

**UNITED NATIONS NORTH AMERICAN
REGIONAL NGO SYMPOSIUM ON
THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE**

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I. DECLARATION ADOPTED AT THE UNITED NATIONS
NORTH AMERICAN REGIONAL NGO
SYMPOSIUM ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE

- We wish to thank the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights for making this Symposium possible.
- We also wish to sincerely voice our appreciation to the distinguished expert panellists, workshop organizers and resource persons who spoke here and offered valuable insights into the question of Palestine as well as the potential central role to be played by non-governmental organizations. These practical suggestions assisted us in formulating future plans for effective collaboration in North America and in linking our efforts to a broader, global network.
- We, the representatives of non-governmental organizations present at the North American NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, 10-12 July 1985, at United Nations Headquarters in New York, call upon the peoples and Governments of the United States and Canada to take all possible steps to secure a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine.
- we resolutely reaffirm the international consensus that the Palestine Liberation Organization is the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. We affirm the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination without external interference, and to establish an independent Palestinian State on its own national territory under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, in conformity with relevant United Nations resolutions.
- It is our belief that all the parties to the conflict should come together in an international peace conference on the Middle East as called for at the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, August 1983, and as adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 38/58 C. It is essential that the conference be inclusive of and be attended by representatives of both Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, those Arab States party to the conflict, the United states and the Soviet Union.
- We strongly encourage all regional NGOs to work diligently with the general public to develop public awareness and support for the Conference. We applaud the United Nations for this recommendation and request the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights to assist North American NGOs by producing a concise publication in mass quantity that clearly explains the objectives and advantages of such a Conference.
- we strongly support the global signature campaign launched on 29 November 1984 by the Interim Co-ordinating Committee (ICC) for NGOs on the Question of Palestine on behalf of convening the International Conference. we are committed to develop creative ways of enlisting organizational support during the coming months. We will co-ordinate our efforts with ICC on this important project.

8. This Symposium has reminded us of the powerful and decisive role played by the "media, especially television, in shaping North American public opinion on the question of Palestine. We are determined to seek more effective ways and means of utilizing this media potential in order to accurately inform the public of the actual facts pertaining to this issue with the expressed intention of positively impacting on United States and Canadian Middle East policies.
9. We hereby establish a North American Interim Co-ordinating Committee (NAICC) 1/ on the question of Palestine as a mechanism to enhance our collective effectiveness and to organize our relationship with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights.
10. We define the initial responsibilities of NAICC to include:
- (a) Co-operating closely with the United Nations in the planning of the 1986 North American Symposium;
 - (b) Recruiting other NGOs for participation in the 1986 Symposium;
 - (c) Serving as a channel of information among NGOs in North America;
 - (d) Circulating the minutes of the Co-ordinating Committee meetings;
 - (e) Building a vibrant, broadly based coalition of groups in North America in order to better inform the public and to influence public policy on the question of Palestine;
 - (f) Co-ordinating relations with the International Co-ordinating Committee and other international NGOs.
11. NAICC members should attend Committee meetings when possible and build a close working relationship with the Committee. The Division for Palestinian Rights could assist NAICC in contacting ICC and NGOs both in North America and other regions for the purpose of strengthening the global network supporting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.
12. We urge the Committee to fund the participation of four North American delegates present for this Symposium in the NGO international meeting to be convened at Geneva in September 1985. We believe that such an initiative by the United Nations will ensure balanced, effective representation at the international meeting.
13. We believe that the effectiveness of United Nations NGO meetings will be significantly enhanced by the participation, as resource persons, of representatives of Israeli peace groups and of Palestinian groups inside Israel and the occupied territories (West Bank and Gaza). We note with satisfaction that some such groups did actively participate in the International Conference on the Question of Palestine (1983) and the International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine (1984), and we call for invitations to be extended to them for regional symposia as well, in order that the discussions may focus on solutions to the question of Palestine that include relevant perspectives. NAICC should make a special effort to expand contacts with Palestinian organizations in North America, as well as North American Jewish and Arab organizations, to explain North American NGO work and to involve them in co-operative activities.
14. We NGOs intend to develop additional effective educational resource materials on the question of Palestine, including teaching aids and relevant bibliographies. We hereby ask the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights to provide technical and financial assistance in the final production of these materials.
15. We are distressed by the decline in international financial support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency as noted in the workshop report on religious institutions. We call on all NGOs to encourage both the United States and Canadian Governments to give top priority to funding UNRWA at its full budgeted level.
16. We gratefully note the emphasis by the many resource centres of the Presbyterian Church (USA) on the question of Palestine. We request that the Division provide copies of its publications and other relevant United Nations documents in quantity for their effective utilization by the resource centres.
17. We urge the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division to continue to emphasize and work on the integral issue of women under Israeli occupation. While clearly not separate from the whole situation, women's lives are beset with particular problems that must be addressed by all North American NGOs. The full report of the women's workshop outlines our recommendations for co-ordinating activities in the coming years.
18. We urge the Committee and the Division to extend their outreach into the region in every possible way. We specifically request that the Division's NGO liaison and information officers, as well as Department of Public Information officers, be encouraged to attend the conferences and activities of NGOs, trade unions, ethnic and other minority groups, peace and disarmament groups and others to demonstrate the linkage between their various areas of concern and the question of Palestine and to recruit their active participation in future NGO symposia, conferences and meetings sponsored by the United Nations. The process of achieving peaceful coexistence and justice in the region is essential to the success of the global struggle for disarmament, peaceful coexistence and justice.
19. We urge the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to convey this Declaration to the General Assembly at its fortieth session as part of the Committee's report.

II. OPENING STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY MR. OSCAR ORAMAS-OLIVA,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CUBA TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND
VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE
INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

On behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I have the honour to welcome you to this important Symposium, the second of its kind to be held in New York. At the outset, I should like to thank the NGO Community itself for assistance and co-operation in the organization of this Symposium.

The Committee is convinced that NGOs have a signal role to play in the efforts made by the international community to find a just and lasting solution to this difficult question. It is our belief that by making the elements of the question better known and by ensuring a broader dissemination of the facts as well as by taking an unbiased look at them, it will be possible to make progress in our search for a solution.

The question has been before the United Nations for almost 40 years and although the Organization's search for a solution which would ensure justice to the Palestinian people as well as to all other people in the region has not been completely successful, at least there has emerged broad agreement on the principles which should serve as basis for a just solution to the question of Palestine.

Unfortunately, a lack of political will has presented obstacles to the implementation of these principles, even though the United Nations in 1975 established our Committee - the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People - to draw up a programme for the exercise of by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights.

In 1976 the Committee drew up a programme of action which was immediately confirmed by the General Assembly, which has reaffirmed its validity and relevance at each of its subsequent sessions.

However, the implementation of this programme has so far come up against the intransigent opposition of the State of Israel, which persists in denying the Palestinians their national inalienable rights, encouraged is that, it must be said, by the situation in the Security Council, the organ charged with maintaining international peace and security which, owing to the veto of one of its permanent members, has still not approved the Committee's recommendations.

This has been most discouraging. Just as discouraging is the fact that many solutions provided outside the United Nations have not found acceptance either, although many of them contain positive elements which could form the basis of a just and durable solution. There are obstacles, therefore, in the path of any significant progress and the Committee has found it necessary to take every action that might contribute to overcoming the impasse.

A highlight of the Committee's attempts to bring this impasse to an end was the initiative it took in convening the International Conference on the Question of Palestine in Geneva in 1983. That Conference, which was attended by 137 nations, concluded with a Declaration and a Programme of Action which our Committee is making every effort to implement.

A major proposal at that Conference was that an International Peace Conference on the Middle East should be convened under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation on an equal footing of all the parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. This proposal has since been adopted by United Nations General Assembly.

Another feature of the Geneva Conference was the presence of 104 NGOs who participated actively in the Conference and demonstrated the importance of the NGO community in the search for a solution.

Our Symposium today had, in fact, its genesis in the Geneva Conference. Our Committee, which had had some contacts with NGOs prior to that date, realized the importance of harnessing the potential that lay among NGOs in working towards progress on this question.

Our Committee therefore has made it an important aspect of its work programme to co-operate more actively with NGOs interested in the question of Palestine and to encourage them to work together in this project. Consequently we have embarked on a programme which envisages three symposia for NGOs each year as well as an International NGO Meeting in Geneva annually.

Last year, we organized the first NGO Symposium for the North American continent which was attended by over 50 NGOs. Later last year, we had the first International NGO Meeting in Geneva which was attended by almost 100 NGOs. At that meeting, the NGOs themselves formed as Interim Co-ordinating Committee of which I am sure you are aware and which has been active in co-operating with the United Nations and with other NGOs that were present at the International Meeting. An important suggestion made at that Meeting was that there should be a signature campaign appealing for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. The campaign was launched on 29 November 1984 and, already, several thousand signatures have been collected. We look forward to the support of all NGOs present here in making the signature campaign a success.

It is our hope that those NGOs that are present today will also find it possible to attend the International NGO Meeting in Geneva scheduled to be held from 9 to 11 September 1985 in Geneva. This year, we have also

organized symposia, such as the one we have here today, in Asia and in Africa. By organizing these symposia, we hope to provide you with an opportunity to acquaint yourselves both with our Committee and with the other NGOs in the North American region who are working towards the same goal. Those contacts, we hope, will enable you to form a network, a powerful network, which will enhance your activities on this question and make you a potent force in policy-making on this question.

Your participation and the interest which you have demonstrated in this question is especially welcome as it will complement and sustain the efforts made by Governments in the United Nations. Your determination will mobilize greater attention and participation throughout this continent in the implementation of policies which will assist in the solution of the problem. It is the hope of the Committee that you will utilize this opportunity to co-ordinate your efforts and that you will participate in the International Meeting in Geneva in September.

I need hardly add that the Committee is pleased with your co-operation and is prepared to assist you in every possible way. We hope that this Symposium is only the beginning of a long and close collaboration founded on a common interest in the cause of the Palestinian people.

III. MESSAGE DATED 8 JULY 1985 FROM MR. YASSER ARAFAT, CHAIRMAN OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION

Revolutionary greetings,

It gives me great pleasure, on this day of the convening of your seminar on the rights of the Palestinian People, to express to you, in the name of our Palestinian Arab people, in the name of my brothers, members of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and in my personal name, our heartfelt greetings.

We express to you our high esteem and profound gratitude for your efforts to promote the legitimate struggle of our people and for your infallible support of the national inalienable rights of our people, including their right to return, to self-determination without external interference and to the establishment of their independent State, and to the attainment of those rights.

It gives me also great pleasure to express to you the tremendous pride that we feel for your continuous efforts in defence of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and for the attainment of peace in one of the most dangerous, tense and explosive regions of the world.

You are fully aware that our Palestinian cause is presently witnessing a dangerous phase as a result of the intensification of the aggressive Israeli policies which receive the support of successive American Administrations.

The Government of the Zionist Israeli enemy is intensifying its repression, oppression and terror against our Palestinian people inside and outside our occupied homeland and persistently exercises illegitimate racial practices by dispossessing them of their basic human rights, paralysing civilian life, destroying the Palestinian economy, expropriating land and water resources, establishing armed colonial settlements in the occupied territories, encouraging, supporting and financing the terrorist Zionist gangs whose aim is to perpetrate criminal actions against our people.

All these acts are being perpetrated with the sole aim of expulsion and forced deportation of our people from their land and homes, for the implementation of the Israeli plan of Judaization of the occupied Palestinian areas and the achievement of their ultimate annexation to the Zionist enemy entity.

The Zionist parties compete in the expression of their hostility and racial extremism against our Palestinian people by granting protection and by preserving rules and regulations based on the Zionist racist ideology.

Additionally, there is the declared policy of Israel of non-withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian Arab territories, the non-recognition and non-respect of the right of self-determination of the Palestinian people, the non-return of Jerusalem to Palestinian sovereignty, the non-establishment of the Palestinian State in Palestine and the rejection of the will of the Palestinian people and their right to designate their representative - the Palestine Liberation Organization.

On the other hand, the American Administration is intensifying its hostile policies and stands against our Palestinian people, and continues to increase its support to the Israeli enemy entity and to its aggressive expansionist policies, by establishing with the said enemy a strategic military alliance aimed against our Palestinian people and the peoples of our Arab nation.

The American Administration also establishes with the Israeli entity a free-trade zone to support its deteriorated economy which is basically devoted to War, to expansionism and to the establishment of colonial settlements. This is in addition to the financial and military aid provided to Israel in the form of non-refundable grants and the moral, political and diplomatic support granted by the United States Administration on all international levels to the extent that it hinders the implementation of the international laws of the international community and impedes the condemnation of the crimes and aggressive measures against the Palestinian people under occupation.

The American Administration similarly denies our people their inalienable rights as endorsed and reaffirmed by the resolutions of the entire international community, permanently attempts to bypass the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and attempts to distort its image by all possible means.

In face of these enormous challenges imposed on our people, our people nevertheless continue their struggle and resistance to the oppressive and aggressive Israeli policies and to the hostile United States policies.

The ordeals and hardships will never dissuade nor impair our people's resolve in their struggle, which meets with the support of the peoples of the world, and of their democratic, peace and justice-loving forces.

Similarly, the Palestine Liberation Organization has availed itself of every opportunity in the search for peace. This emanates from its firm belief in the need to achieve justice, peace, stability and development in our explosive area, in the interest of international peace and security.

