

Prospective Berrigan Jurors Asked for Personal Feelings on Vietnam War and Catholics

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Three prospective women jurors in the conspiracy trial of the Rev. Philip F. Berrigan and six other antiwar activists, spoke up in court today to reveal their personal feelings against the war in Vietnam.

Their plea to be excused from jury duty confronted Federal District Judge R. Dixon Herman with a crucial decision. The women said they believed that their feelings were so strong they might be prevented from impartially weighing the guilt or innocence of the defendants.

The judge reserved decision. The defendants, through their

spokesman, Dr. Eghal Ahmad, a Pakistani scholar, said they were disturbed by the judge's line of questioning on war attitudes. Everyone was for or against the war, Dr. Ahmad said, but only those ventriment with an antiwar attitude were likely to reveal it, while those who supported the Government's Vietnam policy and those who "accepted war as a natural phenomenon like the existence of poverty or something ordained" would remain silent. The result, he said, would be a pro-government jury.

62 Ventriment Questioned
The women revealed their attitudes when Judge Herman asked 62 ventriment: "Would your feelings for or against the Vietnam conflict prevent

you from making an impartial decision on these defendants?" One of the women — Judge Herman has asked the press not to identify prospective jurors — explained that her son had a very low draft number — 23.

A Barrage of Questions

"I'm sympathetic to those who want to end the war," said the mother of the son with the low draft number.

"Honestly, I don't think I could set my feelings aside," said the blonde wife of a Harrisburg doctor. At the end of the day 46 per-

sons, 31 women and 15 men, composed the panel of prospective jurors. These 46 had survived a barrage of questions posed by the judge to determine whether they harbored strong feelings about the war, about Roman Catholics (all but one of the defendants is a Catholic), about priests and nuns who engaged in antiwar demonstrations, whether they belonged to the Ku Klux Klan, John Birch Society, the Silver Shirts, Students for a Democratic Society or "any organization that sought to curtail the activities of the Roman Catholic Church."

"Are any of you related by blood or marriage to Henry A. Kissinger?" the judge asked. No one was. One of the charges

against the defendants is that they plotted to kidnap Mr. Kissinger, Presidential adviser on foreign policy matters, and hold him until President Nixon promised to end the war.

The jurors indicated by their silence that they would not be prejudiced by the fact that Father Berrigan, accused of directing the alleged conspiracy to abduct Mr. Kissinger, blow up buildings in Washington and destroy draft files in several cities, was currently serving a six-year sentence in the Federal penitentiary in Danbury, Conn. He was convicted of destroying draft records in Baltimore and Catonsville, Md.

Asked by the judge whether their military service would have any bearing on their ability to judge this case, all said no, but one veteran was excused a few minutes later when he replied negatively to a question of whether he could decide the case on its merits.

Dr. Ahmad is an alien and a Moslem. The judge asked whether these facts would influence the jurors. They said no. Neither would they admit any bias against defendants Anthony Scoblick and his wife, Mary Cain Scoblick because Mr. Scoblick was a former priest and his wife a former nun.

"Your Honor, you're always a priest."

When Judge Herman described Mr. Scoblick as a priest who "left his order," Mr. Scoblick interjected politely, were excused.

"All right, you're a priest," the judge said and he went on to introduce Mrs. Scoblick as a "former nun," adding: "I don't know if you're always a nun but I understand she's separated."

The other defendants are Sister Elizabeth McAlister, a professor of art history at Marymount College in Tarrytown, N.Y., and two Baltimore priests, the Rev. Joseph Wendroth and the Rev. Neil McLoughlin.

Judge Herman told the jurors they would be isolated in a hotel during the length of the trial, which he said might last three months. Several jurors pleaded hardship, but only two