Correspondence

The U.S. and Israel

To the Editors: I have just seen the Mark Bruzonsky piece in the July-August issue entitled "The U.S. and Israel: In the Eye of the Storm." I was quite disturbed to find Mr. Bruzonsky has repeated again, in the portion headed "Lobby Confrontation in Washington," a reference to me which he had included in an earlier article elsewhere and to which I took strong exception....

In his Worldview piece Bruzonsky again attributes to me a very harsh, personal attack on Morris Amitay. He writes that I had "indicated" that Amitay had certain personal qualities, etc. Although he uses the verb "indicated," he then goes on to include that criticism of Amitay in quotation marks, so it is not clear to me now whether he is actually asserting that I used that language. I did not so characterize Mr. Amitay, and I would not, privately or publicly. It is a matter of public record that Amitay and I have had some disagreements on policy and strategy. The Jewish community is not monolithic, and thus there will be occasions when representatives of the community will disagree. But I have the highest regard for Amitay's commitments and effectiveness. I will continue to express differences with him or others when I feel our common interests require a change in policy or tactics, but I hope always to be able to refrain from personal recrimination.

Hyman Bookbinder

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To the Editors: In the olden days anti-Semites used to call a spade a spade: They came out against Jews. Then Soviet Russia invented a camouflage for anti-Semitism: All you have to do is talk against Zionism. The latest variety of this, however, is: Talk against Begin. However, whichever way the tune goes, the motivation remains the same, even if pronounced by writers of Jewish descent.

Your publication has now consistently throughout some issues followed the "knock Begin" variation on this theme. This culminated in Mark Bruzonsky's interview with Joseph Sisco in your June issue ("MidEast Peace: The Best of Chances"). As I had seen the same interview published earlier in the rabidly anti-Israel Arab publication The Middle East, I knew what slant could be expected. I give Mr. Sisco credit for his well-known diplomatic skill in evading the extreme anti-Israel bias of the "Interviewer," who consistently tried to put words in favor of PLO into Mr. Sisco's mouth. He has now topped that exercise with his article "The U.S. and Israel in the Eye of the Storm" in your July-August issue. Now the gloves are off and the article is peppered with such tendentious expressions as "Begin's deceptions, slanders, and irksome charm," "Israeli intransigence," "Begin used the army to savage Southern Lebanon," "Begin, like Carter, faces dwindling support at home," etc.

If it were not known that Mr. Bruzonsky is a spokesman for the discredited Quisling group called "Breira," it would be hard to understand why he is magnifying out of all proportions such phantoms as "Reputable Jewish Leaders" who recommend "unyielding American pressure" on Israel, or alleged "Israel's best friends" who support Israel's "still expanding Peace Now Movement."

However, the intricate and complex problems of the Middle East should not be viewed through the subjective eyes of a partisan agitator, but through the perspective of thorough knowledge of the religious and historic factors influencing the situation there.

The world perspective of Islam is one of militant conquest and expansion. According to Islam, the world is divided into two spheres: The Dar el Islam, reserved for the Moslems, and the Dar el Harb, the sphere of War and destruction inhabited by all infidels. From the days of Mohamed it has been the most universally accepted doctrine of Moslems that the entire world must be converted into a Dar el Islam. The means for this is Jihad, the Holy War, which is becoming more and more again a central theme in Moslem thinking and writing.

When I visited President Sadat earlier this year in Cairo, he was visibly upset and unnerved when I challenged him on the basis of the above doctrines: How could he pretend to strive toward a peaceful compromise with Israel, if the doctrine of the Jihad prohibits any permanent peace with infidels who seek sovereignty in any part of land over which Moslems claim sovereignty.

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whether Christians in Lebanon or Jews in Israel? It was obvious that Mr. Sadat had never before been engaged in a debate based on theological premises that he, as president of a Koranic republic, is bound by.

After nine months, since his visit to Jerusalem, the facade of reasonableness has however crumbled, and the line of war planes is bound by. "I admit that in private I sometimes reveal anger of the moment. . . ."

Since writing to Worldview Bookbinder has called me in response to my reply to his personal letter. My understanding of our conversation is that he has withdrawn both the accusation that he did not make the statement credited to him and his earlier expressed desire for a retraction.

Bookbinder’s letter seems more significant for what he did not challenge. Apparently he found little else to take issue with and considers valid the general discussion of the Washington situation and the Carter administration’s Middle East policy. As for Mr. Amitay, his exclusiveness and abrasiveness are well known. The issue is not Mr. Amitay personally but, rather, what kind of representative the Jewish community wishes to have in Washington.

Manfred Lehmann’s essay is a good example of the attempt by some excessively zealous Jewish partisans to avoid issues and to discredit through slander, distortion, and inaccuracies those who disagree with them.

His description of the “world perspective of Islam” is juvenile. It can be compared aptly to an attempt to portray the “world perspective of Judaism” by emphasizing the outlook of the Jewish Defense League.

His unpublished poll results are fictitious and become ludicrous when translated by him into blanket endorsement of Israeli policies—something that simply does not now exist even within the American Jewish establishment.

The Middle East, in which the Sisco interview also appeared, is a magazine recently praised by The London Jewish Chronicle for its fairness and objectivity.