This feeling of responsibility has prevailed among our people and their representatives in the consecutive Palestine National Councils, which have repeatedly reaffirmed the determination of our Palestinian people to attain a just peace based on the fulfillment and exercise of the national inalienable rights of our people, including their right to return, to self-determination without external interference and to the establishment of their independent Palestinian State in Palestine.

Based on the resolutions of our consecutive Palestine National Council sessions, in particular the sixteenth and seventeenth sessions, and also based on the principles of the Fez summit, which reflect the peaceful will of our Arab nation, and in accordance with international resolutions, the Palestine Liberation Organization continues its efforts to achieve a joint Arab political plan which aims to contribute to the attainment of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Middle East conflict.

It is significant that your Committee is organizing two distinct activities, distinct yet inseparable. The Seminar in which illustrious personalities participate will be complemented by a Symposium of the determined "grass roots", the representatives of non-governmental organizations. The message to North America, specifically to Canada and the United States of America, will be carried by the militant grass roots with the sincere hope that it will meet with positive response from the Washington Administration and the Government in Ottawa. The message is focused on the attitude of the two States Members of the United Nations which have opted to cast a negative vote when the General Assembly addressed the issue of and recommended a modality, a process, a mechanism for achieving a comprehensive just and lasting peace in the Middle East. Your Committee did not hesitate in expressing its "regret over the negative attitude of Israel and United States and decided to maintain its efforts for the earlier convening of the International Peace Conference.

The General Assembly, almost unanimously, with the exception of Canada, Israel and the United States, reaffirmed its endorsement of the call for convening the International Peace Conference in the Middle East in conformity with the provisions of its earlier resolutions. Regrettably the United States and Canada responded in the negative. We are not aware of even their response to the appeal of the international community "urging all Governments to make additional constructive efforts and to strengthen their political will in order to convene the Conference without delay and for the achievement of its peaceful objectives".

At this juncture I wish to extend to the representatives of NGOs our great appreciation for their unrelenting efforts to mobilize public opinion and to raise their voice in support of the peace process. Such efforts are being concretely manifested in the internationally launched appeal.

In the name of the people who are suffering the immense ordeals of war, oppression and occupation and who strive to achieve peace; in the name of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, and in my own personal name, I wish to express to you our profound gratitude for the valuable efforts deployed by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, by holding symposia and international conferences which have greatly contributed to clarifying and unveiling the justice of the Palestinian cause and in informing the peoples of the world of the legitimacy of the Palestinian struggle for liberation as well as in acquiring the respect and esteem of the peoples of the world to the struggle of our people.

I wish to express here my profound gratitude to Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, to Ambassador Massamba Saré, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, and to all those who have contributed to the success of these seminars and symposia in the service of the justice of the Palestinian cause.

I extend to you my sincerest wish for the success of the work of this seminar and the NGO symposium.

Revolution until victory.

IV. BACKGROUND PAPERS

A. The Question of Palestine and North American public opinion

1. GALLUP NATIONAL OMNIBUS CONDUCTED ON MIDDLE EAST AFFAIRS

Dr. Elia Zureik, Professor of Sociology, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The representative sample of adult Canadians interviewed in this study were to a large extent unwilling to commit either the Palestinian or Israeli side of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

- 35 per cent are sympathetic to neither side or to both sides equally.
- 25 per cent don't know where their sympathies lie.

Canadians who express an opinion on the attitude of Canada towards either Israel or the Arab countries believe, by a 5 to 1 margin, that Canada's position in world affairs is to favour Israel rather than the Arabs; lack of involvement is evident here, as well.

- 41 per cent believe neither side is favoured
- 30 per cent cannot give an answer.

A plurality of Canadians agree that formation of a Palestinian State is more likely to produce peace than threaten the security of Israel. Thirty-eight per cent place their agreement on the side of self-determination for Palestine while 22 per cent agree with the opposing position that Israel would be threatened. One third of those questioned did not know which position they agreed with.

When it comes to perceptions of Middle East leaders, only 25 per cent express an opinion but the majority of that opinion is favourable in respect of Mubarak of Egypt, Hussein of Jordan, Peres of Israel and Fahd of Saudi Arabia. Fifty per cent have an opinion about Mr. Arafat with only 2 in 10 being favourable while President Assad receives a favourable mention from 3 out of 10 among the 25 per cent who have an opinion.

The four leaders given mainly favourable support are each thought to be seeking a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Mr. Arafat and President Assad are believed to be acting in ways which block peace. Between 42 and 58 per cent of those interviewed did not know or did not state whether the leaders concerned seemed to them to have peaceful intentions.

Unlike those questions which preceded it, the issue of whether the major Powers should convene a peace conference to seek a settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict was addressed by a large proportion of those Canadians interviewed. Fifty-nine per cent agreed that an international conference, including representatives of the USA, the USSR and all other interested parties should be held, 28 per cent felt it would serve no purpose and 13 per cent did not give an answer.

INTRODUCTION

Taking direction from M. Elia Zureik, a questionnaire was designed based on previous studies conducted in Canada and the United States. M. Zureik is a Professor of Sociology at Queen's University and Publications Director of the Near East Cultural and Educational Foundation of Canada, a non-profit Canadian registered institution on whose behalf this study was conducted.

A study of public opinion on Middle East related matters is being conducted, concurrently with this survey, in the United States by the Public Opinion Research Centre at the University of Michigan.

This report covers questions included in the first week of the December Gallup National Omnibus.

In total, 1,031 adults, 18 years of age and over were personally interviewed in their homes across Canada from 6 to 8 December 1984.

Case counts and percentages shown are photographic reproductions of computer print-outs.

The sampling characteristics, questions asked, sampling tolerances, and a description of the sample are included in this report.

Because of an imbalance by sex and age, the following weights were applied:

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
18 to 29 years	1.122	1.126
30 to 39 years	0.947	0.877
50 years and over	0.908	1.100
Did not state	1.000	1.000

Attitudes toward Palestinians and Israelis

When asked whether their sympathies lay with the Palestinians or the Israelis in the Middle East conflict, approximately 40 per cent of Canadians chose one group or the other. There is a significant lack of commitment shown in the fact that over one third are equally sympathetic to both sides or to neither side, and one quarter of those interviewed respond that they "don't know".

There is little change in the commitment of Canadians to either side when their sympathies today are compared with those recalled from a year previous.

	<u>Sympathies with</u>	<u>Today</u>	<u>Thinking back of year</u>
	%	%	%
Israelis	28	31	
Palestinians	12	11	
Both/Neither	35	33	
Don't know/Did not state	25	25	

Support for the Israelis comes most strongly from residents of the Atlantic Provinces, from Canadians with high school education and from professionals and executives. Sympathy for the Palestinian cause comes closest to matching that for the Israelis among those with public school education and among francophone Canadians.

Canada's position

By a margin of almost 5 to 1 (24 per cent vs. 5.0 per cent) those Canadians who have an opinion believe that Canada's policy favours Israel rather than the Arab countries. However, the largest proportions (41 per cent) believe that neither is favoured while close to 30 per cent cannot give an answer.

Among respondents stating an opinion, university graduates show the strongest belief that Canada favours Israel. Quebec residents come closest to being supporters of a belief that Canada favours the Arabs. Canadians in Ontario are the most convinced that Canada's policy is to favour neither side.

	<u>Total</u>	<u>University</u>	<u>Quebec</u>	<u>Ontario</u>
	%	<u>Graduates</u>	<u>Residents</u>	<u>Residents</u>
	%	%	%	%
Canada favours Israel	24	40	26	28
Canada favours Arab Countries	5	5	20	3
Neither is favoured	41	38	33	48
Don't know/Not stated	29	18	41	22
Palestinian self-determination				

Given two opposing positions, one that "there will be no peace until Palestinians have self-determination" and the other that "a Palestinian State would be a threat to Israel", Canadians express more agreement with the former position than the latter by a margin of 38 per cent versus 22 per cent.

More than 50 per cent of professionals and executives and a like proportion of those with no religious preference agree with the former position. The latter position receives above average support from:

- those 50 years and over
- low income householders
- miscellaneous workers.

The positions on self-determination expressed by sympathizers with one or the other side in the conflict, and by those without a committed position, are interesting:

	<u>Favourable opinion</u>	<u>Sympathies more with Palestinians</u>		<u>Don't know/ Not Stated</u>
		<u>Unfavourable opinion</u>	<u>Not familiar with</u>	
	%	%	%	%
Mubarak of Egypt	37	3	48	12
Hussein of Jordan	35	14	42	9
Mr. Arafat	30	39	22	8
Fahd of Saudi Arabia	25	11	51	13
Peres of Israel	22	9	57	12
Assad of Syria	12	23	53	12

Genuine efforts for peace

As with the previous matter, Canadian opinion with respect to whether a country's leaders are seen as seeking a peaceful settlement is clouded by lack of knowledge. "Don't know" and not stated" responses range from a high of 53 per cent when the question is asked at the Jordanian leaders to a low of 42 per cent when asked about Palestinian leaders.

Paralleling their earlier response, the Canadians interviewed tend to believe that the leaders of Jordan, Israel, Egypt and Saudi Arabia are seeking a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict while Syrian and Palestinian leadership tries to block peace efforts.

<u>Leaders of</u>	<u>Seeking peaceful settlement</u>	<u>Trying to block peace efforts</u>	<u>Don't know/ Not stated</u>
	%	%	%
Egypt	36	11	53
Israel	36	20	44
Jordan	26	16	58
Saudi Arabia	24	21	55
Palestine	19	39	42
Syrian Arab Republic	13	35	52

International conference

Sentiment among Canadians runs more than 2 to 1 in favour of an international conference attended by representatives of the USA, the USSR and Middle East interests trying to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict. Only 13 per cent of Canadians interviewed did not respond to this question.

Agreement with the suggestion of a peace conference is expressed most strongly, in the following segments:

- as 18 to 29
- women
- lower income households
- mother tongue neither French nor English
- those who do not know where to place their sympathies

ATTITUDES OF CANADIANS TOWARDS THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT 2/ January 1983

FOREWORD

The Institute of Arab Studies Inc. is a non-profit research organization located in Boston, Massachusetts.

Canadian facts was asked by the Institute to conduct a national survey to assess the attitudes of the Canadian public toward various facets of the Middle East conflict, with particular reference to the Palestinian dimension.

Prior to the start of the Canadian survey, a similar, but more extensive survey was carried out for the Institute by a United States research company to determine attitudes of the American public on the same topic.

A major reason for conducting the survey was to compare and contrast attitudes of Canadians and Americans. Thus, the questionnaire used in our survey comprised a subset of the questions used in the United States survey. The Institute also requested that these questions be worded in an identical fashion in order that differences noted would not be attributable to differences in wording.

However, it should be noted that such a comparative analysis is beyond the scope of this report which deals exclusively with the Canadian situation.

The survey was conducted between 1 November and 4 December 1982 among a national cross-section of 943 individuals aged 18 years of age and over. The questionnaire was included as a section of Monitor, Canadian Facts' monthly omnibus survey. Interviews were conducted in person in the respondents' homes by trained Canadian Facts' interviewers.

A sample of this size and nature is considered to have a margin of error of ± 3.5 per cent at the 95 per cent level of confidence.

HIGHLIGHTS

The political and military conflict in the Middle East is not a major issue in the minds of Canadians at this time. Survey questions asked of the total sample elicited don't know/no opinion responses that ranged from a low of 29 per cent to a high of 57 per cent with most falling in the 40 to 50 per cent category.

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE PALESTINIANS AND THE ISRAELIS

Notwithstanding the overall low interest in Middle East affairs, there is evidence of growing support for the Palestinian cause. Among the one third of the population supporting one side or the other, sympathies today are about equally divided between the two; 19 per cent are more sympathetic to the Israelis while 15 per cent are more sympathetic to the Palestinians. One year ago, these same people believed that their sympathies were primarily with the Israelis (28 per cent) with minimal Palestinian support (8 per cent).

The favourable balance of opinion toward the Israelis is consistent across most subsegments of the population, but is strongest amongst:

- Urban residents
- The better educated;

- Residents of Ontario and the Western Provinces;
- Those who consider themselves to be Conservative in Federal politics.

The balance of sympathetic opinion favours the Palestinians amongst two groups:

- Francophone residents of Quebec;
- Supporters of the NDP federally.

Further evidence of support for the Palestinian cause is found in the responses of Canadians on the issue of statehood for Palestine:

- The 1947 United Nations partitioning proposal, which included the creation of a separate State for Palestine, has support from Canadians. Nearly 5 in 10 believe that the Palestinians should have the right to establish their own State. The idea is rejected by fewer than 1 in 10.
- As one would expect, Palestinian sympathizers in Canada wholeheartedly back the idea of statehood. It is of interest, however, to find that a majority (55 per cent) of Israeli sympathizers also endorse the idea. The remainder of this group divide equally between opposition (20 per cent) and "no opinion" (25 per cent).
- More than 5 in 10 Canadians agree there will be no peace in the Middle East until the Palestinian people have self-determination and their own State on the West Bank and in Gaza. Conversely, fewer than 2 in 10 feel that a Palestinian State creates a threat to the security of Israel.

The reduction in sympathies toward Israel's position may be partly a function of its recent military advances, particularly the attacks on West Beirut.

