

To the Editor:

Mark Bruzonsky's doomsday article in *MOMENT* (Perspective: Waiting on Washington, November 1976) has been effectively refuted by the recent campaign and election. Both the presidential candidates emphasized their strong support for Israel in their debate over national television. This was unprecedented. Contrast this with the 1960 Nixon-Kennedy debate when the two candidates spoke about Quemoy and Matsu, two remote islands in the Pacific. The fact is, as I can testify, that Candidate Kennedy rejected the proposal that he make his pro-Israel speech on national television. He preferred to address his remarks to a Zionist convention. The platforms of both political parties were clear and well defined on Middle East issues and many local congressional candidates adhered to their party declarations.

The *MOMENT* article complains that AIPAC's policies have been counterproductive and that Israel is losing ground. Specific reference is made to the roundrobin in which 76 senators recommended that we continue to support Israel in our "reassessment" of American policy.

My successor, Morris Amitay, came into office at a critical moment. The Administration was then stimulating a barrage of criticism at Israel, blaming her alleged "intransigence" for the stalemate in the negotiations. I had just retired from AIPAC's chairmanship but I expressed the view that the letter of 76 senators was an appropriate and necessary contribution to the so-called "reassessment." It strengthened the hand of the Administration in dealing with the Arabs—in repelling the excessive demands by Sadat—whose own "intransigence" had been fortified by the

American reverses in Indochina. It should be emphasized that there have been a number of major clashes since 1974, such as the reckless proliferation of sophisticated weapons to the Arab states and the Administration's reluctance to join in the battle against the Arab boycott. These were issues—there were others—which AIPAC could not afford to ignore. On the contrary, there had to be vigorous and effective opposition. There is nothing new or unprecedented in multi-sponsored resolutions. The Department of State opposed Israel's establishment from the very beginning and for many years it was hostile to Israel's request for aid. We revived the lobby on Capitol Hill in 1951 precisely because the Department was opposed to economic aid for Israel out of excessive solicitude for Arab reaction.

To overcome opposition we always tried to mobilize support on the Hill. Thus, Zionists promoted the pro-Zionist American Palestine Committee as far back as 1941 when 68 senators and more than 200 members of the House called for a Jewish national homeland. Congress has consistently sought to overcome the pro-Arab tilt in the State Department which persisted for many years.

President Ford understood the procedure perfectly and was always helpful and never regarded it as inappropriate. Throughout his career in Congress, as I wrote in the *Near East Report* of August 14, 1974, he was among the leaders of those who sought to strengthen Israel, who sought to oppose Egypt's Nasser, and the record is clear. He addressed a number of AIPAC policy conferences, and Mr. Ford's name consistently appeared on roundrobins and sense-of-congress resolutions which gained many sponsors. Indeed, on October 13, 1973, Mr. Ford called AIPAC to express his regret that he was unable to lead a list of Israel's supporters since he was no longer

the Republican floor leader.

We always had some opposition on the Hill. We always had critics. But we always took the view that if our cause was just, we should not hesitate to state our views firmly. Some of the unjustified criticism directed at Mr. Amitay has to do with alleged changes in style. What is significant is *result* and there is no question that support for Israel has gained in the last two years.

But if it is true that our people are facing new dangers, we must not fail to react with vigor and reason.

I. I. Kenen  
Editor Emeritus  
*Near East Report*

To the Editor:

In a recent article in your publication, Mark Bruzonsky predicts dire times for Israel in terms of U.S.-Israeli relations. He insinuates that the American Israel Public Affairs Committee's current efforts to improve relations between Washington and Jerusalem have actually hurt Israeli and American Jewish interests. AIPAC takes strong exception to Bruzonsky's charges and seriously questions his understanding of AIPAC's work—and beyond that, his understanding of U.S. policy in the Middle East.

Bruzonsky blames/credits AIPAC for the May 1975 letter to President Ford signed by 76 Senators. He says the letter effectively blocked Secretary of State Kissinger's "reassessment" of Middle East policy. Bruzonsky bemoans the "reassessment" threatened to destabilize the Middle East by weakening Israel diplomatically and militarily, and by inflating Arab expectations. A wavering in the U.S. commitment to Israel is always dangerous because it sends the wrong signs to the Arabs and the Soviets.

Bruzonsky conveniently forgets to mention that the "reassessment" put an effective six-month embargo on new U.S.-Israeli arms contracts and delayed the submission to Congress of a new foreign aid bill.

