

Daniel Berrigan's Speech to Arabs Stirs a Furor Over Award

By RALPH BLUMENTHAL

Plans to honor the Rev. Daniel J. Berrigan with a peace award here have run into opposition following the report of a speech he gave recently to an Arab audience describing Israel as "a criminal Jewish community" and a "nightmare" that "manufactures human waste."

As a result of the speech, delivered by Father Berrigan on Oct. 19 before the Association of Arab University Graduates in Washington, the American Jewish Congress has protested plans to present the Jesuit priest the Gandhi Peace Award for antiwar activities, at the Community Church of New York on Jan. 9.

Agreeing with the complaints and terming the speech "so prejudiced as to invite characterizations of anti-Semitism," the Rev. Donald S. Harrington of the Community Church, at 40 East 35th Street, said he was reconsidering his decision to present the award.

Released From Prison

The award is sponsored by an organization called Promoting Enduring Peace, headed by the Rev. Roy Pfaff, in New Haven. Neither the group nor Father Berrigan was immediately reachable for comment.

Father Berrigan was released from the Federal prison in Danbury, Conn., in January, 1972, after serving two years and



The New York Times
The Rev. Daniel J. Berrigan

three months of a three-year sentence for burning draft records in Catonsville, Md., in 1968.

He has just returned to the United States after a semester teaching English and religion at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, Canada. His brother, the Rev. Philip Berrigan, spent 39 months in Danbury Federal prison on related charges and was released last December.

The Rev. Daniel Berrigan's speech on the Arab-Israeli conflict drew little public attention when it was made two months

ago. The controversy began with publication of the text and a Jewish response in American Report, an organ of Clergy and Laity Concerned.

Taking pride in the fact that he was a "non-expert" — experts, Father Berrigan said, "fiddle while the world burns" — and acknowledging that the subject was an emotional one, he first chastised the Arabs for what he called "their capacity for deception" and "their contempt for their own poor."

Turning to Israel, he characterized it, along with South Africa and the United States, as "a settler state" seeking "a biblical justification for crimes against humanity."

While the world knew "criminal Christian communities," Father Berrigan said, "we had never known a criminal Jewish community."

'Imperialist Faces'

Recovering from the Holocaust, "the Jews," he continued, "arose like warriors, armed to the teeth... Israel entered the imperial adventure. She took up the imperial weapons, she spread abroad the imperial deceptions."

In the space of 25 years, Father Berrigan said, "the slave became master, and created slaves."

"The coinage of Israel is stamped with the imperialist faces whose favor she has courted; the creation of an élite

of millionaires, generals and entrepreneurs," he stated. "And the price is being paid by Israel's Oriental Jews, the poor, the excluded, prisoners."

The same racist ideology of the Nazis was now being used by Israel, "fostering the myth of the 'barbarian Arab,'" Father Berrigan declared.

It was a tragedy, he said, "that in place of Jewish prophetic wisdom, Israel should launch an Orwellian nightmare of double talk, racism, fifth-rate sociological jargon, aimed at proving its racial superiority to the people it has crushed."

The dream of Israel, he asserted, "has become a nightmare."

"Israel," he continued, "has not abolished poverty and misery; rather, she manufactures human waste, the by-products of her entrepreneurs, the military-industrial complex. . . . Israel has not freed the captives; she has expanded the prison system, perfected her espionage, exported on the world market that expensive blood-ridden commodity, the savage triumph of the technologized West: violence and the tools of violence.

"Her absurd generals, her military junk, are paraded on national holidays before the narcotized public. The model is not the kingdom of peace, it is an Orwellian transplant, tak-

en bodily from Big Brother's bloody heart."

Were he a Jew in Israel, Father Berrigan said, he would be living as in America — in resistance to the state. And, he said, he would also probably be either hunted by the police or in prison.

He also charged that "many American Jewish leaders were capable of ignoring the Asian holocaust in favor of economic and military aid to Israel." However, he praised American Jews in general for not following their leaders in accepting "the bait offered by Nixon."

The text of the speech in American Report drew a sharp rebuttal from Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, president of the American Jewish Congress, in a subsequent issue.

Achievements Cited

Rabbi Hertzberg charged Father Berrigan with ignoring the antiwar efforts of Jewish leaders and the Jewish community and cited some of Israel's social achievements to refute what the rabbi called the priest's picture of "unrelieved wickedness."

"Let us call all this by its right name," Rabbi Hertzberg wrote: "old-fashioned theological anti-Semitism."

Following complaints by the Jewish Congress about the peace award, Dr. Harrington wrote both Father Berrigan and

Mr. Pfaff that unless Dr. Harrington could make a statement dissociating himself from Father Berrigan's sentiments, it might be better for someone else to present the award.

In any case, Dr. Harrington said, Father Berrigan should have opened himself to a dialogue by making his speech to a Jewish audience.