- "Interested" Canadians (those who express an opinion) oppose Israel's advances on West Beirut by a margin of 3:1 (37 per cent versus 12 per cent). The remainder (51 per cent) expresses no opinion.
- The "interested" group is less critical of Israel's justifications for invading Lebanon generally. Approximately 1 in 4 supports Israel's rationale while a similar 1 in 4 opposes it.

People are generally confused about where to lay the blame for the Beirut massacre of the Palestinian refugees. When asked who they thought was responsible, the majority (54 per cent) say that they don't know. The Israelis are mentioned more frequently than any other group but they are considered to be the sole guilty party by fewer than 1 in 5 (19 per cent). A further 6 per cent fault both the Israelis and the Christian militia.

THE ROLE OF THE PLO

People's attitudes toward official Canadian recognition of the Palestine Liberation Organization are strongly influenced by their beliefs about whether the PLO is or is not the political representative of the Palestinian people. Among those who perceive the PLO to be the official representative, 7 in 10 (69 per cent) also feel that the Canadian Government should recognize the PLO. Conversely, among people who do not view the PLO as the Palestinians' political representative, nearly all (84 per cent) oppose Canadian Government recognition.

In response to direct questioning, we find that:

- only 2 in 10 believe that the PLO is the political representative of the Palestinian people; whereas 3 in 10 oppose this view.
- "Interested" Canadians oppose official Canadian Government recognition of the PLO by a margin of 2:1 (35 per cent to 17 per cent).

Nevertheless, Canadians concede that the PLO should be one of the participants in any peace negotiations even though they feel that the PLO does not and should not receive official political status. Overall, 2 in 5 support PLO participation in peace negotiations, while fewer than 1 in 5 are opposed.

THE DEMAND FOR CANADIAN GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST

During June/July 1982, a period when the major fighting was taking place in West Beirut, statements were released from various Federal Government sources, including the then Ambassador to Lebanon, the Minister of External Affairs and the Prime Minister, opposing the Beirut attack and its effect on the civilian population. Since then, the Government has maintained a low profile. This position meets the approval of the Canadian public who express minimal demand for Federal involvement in any phase of the conflict.

- Among people who support the concept of Palestinian statehood, only 4 in 10 feel that Canada should help the Palestinians establish this State.
- Fewer than 1 in 5 believe that Canada should officially recognize the PLO
- Only 1 person in 7 feels that Canada should take disciplinary measures against Israel because of the invasion of Lebanon.
- Fewer than 1 in 10 volunteer suggestions about any negative Government posture towards Israel (i.e. censure, economic or military sanctions) because of that country's policy of continued settlement of lands on the West Bank and in Gaza.

THE EFFECTS OF INCREASED INFORMATION

At certain stages in the questioning, our respondents were given additional information to assess the effects of that new or reinforced knowledge. This was done because it was believed that most Canadians would not have full knowledge on matters pertaining to the Middle East. Generally, the introduction of the new information increased the pro-Palestinian responses.

The effects of incremental information were tested in 4 areas:

- When people who did not support the idea of a Palestinian State were told that slightly more than half of the estimated 4.5 million Palestinians live as refugees, support for Palestinian statehood increased from 47 per cent to 58 per cent.
- When informed that creation of a Palestinian State would include demilitarized zones, and that Israel would maintain military superiority, concern that statehood for Palestine posed a security threat to Israel declined by over half from 17 per cent to 7 per cent.
- People opposing Canadian recognition of the PLO were told that 108 Governments currently recognize the PLO. The net effect was to double support for PLO recognition from 17 per cent to 32 per cent.
- When people who believed Israel's rationale for invading Lebanon to be justified were informed that the PLO had observed the cease fire between July 1981 and June 1982, and that violations came from the Israeli side, more than one half (59 per cent) of these people withdrew their support.

Two qualifications need to be made about the findings obtained after new information was introduced:

- (i) There was no experimental design used, as would have been the case if the full information had been given in the original question to one random half of the sample and the question used asked of the other half.
- (ii) While the information was believed to be factual, it was all of a type that highlighted the Palestinian cause. The effect of introducing information highlighting the Israeli position is not known.

2. Dr. John F. Mahoney, Executive Director, Americans for Middle East Understanding

Seventy per cent of the United States public says its Government should not favour one side over the other in the Arab-Israeli conflict - that according to a nationwide poll taken in February of this year by the Survey Research Centre of Michigan State University.

That the United States Government does favour one side over against the other makes some sort of sense when we examine the remaining 30 per cent. Of that number 20 per cent favours Israel over the Arabs, while two per cent favours the Arabs over Israel. Thus, hard-core support for Israel looms one hundred times greater than hard-core support for the Arab countries, a sizable bloc for any politician to ignore.

As director of Americans for Middle East Understanding, a United States educational organization reporting on United States-Middle East relations, I accept these figures. I concur, as well, with the conventional wisdom that holds: (1) that the percentage of Americans aware of Palestinian existence has risen significantly, particularly since the formation, in 1964, of the Palestine Liberation Organization; and (2) that hard-core support for Israel may have slipped a point or two since Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon.

These trends, I believe, will continue. Slowly, to be sure. We will wait a good while before an American president goes to Sabra and Shatila to proclaim, "I am a Palestinian." Still, changes will evolve in United States public opinion for the simple reason that Israel's growing dependence on the United States taxpayer will insure that what Israel does with our money, our munitions, with our technology will remain relevant items for public discourse. Part of that discourse - a growing part, I believe - will be: (1) the history itself of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and (2) the role of law, international and domestic, in resolving that conflict.

Palestinians can hardly be faulted if they agree with United States industrialist Henry Ford who once said, "History is bunk," or with Charles Dickens' Mr. Bumble who declared, "The law is a ass." Nevertheless, the experience of our organization over the past 18 years indicates that public airing of both these issues is critical to maintaining and broadening United States public support for a rational and workable Middle East foreign policy.

Consider the history of Palestine prior to 1948. A recent book by an American, Joan Peters, claims to have unearthed new evidence proving once and for all that Palestinians never did constitute an indigenous majority in those areas of Palestine which became Israel in 1948. The book, now in its eighth printing, has been widely promoted by the American media and, I am told, the new Israeli ambassador to the United Nations never leaves home without it.

The book has been challenged by American researchers, including Noam Chomsky of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Edward Said of Columbia University, Thomas De Gregori of the University of Houston and Norman Finkelstein, a doctoral candidate at Princeton, who has concluded that the book is "among the most spectacular frauds ever published on the Arab-Israeli conflict". In England the book has met wide opposition from David Gilmour in the [London Review of Books](#), Charles Glass in [Spectator](#), and Albert Hourani in [The Observer](#).

Our own organization used Peter's book as the opportunity to publish an in-depth rebuttal, debunking the myth that Palestine was a land without a people for a people without a land, and its corollary, that Palestine in the first half of this century was a treeless, plantless desert vying the touch of the colonist's green thumb.

The rebuttal, written by Dr. Muhammed Hallaj of the Palestine Education and Research Centre in Washington, DC, appeared in our bimonthly, [The Link](#), which has a readership of 50,000, including 1,400 schools and public libraries. It was received well not only by these subscribers, but also by new readers, by book review editors, and by professors who used it in their classrooms. And plans are now underway in including the [Link](#) article in a full-length book response to the Peters claims. To set the historical record straight is a purpose noble in itself, my point is that, given the receptivity of the American public, the effort can also be productive.

This is confirmed by a New York Times/CBS poll of June 1984. It was the eve of the Democratic National Convention and presidential candidate, Jesse Jackson, had just given Americans a crash course in Palestinian history. The poll asked registered Democrats nationwide if they felt that "the United States should pay more attention to Arabs even if that angers Israel?" 54 per cent of all whites and 50 per cent of all blacks said, "Yes, the United States should pay more attention to Arabs even if that angers Israel." Considering that, at the time, candidates Mondale and Hart were vying with one another to woo Israel's hard-core supporters, these figures indicate that, given the facts, the public will listen.

Particularly will it listen when American interests are directly involved. In June of last year we published a feature story on Israel's 1967 assault on the [USS Liberty](#), an assault that left 34 Americans killed and 171 wounded. The article, written by James Ennes, the lieutenant on watch during the attack explained why the [Liberty](#) survivors refuse to accept Israel's explanation that it was a mistake, and why, more angrily, they accuse the United States Government of concealing the truth from the American public.

Our motive for featuring their story was called into question recently by author Steven Emerson in a book he has come out with based on a series of articles he did for [The New Republic](#). Americans for Middle East Understanding, suggests Emerson, drudged up the Liberty incident, 17 years after the event, because it is working for an Arab country. Emerson's book will be hailed by Israel's hard-core supporters who profess, with Norman Podhoretz of [Commentary](#) magazine, that any attack on Israel is "an attack on the political culture of the United States and of the entire democratic world". We published the story because, as Admiral Thomas Moorer, Chief of Naval Operations in 1967 and later Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff, recently put it, "even after 18 years, the American people still are entitled to the answers to many, many questions."

The fact is, Americans will not forget the [Liberty](#). Our [Link](#) article prompted an Associated Press (AP) correspondent, David Smyth, to conduct his own investigation into the claims of the survivors, and in October of last year his findings went out over the AP wire service to all major newspapers in the country. Smyth found that the survivors' charge that the attack was deliberate was shared by top United States diplomatic, intelligence and military officers of that time, including former Secretary of State Dean Rusk, including CIA director Richard Helms, including deputy director of the National Security Agency Louis Tordella, as well as Admiral Moorer.

Veterans organizations will not forget the [Liberty](#). The survivors, backed by veterans nationwide, already have forced the United States Government to change the inscription on the gravestones of their comrades in Arlington National Cemetery from "Dies in the Eastern Mediterranean" to "Killed - USS [Liberty](#)."

And there is more. A major film on the [Liberty](#) is in the works. George Golden, the lieutenant who became the [Liberty's](#) second-in-command when the executive officer had been killed, is a production consultant. Golden, a Jewish American, was the first crewman to break silence and publicly accuse Israel of willfully attacking his ship. Unlike Mr. Emerson, Lt. Golden presumably believes that, when it comes to setting the historical records straight, there is no statute of limitations.

And what is true of history is true of the law. Americans have a vestigial respect for law. We know at times it is an ass; we know an unenforceable law is no law. But we know, too, that the moment men depart from the rule of law, all things are uncertain. Tell Americans what the applicable law is, and Americans, most of them, will listen.

Take, for example, the US Arms Export Control Act (22 USC 2751) which requires all defence arms and services sold by the United States Government to a friendly country to be used "solely for internal security, for legitimate self-defence, to permit the recipient country to participate in regional or collective arrangements or measures consistent with the Charter of the United Nations". In 1952, Israel pledged compliance with this law; specifically, it promised not to use United States arms "to undertake any act of aggression against any other State".

Explain this to Americans, then ask them about Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon. We know what they would say, because in November 1982 a poll conducted by Decision/Making/Information, a national research company, found that 69 per cent of the United States public felt that Israel violated the US Arms Export Control Act by using American-made weapons in an act of aggression against Lebanon.

Or take article 49, to which the United States and Israel are both signatories. According to Article 49: "Individuals or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportation of protected persons from occupied territory to the territory of the Occupying Power or to that of any other country, occupied or not, are prohibited, regardless of their motive."

Explain this law to Americans, then ask them about Israel's forcible transfer of over 1,200 Lebanese, in April, from southern Lebanon to Israel. Virtually a non-issue during the first days of the TWA hijacking, the legal status of the Israeli-held Lebanese gradually surfaced: Asked at his press conference if he felt Israel violated international law, President Reagan said he did; queried by George Will on ABC's [This Week](#) why his State Department ever made such a ruling, George Schultz explained that the lawyers at the State Department, after a careful reading of the pertinent sections of the Fourth Geneva Convention, concluded that Israel's action was in violation of the law. Israel's violation does not justify the hijacking of innocent people, but what a growing number of Americans have come to realize is that Israel's violation of the law is related, directly, to the TWA hijacking. The result is that a majority of Americans began calling upon Israel to let its kidnapped people go.

Explain to Americans that we as a nation are treaty bound to actively "ensure respect" for those articles and obligations of the Geneva Convention which prohibit any one country from expropriating land or land resources in areas under its occupation. Then, inform Americans that Israel has expropriated 52 per cent of West Bank land and 80 per cent of West Bank water resources, and not only has the United States not actively ensured respect for the law, it is actually footing the bill for the expropriation.

Explain to Americans that the word Jew has an entirely different meaning in United States law from the same word in Israeli law. In United States law a Jew is a private individual who, like the adherent of any religion, is entitled to practice his/her religion and to be protected from the imposition of a State religion. In Israeli law a Jew is a member of a legally defined nationality group, termed "the Jewish people", which is entitled to special rights and benefits denied to other Israelis, such as the right to automatic citizenship for Jews only who go to Israel, such as the right to form exclusivist Jewish settlements on occupied Palestinian land, such as the right to social benefits tied to a military service that is 99 per cent Jewish. Explain to Americans that the United States Government has rejected the "Jewish people" claim as a valid concept in international law (8 [Whiteman, Digest of International Law](#) 34, 1967), because of its discriminatory character. Then, when Americans are told that their billions of dollars to Israel are well spent because Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East, Americans will know that Israel's definition of democracy is not ours.

