

PROTESTS, RALLIES, DEMONSTRATIONS
RALLY FOR HARRISBURG 13

Pacifica Radio Archives: “Protests, Rallies, Demonstrations”
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Transcript of **Rally For Harrisburg 13**, Introduced by **Father Henry Brown**. Speeches by Tom Davidson, David Poindexter, Sister Jogues Egan, Sister Elizabeth McAlister and Dr. Eqbal Ahmad, about the defendants accused of conspiring to kidnap Henry Kissinger. Recorded at St. Gregory’s Church in Brooklyn, New York City, on March 20, 1971.

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Transcript

RALLY FOR HARRISBURG 13, INTRODUCED BY FATHER HENRY BROWN

FATHER HENRY BROWN: I resigned the Pastor of St. Gregory’s, but I never really left it. And, uh, I’m still Father Brown. I’m what’s called a “new model.” Nobody knows what that means yet, but uh, in other words, you do your Father thing in different ways and then you wait for the Church to catch up and say it’s all right. (LAUGHTER) One of the last times I was on this stage, I guess, was a year ago. Patrick’s Night [St. Patrick’s] and we were singing, “Roody McCorley ghosts die on the bridge of Toome today...” We have that strange Irish-American habit of singing about past rebels and past heroes, past guys who put their bodies on the line. A friend of mine who works with middle Americans and ethnics across the United States tells me that the word is out. The

PROTESTS, RALLIES, DEMONSTRATIONS
RALLY FOR HARRISBURG 13

Berrigans are Jewish. (LAUGHTER AND APPLAUSE) I told that to, uh, Rabbi Balfour Brickner the other night and he said, "Where else would they get their courage?" I hang out sometimes with the clergy and others concerned about Viet Nam and, uh, this brings me, perhaps, to Tom Davidson. Uh, I don't think that's his chief claim to fame, that he hangs out with him, but he's been a Peace Movement organizer with them and they, of course, are an old tried-and-true group in this area of concern about peace and war. He's worked with the Fellowship of Reconciliation and the Committee of Responsibility and Medical Group assisting war-injured children and he's put his body on the line, followed his, uh, his, uh, spirit. He's a conscientious objector. I'm very happy, as our, uh, first speaker, to introduce to you, Tom Davidson, who was listed by the FBI and J. Edgar Hoover, the Justice Department, and all the others, as a co-conspirator. I guess it's becoming the title of honor these days. Tom Davidson. (APPLAUSE)

TOM DAVIDSON: I think it's very clear why the FBI and the Attorney General listed myself, as well as six other people as co-conspirators, or cited us in the indictment as co-conspirators and the reason, for me, is not a reason of legality, but, in fact, it's a reason to try and further intimidate those of us who have taken stands in our opposition to the policies of the government in this country, as well as the opposition to our country's, our government's policy in Indochina. It's trying, through this type of intimidation, to make me and others, and perhaps those of us in the audience who have been intimidated by this, afraid to speak, afraid to think, and afraid to act. And this is the same type of intimidation that has, in fact, worked in the United States, if the reaction of concerned people in this country to the incursion into Laos is any example of what our type of

PROTESTS, RALLIES, DEMONSTRATIONS
RALLY FOR HARRISBURG 13

unified commitment to changing this world is. Where we're more concerned with whether there are American troops going into Laos, or whether they're American-sponsored South Vietnamese troops. But we've, in fact, been intimidated because our reaction was nothing. And I think it's the same type of intimidation which has caused many of us, I guess, to varying extents, to relax our commitment to helping those people of Indochina, our brothers and sisters, those people in Laos who are suffering from the most intense bombing in the history of the Indochinese War, when, in fact, our President says he is winding down the war by bringing American ground troops home, but, in fact, he is mechanizing the war with ten thousand pound bombs, with dropping the equivalent in Indochina of three Hiroshima bombs each week in Indochina, the equivalent TNT.

