

What's a Nice Moslem Like You Doing...?

By JOHN DASH

When Eqbal Ahmad was arrested in connection with the Kissinger kidnaping conspiracy, reporters sped to the Pakistan home of his 85 year old mother, and asked her what she thought of the matter.

"It's all right with me as long as he is on the side of justice," she said.

But when informed that most of the others arrested in the same matter were Roman Catholics, the petite Moslem lady exclaimed: "How the hell did he get mixed up with THEM?"

Ahmad, a soft spoken 40 year old fellow of the University of Chicago, who has been indicted with Father Philip Berrigan, SSJ, and several others charged with plotting to kidnap presidential adviser Henry Kissinger and to blow up heating tunnels in Washington, D.C., thinks there are two reasons for his connection with the Catholic radical left.

The first, he says, is in the nature of the Catholics themselves.

After describing his friendship with Father Daniel Berrigan, SJ, imprisoned brother of Father Philip, whom he knew at Cornell University, he says "for years they (Catholics) were the golden oldies of politics."

Then with the advent of the carnage in Vietnam "These

Catholics were concerned that they would not become the contemporary equivalent of German Catholics during World War II."

The second reason, he says, is that the government feels "no conspiracy is complete without a foreign agitator." When the agitator is a "dark Asian expert on revolutions" all the better.

Dr. Ahmad is widely known for his work in the political nature of the Third World. He has published frequently in *The Nation* and *New Republic*.

He argues, unlike his fellow co-defendants in the case, that he is not an "ideological pacifist." Yet he feels that violence engaged in by a minority (which he considers the peace movement) is counter productive, "is very unpolitical and adventuristic."

"Organized violence succeeds," he says, "only in the time of a total national effort. It succeeds only when the grievance is shared by all."

"I'm a political pacifist," he says.

He feels that the use of violence legitimizes the violence the U.S. government is exerting on its own citizenry and on other peoples.

"The silly bombing of the Capitol and (what is it we are charged with?) blowing up the

heating system in Washington, legitimize the incredible crimes of the government."

Weighing heavily on his mind is the influence the Executive department of the U.S. is exerting on the Judiciary. "I am becoming increasingly frightened by the avenues for justice closing down," he says.

"We are now dealing directly with the lawlessness of this government. Even the Justice Department, the *New York Times* reported, can find no precedent for releasing some evidence, as they have done and attaching it to the indictment."

In referring to recent Justice Department news releases of correspondence to and from Father Philip Berrigan, Ahmad grows startlingly angry.

"Every time we sought an opening, which a democratic society affords, we found that had been closed to us," he says. "I would hope that the public and more institutions would inquire into the extraordinary irregularities in this case. Unless they begin to do that, this country is going to be in very serious trouble."

He described the judiciary as "really rotten." "In my Pakistan I grew up in a colonial system. But God knows we had a judiciary with a sense of justice."



Dr. Eqbal Ahmad at Rochester's Third Presbyterian Church.

"Whether we go to trial, ala the Chicago 7, is entirely in the hands of the government. If I think the Judge is rotten, I will tell him 'you are a rotten judge.'"

"Now we are dealing with the lawlessness of the court. It has no relief from the extra judicial influences of this government and is incapable of protecting itself," he says.

14 Bishops Question U.S. Vietnam Policies

Boston — (RNS) — Fourteen Roman Catholic bishops in New England have questioned the "wisdom and morality" of U.S. Vietnam policies, especially unlimited bombing, "Vietnamization" and the expansionist tendencies of U.S.-backed combat forces.

Their pastoral, published in diocesan newspapers throughout Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont, called the Vietnam conflict "one of the central moral problems facing our nation today," and a "grave national crisis" that the bishops felt obliged to respond to.

Noting that peace is threatened in other areas besides Vietnam, the bishops said that Southeast Asia is "our specific concern" because of direct U.S. involvement.

The pastoral was issued by 14 prelates who serve dioceses in the four states of the Northern New England Province, headed by Archbishop Humberto Medeiros of Boston. It had been under development for several months.

The letter observed that the bishops are not "oblivious to the well-known wanton and immoral disregard for innocent lives and prisoners of war shown by the other side," but added:

"Obviously, we cannot allow their actions to become the norm by which we judge the morality of our own."

Observing that their primary moral concern is for the "consequences of American policy in Vietnam," the bishops said they did not question the sincerity of U.S. officials. But, they said, if the evidence they see and hear is accurate, "we are constrained by conscience to question the wisdom and morality of at least some aspects of our policy."

They questioned the use of massive air power which has resulted in "thousands of civi-

lian casualties" and the practices of search and destroy missions which inflict death and injury on thousands of innocent victims. They said:

"If these policies have in fact caused the civilian deaths reported, then we must sadly but resolutely affirm that they violate the principle of civilian immunity from direct and indiscriminate attack and therefore merit the severest moral censure."

Of the Vietnamization process aimed at turning over combatant roles to South Vietnam's armed forces, the bishops said the "possibility of increased mechanization of the war is fraught with troubling moral consequences."