Ah, well and good, you say, but alas, such a fine message, minus the media to convey it, is much like the man all dressed up with no place to go. As former Congressman Paul Findlay, you may say, about getting the message into the media, or better yet, read his book, [They Dare to Speak Out](#) - if you can find a bookstore that carries it: Or hear Roberta Feuerlicht tell about her book, [The Fate of the Jews](#), and quote: "Just as there are monuments to the unknown soldier and the unknown political prisoner, there should be a monument to the unknown Jew. We are Jews who oppose Zionism, who deplore Israeli oppression and aggression, who fear that Judaism may not survive Israel. We are probably a majority of Jews, but no one knows this because we have been effectively intimidated and suppressed by the Zionist minority." And lest you think these are merely discontent writers, listen to Philip Klutznick, past president of B'nai Brith International and the World Jewish Congress: "For a long time I thought that true and well-meaning friends of Israel, as well as Jews wherever they might reside, could honestly say unpopular taken at face value. But I have found that this is not the case on matters involving the Palestinians and Israel's foreign policy. No matter how well-meaning, or even how correct in retrospect, those who are deeply concerned with the destiny of the State of Israel, including myself, have had our intelligence, as well as our motives, questioned in ways which are not the ways of free people."

The pro-Israel lobby in the United States does intimidate and suppress those who speak on behalf of the Palestinians, it does this because it has no alternative. Lawyers have a saying when that facts are on your side, argue the facts, when the law is on your side, argue the law, when neither facts nor the law is on your side, attack the witnesses. The Israel lobby equates the anti-Israeli critic with the anti-Semite, because that squelches all debate on what the law is or what the facts are. It compiles enemies' lists and sees that they go to all the right places, because a free press or free academic inquiry is more to be feared than a squadron of F16s.

I am reminded of the mid-1950s, when Americans were cowed and harassed by Senator Joseph McCarthy and his hard-core cadre of Communist witch hunters. They had their enemies' lists; they ruined careers and reputations; and those daring to speak out found themselves labelled "pink" or "soft on Communism", or "yellow-bellies". Then, one day, in Washington, during Senate hearings on television, the counsel for the defence, Mr. Joseph Welch - a patrician figure from Boston - stood up in anger, looked Joe McCarthy in the eye, and asked, "Sir, have you no sense of decency?" And Americans applauded, the majority of us.

Have you no sense of decency? That is the most damning retort we can make to those who would put out names on a blacklist, simply because we uphold the law or speak the facts of history. And the truth is, the question is being asked today, not perhaps with Welch's intensity, but surely with his indignation.

Last November it was asked of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith by MESA, the Middle East Studies Association of North America. The organization of 1,400 members, including scholars of Arab and Jewish backgrounds, publicly demanded that the ADL disown the list of names it had compiled and distributed, because the list suggested that some American academics were pro-Arab propagandists merely using their anti-Zionism as a guise for their deeply felt anti-Semitism. What, in effect, these scholars were saying was this: "You, B'nai Brith, you the group that prides itself on protecting us against defamation, have you no sense of decency?"

The same question was put recently to major United States publishing firms by Mike Wallace of CBS News. In a commentary on 18 May, Wallace reported on charges made by Paul Findley that the Israeli lobby was quite willing to stifle free speech in America in order to stamp out criticism of Israel and that, because of this lobby, the major publishing houses would not touch his book, fearing trouble with distributors, the wholesalers, and the book chains. Wallace - himself in Findley's book as one of those who dared to speak out - said he investigated the Findley charges and was told by publishers, off the record, that they were true. What Wallace, I

believe, was saying by implication was this: "You, the leading book publishers in America, you, the freest press in the world, have you no sense of decency?"

The question, to be sure, has to be asked more forcefully, more often, by more such prominent Americans. I, for one, look forward to the day when a prominent United States Christian will stand up and look the Reverend Jerry Falwell in the eye and say: "You, Reverend Falwell, you who profess faith in a Suffering Servant, while applauding Israel's savagery in Lebanon and its ruthless expropriation of other people's land, you, Reverend Falwell, have you no sense of decency?"

During my eight years at Americans for Middle East Understanding I have heard the lament often enough - and have echoed it myself more than once - that what we are doing is barely a drop in the bucket. At such times I think of Albert Camus' admonition that "The greatest crime is to do nothing, because we think we can only do a little."

Three things can be done by those of us working and living in the United States: we can argue the facts, we can argue the law - because both are on our side - and, confronted by those who resort to character assassination, we can counter, for all to hear, "Sir, have you no sense of decency?"

Thomas Dine, executive director of AIPAC, Washington's principal pro-Israel lobby, reports that things have never been better for them in the United States, what with their hold on Congress, and the flourishing pro-Israel political action committees (PACs), not to mention those millions of right-wing Christian evangelists chanting, "Praise the Lord and pass the military grants." But, consider this, Mr. Dine: it took but one small voice to say aloud what most people along Main Street see clearly: "The king, with all his clout, has no clothes on."

3. Dr. Found M. Mouahrabi, Professor of Political Science at the University of Tennessee

Specifications of the study

1. Nation-wide telephone interview with a probability sample of United States households, using random digit dialing telephone sampling methods.
2. Each month, the Survey Research Center conducts a total of approximately 650 interviews, 370 with a new random cross-section sample of United States telephone households and 280 by a reinterview of the cross-section sample from six months past. The total sample for this study is 655 interviews.
3. The margin of error for the total sample is ± 4.1 .
4. The study was conducted during the month of February 1985.
5. The sample was split in order to eliminate question order bias. One part of the sample (330) was interviewed with the question order given. In the other part (325), the question was reversed.

Major findings and interpretation

1. A significant majority (55 per cent) of the American people think that peace in the Middle East will come only when the Palestinians have a State of their own on the West Bank. They do not think that such a State will constitute a threat to Israel's security.

Only 27 per cent of the public think that a Palestinian State on the West threat to the security of Israel. The 1982 Gallup survey the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations shows that the supports, by a two to one margin, the formation of a separate Palestinian State. [John E. Reilly, ed., American Public Foreign Policy 1983 (Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, 1983), p.5.]

The United States Government's hostility to a Palestinian State therefore reflects the views of a minority of the United States public, most likely what Seymour Lipset identified as the hard-core support for Israel in the United States (25 per cent) that clusters around the pro-Israel lobby.

2. Although most Americans are aware that the United States Government favours Israel, the majority (70 per cent) think United States policy should be even-handed and not favour one side over the other. The great majority of Americans think it is important for the United States Government to maintain friendly relations with Israel as well as with the Arab countries in conflict with Israel. Again the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations study confirms this finding: "Overall, public opinion now shows more sympathy for both sides than has been the case in the past." (p. 5) Consistent with previous studies (Lipset), some 20 per cent insist that the United States Government should favour Israel only.

3. A majority of the respondents think the present levels of aid to Israel (2.6 billion dollars a year) and to Egypt (2.0 billion) are too high.

Most people, however, do not think that foreign aid should be used as an instrument to pressure an ally such as Israel to comply with the policy favoured by the United States. Those who are willing to use aid as an instrument of pressure favour reducing aid rather than cutting it off or suspending it temporarily.

4. A majority of the respondents think the United States Government should participate in an international conference along with all the parties in order to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict. The parties include the Soviet Union, the Syrian Arab Republic, Jordan and the PLO. It is quite clear that even though the general public views the PLO negatively, they still think it should be included in peace negotiations. The United States Government's refusal to have anything to do with the PLO within the context of peace negotiations is therefore at odds with the sentiment of the majority of the American public.

5. Of the leaders involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict, President Mubarak of Egypt, King Fahd of Saudi Arabia and King Hussein of Jordan are perceived by those who know something about the Middle East as actively seeking a settlement, more so than Prime Minister Peres of Israel, Chairman Arafat, or President Assad of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Nevertheless, the majority of the population admit to a great lack of knowledge about peace efforts and say that they lack adequate information about the various countries in the region.

Summary finding

1. Most people consider Central America and the Arab-Israeli situation as the two most explosive international problems that deserve special attention by the Reagan Administration.

Q. "In your opinion, which of the following international problems is the most explosive and therefore deserves special attention by the administration: Poland, Central America, the Arab-Israeli situation, or Afghanistan?"

Poland	.....	5%
Central America	.....	44%
Arab/Israeli	.....	25%
Afghanistan	.....	11%
All equally	.....	3%
Don't know/not applicable/other	.....	13%

2. Most American, in fact, a very high percentage (70 per cent), think the United States should not favour one side over the other in the conflict between Israel and the Arabs. Only 20 per cent think the United States should favour Israel. This figure is consistent with what Seymour Lipset had obtained (roughly 25 per cent) as the hard-core support for Israel among the American public.

There is, therefore, overwhelming support for an even-handed United States policy in the Middle East.

Q. "In the Middle East conflict, do you think the United States should favour Israel, favour the Arab countries, or should the United States not favour one side over the other?"

Favour Israel	.....	20%
Favour neither side	.....	70%
Favour Arab countries	.....	0.2%
Don't know/not applicable/other	.....	12%

In addition, most Americans think it is as important to maintain friendly relations with Israel as with the Arab countries in conflict with Israel.

Q. "How important is it that the United States maintain friendly relations with Israel? Is it very important, somewhat important, or not important at all?"

Very important	.....	48%
Somewhat important	.....	39%
Not important	.....	6%
Don't know/other	.....	8%

Q. "How important is it that the United States maintain friendly relations with the Arab countries in conflict with Israel? Is it very important, somewhat important, or not important at all?"

Very important	.....	44%
Somewhat important	.....	42%
Not important	.....	6%
Don't know/other	.....	9%

3. By a 2 to 1 margin, Americans think that peace in the Middle East will come only when the Palestinians have a State of their own. Most of the respondents do not think that a Palestinian State would be a threat to the security of Israel.

Q. Next I will read two statements, and then I would like to know which of the two you agree with most.

The first statement is:

Peace in the Middle East will come only when the Palestinian people have a State of their own on the West Bank.

The second is:

A Palestinian State on the West Bank would be a threat to the security of Israel.

Which statement do you agree with most?

	1	2	3
First statement	(25.3)	(28.9)	55%
Second statement	(14.8)	(11.8)	27%
Both	(0.6)	(0.6)	2%
Neither	(3.4)	(2.7)	7%
Don't know	(2.9)	(2.9)	6%
No answer	(3.4)	(2.7)	7%

(Methodological explanation: the total sample was split, as indicated earlier. The first 325 respondents were asked the questions as stated above. The next 330 respondents were asked the same question with the order of the statements reversed so as to eliminate bias. No significant statistical difference emerged when the statements were reversed. The percentages in column 3 represent the total number of respondents as a percentage of the sum total of the entire sample.)

4. A majority of Americans think the present level of United States military and economic aid to Israel (2.6 billion dollars a year) is too much.

A similar majority think that aid to Egypt (2 billion dollars a year) is also too much.

Q. "The United States Government has agreed to give Israel 2.6 billion dollars a year in military and economic aid. Do you think this aid is the right amount, too much, or not enough?"

Too much	.....	54.2%
Right amount	.....	30.7%
Not enough	.....	3.9%
Don't know/no answer	.....	11.4%

"The United States Government has agreed to give Egypt two billion dollars a year in military and economic aid. Do you think this aid is the right amount, too much, or not enough?"

Too much	.....	55.6%
Right amount	.....	30.3%
Not enough	.....	3.9%
Don't know/no answer	.....	10.4%

5. Sixty-five per cent of the respondents think the United States should participate in an international conference to settle the Arab/Israeli conflict that includes the PLO as well as all other participants. Only 24.4 per cent, the hard-core Israeli supporters, do not think the United States should participate.

Q. "Some people suggest that an international conference including the United States, the Soviet Union, Israel, the Syrian Arab Republic, Jordan, Egypt and the PLO should convene and try to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict. Do you think the United States should participate in such a conference?"

Yes	.....	66%
No	.....	25%
Don't know/no answer	.....	10%

6. King Hussein of Jordan has the highest favourable rating among the United States public (45 per cent) followed by Mubarak of Egypt, Fahd of Saudi Arabia, and Peres of Israel with 41 per cent each. Chairman Arafat of

the PLO has the least favourable opinion (11 per cent), while President Assad of the Syrian Arab Republic has 24 per cent.

Nevertheless, nearly one third of the sample do not recognize Peres of Israel or Mubarak of Egypt. A quarter of the sample say they do not recognize Assad of the Syrian Arab Republic, Hussein of Jordan or King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, while only 13 per cent fail to recognize Arafat's name.

A significant majority (between 56 and 57 per cent) of respondents do not know whether these same leaders are actively seeking a settlement (30, 28 and 26 per cent, respectively). Nineteen per cent of the sample think that Peres is actively seeking a settlement. Arafat and Assad are perceived as trying to block peace efforts.

Q. "I'm going to read a list of names of leaders in the Middle East. As I read each name, please tell me whether you have a favourable or an unfavourable opinion of that leader. If I come to a name you don't recognize, just let me know and we'll go on to the next one."

	<u>Fav.</u>	<u>Unfav.</u>	<u>Don't recog.</u>	<u>Other</u>
Peres of Israel	41	11	32	18
Assad of Syria	24	37	25	17
Hussein of Jordan	45	20	20	17
Arafat of the PLO	11	65	13	13
Mubarak of Egypt	41	11	34	17
Fahd of Saudi Arabia	41	15	28	18

Q. Now, going over the same list of leaders, would you say that Prime Minister Peres of Israel is actively seeking a settlement in the Arab-Israeli conflict, trying to block peace efforts, or don't you have an opinion?"