TOM DAVIDSON: I think in the face of this blatant repression at home, and in face of our government's *increased* opposition to the will of the people, to the will of the seventy-three percent of Americans who say, "We want this war stopped now. We want all troops home now." In face of *this*, our government has continued to escalate tactics at home in repressing people like the Harrisburg 13, like Angela Davis, like the Chicanos in the Southwest, like the Black Panthers throughout the United States. And our response to this, I think, must be very clear, and it must be a response where we say that we will stop our cooperation with our government. Where, in fact, we will have to stop all forms of cooperation that we have with our government, withdraw our support from our government, because our government is no longer representing *us*. (APPLAUSE)

PROTESTS, RALLIES, DEMONSTRATIONS
RALLY FOR HARRISBURG 13

TOM DAVIDSON: I think to speak specifically to some of the charges in the indictment, I would like to put it in somewhat of an indictment against the United States government, because I think this is really the only light in which we can truly understand what has happened through these indictments. To speak of the *conspiracy* of the government, I think that it is imperative that we stop the *kidnapping* by the United States government of two to three million South Vietnamese from the six northern provinces of South Viet Nam, which is happening now, and deporting these two to three million people to the southern areas of South Viet Nam. The kidnapping is going on by the government, has been going on, has made one-half of all the people in Viet Nam refugees, by moving them to other areas. But, I think, what the underlying reason behind this, that we have to be very clear on, too, is to take away from the area around the demilitarized zone, all inhabitants, all civilians, all two to three million people, so that this area can be clear of all people. And many people have postulated, and I think that it certainly has to be thought about, and that's that because this area is now free of human beings, or will be shortly, that there is a very strong implication that this will then be used for the use of tactical, nuclear weapons in Viet Nam. A nuclear holocaust when, in fact, we really don't need a nuclear holocaust because our own mass technology, our, our use of herbicides, which create chromosomal damage, creating monsters in Viet Nam, our constant bombardment of Viet Nam, our constant killing, has done almost the equivalent of nuclear bombing of Viet Nam.

TOM DAVIDSON: Two weeks ago this morning, myself and two other alleged co-conspirators met with Henry Kissinger in the White House to ask Henry Kissinger what

PROTESTS, RALLIES, DEMONSTRATIONS
RALLY FOR HARRISBURG 13

is his responsibility for the war crimes that he is committing. In fact, to ask Henry Kissinger to resign from the government (APPLAUSE). If he cannot affect changes within the governmental structure, I asked him to resign from the government, to totally non-cooperate with the government, as I have resigned from the government. And I think what I'm asking here today is for all of us to resign from the government. (APPLAUSE) Because, in fact, there are too many "good Germans" in the United States today. (APPLAUSE)

TOM DAVIDSON: Now, our responsibility, I think, is *clear*, as I've said, not only to resign, but to increase our non-cooperation by supporting our brothers and sisters, here at home, who are being weeded out by the repression through the money that we pay on April 15th and by non-cooperating, in as we've asked in our statement of the defendants and co-conspirators, by refusing to fight and refusing to pay taxes and refusing to cooperate with the government at all. I think when we're considering this, that there is definitely an urgency about this. There's definitely an urgency in this country, an urgency, I think, that can best be expressed by the words of Dr. Niemoeller [Martin Niemoeller, 1892-1984], who was released from Nazi Germany prison camps after WWII, and said this statement at that time: "When Hitler jailed the Communists, I did not protest, for I was not a Communist. When he jailed the Jews, I did not protest, for I was not a Jew. When he jailed the Trade Unionists, I was silent, for I was not a trade unionist. When he jailed me, there was no one left who could protest." And I think that what's happening in the United States today, to a large extent, is this very same thing, and a modern analogy could be that, "First, they came for the Black Panthers, and I was

PROTESTS, RALLIES, DEMONSTRATIONS
RALLY FOR HARRISBURG 13

not a Black Panther, so I said nothing. And then they came for the Weathermen, and I was not a Weatherman, so I said nothing. And then they came for the Chicanos, shooting them down in the streets of Los Angeles, and I was not a Chicano, so I said nothing. And it can go on and on. But finally, they came for me, and no one was left to say anything.” And I don’t really think that we’re living in Nazi Germany, nor do I think that Nixon is Hitler, but I think for us to negate history is idiotic, and for us to negate our responsibility in light of history and in light of what’s happening in 1971, is also idiotic. What we’re talking about is building a movement to *force* the government to a *stop* and when I’m talking about force, I’m talking about a force that is non-violent in nature, but has many forms and includes such things as tax resistance, as draft resistance, as desertion, or supporting those who desert, as refusal to obey orders, refusing to commit war crimes. I’m also talking about strikes, about organizing massive civil disobedience. And, in fact, to *declare*, and I think that this is what we *must* declare, that if the government does not stop the war, then we will stop the government. (APPLAUSE)

FATHER BROWN: Thank you, Tom. The next man that’s coming up on trial of “harboring.” Now, that word always makes me nervous. (LAUGHTER) It evokes images of closets and things like that, and bird watchers, and you never know who’s gonna be sleeping in your bed kind-of-thing, and people looking under desks and in bread boxes for a skinny Jesuit, and, uh, I suppose if you do it consciously, it’s a very nerve-racking thing and, uh, some of us have done it unconsciously. David Poindexter is, I understand, is going to be tried on April 5th, the day of wrath, for harboring Angela Davis and he represents the New York Citywide Committee to free Angela Davis. He

PROTESTS, RALLIES, DEMONSTRATIONS
RALLY FOR HARRISBURG 13

represents, of course, in his person, his presence here today, the sense that the cause of justice is one, as Tom said so eloquently. “Go not to see for whom the bell tolls, because it tolls for thee.” David Poindexter.

