

INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC OPINION AND THE PALESTINE QUESTION

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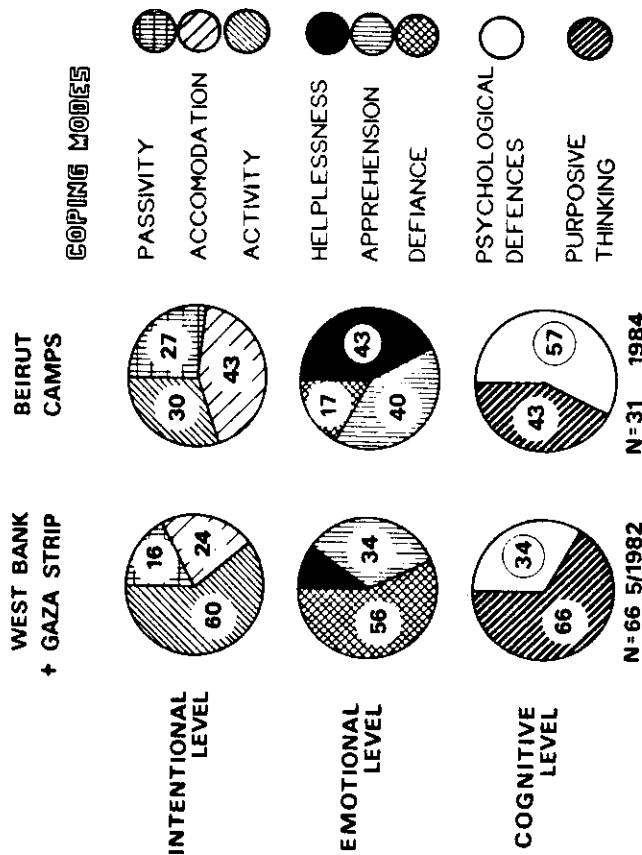
Where surveys of public opinion occur, there is enough material gathered over a long enough period of time to enable us to make some generalizations about how various publics view the Palestine-Israel conflict. Questions about the Palestinians begin to appear around 1974, indicating a shift in the definition of the conflict from Arab-Israeli to Palestinian-Israeli. With few exceptions, most questions are neutral. Furthermore, the same questions are asked of roughly similar samples, making cautious conclusions possible.

This article will analyze public perceptions of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in North America (the U.S. and Canada), in Western Europe, in Israel, and on the West Bank and Gaza, territories occupied by Israel since 1967. Interestingly enough, the West Bank and Gaza are the only areas in the Arab world where systematic public opinion data exist. An analysis of this material should reveal to us what the Palestinian Arabs themselves think and how they perceive their situation.

American Public Opinion

There is a noticeable difference between the public at large and the U.S. government on how to view the Palestine problem. The public seems to be more in tune with the international consensus on the question of how to resolve the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians—this consensus includes the right of the Palestinians to a state of their own on the West Bank and Gaza, mutual recognition between Israel and the new Palestinian state, and the right of the PLO to participate in all peace negotiations as a representative of the Palestinian people. The official U.S. position, on the other hand, is more in tune with that of the Israeli government and its public. Results of surveys dealing with important aspects of the problem reveal the huge gap between public perceptions and the official position.

The U.S. government has consistently opposed the creation of an independent state for the Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza strip. In his September 1 initiative, President Reagan strongly and unambiguously ruled out an independent state for the Palestinians. By contrast, public opinion surveys at the time were yielding close to a two to one majority in favor of an independent Palestinian state. Gallup's question asked from 1977 on was clear and straightforward: "As you may know, one of the major questions in the Middle East situation concerns the Palestinian people. Do you think a separate, independent Palestinian nation should be established, or do you think the Palestinians should continue to live as they do now in Israel and the neighboring Arab nations?"



As table I indicates¹, in 1982, Gallup obtained a two to one majority in favor of a separate nation. This represented a significant increase from 1977, when 36 percent favored this option, while 29 percent thought the Palestinians should continue as they did then.

Table 1
Independent Palestinian Nation (1977, 1982)(percent)

	1977 a	1982 b
Separate nation	36	46
Continue as they do now	29	23
Other responses	3	--
No opinion	32	31
Total	100	100

a. 14-17 October 1977; n=1,520

b. 23-26 July 1982; n= 1,389

Gallup obtained the same ratio in a 1982 study of mass and elite publics on behalf of the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations. The study of the American public and U.S. foreign policy concludes:

The proportion of the American public favoring the creation of a separate, independent Palestinian nation grew from 29 percent in October 1977, to 41 percent in July 1982. Indeed, the 1982 figures show an almost two to one margin (41 percent to 21 percent) in support of a Palestinian state.²

Two other studies yield similar results. A nationwide poll conducted in October 1982 by Decision/Making/Information reveals that 65 percent agree with the statement: "Mr. Smith feels 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 Gaza."³

Only 29 percent agree with the following statement: "Mr. Jones feels that a Palestinian state would be a threat to the security of Israel."

