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BERRIGAN SCORED AS 'PEACE PRIEST'

Lawyer Attacks Harrisburg Seven's Nonviolent Role

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—In closing argument against the Harrisburg Seven, a Government attorney poured scorn today on the Rev. Philip F. Berrigan as a "priest of peace," contending that Father Berrigan and the other alleged antiwar conspirators planned acts of violence against the United States.

"There is no such thing as a nonviolent kidnapping," Assistant Prosecutor William Connelly said. "It is a contradiction in terms."

Mr. Connelly was referring to the first count in the Government's indictment charging that the seven conspired to kidnap the Presidential adviser Henry A. Kissinger, blow up heating tunnels in Washington and raid draft boards in several states.

Summarizing 24 days of testimony, Mr. Connelly defended the Government's chief witness, Boyd F. Douglas, an ex-convict and paid informer for the Federal Bureau of Investigation, from defense charges that Douglas was a provocateur who tried to entrap the Berrigan group by promoting a vapid discussion of kidnapping into an agreement and a plan.

Douglas Defended

"Douglas had nothing to do with the raids on draft boards in Philadelphia, Delaware and Rochester involving some members of the group," Mr. Connelly said.

"Douglas did not initiate the kidnap proposal. And Douglas found that the plan to destroy the utility tunnels already had been formulated by the time he started informing to the F.B.I.," the prosecutor said.

Instead of being "used" by the informer, it was the Berrigan group that tried to use Douglas, Mr. Connelly said.

In a dramatic wind-up, the all, baldish prosecutor approached the defendants and, singling them out, described the educational gap between the defendants, all of them college-trained, and Douglas, a high school dropout who disappeared from public view after testifying for 14 days earlier this month.

Mary Cain Scoblick, a former nun, taught at a college in Washington, Mr. Connally said, and her husband, Anthony, was educated as a Catholic priest.

The Rev. Neil McLaughlin and the Rev. Joseph Wenderoth had "the full advantages of seminary training and were accorded all the respect normally given a priest"; Dr. Eqbal Ahmad, a Pakistani Moslem and the only non-Catholic in the group, was "a scholar, teacher, educator, planner."

Sister Elizabeth McAlister was a nun in the religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary who had taught in college.

'Priest of Peace'

"And finally," Mr. Connally said, waving to the tall, stern-faced priest who was sitting against the wall, "there is Phil Berrigan, the 'priest of peace' whose most famous letter was the kidnap letter, a disparagement of true peace, an obliteration of the distinction—his own—between violence and non-violence."

While Father Berrigan regarded him sternly, Mr. Connelly clasped his hands across his chest and told the jury that the Berrigan group had not even tried to "bring the goodness in Boyd Douglas," a man with a long record of deception and fraud, but merely "wanted to use his criminal talents."

"And now they ask: 'Oh, find us innocent; damn Boyd Douglas!'" Mr. Connelly said.

Yesterday Judge R. Dixon Herman cleared Dr. Ahmad of two of three charges against him, thereby reducing from 20 years to five the maximum penalty the Pakistani could receive. Today in Federal District Court, Mr. Connelly kept referring to Dr. Ahmad as "the man behind the scenes."

The testimony brought out that Dr. Ahmad had never been to the Federal prison at Lewisburg, Pa., where Douglas was imprisoned with Father Berrigan. The testimony also brought out that Dr. Ahmad had never met Douglas and that the case against him rested almost exclusively on the letters of Sister McAlister and on two alleged telephone calls that Douglas said he had received from Dr. Ahmad.

Never 'Surfaced'

The Pakistani had never "surfaced" with the other conspirators except at a rally in the Church of St. Gregory the Great immediately after the F.B.I. found Philip Berrigan hiding in the rectory in April, 1970.

"Eqbal didn't want to be seen with people," Mr. Connelly said. "He wanted to remain in the background."

Dr. Ahmad smiled and winked at the spectators.

J. Thomas Menaker, first to address the jury for the defense, charged that Douglas had fabricated testimony, including a purported discussion with Father Berrigan in which the priest had made a callous remark about an antiwar explosion at the University of Wisconsin.

According to Douglas, Father Berrigan said that the one life lost at the university was nothing compared with the daily toll in Vietnam.