DAVID POINDEXTER (DP): (SUSTAINED APPLAUSE) Thank you. I am charged with the responsibility by Angela Davis to send her love and greetings to the Berrigan Brothers, to their co-defendants, and to their co- “so-called” – conspirators. She understands that the crucial issue of our time is peace and racism, and the Berrigan Brothers have exemplified a principled struggle for peace. (LIGHT APPLAUSE) She also *hopes* that those who are involved in the upcoming demonstrations in Washington will make an *extra* effort to involve Black, poor, and Third World people in those demonstrations. (APPLAUSE)

DP: It is, indeed, humorous to look across this country today and see a Philosophy Professor in jail in California [Angela Davis] and two Jesuits in jail in Connecticut [Philip and Daniel Berrigan], while the modern barbarians wage a war of extermination against people ten thousand miles from their shore. (APPLAUSE) The question of guilt or innocence is really not a question at all. If you look at Angela, all the things that she did in this life, she did openly. She mobilized and organized people quite openly. If you look at the Berrigan Brothers’ lives, you see that they did the same thing. It’s not a question of guilt or innocence at all, it’s a question of whether the American people will let a few *greedy* and corrupt men wage a war in their name against humanity and the

PROTESTS, RALLIES, DEMONSTRATIONS
RALLY FOR HARRISBURG 13

question is how aroused can you become? How much of your life do you wish to commit to the freedom of mankind? That's the question on the agenda today. (APPLAUSE)

DP: In a few weeks, I'll be going to trial and chances are good that I'll be found guilty and I'll be a convicted felon. One of the things that sort of eases that for me is that Daniel and Philip Berrigan are convicted felons, so I'll be in good company. But there has to be an end to madness. We don't want the fraternity to get any larger. So we *hope* that all of you here will, not only in your prayers, but in your day-to-day acts, do everything you can to save political prisoners all across this country and will turn the tide. For *all* that it takes for injustice and evil to triumph is that *good* men do nothing. History will judge you. A hydrogen weapon hangs over your head at this moment, and if you are equal to the times, you won't survive the times. You'll be the dinosaurs. Free Angela. Free the Berrigan Brothers. Free Bobby [Bobby Seale] and Erika [Erika Huggins] and bring peace to the world. Thank you. (APPLAUSE)

FATHER BROWN: Thank you, David and I hope you'll send our love on to Angela. The, uh, next speaker is my second most favorite woman from the County Wexford. My mother came from there. But Mother Jogues, uh – When I met her first, she was very proper, uh, Provincial of the Marymount Sisters (who were very proper indeed), and she's grown in stature and disreputability ever since. (LAUGHTER AND APPLAUSE)

I understand that by the Grand Jury investigations have been asked about the topics of conversations at the parties at St. Gregory's and she can't remember anything, except that everybody was talking at once and drinking out of both sides of their mouth.

PROTESTS, RALLIES, DEMONSTRATIONS
RALLY FOR HARRISBURG 13

(LAUGHTER) Which shows she's a good, sensible Irish woman and, as her lawyer said so well to the press, she's sort of the "type" of what a proper nun should be. I suppose if you read the, uh, Canterbury Tales properly, you'd find her in there. (LAUGHTER AND APPLAUSE) How's that for a learned reference, which only you West Side Liberals would get, uh? Jogues, you're free to speak freely and away from the manuscript, but knowing how, how conservative you are about these things, if you want to stick to your script, too, it's all right, too. Mother Jogues. (APPLAUSE)

SISTER JOGUES EGAN: I think I'm probably here to show that when you've seen one co-conspirator, *alleged* co-conspirator, you haven't seen them all. (LAUGHTER) And I *would* simply like to read the joint public statements of the Defendants and the co-conspirators.

