he recruited Bucknell students and others for illegal resistance, Douglas identified today a fall 1970 letter he wrote to Susan Williams in which he described himself as "a made, totally committed, non-violent revolutionary, who believes in strategic sabotage."

Plot Informer Sent Inquiry to Berrigan About Kidnap Plan

By Betty Medsger
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