

Correspondence

Paul Nitze Responds

To the Editors: The tone of Mr. Hudson's comment (Correspondence, *Worldview*, June) reflects Congressman Carr's well-known "graciousness of style." As to substance, I believe the following to be pertinent.

The particular section of Philip Morrison's article that I had in mind when I responded to Mr. Hudson's question [See "Dealing With the Soviet Union," the transcript of Mr. Nitze's presentation at a CRIA Conversation and the question and answer session that followed (*Worldview*, March)] reads as follows:

"From the earliest days of the ICBM's it has been recognized that a couple of hundred missiles would suffice as a second-strike deterrent, to be launched if an adversary should strike first without warning. That number can be found today in the latest reports of the Department of Defense. The U.S., however, maintains at least 9,000—45 times 200—strategic missile warheads, and its leaders are reluctant to reduce that number."

The language is unspecific as to how many launch vehicles would carry the 200 objects (is it missiles or is it a forty-fifth of 9,000 warheads?) referred to. In any case, I read it as being consistent with two submarine loads. The paragraph from which Mr. Hudson prefers to quote is similarly imprecise; it leaves unspecified the number of missiles or warheads the authors would eventually desire per launch vehicle. What is clear is that they are recommending some minimum deterrent adequate only for a self-disarming, self-defeating revenge attack against evacuated buildings and civilians.

With respect to Mr. Daniel's letter I have little comment to offer. The questions he lists appear to me to be pertinent. There remains the problem of finding common ground on the basis of which solidly based answers can be sought. It is necessary, at a minimum, to have an agreed summary of the SALT II terms and agreed projections as to the probable U.S. and Soviet strategic deployments during the period of the SALT II treaty, assuming

a continuation of the approved U.S. five-year defense program and estimated Soviet programs consistent with SALT II. At a maximum, data covering a number of important issues must be analyzed and sorted out before truly considered judgments can be arrived at.

Much of this work has been done. It keeps being obscured and made more difficult by demagogic, oversimplified, or actually misleading statements. The more important the issues the more difficult it is to impose rigor on the debate.

Chinese Sources

To the Editors: In a country as large and diverse as China all sorts of things happen. The Londons have given us some useful information about how China's food system has problems. Illegal migrants to cities lack ration books and have trouble getting food. Cadres have reported false data, which made government plans for procurement or distribution of relief supplies difficult. As China's agriculture is increasingly dependent on industrial supplies, it can be hurt by disruptions in industry and transportation. These problems have been aggravated by factional struggles associated with the succession struggle and by bad weather.

The Londons interpret these reports of problems as symptomatic of the overall situation, but this conclusion seems unwarranted. Many of the reports have emerged in Chinese political rhetoric to attack one faction. They must be used as cautiously as all other reports on China, many of which advocate policy rather than illuminate reality. The fact is that virtually no systematic surveys have been done in China, so neither the Londons, nor I, nor the Chinese Government know the precise occurrence of hunger.

The Londons are correct that macro statistics cannot capture the nuance of a concrete, specific situation. However, statistics do help interpret where on the broad distribution of reality a specific report is likely to lie. It is

(continued on page 57)

WORLDVIEW

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of *Worldview* is to place public policies, particularly in international affairs, under close ethical scrutiny. The Council on Religion and International Affairs (CRIA), which sponsors the journal, was founded in 1914 by religious and civic leaders brought together by Andrew Carnegie. It was mandated to work toward ending the barbarity of war, to encourage international cooperation, and to promote justice. CRIA is independent and non-sectarian. *Worldview* is an important part of CRIA's wide-ranging program in pursuit of these goals.

Worldview is open to diverse viewpoints and encourages dialogue and debate on issues of public significance. It is edited in the belief that large political questions cannot be considered adequately apart from ethical and religious reflection. The opinions expressed in *Worldview* do not necessarily reflect the positions of CRIA. Through *Worldview* CRIA aims to advance the national and international exchange without which our understanding will be dangerously limited.

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**John F. Kennedy:
Catholic and Humanist**
by Albert J. Menendez
(Prometheus; 144 pp.; \$12.95)

An admiring effort to depict JFK as a religiously serious and reflective Catholic who made a major contribution to shaping American politics and morality. The argument for JFK's piety is, however, excessively dependent upon the testimony of his mother and his friend Cardinal Cushing. More valuable contributions of this short book are a concise overview of anti-Catholicism in American history and an appendix containing the texts of various JFK statements on religion and morality.