SISTER JOGUES: "We are thirteen men and women who state, with clear conscience, that we are neither conspirators, nor bombers, nor kidnappers. In principal and in fact, we have rejected all acts such as those – such as those of which we have been accused. We are a diverse group united by a common goal, our opposition to the massive violence of our government in its war against Southeast Asia. It is because of this opposition that we have been branded a conspiracy. Our anguish for the victims of the brutal war, has lead all of us to non-violent resistance. Some of the us to the destruction of draft records. But, unlike our accuser, the government of the United States, we have not advocated or engaged in violence against human beings. Unlike the government, we have never lied to our fellow citizens about our actions. Unlike the government, we have nothing to hide.

PROTESTS, RALLIES, DEMONSTRATIONS
RALLY FOR HARRISBURG 13

We ask our fellow citizens to match our lives, our actions, against the actions of the President, his advisors, his Chiefs of Staff, and pose the question: ‘Who has committed the crimes of violence?’ It is, in fact, the government which has engaged in kidnapping on an enormous scale. The deportation of millions of Vietnamese, and now Cambodians and Laotians, from their ancient homes, by force. The abduction of American young men from their families under the Selective Service laws, sending *them* across State lines and international borders, to be killed or maimed. It is the government, which has not only conspired, but carried out the destruction by explosives of three countries: Viet Nam, Laos, and Cambodia, crippling these defenseless people with napalm and pellet bombs, destroying their forests and rice fields. Throughout history, citizens of conscience have engaged in discussions as to how to oppose the overwhelming powers of unjust government. In such discussions, the problems of violence and non-violence have been aired, and an infinite variety of strategies and tactics examined, accepted, or rejected. Such discussion is part of the tradition of free speech in a democratic society, protected by the First Amendment. When our government moves against some citizens, through wiretapping, secret agents, and conspiracy laws, to turn this Constitutional right into a crime, free expression is endangered for all Americans. Our government’s disregard for the Constitutional rights of individuals has marked every stage of the proceedings against us so far. The pre-indictment accusations by J. Edgar Hoover, the arrests without warrants, the excessive bail amounting to ransom, the travel restrictions on Defendants, (which have been raised, of course, since this statement was made), and an atmosphere of intimidation created by the Grand Jury, which began, historically, as a shield to protect the innocent and has become, instead, a sword to oppress the defenseless. Does justice

PROTESTS, RALLIES, DEMONSTRATIONS
RALLY FOR HARRISBURG 13

really exist for Black people, for poor people, or for those who, like us, oppose the policy of war? Based on what has happened to us so far, we can only wonder. We *believe* in the holy Commandment, “Thou shalt not kill,” a Commandment which our government has violated with impunity a million times. We urge our fellow citizens to join us in demanding that our government stop the current invasion of Laos, end its expansion of the war in Southeast Asia immediately, and bring its troops, planes, guns, and bombs home without delay. We ask our fellow citizens to resist this war by refusing to fight, refusing to pay taxes, refusing to cooperate in any way. Finally, we reaffirm our dedication to a world without violence. That violence, which for so long has ravaged so many lands, so many souls.” Thank you. (APPLAUSE)

FATHER BROWN: Thank you, Miss Egan, to use her, uh, her alias that she runs around under. Mother Jogues Egan. I suppose the most photographed Defendant of the Harrisburg group has been a little girl from Jersey, a Professor of Art History – that sounded like male chauvinism – I’m just trying to – It is, really it is down deep. I’ve been called “Father” for too long. (LAUGHTER) At any rate, Lizzie McAlister [Sister Elizabeth McAlister], to put her on equality with Harry, as you know, is where the thing broke, and her picture’s in the paper in old habit and new, kind of characterized the all-out war on the sisterhoods of the United States. As one of the great members of this Movement, one of the great takers of risk, she’s, uh, been, I know, an inspiration to me, and uh, as Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, has been instrumental in turning around the institution, the Order, and the Church, to which she belongs, I give you a great subverter and survivor, Lizzie McAlister. (APPLAUSE)

PROTESTS, RALLIES, DEMONSTRATIONS
RALLY FOR HARRISBURG 13

SISTER ELIZABETH McALISTER (EM): Thank you. (SHUFFLES PAPERS) And what I have to say is going to be quite brief. What I want to say, first of all, is what we have *not* been about. We have *not* been about bombing, kidnapping, or conspiring. More importantly, I'd like to say what we *have* been about, and that's basically three things. We've been about non-violence and we've been about that, in principal, first of all, because we believe it's the only way you can change people and that change means, most of all, change in people. The tools in this process are two: Truth and Love. Truth, which cuts through the lies which are either public or private and Love, which makes it possible to accept the Truth. That's what we've been trying to speak, to speak the truth to our country while still loving it, and speaking the truth because we love it. Speaking the truth to one another. We are opposed to violence, in principal, and also tactically, because the violence of our government is so great that it absorbs and consumes and destroys any violence which tries to meet it, in kind.

