

reporter's notebook

Travellers' advisory: it will be safe to travel in California during 1982. The Jupiter Effect has been cancelled until further notice.

The what?

You must be a University student. Sixty percent of you needed a hint in a recent informal poll before you remembered what the Jupiter Effect was.

It has to do with planetary alignments, earthquakes on the San Andreas fault.

... And California falling into the ocean in 1982?

It was supposed to, but it probably won't. Let me explain — it'll come back to you.

Once every 170 years or so, all the planets line up, more or less, on the same side of the sun. That alignment magnifies the planets' gravitational pull on the sun, and causes extra sunspot activity in that particular sunspot cycle.

Is that true?

Sure. Unless you ask the local astronomer, but never mind him.

Why, what did he say?

James Kemp of the University physics department says sunspots are more complicated than that.

OK, OK. So what next?

So sunspots cause earthquakes.

At least they're associated with increased earthquakes, you can look at the historical records and see for yourself.

Who thought all this up?

Two scientists, John Gribbin and Stephen Plagemann, in 1974. They thought sunspots might cause earthquakes because the solar wind is increased during sunspot activity.



Graphic by Max DeRungs

Solar wind is ionized, magnetized particles that travel outwards from the sun at nearly the speed of light. When it comes close to the earth, it produces effects such as disrupting radio waves, causing the Aurora Borealis.

... And earthquakes?

They're not positive. Could be because the solar wind causes changes in weather patterns, which cause the shifting of large air masses over the planet's surface, which in turn — am I going too fast? — causes a tiny little change in the length of time it takes the earth to rotate, and that might be just the jolt that.

... that shakes up the San Andreas fault.

Bingo.

Let me get this straight. Planets lining up cause extra sunspots, which increases the solar wind, which induces more bad weather, which changes the earth's rotation time and that produces an earthquake.

Who ever heard of weather patterns causing earthquakes?

You sound like Brian Baker in the geology department. He couldn't think of a single reason why sunspots could possibly cause earthquakes.

The theory would be perfectly reasonable, except the sun isn't behaving exactly right.

One of the theory's authors said last year that the maximum sunspot activity already occurred during this sunspot cycle and now is decreasing, before the planets even got a chance to line up in 1982.

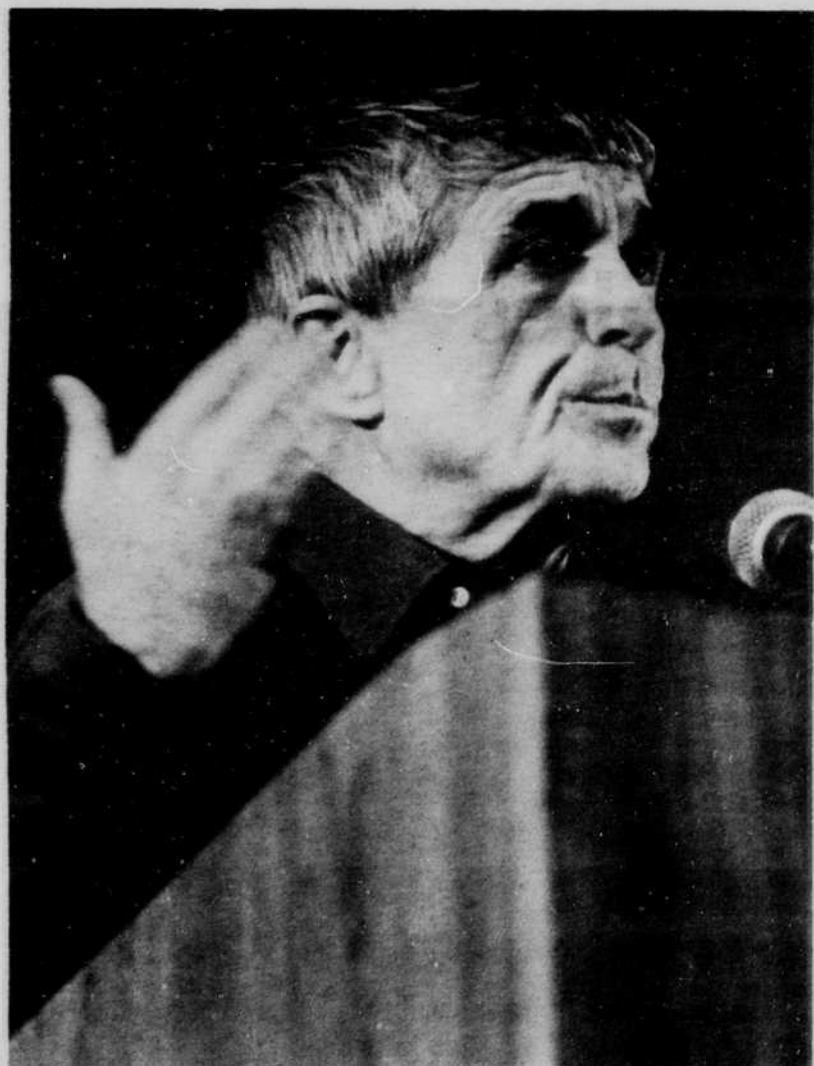
He said maybe he got the year for maximum sunspot activity wrong, but there were extra earthquakes.

But not on the San Andreas fault.

A few quakes shook the fault up, but it was nothing out of the ordinary. I guess he was disappointed.

Sounds like a merchant of confusion and terror.

Funny thing, Baker said the same thing.



Daniel Berrigan, pacifist

Photo by David Corby

Activist pacifist says U.S. faces 'cheap death'

"I don't believe pacifists belong in a corner," radical priest Daniel Berrigan said from the EMU ballroom stage on Friday night.

The man famous for burning draft records during the Vietnam War gave a gentle but resolute speech on Americans' "spiritual enslavement to the main project of a dying culture: cheap death."

Reflecting on his latest year of working with the peace movement on the east coast, Berrigan talked about the "social numbing" he sees in the United States.

There is a "murderous indifference" to the value of human life and — as in Germany under Hitler — the judicial system is corrupt, accepting the elimination of "unprofitable" and "unproductive" people, he said.

Berrigan also indicted the trend of "normalizing the abnormal," in which nuclear arms are considered normal, while those supporting the truly normal are outlawed and jailed. He proposed an "active pacifism," suggesting that any social change worth having has come about by people breaking unjust laws in deference to a higher law.

Audience question topics ranged from WWII to draft registration to fasting in Ireland. On Reagan's decision on the draft Ber-

rigan said it is a "testing of the waters" by American leaders to see what they can get away with.

Bobby Sands and others who fasted in Ireland participated in an "honorable and important expression of conscience," he said.

Vietnam veteran Ron Phillips expressed disgust over the naming of nuclear submarines U.S.S. San Francisco (after Saint Francis) and U.S.S. Corpus Christi (Body of Christ). Berrigan agreed and suggested, tongue in cheek, that future names could include U.S.S. Yahweh and U.S.S. Buddha.

On nuclear arms limitation he said, "There cannot be anything except tyranny in the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. with (an) arms race."

Berrigan answered a question on individual action by telling listeners to look around for nuclear installations and think-tanks: "Such property should not be allowed to pollute the human landscape." He stressed tax resistance because "they can't make their bombs without your money."

Encapsulating the rally-like atmosphere of the evening, Berrigan wrapped it up by saying, "good (pacifist) work and moral understanding heartens us coast to coast."

He left the stage, but not to a corner.

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