



Released on Bail

Two Baltimore Roman Catholic priests and a former priest, under federal grand jury indictment in an alleged kidnap-bomb conspiracy, stand with their attorney outside the U.S. commissioner's office in Harrisburg, Pa., after they were released in the custody of Lawrence Cardinal Shehan, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Baltimore. From left to right are Father Joseph Wenderoth; Francis X. Gallagher, archdiocesan attorney for Cardinal Shehan who is representing the defendants; Anthony Scolbick, a former priest; and Father Neil McLaughlin. On Scolbick's right is his wife, a former nun. The three men are part of a six-person contingent accused of plotting to kidnap presidential adviser Henry A. Kissinger and blow up heating systems in federal buildings in Washington, D.C. (Religious News Service)

Berrigans Helped on POWs, Congressmen Reveals

Washington, D.C. — (RNS) The Tennessee congressman who challenged FBI director J. Edgar Hoover's charges against the Berrigan brothers last November disclosed here that he consulted with the two imprisoned priests before conferring with North Vietnamese delegates in Paris.

Rep. William R. Anderson (D-Tenn.) confirmed that he and Thomas F. Buck of Montrose, Pa., a peace activist and filmmaker, sought the advice of the priests in Danbury, Conn., federal prison before attempting to negotiate for the release of American prisoners of war in North Vietnam.

According to the Los Angeles Times, Rep. Anderson also admitted he met with North Vietnamese delegate Xuan Thuy in a personal effort to obtain the POWs release.

The congressman apparently made the disclosure because the recent indictment of Father Philip Berrigan, along with five others dashed any hope of the priest-brothers obtaining a visa to go to North Vietnam and appeal for the prisoners' release.

In 1968, Father Daniel Berrigan, the other brother imprisoned for destroying draft records, did go to North Vietnam and helped obtain the release of three U.S. airmen.

Rep. Anderson, 49, a former Navy captain who commanded the nuclear submarine Nautilus

on its historic voyage under the polar ice cap in 1958, indicated he and Buck visited the Berrigans in September. This was during the time they were being investigated for allegedly conspiring to kidnap Presidential advisor Henry A. Kissinger and blow up federal buildings' heating systems. These are the charges on which Father Philip Berrigan, two Baltimore priests and a former priest from Baltimore, a nun, and a Pakistani peace activist, were indicted in Harrisburg, Pa., last week.

Rep. Anderson said he decided on the private peace effort last Summer after visiting South Vietnam and becoming "very pessimistic" about U.S.

involvement there. He later made headlines exposing the notorious "tiger cages" for political prisoners there. In strict secrecy, he enlisted Buck, a friend of the Berrigans, to make contacts in the peace movement. The two talked with leading Protestant churchmen, who arranged the Paris meeting with Thuy.

Rep. Anderson carried a letter from the Berrigans to Thuy in Paris which commended the congressman and urged the North Vietnamese to release the prisoners as a peace gesture. The letter was not censored by prison officials because of Rep. Anderson's immunity as a member of Congress.

'Black Dog' Testimony Helped Convict Bishop

Paris — (RNS) — Reaction to testimony in the trial of the Cameroonian Catholic prelate convicted of plotting government upheaval has now produced counter-charges that investigative methods in the case "bordered on sorcery" and the evidence was insufficient.

Also startling was the contention of the accused churchman, Bishop Albert Ndongmo of Ngongsamba, that he was actually working for the Cameroon government, trying to win over the rebel leader, Ernest Ouandié.

Bishop Ndongmo, 44, was initially sentenced to death for plotting the assassination of President Ahmadou Ahidjo, but the Cameroon leader — after intense pressure from the Vatican — many high-ranking Catholic prelates and world organizations — commuted the sentence to life in prison.

During the trial, nearly 100 persons were accused of plotting to overthrow the government. Bishop Ndongmo denied any part in a conspiracy to kill

the President, but he did not deny having been in contact with so-called rebel leaders.

He told the court he was entrusted by the government in an attempt to "rally over Ouandié" to the regime, but this contention was challenged by President Ahidjo himself.

The trial reportedly aroused some "indignation" among observers when the "methods of investigation" were revealed and when the "proof of guilt" appeared to be based on rather thin evidence.

The investigation consisted of a "black dog" technique, popular in African nations, wherein a black dog is released in a village and all residents are asked to touch it. If they refuse, they are considered liars and told they will die "within a few hours" for their deceit.

Reportedly, in this climate of sorcery and superstition, strange confessions are made and some of these allegedly formed the basis of the government's case.

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