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Where are they now?



On May 17, 1968, Fathers Daniel and Phillip Berrigan led seven fellow Catholics in a raid on the draft-board offices in Catonsville, Md.

The group removed hundreds of files from the Selective Service office, and ignited them in the parking lot with homemade napalm.

This symbolic action drew national attention to the Catonsville Nine, as the activists came to be called.

It also alerted the public that at least a few prominent Catholics opposed the Vietnam War. Charles Meconis noted in *With Clumsy Grace: The American Catholic Left,*

1961-75.

And the Berrigan brothers quickly emerged as the leaders of the movement known as the "Catholic Left."

During the next four years, Catholic leftists were implicated in a series of similar events staged in cities across the United States. Among them was a September, 1970, Rochester action dubbed the Flower City Conspiracy.

But just as suddenly as it emerged on the scene, the Catholic Left seemed to vanish. Its last hurrah, Meconis, observed, was the trial of the Camden 28 in the spring of 1973. That trial resulted in the acquittal of all the defendants.

"At Camden," Meconis wrote, "the Catholic Left finally had its day in court, and then disbanded and quietly passed into history. The Camden trial was the last great gathering of the movement."

The Catholic Left disintegrated through a combination of exhaustion, FBI pressure, the close of the Vietnam War, internal dissension and the jailing of many of the movement's core members, Meconis observed in a telephone interview with the *Catholic Courier*.

But while the Catholic Left may have passed away as a structured movement, its members did not simply cease their activi-

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By Lee Strong