A 1985 study by the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, reveals a slight decline in support of the idea of an independent Palestinian state. Nevertheless, the results still show a two-to-one majority favoring such an option.⁴

The majority of respondents think the U.S. government should negotiate with the PLO, but not formally recognize the organization. A significant

majority of respondents think the PLO should be involved in peace negotiations and that Israel is wrong in refusing to deal with them. Table 2 shows the responses to a *Los Angeles Times* (1 October, 1979) question as well as a similar *New York Times* question on whether the U.S. government should negotiate with the PLO, even if Israel objects.⁵

Table 2
Should the U.S. Negotiate with the PLO (1979)^a(percent)

	Yes	No	No Opinion	Total
U.S. should negotiate with the PLO?	59	29	12	100
U.S. should negotiate with the PLO, even if Israel objects ^b	42	45	13	100

Question: (*L.A. Times*) "Some people say that the United States ought not to negotiate with the Palestine Liberation Organization-the PLO-because they are terrorists and they refuse to recognize the right of Israel to exist. Other people say that in order to bring peace to the Middle East, we should be willing to talk to all parties involved in the conflict, including the PLO. What do you think? Should the United States negotiate with the PLO or not?"

a. 9-14 September 1979; n=1,453

b. Question: (*New York Times*) "Some people say we should negotiate with the PLO even if Israel objects. Do you think the U.S. should or should not negotiate with the PLO?"

Canadian Public Opinion

What is most striking about Canadian public opinion surveys on foreign policy issues is the extremely high proportion of respondents who express no opinion. The majority of the public view Canada's role as only peripheral. Among those who express an opinion, however, there is a far greater relative sympathy for the Israeli position as compared to sympathy for the generic 'Arab' category. Nevertheless, from 1973 on, a steady, albeit slow, increase in sympathy for the Arab side begins to occur, showing a growing public awareness of the complexity of various claims and the urgent need for a peaceful settlement.

In 1982, Canadian respondents by a majority of 54 percent versus 17 percent (with 29 percent giving no opinion) agree that there will be no peace without a Palestinian state. By 1984, there is a decline from 54 percent to 38 percent as memories of Israel's involvement in the Lebanon invasion begin to fade. Nevertheless, the number of respondents who think that a Palestinian state would be a threat to the security of Israel only increased from 17 percent in 1982 to 22.4 percent in 1984.⁶

As table 3 shows, however, a surprisingly large number of respondents whose sympathies lie with the Israelis see a Palestinian state as necessary for peace: in 1982, this figure was 48 percent and in 1984, the figure was 38.7 percent.

Table 3
Endorsement of Palestinian State, by Choice of Sympathy
(1982 and 1984)(percent)

Peace Requires Palestinian State	11/1982		No Opinion		1984 Sympathies	
	Israelis	Palest.	Neither	Opinion	Israel	Palestine
No peace without Palestinian state	48.0	87.0	61.0	40.0	38.7	70.3
Palestinian state threatens Israel	41.0	7.0	13.0	11.0	47.1	12.5
Don't know	11.0	6.0	26.0	49.0	13.9	17.3
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	99.7	100.1

By and large, most Canadian respondents do not think the PLO is the political representative of the Palestinian people. The only exception is Quebec where 28 percent of respondents think the PLO is the representative of the Palestinians and 19 percent disagree. At the same time, however, a majority of Canadians do think that the PLO deserves a seat at the negotiating table although they do not think the Canadian government should recognize the organization. As table 4 shows, 42 percent of respondents agree that the "PLO should have a place at the negotiating table for Middle East peace." Only 18 percent disagree, and 40 percent express no opinion.

Table 4
British and Greek Attitudes

When the state of Israel was created in 1948, large numbers of Palestinians who lived there became refugees and are still living in camps in other Arab countries. I want to ask you about some suggestions for dealing with this problem, and whether or not they would be acceptable in your opinion. Now, would it be acceptable or not to...