	<u>Seeking peace</u>	<u>Blocking peace</u>	<u>Don't know</u>	<u>Other</u>
Peres	19	7	67	8
Assad	10	23	61	8
Hussein	26	13	56	8
Arafat	9	43	41	8
Mubarak	30	6	59	8
Fahd	28	9	57	8

7. A great majority of Americans feel that they lack information about the various national groups in the Middle East. The best known are the Israelis, followed by the Egyptians. The least known are the Syrians, followed by the Jordanians, the Saudis and the Palestinians.

Q. "Next I would like to know-whether you know enough about each of the national groups I will mention, or whether you feel you lack information about any of them"

	<u>Know enough</u>	<u>Lack information</u>	<u>Other</u>
Syrians	7%	86	8
Palestinians	18%	76	8
Israelis	30%	63	8
Saudis	17%	76	8
Egyptians	20%	73	7
Jordanians	11%	82	7

This poll conforms to the code of ethics of the American Association for Public Opinion Research.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

CC1. In your opinion, which of the following international problems is the most explosive and therefore deserves special attention by the Administrations Poland, Central America, the Arab-Israeli situation, or Afghanistan?

1.	Poland	5%
2.	Central America	44%
3.	Arab/Israeli situation	25%
4.	Afghanistan	11%
5.	All equally	3%
6.	Don't know, No opinion	7%
7.	No answer	6%

CC2. In the Middle East conflict do you think the United States should favor Israel, favour the Arab countries, or should the United States not favour one side over the other?

1.	Favour Israel	20%
2.	Favour Arab countries	0.2%
3.	Favour neither side	70%

4.	Don't know; Don't understand conflict	4%
5.	Undecided	2%
6.	No answer	6%

CC3. Next, I will read two statements., and then I would like to know which of the two you agree with most.

The first statement is:

Peace in the Middle East will come only when the Palestinian people have a State of their own on the West Bank.

The second is:

A Palestinian State on the West Bank would be a threat to the security of Israel.

Which statement do you agree with most?

1.	First statement	55%
2.	Second statement	27%
3.	Both	2%
4.	Neither	7%
5.	Don't know	6%
6.	No answer	7%

CC3a. Do you agree strongly or not strongly with the statement?

1.	Strongly	36%
2.	Not strongly	45%
3.	Don't know	1%
4.	No answer	2%

CC4. The United States Government has agreed to give Israel 2.6 billion dollars a year in military and economic aid. Do you think this aid is the right amount, too much, or not enough?

1.	Right amount	30.7%
2.	Too much	54.2%
3.	Not enough	3.9%
4.	Don't know	6.0%
5.	No answer	5.4%

CC5. The United States Government has agreed to give Egypt two billion dollars a year in military and economic aid. Do you think this aid is the right amount, too much, or not enough?

1.	Right amount	30.3%
2.	Too much	55.6%
3.	Not enough	3.9%
4.	Don't know	4.9%
5.	No answer	5.5%

CC6. In 1982, President Reagan recommended a plan for settling the Arab-Israeli conflict. Israel rejected the plan. In situations like this, where the United States and a strong ally such as Israel disagree over policy, should the United States reduce or cut off aid to the ally in order to obtain compliance with the policy favoured by the United States, or should foreign aid not be used for this purpose?

1.	Reduce/Cut off aid	26%
2.	Not use foreign aid for this purpose	45%
3.	Don't know	1%
4.	No answer	2%

CC6a. Would you favour suspending aid temporarily, reducing the level of aid, or cutting off all economic and military aid?

1.	Suspending aid	5%
2.	Reducing aid	14%
3.	Cutting off aid	8%
4.	Don't know	1%

CC7. How important is it that the United States maintain friendly relations with Israel? Is it very important, somewhat important, or not important at all?

1.	Very important	48%
2.	Somewhat important	39%
3.	Not important	6%
4.	Don't know	2%
5.	No answer	6%

CC8. How important is it that the United States maintain friendly relations with the Arab countries in conflict with Israel? Is it very important, somewhat important, or not important at all?

1.	Very important	44%
2.	Somewhat important	42%
3.	Not important	6%
4.	Don't know	3%
5.	No answer	6%

CC9. I'm going to read a list of names of leaders in the Middle East. As I read each name, please tell me whether you have a favourable or an unfavourable opinion of that leader. If I come to a name you don't recognize, just let me know and we'll go on to the next one.

	<u>Favourable</u>	<u>Unfavourable</u>	<u>Don't Recognize</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Not Applicable</u>
Prime Minister Peres of Israel?	41%	11%	32%	11%	7%
President Assad of Syria?	24%	37%	25%	10%	7%
King Hussein of Jordan	45%	20%	20%	10%	7%
Chairman Yasser Arafat of the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization)?	11%	65%	13%	6%	7%
President Mubarak of Egypt?	41%	11%	34%	10%	7%
King Fahd of Saudi Arabia?	41%	15%	28%	11%	7%

CC10. Now going over the same list of leaders, would you say that Prime Minister Peres of Israel is actively seeking a settlement in the Arab-Israeli conflict, trying to block peace efforts, or don't you have an opinion?

	<u>Seeking Settlement</u>	<u>Block Efforts</u>	<u>Don't know; No opinion</u>	<u>No Answer</u>
Prime Minister Peres of Israel?	19%	7%	67%	8%
President Assad of Syria?	10%	23%	61%	8%
King Hussein of Jordan?	26%	13%	56%	8%
Chairman Yasser Arafat of the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization)?	9%	43%	41%	8%
President Mubarak of Egypt?	30%	6%	59%	8%
King Fahd of Saudi Arabia?	28%	9%	57%	8%

CC11. Some people suggest that an international conference including the United States, the Soviet Union, Israel, the Syrian Arab Republic, Jordan, Egypt and the PLO should convene and try to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict. Do you think the United States should participate in such a conference?

1. Yes	66%
2. No	25%
3. Don't know	4%
4. No answer	7%

CC12. Next I would like to know whether you know enough about each of the national groups I will mention, or whether you feel you lack information

	<u>Know Enough</u>	<u>Lack Information</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>No Answer</u>
The Syrians?	7%	86%	2%	6%
The Palestinians?	18%	76%	1%	7%
The Israelis?	30%	63%	2%	6%
The Saudis?	17%	76%	2%	6%
The Egyptians?	20%	73%	2%	7%
The Jordanians?	11%	82%	2%	7%

3. Ms. Gail Pressberg, Director, American Friends
Service Committee's Middle East Programme of the
International and Peace Education Divisions

Mr. Chairman, thank you for inviting me to be a panellist during this important conference.

I want to acknowledge to our Canadian friends here that most of what I have to say this morning is an analysis of the situation here in the United States. On such sensitive matters I believe it is preferable for our Canadian friends to address the situation in their own country.

I wish to be frank this morning. It would be much easier to present an analysis which describes and criticizes the actions of others - Governments, lobbies which advocate the status quo, etc. We could all walk away from here feeling morally right. This may be legitimate to do but in an act of itself, I am afraid, does nothing to relieve the terrible burdens and oppressions of the Palestinians living in refugee camps, under occupation and in the midst of war.

On the other hand a frank assessment on our part could turn into a liberating means to change public opinion. The opportunity is certainly present if we grab it.

What are some of the problems we face? To begin with, most citizens of the United States are far more concerned with the domestic issues of our country than with foreign policy. In so far as public opinion is one lever for change in Government policy, we are always going to be competing with domestic issues for the public's attention. Another problem we face, in terms of the public's priorities, is that we have a war contingent to our southern borders with refugees from Central America flooding our cities. This means that on a day-to-day basis, United States citizens are more concerned with choices our Government has to make on that particular foreign policy issue. There is little we can do to change these two factors.

The third problem - which is perhaps obvious to all - is that there are strong lobbies to support the status quo in the Middle East - the lobbies for the continuous sale of arms to the region, the lobby for Israeli Government policy - these all contribute to a dangerous status quo. Since these lobbies have learned how to translate their concerns into political policy in Washington, the dovish aspects of United States public opinion as described by Professor Moughrabi are not even known in Washington, let alone taken into account in policy-making.

A fourth problem we face is in the arena in which we can do the most. What I have to say is not meant to blame ourselves - we being the non-governmental organizations in the United States - it is meant to be constructive criticism out of which constructive action can occur.

We most often talk at our fellow citizens in the United States - we don't begin by listening to their concerns. In doing so, we often present too much information which goes right by our audience's ears. To compound this

problem, we often fail to end our presentations with specific action which United States citizens can take.

In talking at people and not listening to their concerns (before we give our views), we present our moral overview of the situation facing the Palestinians. While this is certainly understandable, given the war being waged against the Palestinian people's very existence, it fundamentally does not help in mobilizing public opinion to effect change in Washington's policy. For example, we neglect to present an analysis based on the concerns of the United States public about why it is in their very own interest to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Unfortunately it is, I believe, accurate to assert that peoples and countries act out of their own perceived self-interest and not out of the interest of another community. I know this must sound strange coming from the staff of a Quaker organization but I believe we can lead a value-oriented discussion and at the same time reflective of our own interests.

Another problem we have - and it is also a problem about which we can do something - is that we often present formulae for resolution of the conflict which go beyond the consensus in American public opinion which I believe Professor Moughrabi very accurately described. I shall dwell on this at greater length in a few minutes.

I have possibly dwelt too much on the problems. I'd like to talk about the elements of a constructive programme for action in the United States.

We must talk to people about what I believe is on their minds - the fact that, an unresolved Palestine question - the continued statelessness of the Palestinian people - is bound to exacerbate tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union. As I travel across the United States it is clear that people feel we are living in a very dangerous time. There is no question that public opinion polls show that United States citizens fear nuclear proliferation and nuclear war. It is our job to help them see that nuclear escalation can take place in either the East-West context - namely the unresolved Israel-Palestine conflict (after all it was the United States who raised the potential for the use of nuclear weapons when we went on a nuclear alert in 1958, 1967, 1970 and 1973).

Vice-President Bush two weeks ago perhaps gave us another opening to reach the public when he remarked in Europe that nuclear terrorism was a major threat to western civilization. To be sure nuclear terrorism could turn into a major and devastating problem. There is no doubt, however, that he was trying to sell the public and Governments of NATO countries on the notion that uncivilized demons in the third world are against us (coming on the heels of the TWA flight 847 hostage crisis, his remarks were aimed at the Middle East) and that the United States and its allies must build exclusive nuclear strength to combat this development.

I was in Europe at the time of Mr. Bush's remarks and I am afraid that he was taken seriously there. We must not allow the Reagan Administration to control this debate. We have an important opportunity to get public support for a resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict for non-proliferation and for a freeze on nuclear weapons. I am not implying that Palestinians have in mind to use a nuclear threat against the West. To the contrary, they are using political means. My message to the United States public is that the resolution of the major issue in the Middle East - the Israel-Palestine conflict - would be perceived by the people of the region as Western interest in their problem. To let the status quo, continue - occupation, war - is to send a signal that we do not care and we are more a part of the conflict than we are a part of the solution. It is the latter which fosters the conditions of hopelessness - hopelessness in political processes - which in turn fosters the use of terror.

Specifically in relation to the Palestine question, we must continue to bring to the United States Palestinians who can tell their story themselves. In this regard, I suggest that we continue to organize face-to-face discussions between authentic Palestinian voices and the United States public. This perhaps is more useful than resolutions of our own organizations. We can be dismissed as advocates and marginalized. The public can less easily dismiss the stories of the Palestinians in Sabra-Chatilla or Dheishah refugee camps or the Palestinian who flees Lebanon for safety only to find no Arab countries willing to give him permission to enter.

In order to mobilize United States public opinion we must demand that the media in the United States cease to use anti-Arab and anti-Jewish stereotypes. For example, NBC news this morning, in reference to the conviction of Jewish terrorists accused of bombing Palestinian mayors, said that they "don't look like terrorists". The racism in this statement is profound. Does the news editor expect of Jewish people that they always behave well? Jews, like any other group, have their delinquents. Contrast NBC's reference to those convicted today in Israel with the continued references to Palestinians as terrorists. I suggest that castigating a people as all good or all bad is filled with the kind of prejudice that should not be in our media.

Finally, we must acknowledge that the United States public is not going to abandon Israel in favour of Palestinian Arabs. To believe otherwise is to engage in a dangerous exercise of delusion, which by the way I find less among the Palestinians in the Middle East than many of their supporters in the United States and Europe. The United Nations has led an international consensus for the right Israelis and Palestinians to live in their own separate States. We must support and publicize this consensus. We must insist that only the PLO can deliver an agreement at the negotiating table because it alone represents the Palestinian people and we must insist that our Government negotiate with the PLO. This is our urgent task.

B. Collaboration by non-governmental organizations on the question of Palestine and the role of the United Nations

1. Ms. Savitri Kunadi, Representative: Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, in discharging its responsibilities, has always been searching for additional ways and means for furthering the cause of the Palestinian people. Since its inception in 1975, the Committee has been fully conscious of the paramount importance of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in enhancing public awareness of the Palestinian cause and in forming public opinion in favour of a speedy, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine. The Committee feels that NGOs have the ability to reach "grass roots" and create sufficient public opinion in favour of the Palestinian people, which will ultimately influence national policies on this question.

