

Tunnels' Destruction Is Topic Of Purported Berrigan Letter

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By HOMER BIGART MAR 2 1972
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HARRISBURG, Pa., March 1 —The jury in the bombing-kidnapping conspiracy trial of the Rev. Philip F. Berrigan and six other antiwar activists listened today to the reading of a purported letter from Father Berrigan to a New York nun in which the writer directed that the "priority" project for the winter of 1970-71 would be the destruction of utility tunnels in Washington.

In other purported letters from the priest, which were read to the jury by Assistant Attorney General William S. Lynch, their writer proposed that the alleged conspirators seek "new turf," move out of the Eastern Seaboard where they were subject to increasing surveillance and raid draft board offices in the interior.

Obtained by Informer

The letters, addressed to Sister Elizabeth McAlister, one of the defendants, fell into the hands of the Federal Bureau of Investigation before the nun received them. They had been obtained by a Government informer, Boyd Douglas Jr., a former convict who won the confidence of Father Berrigan when both were imprisoned at Lewisburg in the spring and summer of 1970.

The reading of the letters today indicated that in an apparent attempt to bolster the priest's morale, Sister Elizabeth wrote him in late July, 1970, that there was a possibility of financial support for the war resistance movement in this country.

Sister Elizabeth reported that Douglas F. Dowd, an economics professor at Cornell University, was about to visit Europe on a "high-level secret sort of mission." She went on to say, "The Swedish government—or some officials in it—have observed the path the United States Government is taking, and feel the only defense against it is resistance and are willing to support it, at least financially, with upwards of several millions."

Dr. Dowd, apparently attached to the Berkeley campus of the University of California, could not be reached for comment.

'Elusive Golden Fleece'

Father Berrigan, according to the reading of the letters, had written Sister Elizabeth that "resources" were available for the blowing up of heating vents to Government buildings in Washington and mentioned several cities and states as possible theaters of other action but said, "Ah, yes, the Distr:

is still the elusive golden fleece."

The informer Douglas, testifying for the third day, said he was recruited by Father Berrigan for the Washington action. Douglas had posed to Father Berrigan as a demolitions expert.

Douglas said he was later advised by one of the defendants, the Rev. Joseph Wenderoth of Baltimore, that Washington's Birthday, 1971, was set as the target date for the explosions because it was normally cold at that time and the cutting off of heat to Government buildings would cause maximum disruption.

According to the Government the group planned to follow up this action next day with the kidnapping of Henry A. Kissinger, the Presidential aide.

Douglas said Father Wenderoth told him that 15 persons had been recruited for the tunnel explosions. "I asked what type of explosives he had," Douglas said. "He said he's try to get plastic explosives from the Indianhead Naval Supply station in Maryland."

"He told me to relate to Philip Berrigan that the project was working out as planned per his [Berrigan's] instructions."

Douglas was able to serve as courier between Father Berrigan and the other defendants because he was released from prison each day to attend classes at Bucknell University.

Federal Judge R. Dixon Herman today delayed decision on a Government motion to quash defense subpoenas for F.B.I. director J. Edgar Hoover and for the Director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, Norman A. Carlson.