	Britain (a)			Greece (b)		
	acceptable	not acceptable	d/k	acceptable	not acceptable	d/k
Leave the Palestinian refugees where they are.	26	54	20	17	64	19
Allow the Palestinian refugees to return and for Israel, the West Bank and Gaza to be divided into two separate Jewish and Arab states.	55	21	23	55	22	23
Allow the Palestinian refugees to return, and create a new state, incorporating Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza of which Jews and Arabs would be citizens with equal political and religion rights.	60	22	18	57	20	23

a. MORI Poll, 14-17 August 1982 u=1061

b. Eurodim Poll carried out in the Greater Athens area March/April 1985

Jack Zubrzycki concludes his excellent study of Canadian public opinion by showing increasing "recognition of the crucial issue of a Palestinian 'homeland'", reluctance to "demand dramatic changes with respect either to 'solution or to the composition of the players", and caution about getting too involved, preferring a "peripheral" role-- "that of a moderating, diplomatic, behind-the-scenes player."⁷

Western European Public Opinion

Questions about the Palestinians first appear in European opinion surveys in 1973, corresponding to the time when the conflict begins to be redefined from

Arab-Israeli to Palestinian-Israeli. In 1974, France, Italy, and Ireland voted in favor of the motion urging participation of the PLO in U.N. deliberations. The other six members abstained. In 1976, the nine members of the European Community announced that the pursuit of the right of the Palestinian people to give expression to its national identity could entail a territorial basis. And, by 1977, the nine issued another declaration which said that a solution of the conflict in the Middle East will only be possible if the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to give expression to its national identity is concretized. The statement added that representatives of the Palestinian people should take part in the negotiations. In 1980, specific mention of the PLO was made in the Venice Declaration which said that the organization "will have to be associated with the negotiations."⁸

In Western Europe, Greece is known as a strongly pro-Arab country both at the official and the public levels. Nevertheless, there is a remarkable similarity between British and Greek public attitudes on the Palestinian issue. Table 4 shows response to the same question on scenarios for a possible settlement of the Palestine problem.

Asked whether the Palestinians are entitled to a state of their own, a great majority of respondents in The Netherlands respond in the affirmative as is shown in Table 5.

Table 5
Netherlands-NIPO(percent)

	Entitled	Not Entitled	No answer
August 1979	91	4	5
June 1982	88	7	5
18-24 years	88	8	4
25-34 years	87	10	3
35-49 years	87	9	4
50-64 years	88	4	8
65 and over	92	4	3

Similarly, while the majority of respondents in Western Europe view the PLO negatively (only 12 percent in Britain think of them as freedom fighters), they are nonetheless willing to see the PLO involved in peace negotiations. In Britain, where Mrs. Thatcher has in recent times visited Israel and called on the Palestinians to find an alternative leadership, public opinion is evenly divided

on the issue of whether the British government should recognize the PLO. As table 6 shows, 39 percent agree that Britain should recognize the PLO and 36 percent disagree. However, the British public clearly favors the PLO's participation in peace discussions.

Table 6
Great Britain (percent)

	Yes	No	Don't know
Do you think the PLO should be included in any future Middle East peace talks, or not? Do you think Britain should recognize the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people, or not?			
14-17 August 1983			
Include PLO in peace talks	61	24	15
Recognize PLO	39	35	25

In her analysis of European attitudes toward the conflict, Connie de Boer concludes that "the trend in European public opinion is toward neutrality."⁹ Ms. de Boer finds that the decline in sympathy for Israel has not been accompanied by an increase in pro-Arab sympathy. Most Europeans prefer not to be involved in the Arab-Israel conflict.

Israeli Public Opinion

Public opinion surveys in Israel reveal a fairly significant level of symmetry between the government position and public attitudes on Palestinian related issues.

Louis Guttman summarizes the results of Israel's public opinion surveys over a ten-year period ending 2 December, 1977.¹⁰ On some issues, public opinion exhibits a consistently strong consensus, meaning that 80 percent agreed over time, regardless of events, including President Sadat's Jerusalem visit. These issues include the following:

- * that Israel can cope (in general and with the military situation) and survive in the future;
- * the U. S. and USSR intentions are to help Israel;
- * that Israel should go to Geneva;
- * that Syria is not interested in real peace;
- * returning territories has nothing to do with attaining real peace;

- * a good part of Sinai should be returned to Egypt;
- * there should be no return to the 1967 borders (even with minor adjustments);
- * the status of United Jerusalem should be unchanged;
- * there should be no independent Arab state on the West Bank; such a state would endanger the security of Israel;
- * there should be no dealing with Arafat or the PLO;
- * Real peace necessarily includes open borders and diplomatic relations;
- * the status of Sharm el-Sheikh and the Golan Heights should remain essentially unchanged.