EM: Secondly, we've been about a militant opposition to this war. We have each, in our own way, refused to let it be the "forgotten war" that our government wants it to be. And, in the process, have tried to expose the lie that we are winding down the war, and the truth that Vietnamization means technologizing the war and changing the color of the dead. Thirdly, we have been about respect for life, which has let us believe and know that the Asians, whom our government is killing, are our brothers, (APPLAUSE) and that respect for life has come into even our relationships with one another. So, I say to you, that this is what we've been about, and this is what has been labeled a "conspiracy."

PROTESTS, RALLIES, DEMONSTRATIONS
RALLY FOR HARRISBURG 13

Thirdly, I'd like to say a few words about what we *hope* to be about. That, even while we have been tossed into this pickle, and have to deal with it, we don't wish *this* to distract *us* or distract you from the issues that are at-hand in our own country. And those issues are, again, the War – which is right now at the most violent point it has ever been at in our history, yet we're winding down the war. And that the War in Viet Nam is simply the one very dramatic example of a counter-insurgency policy that our government is pursuing across the globe. And secondly, the issue of repression – the slow, steady corrosion of the system of justice in our country, and of the nation's confidence in it. It is at a critical stage. We have a government which is afraid of its people, which is breaking its own laws. And you need only look at the investigations of Senator Samuel Irvin's committee to be convinced of that. What has happened to us is not new. It's been happening to our Black brothers, to Chicanos, to Young Lords [militant Puerto Rican organization in New York], and to young students, for years. It hits home in us because we are, basically, white, middle-class, and over thirty, and probably the first group of many to follow, if the stop is not made here. The point of all this is, what are you willing to do about these two things? This war is your responsibility, and you and we must make our elected officials accountable to us for what they are doing in our name. We must find ways to oppose it, imaginatively, humanly, non-violently. The repression means that *your* freedom is at stake, as ours already is. And what this requires, it seems to me, is getting our wits together, organizing, as opposed to the sort of fracturing that we have in the Movements across this country, but a willingness to join on the issues for the *ends* that are *ends* of us all. Thank you. (APPLAUSE)

PROTESTS, RALLIES, DEMONSTRATIONS
RALLY FOR HARRISBURG 13

FATHER BROWN: Thank you, Elizabeth. I guess, uh, anybody that had been reading that “man from Mars” book, uh, where you ‘grok’ everything. I ‘groked’ this next guy, the Stranger in a Strange Land [Robert Heinlein book, Stranger in a Strange Land]. I “grok” Eqbal, Eqbal Ahmad, Doctor, and perhaps he is the man from Mars who sees us like nobody else can see us, having studied, taken his doctorate here, he’s now a fellow at the Adlai Stevenson Institute of International Affairs, and being interested in revolution and the developing nations, perhaps he sees us and sees our problems, which are also identified as his own, in a very special way as one of the Defendants. Of course, he represents perhaps another kind of terrible thing about the present state of the government of the United States, its fear of the foreigner, which certainly Irishmen and Catholics appreciate it, but they went through it about a century ago – but Dr. Eqbal Ahmad, welcome again to St. Gregory’s. I hope we can, uh, get you out this time without all the chaos of the last time. (APPLAUSE)

EQBAL AHMAD (EA): I would like to speak about the *conspiracy* itself and speak for a few moments on how I see these charges against us, and its relationship to the war in Viet Nam. Of course, first of all, I should say that there are some very baffling things about this whole damn thing. And one of the baffling things, for many people, is my presence in it. (LAUGHTER) “For once,” said The New York Times, “there are some ways in which the government’s case seems to be a little better than what they had done in Chicago or what they had done with Dr. Spock, namely the group is rather homogeneous. It is quite Christian. It is totally pacifist and they’re all Catholics.” (LAUGHTER) So, many people have asked why this fellow, in a rather homogeneous, somewhat well-