As far back as 1978, in General Assembly resolution 34/65, closer co-operation by the Division for Palestinian Rights with NGOs was envisaged and the first steps were taken in that regard. However, it was not until the holding of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine at Geneva in August and September, 1983 that a very determined effort was made to bring together as many concerned non-governmental organizations as possible under the same roof, not only for an expression of solidarity but also for the purpose of co-ordinating their future activity among themselves and their co-operation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. It should be recalled that over 240 persons representing 104 NGOs attended the International Conference on the Question of Palestine. The NGO participants included a broad spectrum of interests - parliamentarians, jurists, lawyers, educators, church groups, women's organizations, youth groups and solidarity groups among others. Nine organizations from Israel representing Jewish and Palestinian communities also participated.

The Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights adopted at the International Conference declared that the role of NGOs remained of vital importance in heightening awareness of and support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent sovereign Palestinian State. To those ends, the Conference called for the organization of meetings, symposia and seminars by the relevant organizations of the United Nations system on topics within their terms of reference and relating to specific problems of the Palestinian people by establishing closer liaison with NGOs, the media and other groups interested in the question of Palestine.

Section 3 of the Programme is almost entirely devoted to the role of NGOs. Convinced of the important role of world-wide public opinion in resolving the question of Palestine, and in the implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action, the International Conference urged and encouraged the NGOs to increase awareness by the international community of the economic and social burdens borne by the Palestinian people as a result of the continued Israeli occupation and its negative effects on the economic development of the West Asian region as a whole. The Conference urged and encouraged NGOs and professional and popular associations, the media, institutions of higher education, parliamentarians, political parties, organizations for solidarity and intellectuals - particularly in Western Europe and North America - to intensify their efforts to support the rights of the Palestinian people in every possible way, to undertake exchanges and other programmes of joint action with their Palestinian counterparts) to investigate the conditions of women and children in the occupied territories, to disseminate relevant information to increase public awareness and understanding of the question of Palestine in all its aspects) to establish special investigative commissions to determine the violations by Israel of the Palestinian legal rights and to disseminate their findings accordingly) to initiate with their Palestinian counterparts consultations, research and investigations on the juridical aspects of problems affecting the Palestinians' struggle, in particular the detention of political prisoners and the denial of prisoners-of-war status to detained members of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO)) to join their counterparts in other parts of the world in giving their support, where it has not been done, to an initiative which would express the desire of the international community to see the Palestinian people at last living in their independent homeland in peace, freedom and dignity.

The 104 NGOs present at the International Conference also adopted a Declaration whereby they called upon the Committee to establish close links with all the interested NGOs to facilitate co-operation among NGOs and between NGOs and the United Nations, and urged the Committee to call consultative meetings with NGOs in New York and in Geneva to examine the possibility of co-ordination in implementing the Programme of Action adopted by the International Conference. NGOs further adopted a recommendation for action that, inter alia, emphasized the dissemination of the results of the Conference.

Since the Geneva Conference, the Committee has made it an important aspect of its work programme to co-operate more actively with NGOs interested in the question of Palestine and to encourage them to work together in those tasks. The first step taken by the Committee was to request the Secretary-General to appoint in the Division of Palestinian Rights, a Liaison Officer for MGM with sufficient staff to increase collaboration with NGOs worldwide. In addition, the Committee requested that regional symposia for NGOs be held as well as an annual international meeting for NGOs.

The first NGO symposium was held in New York last year. There has also been an Asian Symposium in New Delhi in May this year. An African Symposium is being organized in Dakar, Senegal, next month.

I had the privilege of attending the NGO Symposium in New Delhi, as a representative of the host country in the Committee's delegation. I was impressed by the quality of participation by NGOs and in particular by the panelists at the Symposium. The Declaration adopted by the Symposium highlights the important role which NGOs can play in promoting a just solution of the question of Palestine. The Symposium also reiterated the conviction of the Committee that the International Peace Conference on the Middle East offered the only realistic and practical way towards a solution to the problem of Palestine and the establishment of a Palestinian State. The following paragraphs from the Declaration aptly sum up the role envisaged for NGOs and I quote:

"We concur that influencing world public opinion is a key factor in the just resolution of the question of Palestine. As NGOs we have access to local populations, the "grass roots", in many societies and are determined to work to increase their understanding of the question of Palestine and to effectively mobilize their potential political, social and spiritual power.

"Beyond these principles, we firmly believe that non-governmental organizations are a unique asset in securing the rights of the Palestinian people, for we can present the issue in its vital human dimension to individuals and other non-governmental organizations.

"We are aware of the forces opposed to our efforts. But the inherent justice of our cause and the sound construction of a genuine regional and global NGO network will be mutually reinforcing and demonstrably advance our endeavours."

It is the Committee's hope that these regional symposia will bring together NGOs in the various regions and results in closer co-operation amongst themselves and with the United Nations, as well as more active

participation in the annual International Meeting. At last year's International Meeting it was remarked that the bulk of the participants were from the North American continent and Europe. It is the Committee's endeavour to increase the participation of NGOs in the other regions as well and it is hoped that the regional symposia will assist in achieving this objective.

Following the International Meeting in Geneva in September last year, the Committee has co-operated closely with the 15-member Interim Co-ordinating Committee (ICC) established at that Meeting. In the past months it has enabled ICC to meet twice in Geneva - in November 1984 and March 1985 - when the members of ICC were able to get together and to finalize plans for the signature campaign and for this year's International Meeting. In both these projects, the Committee has extended, through the Division for Palestinian Rights, the assistance it could.

The Committee hopes that the regional symposia will afford the opportunity to NGOs in each region to agree on a common approach which they will take to the International Meeting in September.

It is essential that NGOs themselves need to take the initiative in co-operating amongst themselves, both regionally and internationally, and increase the network of NGOs interested in the question of Palestine. The Committee will do whatever it can to support these initiatives.

The question of Palestine has been before the United Nations for almost 40 years. Although the United Nations search for a just and comprehensive solution which would ensure justice to the Palestinian people as well as to all other people in the region has not been successful, there has emerged broad agreement on the principles which should serve as a basis for a just solution to the question of Palestine. Unfortunately, the lack of political will has presented obstacles to the implementation of these principles and the Committee's programme, drawn up in 1976, for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights remains unimplemented.

The Committee regards NGOs as a valuable asset in its struggle for Palestinian rights. The impact of the increasingly important phenomenon of "grass roots" organizations in the forming of public opinion, and of government policies for that matter, justifies the need for a substantial enhancement in the quality and expansion in the scope of co-operation among the NGOs, and between the NGOs and the United Nations, first and foremost the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights.

It is our hope that this Symposium will adopt proposals which are conducive to more fruitful and productive collaboration on this issue of common interest. I wish your deliberations every success.

2. Role of non-governmental organizations and search for pathways to a creative peace in the Middle East

Dr. Donald Bets, Assistant to the President and Professor of Political Science at Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, United States of America.

It is a great honour for me to spend the next few moments with you and then the next couple of days with you discussing some issues which are of common interest and I think of general importance. I would like to make a couple of comments before I move into the major part of my address.

The first is that Ms. Kunadi has given us an outstanding review of the basic relationship between the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the non-governmental organizations (NGO) community and has given us a United Nations perspective which is important for our deliberations, and I will try to complement that where I can.

Secondly, I would like to take a moment to thank those who have made it possible for this conference to be held. I was in the position not very long ago of having to be on the other side of this microphone and I know some of the problems, the trials and the travails that they have gone through to make this a success. So I believe that the Division for Palestinian Rights, particularly the Committee, and specifically Mr. Aubrey Nkomo and Ms. Eileen Schaeffler, deserve our undying gratitude for the work that has gone to in this particular conference. I think also that the resource leaders, resource persons and the workshop leaders, whose work really begins in earnest tonight and continues all through the next couple of days should not be forgotten and we are passing our thanks.

In the remarks read out by The Rev. Meyers, he mentioned that I am currently residing in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, which I am sure all of you instantly recognize since many of you are atlas buffs of the United States. Briefly, Tahlequah is the capital of the Cherokee Indian Nation and I find it ironic yet highly relevant to be living among people who, 150 years ago tasted dispossession of their land in the eastern part of the United States as they were removed from what was then called Indian territory. But that Indian territory was soon to become part of a new State once it was realized that there was wealth to be found in those plains where they were supposed to be beyond the realm of law and order.

This panel is to address the question of NGO collaboration on the question of Palestine and, specifically, the relationship with the United Nations. I would like to pass over a couple of the events that Ms. Kunadi has brought to your attention but perhaps from a slightly different perspective. I had the opportunity in good fortune of being involved with the United Nations in the evolution of this NGO network that has come in to being and I think that you might appreciate some of the perspectives that can be brought to this particular point.

In 1982, the United Nations had no direct relationship with a network of NGOs on the question of Palestine. In fact I go so far as to say that there was no such network in existence and, while a network certainly has difficulties and troubles and perhaps does not know one side from the other at this particular point, it does exist and it is vibrant and it is crying for attention and organization. But it was in 1982, with the formation of the secretariat for the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, under Mrs. Lucille Mair, that the question of NGOs and the role that they could play, the positive important role that they could play in the development of consciousness on the question of Palestine, began to be considered. Mrs. Mair was, and is, a firm believer in the role of NGOs and commissioned several of us to begin to work with the NGO community. As we began to reach out to the NGO community, not just in the United States but world-wide, something became painfully apparent, and that was that there was no NGO community on the question of Palestine. There were important organizations doing highly relevant work but, as an international community, these NGO entities simply did not exist. And so we found curious anomalies, situations where NGOs doing outstanding work just a few miles from another NGO, had no conception of what that NGO was up to, had no idea that that NGO might be duplicating their work. And even in Europe and other countries, we found a similar situation.

Those were very humble beginnings, but the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and its service organization, the Division for Palestinian Rights, worked very hard to encourage the NGO community to co-operate with it throughout the coming years. And the results, I think, grew progressively more impressive and progressively more important.

It was in 1983 that the International Conference on the Question of Palestine was held and it was convened, as you know, at Geneva after a series of regional meetings. To those regional preparatory meetings were invited a number of NGOs, not in North America however, but in Latin America, Western Asia, Africa and Asia and Europe. Perhaps it was the European meeting that sticks most strongly in my consciousness because there were about 40 NGOs that did come, and out of that meeting came a commitment on their part not to simply leave the meeting and go their merry way but to co-operate with one another in a way which they had not done up to that point. This perhaps was our first indication that a network was a true possibility.

It is difficult for me to speak about the International Conference on the Question of Palestine without putting it into some contemporary context. I always call it the most controversial and the least discussed Conference ever held by the United Nations, and I am sure that is open to great discussion. But I will tell you, from the perspective of someone that played a very small role in the development of that Conference, that I was always amazed how it was conspicuously avoided by the press. I recall just before the opening of the Conference that the press of the world was reporting that only 76 countries were going to attend. And yet finally, when 137 nations did participate in some form, that particular figure was trumpeted very loudly. In fact if you lived in the United States or some other countries in the world, about the only thing you would have heard from that Conference was the fact that the Swiss Government took impressive and perhaps extreme measures in order to ensure our security. Twelve miles of barbed wire were laid around the Palais des Nations at Geneva. Every 100 yards, there was an armoured personnel carrier station and every 50 yards was a sign in five languages that said, "If you are asked to halt, please do so." Otherwise, the patrol units and the soldiers were ordered to shoot. I was never quite sure whom the Swiss army was protecting from whom. But the result was a rather tranquil Conference, tranquil in terms of external violence or difficulties, but I think quite revolutionary in terms of its results. Aside from the 137 nations that participated, there was what was called a side-show, another dimension of the Conference, which eventually assumed some proportion. That was the fact that 104 NGOs, representing international NGOs and national NGOs from 24 countries, decided, with their own money, with their own expenses, to come to the meeting. We had at that meeting 10 organizations from Israel representing the Palestinian and the Jewish-Israeli communities. We had organizations, some from the West Bank and Gaza, although others were not allowed to attend. And it was a rather turbulent period. But I believe that the results were quite extraordinary because we had the beginnings of an international consciousness amongst the NGO community that they could make a difference.

I realize just how important that meeting was from an NGO perspective when the United Nations began to count the achievements of that Conference. While the Declaration and the Programme of Action were considered to be outstanding accomplishments, also listed among the accomplishments was the fact that, not only did the NGOs participate, but they participated so vibrantly. In fact it was on more than one occasion that I found representatives to the governmental conference slipping downstairs to catch the NGO action. It was an interesting meeting. It was a meeting which had some turbulence and some interaction that went beyond just normal conversation but I think it was an important step in the evolution of the NGO community on the question of Palestine.

Last year, here, the North American Symposium on the Question of Palestine was held. It was the first of its kind in this particular region and it was attended by 55 or 56 NGOs. I think it played a crucial role here in North America. But there was a problem. And the problem was that, in the Declaration that was adopted by many of you who were there, one of the keys that you saw to the future of the NGO effort in North America was the question of organization. In fact you called for it specifically in the recommendations that the North American NGOs, in Canada and in the United States, should become more involved in a formal organizational way, and I believe over the next three days we are going to have to address that particular question more determinedly.

