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DISCUSS FEDERAL INDICTMENT: Dr. William Stringfellow, left, and Anthony Towne at news conference in their home at Block Island, R.I., yesterday. They commented on charges against them of harboring the Rev. Daniel J. Berrigan when he was a fugitive.

2 Who Aided Berrigan Warn of U.S. Repression

By **BILL KOVACH**

Special to The New York Times

BLOCK ISLAND, R. I., Dec. 21—The first decision Dr. William Stringfellow and Anthony Towne had to make this morning was which of an assortment of 16 new and Colonial American flags to fly from the staff in front of their home.

They decided on two versions of the pre-Revolution "Don't Tread on Me" ensign and the Liberty Tree flag with the legend "An Appeal to Heaven."

"We thought the combination fitting for today," Dr. Stringfellow said shortly before he and Mr. Towne held a news conference to maintain that repression in America had reached the point where innocent persons were being attacked by the Federal Government "in an effort to make other citizens more cautious in their protests against repression."

Dr. Stringfellow and Mr. Towne, who are authors of moral and religious studies, have been indicted by the Federal Government on charges of harboring the Rev. Daniel Berrigan here last August when he was evading a three-year sentence for destroying draft records. Both entered innocent

Rhode Islanders, Accused of Harboring Priest, Also Urge End to Violence

pleas to those charges last week.

The two men said their news conference was called to state "the political context" of the charges against them and not to discuss the specific facts of the case. Both concede that they did "relieve, receive, comfort and assist" the Father Berrigan, as the indictment states. But both deny that they did anything to "harbor" or "conceal" him or "hinder" the authorities in arresting the priest, as the indictment further states.

'Spirit of Repression'

"Because we are innocent," they said in a statement each read in turn, "we believe that we would not have been indicted but for the pervasiveness of the spirit of repression which has lately overtaken the nation. In that respect, we consider that whatever happens to us will in truth be happening to all Americans."

The statement—fashioned as a Christmas greeting to Father Berrigan and his brother the

Rev. Philip Berrigan, both of whom are serving Federal prison sentences — also called for an end to violence by the Federal Government in Southeast Asia and by political terrorists in the United States.

As the two men discussed the political nature of the charges against them, the Episcopal Peace Fellowship in New York City announced its intentions "as a corporation" to support and "defend them. The organization announced that it was ready to raise funds and "to stand prosecution with Mr. Stringfellow and Mr. Towne." ready for trial in the United States District Court in Providence by early spring.