I never was a spokesman for Breira, although some of my views did coincide (and some did not) with positions taken by that organization. And if Mr. Lehmann’s implications about my personal motivations are to be believed, then a few years ago the American Jewish Congress employed an anti-Semite on the staff of its Commission on International Affairs and the American Zionist Federation paid an anti-Zionist to write articles on Zionism for circulation to Jewish college students throughout the county. In short, Mr. Lehmann is as irresponsible with his characterizations as with his ideas.

To link traditional anti-Semitism with anti-Zionism, with Soviet anti-Jewishness, and with today’s anti-Be ginism shows profound ignorance. Moreover it implies complete unwillingness (and, I suspect, inability) to examine principles, issues, and political realities.

Israel, the Jewish people, and Zionism are not well served by people with views such as Manfred Lehmann’s.

Turks

To the Editors: In Viewpoint, “Turks and the Western World” (Worldview, September), Tracy Early makes several valid points in discussing his thesis that American impressions “of the Turks come mainly from their enemies.” But Mr. Early and Mr. Kilic, of whom he writes, ignore the fact that current American impressions stem mainly from Turkish actions during July and August of 1974 during their invasion and occupation of northern Cyprus and by Turkish actions since: the widespread desecration and damage to Greek Cypriot churches and cemeteries in the north after February, 1975, which were filmed by a British journalist, and the expulsion of remaining Greek Cypriots from the north despite the August, 1975, agreement permitting them to stay. Contrary to Mr. Early’s assertion, the Westernization of Turkey by Kemal Ataturk and Turkey’s participation in NATO have effectively overridden the earlier reputation of Turks in the minds of most Americans.

Mr. Kilic is accurate in describing the situation as one the United States “should never have gotten into in the first place,” but errs in his contention that this is “the result of Greek influence.” The situation is the result of the Greek junta’s attempt to overthrow the Cyprus Government, the short-sighted and ill-advised U.S. reaction (or non-reaction) to that attempt and to Turkish actions far in excess of what was permitted by the terms of the 1960 treaties (to reestablish the status quo). Appearing to condone the violation of a nation’s sovereignty by an ally inevitably makes for an untenable position.

The murders of Turkish Cypriots by Greek terrorists in the 1960’s were certainly regrettable, but so also were the murders of Greek Cypriots by Turkish terrorists, as well as the murders by terrorists on both sides of moderates within their own communities. It is not possible to be certain which side was more responsible for starting the killing in 1963-64, but observers cite Turkish terrorists for beginning the intercommunal killings prior to independence.

While Mr. Early offers points worth considering, his thesis as a whole is not valid.

Bernice Wood

Bernice Wood—a pen name—is personally acquainted with the Cyprus situation.
To the Editors: I know that the opinions expressed in Worldview are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the positions of the Council on Religion and International Affairs, but the article of Mr. Tracy Early under the caption “Turks and the Western World” does not accomplish the aim of the Council, which is to advance national and international understanding.

If anything, it simply exacerbates the questions that it purports to elucidate. Recording faithfully the “official” views of the Turkish information officer Mr. Kilic, who is plodding to present the innocuous role of the Turks through the ages, without concurrently reporting the view of the Greek side, is, to put it mildly, unfair.

In order to show that the “assertive sorrow” of Mr. Kilic does not bring forward the best of arguments, I shall refute only one claim. How does he account for the fact that the Moslem minority in Western Thrace has since the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne consistently increased in numbers (it was 102,621 in the 1928 census and 117,000 in the 1977 census), despite Mr. Kilic’s allegation that it is “systematically persecuted,” while the Greek Orthodox minority of Istanbul and the islands of Imvros and Tenedos has dwindled from 152,000 in 1936 to 9,740 (1976 census)? Maybe it will further illustrate this point if I mention that the Greek Government has protested to Turkey about the upset of the numerical balance of the two minorities (established by the Treaty of Lausanne) and has also sought recourse from the U.N. Security Council (September 5, 1964) for the massive expulsion of Greek citizens from Turkey as well as from UNESCO (August 31, 1964) for the closing down of minority schools in the islands of Imvros and Tenedos.

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Tracy Early Replies:
I think American impressions of the actions by Turks in Cyprus also come mainly from their enemies and from Western observers predisposed, by long tradition, to minimal empathy. And on Cyprus matters, as well as others related to the Turks, Americans could perhaps broaden their understanding by listening at least occasionally to what the Turks themselves have to say.

My purpose was not to determine the rights and wrongs of the Greek-Turkish tensions but only to report on how Turks view their overall situation vis-à-vis the West, a seldom-told story in the United States. Whether Turks living in Greece actually are persecuted I don’t know. But Mr. Nicolopoulos might strengthen his case if he could go beyond merely giving census figures and cite testimonies from authentic representatives of that community. We know from experience in the United States that a minority may still have serious grievances even if its numbers are increasing.

Access to Education
To the Editors: In the few issues of Worldview that I have seen defenders of private schools, religious and otherwise, are quite prominent. I do not share their position.

The purpose of education is to provide information. Schools and universities make available knowledge—ideally in full scope on all conceivable subjects: the various branches of science, the different forms of art, philosophy, religion, history, literature, languages, and so on.

Ideally, once again, every person has access to man’s growing fund of knowledge. If a student attends a private educational institution, it means that he or she is getting either more than children in the public schools or he or she is getting less. For instance, if the child is going to a private secular school, he may be getting more individualized attention. If he is attending a religious school, it may be that he is being denied a full range of knowledge of past and present religions—and of nonreligion.

Equality of opportunity in education can be achieved only by equal access to information, free from both privilege and dogma.

John Sheldon
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