

Berrigan Case's Roots Traced at Trial

By HOMER BIGART
Special to The New York Times

HARRISBURG, Pa., Feb. 22—

The alleged antiwar conspiracy involving the Rev. Philip F. Berrigan and six other persons first came to light in front of the Liberty Bell at Independence Hall in Philadelphia on a snowy St. Valentine's Day two years ago, a Government witness testified today.

The witness said that in that symbolic setting the Rev. Joseph R. Wenderoth, one of the defendants, openly declared that a group to which he belonged broke into three Philadelphia draft boards a week earlier, "putting all but one of them out of action."

The seven peace activists are now on trial in Federal District Court here on charges of conspiracy to kidnap Henry A. Kissinger, assistant to President Nixon for national security affairs; blow up heating tunnels in Washington, and raid draft boards.

J. Clifford Ausley, a tall, bald special agent for the Federal Bureau of Investigation, was the witness today. He said that he and at least four other F.B.I. agents, some of them with tape recorders, had joined a crowd of 170 pacifists and newsmen around Liberty Bell for a "press conference" by antiwar agitators.

Father Wenderoth spoke only two or three minutes, according to Mr. Ausley, saying that his group had raided not only three Philadelphia draft boards but also the General Electric Company offices in Washington.

Judge R. Dixon Herman ordered mention of the General Electric incident stricken from the record after protests by the defense that the Government's

indictment contained no reference to this episode.

Father Berrigan, described by the Government as ring-leader of the conspiracy, was not seen at the Liberty Bell conference, which was heavily photographed by the local police and the Federal agents, nor were any of the other defendants except Father Wenderoth, the court was told.

Objections by Defense

The chief speaker, the court was told, was another Roman Catholic priest, the Rev. Warren Bidwell, who reportedly described the draft board raids to the crowd in some detail. But Father Bidwell's words were not admitted to the record today.

When an Assistant United States Attorney, William M. Connelly, asked Mr. Ausley whether Father Wenderoth "made any objection to what Bidwell said," there was strenuous objection by the defense.

Leonard Boudin, a defense attorney, argued that nothing could be held against a man for failing to stand up at a public meeting and tell a speaker to be quiet. Judge Herman upheld Mr. Boudin's objection.

Mr. Boudin also contended that, whatever his client had said at the Liberty Bell, it could

not be used against the other defendants, citing as a precedent a decision in the conspiracy case against Dr. Benjamin Spock.

The Government was told today that four young women whose testimony might be essential in the corroboration of its key witness, Boyd Douglas Jr., a former convict who was an informer for the F.B.I.; would refuse to testify tomorrow pleading the constitutional right against forced self-incrimination.

The chief prosecutor, William S. Lynch, said that he would reply for full transactional immunity for the four women, which would oblige them to testify or face jail for contempt of court.

The witnesses are Jane Hoover and Betsy Sandel, two former co-eds at Bucknell University, who were dated by Douglas when he was serving as courier between Father Berrigan, in imprisoned the Federal penitentiary at Lewisburg for destroying draft files and the other defendants outside; Patricia Rom, a librarian at Bucknell, and Zoia Horn, formerly chief reference librarian at Bucknell, who is now Mrs. Zoia Horn Galloway of Turlock, Calif.