They asserted that it was precisely this involvement which apparently caused the "already great number of civilian casualties and refugees."

Referring to the U.S. Catholic bishops' pastoral of 1968, *Of Human Life*, the New England prelates said the passage of three years has given new emphasis to the question of "proportionality" of war and "deepened our doubts about the justice of further prosecuting of this war."

Besides Archbishop Medeiros, those signing the letter were:

Archbishop Joseph Tawil, Apostolic Exarch of Melkite Rite Catholics in the U.S.; Bishop Christopher J. Weldon of Springfield, Mass.; Bishop Robert F. Joyce of Burlington, Vt.; Bishop Ernest J. Primeau of Manchester, N.H.; Bishop Peter L. Gerety of Portland, Me.; Bishop Bernard J. Flanagan of Worcester, Mass.; Auxiliary Bishop Thomas J. Riley of Boston; Auxiliary Bishop Jeremiah F. Minihan of Boston; Auxiliary Bishop Timothy J. Harrington of Worcester; Auxiliary Bishop James J. Gerrard of Fall River, Mass.; and Bishop James L. Connolly, retired bishop of Fall River.

Washington Center to Seek Fresh Ideas for a Better World

New York (RNS) — Father Pedro Arrupe, superior general of the Society of Jesus, announced here that a center for the study of peace, justice and development would be opened soon in Washington, D.C.

He made the announcement at the United Nations, where he talked with Secretary General U Thant.

"The intention is to develop fresh ideas . . . and to offer a forum where the search for justice and authentic human development can be worked out; to help to give meaning and direction to man's efforts to build a better world," he told U Thant.

The U.N. Secretary General replied that the directions of his organization and of the Jesuits "are clear, and our plans have been laid out in a global strategy and programmed for integrated economic development."

Father Arrupe said the Washington Center of Concern would seek an affirmative answer to the question, "Can a religious group formalize a radical questioning process for society and lead others to ask the same fundamental questions?"

Although the North American Jesuits and the U.S. Catholic Conference are aiding in the initial stages of the project, the center will remain neither exclusively Western nor Roman Catholic.

"We are not alone in this," he told newsmen. "We know our concern for man's dignity and freedom is shared by all the Christian churches, by the great non-Christian religions of the world, and by men of good will who do not subscribe to religious faith."

He said that to this end the Society of Jesus accepted the invitation of the U.S. Catholic Conference to carry out a feasibility study over the past few months concerning the usefulness of launching such a center. He noted that similar centers had already been established in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Effective representation of

the world's oppressed on both the staff and the directing board holds high priority. Exploratory consultation with other religious leaders have already begun and will intensify in the months ahead, reporters were told.

Msgr. Marvin Bordelon of the U.S. Catholic Conference suggested that future efforts might resemble the grape boycott or the current campaign to challenge Gulf oil activities in Portuguese-controlled Africa.

Churches and church-related organizations whose endowments own a significant share in American business may be asked to use their ownership to

push for corporate policy change when policy is seen to be "dehumanizing."

Among difficult questions to be posed and acted on through this center, it was said, is whether churches or any corporation can earn money from militarism, racism and other kinds of exploitation without hypocrisy.

In his talk with U Thant, Father Arrupe emphasized that for the Catholic Church it is a matter of prime concern, overriding its domestic problems, that millions are still poor and insecure and that aid from richer countries falls short of an acceptable minimum.

Pope Stresses Social Gospel

Vatican City — (RNS) — Pope Paul VI declared here that Catholic workers need not look for social teachings in "ideological inspirations" other than provided by the Gospel as interpreted through the social teachings of the popes and Vatican II.

He addressed members of a pilgrimage of the Catholic Movement of German Workers who were in Rome as part of their observance of the 80th anniversary of Pope Leo XIII's social encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, issued in 1891.

Speaking in German, the pontiff told the workers that the Church has words of guidance to offer to modern man on social problems.

President's Welfare Talk Rapped

Washington, D.C. (RNS) — A spokesman for the National Conference of Catholic Charities characterized President Nixon's remarks on welfare to the recent Republican governors' meeting as "misleading and unfortunate."

He urged that the President "manifest a humanitarian and compassionate spirit" for as many as 50 per cent of those eligible for welfare who do not receive it.

"These," he said, "are the words of Jesus Christ in the Gospel, as interpreted through the social teachings of Popes and Council—words that contain all that is necessary for man to achieve earthly happiness and maintain his dignity."

"Christ's word offers a clear vision and a just appreciation of all earthly goods because it frames them within the context of eternal values and goods that men, by divine will, have been invited to share," he said.

"We must be convinced," he emphasized, "that justice, truth and charity, as announced by the Gospel can bring about true social progress, economic balance, order and peace" in today's "agitated" world.

Msgr. Lawrence J. Corcoran, secretary of the NCCC, said to "imply that the elimination of welfare chiselers will save a large proportion of welfare money is . . . misleading."

Msgr. Corcoran praised the President for reiterating that welfare reform is high on the domestic priority list and recommended a federally financed and administered program, with uniform standards.