PROTESTS, RALLIES, DEMONSTRATIONS
RALLY FOR HARRISBURG 13

constructed group of nuns and priests, and I really think that there are some very nice reasons behind it. One of them might be that the government, for reasons that I am going to come to very soon, the government is *trying* to invoke – and since it has run out of goodness, it can only try to invoke – the worst in the American political culture - and one of the worst, of course, of the American political culture is a paranoid strain in American politics. Now, the Catholics have been the oldies and the goldies of American paranoia, and conspiracies have been a common form of public suspicion of dissenters, and a common form of punishing the dissenters that the government doesn't like. But no conspiracy would be completed without a foreign agitator. (APPLAUSE) And if that particular foreign agitator happens to be a man of color and is an Asiatic, and above all, an expert on revolutions. Ah, it's a fine combination to have around. But no, jokes apart, as you know, we have been very shy of discussing the specifics of the charges against us. In fact, we have *refused* to discuss the specifics of the charges against us, and I think that in a very square manner, I ought to face up to that decision and say a few words on *why* we are not discussing the charges against us. I should like to point out that this is a feeling that *all* the Defendants and co-conspirators have shared with us – that we live in very difficult times. In times when the rulers of the strongest nation in the world are committing crimes against humanity, when they are violating the basic norms of Due Process in their civil liberties at home, common people, like me and like you, have a special responsibility before us. And the responsibility is to set a *tone* of civility, of responsibility. Set a *tone* of correct judicial behavior which is so lacking in the rulers of this nation. (APPLAUSE) Now, you would recall that our indictment has had some extraordinary, extra-judicial beginnings. We were already declared to be guilty, in a most

PROTESTS, RALLIES, DEMONSTRATIONS
RALLY FOR HARRISBURG 13

unusual situation before a Congressional committee by the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation himself. And that was, I think, on November 28th or 29th , when at least one of the Defendants was out of this country. I was out of the country and read about Mr. Hoover's accusations in Paris, and the rest of us who were here were equally shocked, as were my colleagues in France.

EA: The Berrigan Brothers, [UNCLEAR] Irishmen that they are, would not take that lying down. They challenged J. Edgar Hoover via Congressman Anderson to put up or shut up. If you have got facts, start a trial, proceed or else apologize. J. Edgar Hoover neither apologized nor issued indictments. Two and a half weeks passed. The President of America, under considerable pressure from the press, finally calls a press conference and the first question at his press conference concerns this particular statement by J.

Edgar Hoover. "What do you, as a President and as a lawyer, - how do you, as a President and as a lawyer," said a newspaperman, "feel about your statements about the guilt of Charles Manson or Angela Davis and how do you, as President and as a lawyer, explain away or feel about the statements of the FBI Director, J. Edgar Hoover, that two priests of whom both are serving prison sentences, were plotting to kidnap and bomb?" The President replied, "I regret my statement regarding Charles Manson," or something to that affect - I'm not quoting exactly. "As for J. Edgar Hoover, he is a great American, and one of the greatest Americans of our time to whom the American public should be grateful..." etc. etc. etc. And, as for his charges against us for the, as for the priests and allegations against the priests, "The Justice Department," he says, "is looking into it and indictments will follow if there is enough evidence." When the President of a country,

PROTESTS, RALLIES, DEMONSTRATIONS
RALLY FOR HARRISBURG 13

prior to such an indictment, makes such a promise, with that kind of praise for the extra-judicial behavior of the Director of the FBI, you can be pretty sure that, already, in an extra-judicial way, our conviction has occurred. (APPLAUSE)

EA: A few more days pass, a Grand Jury is called, indictments are issued and the, the, the Attorney General himself informs the press that indictments are being - the arrests are being made or have just been carried out. Well, subsequently since then, as you know, Vice President Agnew has joined the fray. In other words, we do not want to continue. I was giving you, as an example, - of course, these people have done many more and much more irresponsible things than this kind of extra-judicial behavior. What I was simply giving you was one example of the kind of extra-judiciality that is being practiced in this country by the highest officials of this nation. And, in such a time, we do not want to continue the extra-judicial trial that was begun in Washington before our indictment. That is one reason why we are unwilling to talk about the specifics of the case. We would *like* you to come to Harrisburg, and we would like, because we are convinced that given a fair jury and a fair trial, we shall not only *prove* our innocence, but the additional guilt of men whom we consider as at least deserving of trial as criminals of war.

(APPLAUSE)

EA: We would like to invite you to Harrisburg because, there in the court of law, we would *hope* that the truth will come out. We shall *hope* that we shall point out, and bring into full relief, the conspiracy of those who have been killing and maiming now for several years in Indochina. The conspiracy of those, of the war makers who have been

PROTESTS, RALLIES, DEMONSTRATIONS
RALLY FOR HARRISBURG 13

indicting the peacemakers, the conspiracy of those who would make us scapegoats, or poor and insignificant men like Captain Calley, while themselves escaping, literally escaping, even the censure of humanity for the crimes that they are committing. And I pray, and so do the Defendants, other Defendants, that he shall be acquitted. He *should* be acquitted because, while he is guilty, or he may be guilty, of the specific crime committed in the village of My Lai, he is no more guilty than were the German soldiers who committed a specific crime during World War II.