**Patriot or Traitor:
The Case of General
Mihailovich**

(Hoover Institution; 497 pp.; \$19.00)

Mihailovich was a Yugoslav guerrilla leader against Nazism. Opposed by Tito's Communists, he was condemned as a traitor after the war. David Martin, who writes an introductory essay to this record of documentation that was not admitted at the trial, was instrumental in forming an American committee on Mihailovich's behalf. Of course all this is now an historical footnote, but it is an important footnote.

**An Historian's Approach
to Religion**
by Arnold Toynbee

(Oxford University Press; xiii + 340 pp.; \$17.50)

The second edition of a much respected work, with a new section, "Gropings in the Dark," in which Toynbee offers some of the tentative conclusions about the Ultimate Spiritual Reality that he had reached by 1974, the last year of his life. In its encyclopedic breadth and speculative reach it is a book best described as Toynbee-esque.

**Yesterday, Today,
and What Next?**
by Roland H. Bainton
(Augsburg; 144 pp.; \$3.95 [paper])

A humane historian of church history at Yale for forty-two years reflects humanely upon "the meaning of it all." Bainton has made significant contributions to the cause of Christian pacifism and these memoirs reflect his abiding interest in nonviolent ways to resolve conflicts in history.



Correspondence (from p. 2)

useful to know that China's grain production is about 300 kg per capita per year. It has been about constant at that level, and is about 40 per cent or more higher than that in India, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Bangladesh. Available per capita animal protein, while very low, is double that of India. Vegetables, fruits, animal protein, fish, etc. probably have been increasing faster than grain. Such produce, of course, is highly vulnerable to ultra leftist policies, the precise extent of which can not be gauged. Current policy is stressing diversification into such products.

In some of their examples to show

urban-rural differences the Londons probably have mistranslated their Chinese sources. In Tung County (*People's Daily*, December 20, 1978) wages probably are not \$7 JMP per month (i.e., one-seventh factory wages). Rather, *per capita distributions* to "commune members" from collective sources average \$7 JMP per month. There is a bit of ambiguity as to whether "commune member" implies each and every person, including young and old, male and female, or each adult laborer. My own judgment, shared by Chinese colleagues from both Taiwan and the Mainland, is that the reference is to everyone. This is the way per capita income has been computed in the past in China...Inasmuch as the county has a population of 500,000 but a labor force of 180,000, a laborer's wages are about three times per capita income, i.e., about \$21 JMP. (Wages are low there because of high investments in agricultural mechanization.) These wages are for income from collective sources. We do not know how much income comes from private sales of garden produce. It might be very high in this region situated conveniently to rich Peking markets. Moreover, this county is largely mechanized (\$70 million JMP were spent), so farmers may have a lot of time available for their gardens. The rural income may be lower than urban, but probably in this case the difference in living standard is far less than the Londons report.

Likewise, the Londons probably misinterpret the reports on China's very poor regions of the erosion-prone Northwest (*People's Daily*, November 26, 1978). The report was that in 69 out of 123 counties, per capita collective *income* (not *wages*) was under \$50 JMP per year. (Here there is less ambiguity. The Chinese says every person's average income, and does not refer ambiguously to "commune member.") Wages would be about triple the per capita income. Private income might supplement this.

I hope the Londons will exhibit the same care which they rightfully demand of others in interpreting particles of data about a massive country.

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Miriam and Ivan D. London
Respond:

It is true that we tend to be demanding of accuracy of detail and go to painful lengths in our own work to achieve it—not always successfully. Chinese sources are not only especially tricky, but the wording is often imprecise and ambiguous. In this case, however, we believe that the misinterpretation—this is evidently what Mr. Stavis means by “mistranslation”—is his, not ours.

The relevant passage of the *People's Daily* article of December 20, 1978, reads as follows:

“The T'ung County Secretary, Comrade Chao Feng, just returned from a visit to Europe in a disturbed mood. Over and over he thought of only one thing: Denmark...has only 130,000 *nung yeh lao li* [able-bodied agricultural laborers]. Their [annual] production of agricultural and dairy products is such that, aside from guaranteeing the feeding of the country's population of five million, they have two-thirds left for export. Every laborer every year earns [U.S.] \$20,000. T'ung County, however, has 180,000 agricultural laborers, [whose] annual production is such that, aside from feeding around 500,000 people in the county, every laborer every year earns only about \$100 [JMP]. What an enormous disparity!...On the average, every *lao li* [able-bodied peasant laborer] cultivates 6-7 mou of land. Every year every commune member gets only \$80-90 in the distribution [of the funds]. Judging from the production rate and income of commune members, there has not been much change in the last eight years.”