Bruzonsky himself reports that following the Administration's failure to implement the planned "reassessment," the Secretary of State was forced to resort to "pressure-by-pressure" tactics. This new policy was manifested by attempts to whittle away foreign assistance for Israel and by proposals to sell vast supplies of offensive weaponry to Israel's Arab neighbors. This alternative to the "reassessment" was merely an attempt to impose the original "reassessment" plan piecemeal. Thus, friends of Israel in the Congress were compelled to oppose those measures as well.

AIPAC is accused by Bruzonsky as being "ruthless." He quotes an unnamed Senate aide as saying that AIPAC "does with a sledgehammer what should be done with a stiletto." But the actual record shows that AIPAC has won wide respect on Capitol Hill, as the recent statement by Sen. Richard Stone (D-Fla.) in *The Jerusalem Post* testifies: "They (AIPAC) are skillful and careful; they know when to try hard and when to use the soft-touch."

Leonard J. Davis  
 Director of Information  
 American Israel Public Affairs  
 Committee

To the Editor:

As chairman of the Jewish Museum throughout the tenures of Stephen Kayser and Alan Solomon, I should like to add a facet which Freudenheim's excellent article (*The Jewish Museum*, November 1976) omits. For 20 years the Jewish Museum has housed the only workshop and school devoted exclusively to the design and execution of

Jewish ceremonial objects in the modern style. Under the guidance of its master, Ludwig Wolpert, and his associate, Moshe Zabari, the Tobe Pascher Workshop is responsible for a whole genre of sacred objects in scores of homes and synagogues in the United States and Canada. Additional scores of objects are owned and have been exhibited not only in the Jewish Museum, but also the Museum of Modern Art, B'nai B'rith Museum in Washington, Spertus Museum in Chicago, the North Carolina Museum of Art, and on the West Coast in the Skirball and Judah Magnes Museums. There are its pieces in the Truman Museum in Independence, and the Jewish Chapel in the Air Force Academy is entirely furnished by Wolpert.

This is one venture in which Conservative Judaism can rejoice. While promulgating a modern view of ritual, it also sponsors the modern designs of ritual objects. It brings craftsmen into the field who study the origin and history of the ceremonies behind the objects and so create designs often more Jewishly traditional than the "traditional" copies of copies, of copies of Gothic and Baroque pieces.

Tom, when he was curator of Judaica at the Museum, was a warm and enthusiastic supporter of the Workshop and both Wolpert and Zabari.

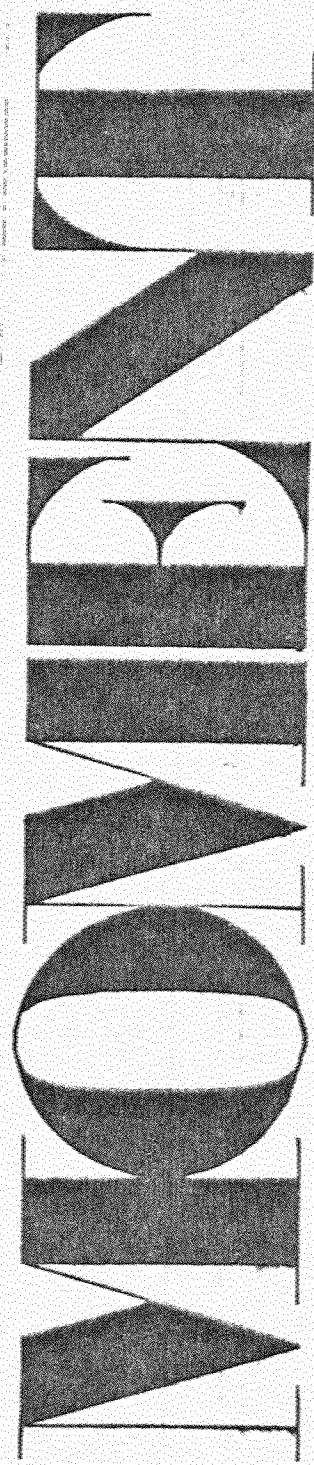
Abram Kanof  
 Raleigh, North Carolina

Announcing the  
**Journal**

VOLUME 7 NUMBER 4

THE JEWISH MUSEUM

1977



C.P.  
 1747 Fea  
 Ottawa, Canada