Last August, the International Meeting on the Question of Palestine, held at Geneva, was attended by about 100 NGOs, and out of that came the first formal, though transitional, structure to bring NGOs together world-wide. It is called the Interim Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (ICC), usually referred to as the Interim Committee. It is composed of 15 organizations world-wide, 2 of which are from North America. One is the National Council of Churches and the other is the Palestine Human Rights Campaign. It was considered to be a transitional mechanism to help NGOs on the way to organizing their efforts and it will be completely revamped, reviewed, revised and perhaps replaced at the upcoming international meeting on the question. But regardless of the structure is, it is important that the structure was created because, however flawed and however primitive, it provided the international NGO community with its first vehicle to relate directly as a community to the United Nations. And remember that we are interested in finding ways that the NGO community can collaborate positively with the United Nations on this question. I think, in the past, that perhaps we have looked more to the United Nations for the initiative in this relationship and, in the future, we must look to our selves and to other NGOs for that initiative.

What role can we, as NGOs, play in collaboration with the United Nations? Well, I think that some of you have talked about this before but I want to reiterate a couple of points. First, we cannot see the challenge in a sectarian or a provincial manner. The challenge is global, the response must be global. Each of us must react locally but we must collaborate globally. Each of us must do our thing, in our place, but we must be consummately aware of what others are doing in their places so that we can interact, understand, inform, co-operate, impress and be effective for the future.

We do this not by repeating what Governments have done but by taking our own perspective. Many NGOs have the advantage of being grass-roots movements. You touch people in the heart as well as the mind. You remind them that people, the Palestinian people, are in fact just that - people. They are not stereotypes to be reduced to terrorists or refugees. They are mothers and fathers, children and teachers and, when you take the whole gamut of the 4.5 to 5 million Palestinians, you realize as you understand the issue, that you are dealing with a real human community. If we can accept the challenge of making that a reality, not only to our friends and not only to each other because we all know this, but to those in the gallery and to those beyond the gallery, to the constituencies that exist in the United States and Canada and then beyond that area, then we will accomplish our ends. If we can attack the pernicious stereotyping that is going on with regard to the question of Palestine, each in our own individual way, then we will have made a significant contribution to the process of realizing a Palestine for the Palestinians in the future.

There is another challenge and that challenge has to do with the Committee that organized this Conference. Any of you that know of the impression of this Committee beyond the confines of this house, particularly in the United States and Canada, are aware that this Committee is not held in the highest esteem. As a matter of fact, I would say it is a rather maligned organization. And yet I find it quite interesting over the last day and a half, talking to several of you, how many of you have been impressed by members of the Committee you have met, and how "moderate" the pronouncements of the Committee seem. I do not believe that the Committee is moderate in terms of its aims. Its aims are there - they are clear. The aims are to effect the rights of the Palestinian people and to help them to secure a national home in Palestine. But I believe that the image of the Committee has really been distorted. Perhaps in your work we can consider an accurate portrayal of the role of this Committee in some inventive ways.

We are sometimes called NGOs or sometimes called the key to public opinion in the United States. But, perhaps because we are grass-roots organizations, we can make a difference. I think the challenge is there. It is just how do we accept, it. When I come back to a theme I started at the beginning - it is the question of organization. From my perspective, this Conference begins when my words end, because what has been said up to this time is preliminary. What happens after this particular moment is going to be significant because the conference is unique in United Nations history. It is going to revert to you and to me, as an NGO. It is going to revert to

our talents and our perspectives. We are going to be trying over the next couple of days to come up with specific ways and means, not pious platitudes, but specific ways and means by which we can effect the ends we all hold in common, and I believe we cannot shrink from the notion of organization. At some point, in some form, we must address how do we, as a continental existence, as a continental group of NGOs, project our work in a more efficient, more realistic and more effective fashion. What mechanism, however primitive, can we create over the next couple of days to make sure that what we do here is not forgotten until the report is read next year.

I think it is important to consider the question of team-work. I think it is important to consider the question of dissemination of information over the next couple of days, the role of the media and how you network. Tomorrow, there is going to be a specific panel, which is a non-panel, a workshop, dealing with the question of networking and collaboration. It is the most unstructured of all of the workshops. It rests exclusively on your inventiveness. It rests exclusively on your insight and the dreams and hopes that you can bring into the focus of reality. And I believe that the committee, that particular workshop, will be as successful as the individuals in this room care to make it.

Toward global NGO collaboration, I would like point again to ICC. Last year in August, ICC initiated a global signature campaign. It was a campaign designed to mobilize world public opinion in some form by a global signature process to support the idea and the convening of an international conference on peace in the Middle East, as prescribed in United Nations General Assembly resolution 38/58. This particular signature campaign and the particular instrument for the signature campaign has been analysed and re-analysed and discussed and debated. I know that there are some of you out there that do not believe that you can sign. Others of you have sponsored it. Some of you have endorsed it, some of you have passed it around. Actually from a personal perspective, that makes very little difference to me. What is important is that it was a step taken by the international community and that that step has to be discussed, debated and reasoned by us all. The hope, and it is coming to fruition, that the number of signatures that are going to be gathered in this campaign will be significant and will be presented to the Secretary-General next 29 November as an indication of grass-roots support for that international conference.

Beyond the signature campaign, let us look to a comprehensive regional and global NGO directory, a data base that lets each of us know where the other one is and what we are up to. We have found one another more or less, although there are new groups being discovered all the time, but we lose touch with one another. It is going to be important to consider ways and means whereby we can stay in contact. A continuing committee? Perhaps. In what form? That is open to your discretion. What about a comprehensive audio-visual directory? We have all been impressed, individually and collectively, with the massive role the media, particularly television, can play in our lives. And it is no different on the question of Palestine. A very small example, and it is very small: I spoke not too long ago - I had the great pleasure of speaking - at Mount Holyoke College on this question. And I must admit it was an audience that was basically neutral for the issue, some for, some against, but essentially neutral. And When I went up there, I had the opportunity of taking what I consider to be a very significant piece of audio-visual equipment. It is "Shadow of the West", a short audio-visual piece that was done by Edward Said and shown on British television. It had an opportunity to be shown while we were there and they asked if they could retain it. Well, it has been returned to me and it has been passed around to four or five different colleges in the area and all the reactions have been positive. People are talking and thinking. It was a catalyst for some sort of action and activity. But do we have, perhaps you will answer yes, do we have a comprehensive continental and international directory of all the audio-visual possibilities that exist for us today? What kind of media blitz could we in fact mount if we knew what was out there? A comprehensive directory of NGO meetings world-wide? I am constantly finding new organizations holding meetings or groups of organizations holding meetings. And what about an expanded data base of human rights violations that we can have access to by computer? These are all areas that we have to look into. But first and foremost we have to consider in what form this body will be constituted after these dates. And I urge you to look to the possibilities of a regional plan of action that includes a continuing committee of some sort.

At the end of this Conference, one of the cardinal rules of United Nations meetings, and many of you are more aware of this than I am, is that we will be asked, as NGOs, to present a declaration to the United Nations. In the past I think we, as NGOs, have prepared monumental declarations, some of great substance and some of lesser substance. But I believe that it is important that this declaration take on a unique dimension. This should not be a declaration composed solely of general statements and platitudes. This should be a declaration where we are quite specific not as to what we expect the United Nations to do for us but as to what we are going to do for the question of Palestine in North America and how the United Nations can assist us in that quest; not demanding that the United Nations accomplish a particular end while we go our particular individual ways, but how we are going to co-operate and how that co-operation will be enhanced by the United Nations. I submit to you that the clearer we are, the more specific we are, in our recommendations the better opportunity we will have of collaborating positively with the United Nations.

In 1983, Lucille Nair closed the International Conference on the Question of Palestine on what I consider to be a high and relevant note. And I am going to paraphrase some of her comments at this point. She said that, at that Conference, something unusual had happened and that was that we had a glimpse of a bridge - a bridge that can be built by decent people. This morning, John Mahoney talked about the question of decency. And if there is one way to characterize the people in this room that I know, it is definitely a collection of decent people. What can be accomplished by decent people from this point on? I believe that at the International Conference on the Question of Palestine we had a sense, perhaps for a moment, of the world community drawing on its deepest hopes and its noblest aspirations) that we can take the question of Palestine beyond a regional notion or a refugee notion, and that we can create and continue to create an infinitely important yet still delicate new form of hope about this issue. I believe that the work on the question of Palestine in North America has been begun in earnest by all of you. I believe that a new dimension, a collaborative dimension, a continental dimension, begins when you go to work collectively tomorrow. And I am very pleased, honoured and excited to be part of that process.

V. REPORTS OF WORKSHOPS

A. Role of educational institutions in the formation of public opinion on the question of Palestine: report of workshop I

This workshop on the role of educational institutions in the formation of public opinion on the question of Palestine came into being as the result of formal and informal evaluations done by participants at last year's North American Symposium and the International Meeting in Geneva.

We wish to thank the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights for making it possible for NGOs interested in enhancing the role of educational institutions to come together.

Resource persons Michael Griffin, Michael McKinnon and Jock Taft brought expertise on how to develop the issue of Palestine for teaching high school students; Martha Oukas and David Yates assisted in our understanding of how our public library systems operate so as to best effectuate a North America-wide campaign to broaden library collections' works on the question of Palestine.

In our afternoon sessions we developed the framework for a brief concise bibliography on the question of Palestine, of the 20 essential works which every library collection ought to contain. An exercise solicited from each participant a listing of what each considered the five basic works, keeping in mind, so far as it was known, four criteria that a work should be; inexpensive, in print, fairly easily available, and for the non-specialist. Solicitations produced much agreement on essential works and the initial compiled list of some 25 works fell naturally into major broad categories.

A framework for a one-week teaching unit on the issue of Palestine, suitable for high school presentation was developed, defining subject areas and foreseeing the need for formulation of goals and objectives and the identification of corresponding appropriate resources, methods and activities.

Each of these projects - a bibliography geared to librarians, a teaching unit geared to high school students, is in a beginning working stage, with much input needed from NGOs not present at these workshops. To that end, typed outlines will be sent to each of you, seeking your own expertise and input.

A core group of participants in these workshops has indicated commitment to refining the work, after wider NGO participation in the process, so that a revised working model of each can be presented to this group at a future date.

We intend to facilitate the realization of these two projects, realizing that several areas of importance remain to be investigated. Questions of distribution and follow-up, budget and funding, and the question of the United Nations in assisting this work, were touched upon briefly and acknowledged as questions that will require further planning and development as the work progresses.

B. Fund-raising: report of workshop II

The fund-raising "mini-workshop" came into being as a result of the formal and informal evaluations done by participants in last year's North American NGO Symposium and the International NGO Meeting in Geneva. Overall, people stressed the need for practical assistance from the United Nations in their work on the question of Palestine, in addition to the research and commentary of experts. Participants indicated a need to know more about grantsmanship and the finer points of general fund-raising. The idea of sharing fund-raising ideas within our NGO network also received encouragement.

Yesterday's presentation by Dr. Kader, Executive Director, American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, was direct and to the point. There are over a dozen major mistakes that the average organization makes in going after money - whether asking for outright cash donations or conducting a sale. Dr. Kader elaborated upon these mistakes in detail, using each mistake to point up other important aspects to fund-raising work, and illustrating his talk with examples from his own experience in political campaigns.

Dr. Kader returned often to several key themes. He stressed that it is essential for us to state our projects and our needs in concrete terms in a way that can be easily visualized by the prospective donor. He reiterated that stating your cause is not enough and, quite simply, is ineffective. Likewise, the benefits of contributing funds to your organization must be expressed in equally concrete terms.

He reminded us several times of the importance of current and past donors and termed them our most important funding resource. It is imperative to keep them informed, keep asking for contributions and to let everyone know of their largesse. He suggested that donors are also the best source of new donors.

Dr. Kader also encouraged us to spend freely to add to our donor base because of the points just mentioned.

As the director of an organization that is constantly asked for money as well as having to raise it, Dr. Kader suggested strategies for getting your request the attention it needs. The concept of seeking and obtaining matching funding was a key element of these strategies.

In closing Dr. Kader directed us to several organizational resources as well as a reading list.

In response to the idea of sharing fund-raising ideas, among the NGO network a brief questionnaire has been prepared and distributed at this conference. (If you did not receive one please see the back table, or me.) These questionnaires will be compiled into an NGO Fund-raising Idea Guide and distributed to the NGO community with a detailed report on Dr. Kader's extremely helpful presentation.

C. Increasing the effectiveness of religious organizations in raising public consciousness concerning the question of Palestine: report of workshop II:

The workshop began with a historical account by Dr. Tracey K. Jones of the procedures by which the National Council of Churches Governing Body prepared itself to adopt its influential statement on the Middle East on 6 November 1980. We were impressed by the degree to which long-range study, consultation with a wide range of interested parties and careful debate had been involved in that achievement.

Dr. James Cogswell, Director of the Division of Overseas Ministries of the National Council of Churches (MCC), reported on the recent structural changes which have occurred in NCC, stating that he believed that the new structure would enhance the ability of NCC to act effectively on issues of justice, like those concerning the status of Palestine.

These opening statements were followed by a series of brief reports on the work of 10 Christian denominations or church agencies, as indicated on the attached programme, with the following exceptions: Charles Kimball, who is out of the country, did not report on NCC and Gail Pressberg reported on the current activities of the American Friends Service Committee.