According to Mr. Stavis's understanding, every agricultural laborer in T'ung County would actually get three times the indicated average of \$80-90, that is, \$240-270 JMP! How does Mr. Stavis square these figures with the annual return of around \$100 JMP per laborer, noted clearly in the text? (Peasants, incidentally, do not get “wages.”)

Our interpretation is consonant with that of the *Ming Pao Daily* (Hong Kong) in its news item of December 29, 1978, citing the *PD* article. It was the *Ming Pao Daily*, in fact, that suggested the comparison with the “mid-level ur-

ban worker's wage,” which we found appropriate to use.

Calculation of peasant income is based on the local monetary value of the work-point and assumes a maximum of 10 work-points daily, earned by labor on the collective fields. Out of this income the peasant pays for his grain allotment (*k'ou liang*) and other necessities. Whatever is left over he receives as cash. In a bad season he may not only receive no cash, but find himself in debt to the production team (very much as in the old capitalist “company town”). It is important to note that the peasant's income and grain allotment, unlike the worker's wage and grain ration, are not fixed, but vary constantly with the harvest. Small wonder that many Chinese peasants feel that they and Heaven alone produce, while everybody else works for the government.

It is correct that Chinese figures on peasant income do not include—by implication—earnings from the private plot. The size and profitability of private plots vary. Some peasants near large cities do, indeed, increase their income by urban sales of produce from their private plots. Others use their private plots mainly to supplement an insufficient diet. In some areas peasants still are deprived of private plots—a condition that the authorities are now trying to correct. Given the variability of basic income from the “collective,” however, the added earnings from the private plot do not maintain total income at the same higher level from year to year.

Mr. Stavis reports China's annual per capita grain production of allegedly 300 kg as though he were citing an absolute statistic—to correct for any distortion that might ensue from a “concrete, specific situation.” In fact, as all economists know (although some forget), the figure of 300 kg is an artifact, arrived at by dividing debatable estimates by debatable estimates. Firm quantitative data on China's agricultural production are still lacking—and recent revelations within China about widespread falsification of local production statistics since 1958 cast even more doubt on the reliability of foreign estimates. It is most incautious, therefore—as at least one sober economist has noted—to compare China's agricultural performance with that of India or similar countries, which are

more open to inspection and where statistics are on a much higher level than those of China.

Mr. Stavis's statement that production of “vegetables, fruits, animal protein, fish, etc. probably [has] been increasing faster than grain” is, unfortunately, only speculative. Take fish, for example: *Hsin Hua* News Service reported from Peking on March 17, 1979, that the reclamation of more than 20 million mou of farmland from lakes since 1949 has, in fact, brought about a serious decline in fish production. The present regime is undoubtedly attempting to increase supplemental food production, instead of indiscriminately emphasizing grain as before, but policy is still not reality.

Concerning the “precise occurrence of hunger,” perhaps the Chinese authorities know more than Mr. Stavis suspects. In the May, 1979, issue of the Communist Hong Kong journal *Cheng Ming*, which seems to have direct access to information from top sources inside China, the following statement appears:

“According to statistics [for the ten years of the Cultural Revolution, 1966-76], 200 million peasants in China each received less than 300 catties of food grain a year, that is, they were in a state of semistarvation. The Cultural Revolution had completely squandered the assets of the Chinese countryside. During the war years of the past, the peasants in northern Shensi [Province] had some grain reserves at home. But now they do not have a single grain.”

A word or two about the use of statistics. The concept of an average has limited utility, unless accompanied by some measurement of the range over which it is taken and some idea of the homogeneity of the “statistical population” under study. It is not illuminating, for example, to speak of the average height of adult Swedes and pygmies. Likewise, it describes China little to speak of per capita consumption without indicating the variance. Mr. Stavis seems to prefer the false neatness of averages, forgetting the messy implications of the lower range below the mean. Do we really need “systematic [nutrition] surveys” in order to believe all those Chinese peasants who told us they were hungry? Perhaps, it is time for some statistics with a human face. **WV**