EA: Now, what does, then, what is, then, the meaning of the My Lai trial? Let me say a very simple – make a simple statement that is going to shock you, but I am speaking from some knowledge about revolutionary warfare and, more specifically, about some knowledge about what is going on in Viet Nam. My Lai was one of the most humane. My Lai was one of the finest, one of the better hours of Americans in Viet Nam, because this is one of the very few massacres Americans have committed in Viet Nam that brought the killer and the killed together, that created a *measure*, at least a measure, of human contact between them. In which there was at least a measure of feeling and emotion involved. For Viet Nam, otherwise, is a story of mechanized massacres. A kind of mechanized massacres which cannot be filmed by TV cameras, which are not being pictured in Life Magazine, where you do not see the blood of the victims before the victims literally disappear in ashes after a B52 strike, or after a long-range artillery attack, or after an M104 strike. In a country which is now strewn with about 5 million human sensors which cannot distinguish even between men and animals, or human beings and animals, but always bring that the movement, the slightest movement of a warm body, or

PROTESTS, RALLIES, DEMONSTRATIONS
RALLY FOR HARRISBURG 13

a warm mass somewhere, bring air strikes almost automatically. In this kind of a *highly* mechanized war that is called Vietnamization, and I'm not going to, to bother you with the details of Vietnamization and what it means in that kind of war, My Lai was one of the more human, one of the finer hours of Americans.

EA: What then does the trial of Lieutenant Calley mean? What does it symbolize to you or me? To me, it symbolizes the *powerlessness* of the American people. To me, it symbolizes the extreme *cynicism* of a government that is not only willing to send people to die and kill in an unknown, strange land, strewn with booby traps, but is also willing to bring them home and then give them trials when stories break out, and execute them, or at least Defend them again. But it symbolizes the extreme *brutality*, the bruteness of government power in this country, and one that's almost beginning now to reach the fringes of fascism. I said *only* the fringes. And that is why I say we *pray* that poor, Lieutenant Calley shall be acquitted.

EA: Another simple thought I want to leave with you, and that concerns, again, our indictment. I said that to my co-Defendants last evening, because it is a very frightening thing to confess, and I'm going to make that confession once again. I've done it two or three times now with public, but this is the first time I'm doing it in New York. When I was arrested on January 12th and came out on bail, from January 12th to February 8th, when we were arraigned in Harrisburg, none of us were allowed by the Judge to move out of the city in which we were living, so that, as Defendants, we could not see each other for three weeks and a half. We first met, as a group, in Harrisburg on February 6th

PROTESTS, RALLIES, DEMONSTRATIONS
RALLY FOR HARRISBURG 13

and I want to make this confession because it is very frightening. It is frightening for you and it's frightening for me. I knew – I read the indictment and I knew – that I was not guilty. I was also very sure that no one in my group was guilty of those charges, but God knows that somewhere, somewhere in the back of my mind, there was a lurking fear, a question lurking. Is there something somebody knows that I do not know that may have relevance to this case? For I could not keep but thinking, how the hell could the government do this without anything? Maybe somebody else knows something about some other group and so on. And it was very (UNCLEAR) to arrive in Harrisburg because we couldn't possibly *talk* about this on the phone. We were paranoid at that point. So we had to wait until we met in Harrisburg. And when we first met in Harrisburg, it was very pathetic to watch that every one of the Defendants, four others in other words. Phil we hadn't yet seen before we saw him two days later. Every one of them – We sort of grouped together in a pathetic manner and took the indictment and each one of us were asking each other the same question. “Do you know anything more than I do? (SOME LAUGHTER) Is there anything to this damn thing that we do not know? Do you know – do you know anything? Have you heard anything? Is there any other group that is (UNCLEAR)?” Very frightening. And then we went to see Phil and he was writing, you know, in this federally marshally guarded thing and he writes on a piece of paper, “Is there any truth to this? Do you know anything?” We said, “No, no, no, no,” five ‘no’s’ and he bellows like an Irishman, “Ha, ha, ha!” I thought you people might – somebody might have gone crazy.”