The workshop members were made aware of the diversity in programme and activities of those religious groups. Some denominations have given Middle East questions top priority; others have given it little attention. But in every denomination there appear to be some people who have developed a deep concern for the issues and who are eager to see their communion's energies directed toward those issues. We believe we should work at finding ways to assist each other in stimulating each NGO to a deeper involvement and a more vital programme for raising consciousness concerning Palestinian questions.

After lunch, Mary Appelman of the America-Israel Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace reported on the activities of a number of Jewish groups concerned about the question of Palestine. Her report made it clear that there is a wide diversity among North American Jewish groups in their interpretations of what should be happening on the question of Palestine, and that some groups have been deeply concerned for justice in the Middle East, calling for the rights of self-determination for both peoples in Palestine and campaigning for a settlement freeze. She said, "These groups are lobbying in the heart of the Jewish structure."

The Reverend William Gepford gave a detailed report of the work of the Littlefield Presbyterian Church in Dearborn, Michigan, a community with a high concentration of Arab Muslims. His analysis made it clear that there are many possibilities for a significant interchange and for mutual service and respect among the three faith groups (Jewish-Christian-Muslim), and we hope that the work in Dearborn will be published and widely emulated.

Grace Halsell reported in some detail on the research she is doing for a book on the relationships between certain television evangelists and Israel. She has participated in tours of Israel organized and led by Jerry Falwell, and she shared with the workshop her observations of the intensity of religious fervour on the part of participants in those tours. She especially noted the excitement expressed about Armageddon and possible changes on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Members of the workshop were impressed with the degree to which this fascination with modern Israel on the part of groups which Halsell called "born-again Christians" is a factor affecting the consciousness of North Americans on the question of Palestine.

During the day we shared in two brief discussion periods in small groups, in which we attempted to find some guidelines for the future. Some of those suggestions and agreements are listed in the recommendations which are appended. During the day perhaps 40 people came into the workshop, and there were usually some 25 to 30 persons present.

The workshop members wish to thank the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for this opportunity to share in a workshop under its auspices. We believe that it has been a highly-useful learning experience for all of us.

D. Increasing the effectiveness of religious organizations in raising public consciousness concerning the question of Palestine: report of workshop IV

The workshop recommends that the following suggestions be implemented primarily by NGOs:

1. Organizations should be urged to find ways to encourage their members and the general public to participate in the signature campaign in support of an International Peace Conference under the auspices of the Security Council.
2. Organizations should be urged to alert their members of the effect on the consciousness of travellers of some Holy Land tours which do not give a full account of the status of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza.
3. Organizations should be urged to alert their members and the general public of the orientation towards Israel of a number of TV evangelists, and of the religious interpretations they make of Israel's military activities.
4. Organizations should be urged to co-operate in sharing resources and activities in local communities. For example, the Presbyterian Church (USA) has a national network of approximately 150 Resource Centers which already have become depositories of resource for understanding the crisis in the Middle East. This church welcomes opportunities to share its resources with others concerned about the crisis.
5. Organizations should be urged to inform their members of the results of this Symposium and of the agreements which have arisen within it.
6. The 1985 NGO Symposium should attempt, before it adjourns, to establish an interim co-ordinating committee to assist the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in developing the North American NGO Symposium for 1986. It should give special attention to informing other NGOs of the activities and outcomes of the 1985 Symposium, and it should attempt to gain much wider participation of other NGO for the next Symposium.
7. NGOs should co-operate to find ways of informing each other of the range of resources and activities that they can share.
8. Certain innovative activities directed toward increasing understanding between faith groups, such as those described as having occurred in Syracuse and Dearborn, should be publicized through NGO networks, so that they may serve as models for other communities. We urge that, wherever possible, interfaith dialogues be changed into dialogues.
9. NGOs should request Sojourners or some other religious journal, to publish an article updating the public on the political implications of the television evangelists' interpretation of religion.
10. NGO should not let the possibility of declining contributions, risked because of their commitments to action for justice for Palestinians, prevent them from acting for justice.

E. Collaboration and networking: report of workshop V

1. Based on our collective deliberations, we strongly suggest to the assembled NGOs at this North American Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine that they organize themselves on a regional basis through the creation of an Interim Co-ordinating Committee. This Committee should be composed of a representative number of NGOs (5 to 10) who are both capable of and eager to work towards the close co-ordination between NGOs in North America and between the Co-ordinating Committee, as representative of the regional NGOs and the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights.
2. This Committee should meet quarterly, if possible, with one meeting taking place during the North American Symposium.
3. The Committee requests that the mid Nations-provide funds to cover the travel costs for meetings.
4. The Sub-Committee on the Structure of the North American Interim Co-ordinating Committee suggests that the Committee include the following organizations

Palestine Human Rights Campaign
National Council of Churches
American Friends Service Committee
America-Israel Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace
Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee
National Conference of Black Lawyers
NAJDA
November 29 Committee for Palestine
Canadian-Arab Federation
Near East Cultural and Educational Foundation of Canada (NECEF).

5. As North American NGOs we should concentrate our educational, informational and recruitment efforts on ethnic and other minority organizations, peace and disarmament groups, trade/labour unions, elected national and local officials as well as the media.
6. There is an intransigence at the highest leadership levels of the national and international/labour union movement to analyse the impact of the Middle East struggle on the economic conditions of their members. This has the effect of a breakdown of solidarity in the international labour movement. It is our observation that the labour movements in the United States and Canada are vastly different. The Toronto Federation of Labour proposed a resolution recognizing the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. This, however, did not pass at the national level. Identification of progressive elements within the Canadian movement are more easily identified at levels above individual locals.
7. In the light of their tradition of allegiance to political justice and democratic principles, American trade/labour unions, which have stated positions on Central America and South Africa, have refused to address the question of Palestine. We therefore suggest:
 - (a) Expanding work at the local level, focusing on particular ethnic groups within organized labour, especially Arab-Americans in the Detroit area, Afro-Americans and Hispanic trade-labour organizations, such as the A. Philip Randolph Institute, the Coalition of Black Trade Unions and the Labour Coalition for Latin American Advancements
 - (b) Identification of progressive/sympathetic local leadership;

(c) Work to develop effective labour/community coalitions.

8. In an effort to achieve global recognition of the rights of the Palestinian people, we intend to introduce trade/labour unions to their counterparts in the Occupied Territories and to arrange an exchange of delegations.

9. In order to increase awareness of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, we are committed to concentrate our educational, informational and recruitment efforts on:

- (a) Religious and secular organizations;
- (b) Ethnic and minority communities;
- (c) Legislative lobbying structures.

in addition to our focus on organized labour. We plan to involve these organizations in future NGO symposia.

10. An effort will also be made to improve relations between women's organizations and NGOs.

11. A newsletter is to be distributed regionally to impart NGO news to interested organizations.

12. Legislative lobbying structures will commit themselves to effect national policy on the role of the United Nations.

VI. REPORT OF NGOS DOING WORK ON WOMEN IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The NGOs involved in work on the issues of women under occupation in the Middle East, particularly in the territories occupied by Israel, make the following proposals:

- 1. The establishment of a network of North American NGOs involved and/or interested in the issues of Palestinian and Lebanese women under occupation.
- 2. The establishment of a strong working relationship between the North American NGO network and women's organizations in Palestine and Lebanon.
- 3. The invitation, as a first step, of Um Khalil to the International Meeting in Geneva this September and, in accordance with the proposals made by the networking workshop, of a diverse group of women from the occupied territories to the next North American NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine.
- 4. A subsequent tour of North America by these women, who represent a variety of women's organizations under occupation, would give grass roots organisations on this continent the opportunity to hear, firsthand, both the impact of occupation and the variety of women's responses to occupation.
- 5. We strongly urge that the following women be considered:
 - (a) Zahera Kamal;
 - (b) Samiha Khalil;
 - (c) Mary Khass;
 - (d) Other women denied exit visas to attend the NGO conference on the conclusion of the decade of women, held in Nairobi in July 1985.

VII. LETTER DATED 10 JULY 1985 FROM THE REVEREND DARREL MEYERS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

We, the participants in the Second North American Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, have just learned that Sameeha Khalil, invited by the United Nations to participate in the United Nations Conference on the Decade for Women in Nairobi, Kenya, as well as Siham Barghouty and Zahera Kemal, have been denied permission by the Israeli occupation authorities to travel. We ask that His Excellency the Secretary-General intervene on their behalf taking into consideration the urgency of this matter.

On behalf of all NGOs present at the Symposium

(Signed) Reverend Darrel MEYERS
Middle East Fellowship of Southern California
Moderator at the Symposium

VIII. CLOSING STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY MR. OSCAR ORAMAS-OLIVA, VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

We have now come to the end of the North American Regional NGO symposium on the Question of Palestine. I think we may describe it as an experiment in co-operation between the United Nations and NGOs on this question and I am sure you all agree that it has been a most interesting and rewarding experience.

The Declaration you have adopted reaffirms views which are held by many but are, unfortunately, still required to be shared by many more. As I said, at the commencement, a clear understanding of the facts will promote progress towards acceptance of a just solution to the problem. Your adoption of the Declaration represents a further commitment on your part to continue to work for justice for the Palestinian people.

I would like to take this opportunity to stress, once more, the importance that our Committee attaches to the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. We are glad to see that you too share this conviction. You have a definite role to play in promoting a successful outcome of the campaign to convene such a conference. I would appeal to you once more to participate actively in the signature campaign that has been launched and gather as many signatures as you possibly can. The more signatures we have the greater the impact that the campaign will have.

The responsibility of spreading the facts still remains and it is one you have shouldered and which clearly you are prepared to continue to be.

The dissemination of the facts and the achievement of more widespread understanding of the situation can be advanced through co-operation between the United Nations and yourselves on the one hand, and amongst yourselves on the other.

Another stone in this new structure of co-operation has now been laid. We look forward to a long and close relationship in tackling this difficult task before us. It has to be a continuing process - one in which our efforts cannot be relaxed until our objectives are fully attained.

I am confident that your determination to continue to work in this cause as manifested here over the last three days augur well for our continued co-operation.

I thank you all for your active participation in this symposium, which has contributed to its success. Our special thanks are due to the panelists for their presentations and particularly to the workshop leaders and moderators, who took on the additional responsibility of guiding the discussions. I take this opportunity also to thank the members of the United Nations Secretariat for the efforts they have all made to make this event a success.

Your contribution here will play its part in the next event scheduled in this programme. I refer of course to the International Meeting of NGOs to be held at Geneva in September this year. It is our hope that you will all find the time to attend that Meeting, too.

Of course, these symposia are also to be a recurrent feature, so we are assured of close contacts in the future. We would always be interested in hearing reports of your activities and stand ready to co-operate and assist you whenever required. With these few words I wish you all good luck and success in your efforts.

IX. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AND OBSERVERS

NGOs

America-Israel Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee
American Baptist Churches, USA
American Friends Service Committee
Americans for Middle East Understanding
Association of Arab-American University Graduates, Inc.

Board of Global Ministries/United Methodist Church
 Canada Arab World Parliamentary Association
 Canadian Arab Federation
 Canadian Jews Against Zionism
 Church of Humanism
 Commission of the Churches on International Affairs of the World Council of Churches
 Committee for Academic Freedom in the Israeli Occupied Territories
 Federation of American-Arab organizations
 Grassroots International
 International Jewish Peace Union
 International Movement for Fraternal Unity Among Races and Peoples
 International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (EAFORD), Canada
 International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (EAFORD), Virginia, USA
 International Studies Association
 Medical Aid for Palestine
 Middle East Fellowship of Southern California
 Najda
 National Conference of Black Lawyers
 Near East Cultural and Educational Foundation of Canada (NECEF)
 November 29th Committee for Palestine
 Palestine Committee for NGOs
 Palestine Human Rights Campaign
 Presbyterian Church (USA)
 Toronto Universities Middle East Group (TIMEG)
 Union of Arab Jurists
 United Holy Land Fund
 Washington Area Jews for an Israeli-Palestinian Peace
 Women's Collective on the Middle East
 Women's International Democratic Federation
 Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
 World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Association
 World Association of Former United Nations Interns and Fellows, Inc.
 World Muslim Congress World Peace Council

NGO observers

Association Suisse-Palestine
 Baptist World Alliance
 Committee for a Democratic Palestine
 Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee

Panelists

Dr. Donald Betz (USA)
 Ms. Savitri Kunadi (India)
 Mr. John Mahoney (USA)
 Dr. Fouad Maughrahi (USA)
 Ms. Gail Pressberg (USA)
 Dr. Elia Zureik (Canada)

States Members of the United Nations

Egypt
 India
 Iraq
 Jordan
 Mali
 Malta
 Tunisia
 Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic
 Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

United Nations Secretariat units

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP),
 Nairobi Representative: Mr. Salih M. Osman,
 Director and Regional Representative

Specialized agencies

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), New York
 Representatives: Mr. D. Dionne, Director Mr. Neh Tolbert-Dukuly

National liberation movements

Palestine Liberation Organization
 South West Africa People's Organization
 African National Congress

1/ The 1985/1986 membership of the NAICC is the following: American Friends Service Committee, America-Israel Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peaces Board of Global Ministries, United Methodist Church; Canadian Arab Federation; NAJDA (Women Concerned about the Middle East); Near East Cultural and Educational Foundation of Canada (NECEF); Palestine Human Rights Campaign.

2/ Highlights of a report prepared by Canadian Facts, Toronto, Ontario and presented to The Institute of ARAB Studies Inc., 556 Trapelo Ra., Boston, Massachusetts 02178.