

## Correspondence

### Islam and Iran

In the May *Worldview* ("What the U.S. Needs to Know About Iran") Yahya Armajani speaks much of the prominent role Islam plays in the Iranian revolution. "Among the three great missionary religions of the World, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam, Islam has not had a history of persecution." True, yet the reason for this is that it has been the predator, and not the prey. What of the Arab, Jewish, and Christian ethnic and religious minorities within the heart and outskirts of Lady Persia? A Jewish businessman was recently executed for having "links with Zionist Israel." The non-Arab military personnel are fighting a three-front war against Arab tribesmen on the fringes of Iranian territory. No Christian has yet been shot by "revolutionary tribunals" or Islamic "courts," probably because of the fact that even though 98 per cent of the Iranian populace is Muslim, the repercussions in the Christian world would be devastating, and Mr. Khomeini doesn't need more troubles—especially during his current "rest." But were the massacres of Bahai religionists justified? Were they also sentenced because of "spreading corruption of Earth?" And, although Communists are known for devilish troublemaking in hotspots and are not beyond fomenting riots and stirring up "causes" for their own chauvinist ends, they are human beings made in the image of an Islam and Christian God alike. Mr. Armajani quotes one ayatollah as commenting that "Islam means freedom of the individual limited only by the freedom of the others." Well, the "others" now have the upper hand in Iran, and the outspoken "individual" is truly limited in his action, and in his life as well.

Ray E. Johnson

Boulder, Colo.

### Victims of the Hitler Youth

To the Editors: We were stunned and saddened to see Alfons Heck's article ("The Hitler Youth: We Too Were Victims," May, 1979) appear in *Worldview*. Heck's self-pitying tone and repugnant message deserve no place in

your journal. Heck's article is a thinly veiled apology for the Nazi Holocaust. Although he condemns the Holocaust in a pro forma manner, he is most careful to shun any personal or collective responsibility. ("Not by the bloodiest thirst for revenge can we, the children of that age, be blamed for what happened.") Heck reveals his true feelings when he describes the foes of Nazism as being filled with "the bloodiest thirst for revenge." Who, we wonder, are those unnamed bloody avengers?

But there is more. One can almost hear the jackboot heels clicking when Heck remembers his "exciting" years in the Hitlerjugend. He was a "dedicated" member, who belonged to a "coveted elite unit." No wonder Heck "enjoyed" his career in the Nazi Youth Movement. For Alfons Heck the "betrayal" of the Fuhrer's youthful soldiers was Adolf Hitler's greatest sin. Heck recounts that Hitler's "betrayal" and Nazi Germany's defeat in the Second World War cost the German people "Innumerable futures....And a third our territory." But Heck does not tell us that nearly 11,000,000 non-German civilians lost much more than territory or shattered futures at the hands of the Nazis; they lost their very lives. Heck, despite thirty-five years of solid historical research, still plays an obscene numbers game with the Jewish victims of the Holocaust (the "slaughter of four to six million people...whose only crime [sic!] it was to have been born Jewish...").

But there is more. Heck reverts to the "some of my best friends are/were Jews" game when he sadly remembers Heinz, his childhood Jewish acquaintance. Heinz, one of the Six Million, was gassed at Auschwitz in 1944 "perhaps cursing the stupendous caprice of fate that had made him a Jew in an era when it was again open season on Jews." For Heck, being a Jew is either a "crime" or a "stupendous fate." It never occurs to the former Hitlerjugend member that millions proudly lived and died as members of the Jewish People, men and women who thanked God every day for being Jewish, even in the face of death. For them and for us it is no "crime," no "stupendous fate," only a God-given obligation to attempt to fulfill the Jewish Covenant.

But there is more. Heck concludes his whimpering letter as if we were  
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## 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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