PROTESTS, RALLIES, DEMONSTRATIONS
RALLY FOR HARRISBURG 13

EA: Ladies and gentlemen, what I'm trying to say is, it is very frightening, the power of suggestion, a powerful government can have. The mere power of suggestion it has, even with people who are indicted in there. I kept thinking, as I was coming back from that trip, I kept thinking, "My God, if such a feeling could exist in the back of *my* mind about us, is there something somebody knows that I don't know, how does the public feel, including the sympathetic public? And then, you know, the thought struck me, and I'll end with that, the thought struck me that our indictment, in a very genuine sense, is the domestic equivalent of the Tonkin Gulf incident. You remember that one? Nineteen Hundred and Sixty-Four, President Lyndon B. Johnson – Lord, I'm beginning to feel nostalgic about that man – (LAUGHTER AND APPLAUSE) – Yep. In the year of the Lord, nineteen hundred and sixty-four, Lyndon B. Johnson *told* the American people and the American Congress, he gave them very bad news. He told the American people and the Congress that a North Vietnamese PT boat had invaded the Pacific Fleet.

(LAUGHTER) Just imagine it. A North Vietnamese PT boat invaded the Pacific Fleet, which consists of at least five aircraft carriers and carries on it two hundred and fifty-six thousand well-armed soldiers. *That* was invaded by the PT boat of a country that President Nixon rightly calls a fourth-rate power and which Navally-speaking isn't a power at all. And yet, he got away with it. The power of suggestion was such, yet the credibility of the President was such that not only the American people believed it, but the American Congress passed a Resolution that became, in the words of President Johnson, the equivalent of a Declaration of War. In only six years, look at the price that somebody has paid for your beliefs in this government. Six years, four to five million Vietnamese and Indochinese casualties later, eight to ten million refugees later, the

PROTESTS, RALLIES, DEMONSTRATIONS
RALLY FOR HARRISBURG 13

equivalent of fifty to one hundred Hiroshimas later, and three hundred thousand American casualties later, the United States Congress, after a series of hearings and inquiries, discovers, first, that there was no truth in the allegations of a PT boat invading the Pacific Fleet, that the whole Tonkin Gulf Resolution was based on a lie, and that it ought to be repealed. So, a Democratic process worked and a mistake was recognized and, in between, millions have been killed and maimed, a country destroyed, a culture threatened.

EA: In this particular case, imagine the image of five pacifist, Catholic priests and nuns and one half-starved looking Pakistani, hungry-looking chappie, have been accused of plotting to kidnap, plotting to *kidnap* Dr. Henry Kissinger, and blow up, with the use of explosives, blow up the heating system in Washington, D.C. As good an image as a PT boat invading the Pacific Fleet. And the point is, that if they get away with this one, it is going to become the Tonkin Gulf of repression in America. Because you see, this is the good technique of striking at the worst possible level. If you get away with that one, you can get away with a lot. And I wish I had really time to do the thing that I am specialized at, and then to talk about the War, but it is late and we don't have time. Some other time. But I want to leave you with this feeling because we can't afford any more to just put in money, because we are all threatened. *You* are all threatened. As I came out of that prison, one of my colleagues, who is a conservative man, and who is the President of Chicago's biggest bank – He is my colleague because he is a Fellow of the Adlai Stevenson Institute this year – had tears in his eyes. He differs with me *violently* on some issues, but he had tears in his eyes and he kept shaking his head and said, "Eqbal, I can't

PROTESTS, RALLIES, DEMONSTRATIONS
RALLY FOR HARRISBURG 13

take it anymore, because if it could happen to you, it could happen to me.” Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

NOTES:

1. The Berrigan brothers, Philip and Daniel, both Catholic priests and anti-war activists, were serving time in Federal prison for breaking into a Maryland Draft Board and burning draft records, when they were indicted on federal charges of conspiring to kidnap U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. Others indicted as co-conspirators included Mother Jagues Egan, Sister Elizabeth McAlister (who eventually left her order and married Philip Berrigan), Tom Davidson, and Dr. Eqbal Ahmad.
2. Philosophy professor Angela Y. Davis, was a member of the Communist Party and the Black Panther Party. In 1971, she was imprisoned on murder and kidnapping charges (for which she was later acquitted). David Poindexter was with her when she was apprehended.
3. Bobby Seale and Erika Huggins were members of the Black Panther Party leadership, who were imprisoned at the time.
4. Dr. Eqbal Ahmad (1933-1999) was a Pakistani writer, journalist, and anti-war activist. He was an indicted co-conspirator at the time of this rally.
5. Dr. Benjamin Spock (1903-1998), pediatrician and author of “Common Sense Baby and Child Care,” the permissive ‘Bible’ of the parents of baby boomers, was a vocal critic of U.S. involvement in Viet Nam.
6. Lieutenant William Calley was convicted of participating in the murder of Vietnamese civilians in the wartime event which was known as the “My Lai Massacre.”

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