On other issues, Guttman suggests that a new consensus was favored as a result of Sadat's visit. They include the following:

- * Egypt is interested in real peace with Israel;
- * there is now a substantial increase in the prospect of peace with the Arab countries;
- * Israel should try to achieve direct negotiations with the Arabs and need not wait for U.S. mediation;
- * there is a possibility of doing away with the state of war with Egypt, a country that may be able to lead other Arab countries into coexistence with Israel;
- * there will be no war within the next year or two on the Syrian front;
- * Israel should insist that negotiations with Arab countries be face to face.

Guttman identifies another set of issues where the old consensus was broken. They include:

- * will there be another war with Arab countries? (previous consensus was Yes)
- * Is the purpose of the Arab countries to destroy Israel? (previous consensus was Yes)
- * Is a Geneva conference likely to result in real peace? (previous consensus was No)
- * After all that had happened, will the Arab countries be willing to discuss real peace with Israel? (previous consensus was No)

Louis Guttman identifies two issues on which no consensus existed whether before or after the Sadat visit. They include:

- * What is to be done with the West Bank given that no independent state will be allowed there?
- * What is to be done with the Gaza strip?

Public opinion surveys taken since 1982, especially after Israel's Lebanon invasion do not reveal any substantive changes in these positions. The DAHAF Institute has obtained results which suggest that only one third of respondents agree to the following option: "In exchange for a peace treaty and security arrangements, Israel gives up most of the West Bank and Gaza."¹¹ Roughly 5 - 7 percent of respondents are willing to accept a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza. The rest opt either for outright annexation or keeping the status quo.

Gloria Falk, a former employee of the United States Information Agency, examines data compiled by Public Opinion Research of Israel (PORI) and argues that the Israeli public is willing to endorse a moderate stand on the occupied territories in the presence of guaranteed security arrangements.¹² Falk's careful reading of the data shows cracks in the Israeli consensus especially on the questions of building further settlements and the possibility of a deal with Jordan. However, her optimistic reading is only warranted if one ignores Guttman's reading of the long held consensus that has characterized Israeli public opinion for nearly two decades. One possible cautious conclusion that may be drawn from Falk's reading, one that is not inconsistent with the literature, is that public opinion is neither static nor monolithic. Israeli public opinion is certainly no exception. If the prospect for a settlement is real, and if the Israeli government goes along with it, the majority of the public will probably follow suit. A minority of die-hard extremists will resist but they cannot alter the facts.

Palestinian Public Opinion

The Israelis, the Americans, Mrs. Thatcher, and now the Jordanians insist that the Palestinians need to find an alternative to the PLO. For the Israelis and the Americans, this is not new-their position has been consistent. Mrs. Thatcher has recently switched positions, while the Jordanian monarch has reverted to his earlier position, one that he, most likely, never really swerved from, in spite of his flirtations with the PLO.

The question ultimately is not what the Israelis, the Americans, Mrs. Thatcher, or the Jordanians want. They have never been known as wishing the Palestinians well in the first place. The real question is what the Palestinians themselves want. Fortunately, there are enough data on this question, sketchy as they may be, perhaps even crude, that reveal a story. Public opinion studies have been conducted on the West Bank and in Gaza, the only places in the Arab World where such opinion surveys are done. While these are no substitute for free and open elections, they nonetheless do tell us something about the Palestinian political universe.

What do these surveys tell us about the Palestinians and their perceptions of the world? How reliable are these surveys?

In a series of seven polls conducted by academics and media organizations (including *TIME* magazine) between January 1982 and June 1985, we get the following picture:¹³

An academic survey conducted in January 1982 among 2,700 Palestinians reveals that 76 percent endorse the idea of an independent state on the West Bank/Gaza headed by the PLO.¹⁴

- * Slightly more than one percent accept the idea of autonomy as it is advocated by Israel and the U.S.
- * Only 4 percent believe that the Arab states really support the Palestinian cause, and 42 percent say the Arab states in general are indifferent to the Palestinians or would be willing to plot against them.
- * Only 2 percent believe the United States is serious about resolving the Palestine-Israel conflict; the majority (89 percent) think the U.S. is too biased in favor of Israel.
- * One percent see King Hussein as the "sole representative" of the Palestinians; 17 percent see him as a possible co-representative, while 74 percent reject him emphatically as representing them.
- * Only 10 percent perceive Saudi Arabia as interested in seeking a solution that is beneficial to the Palestinians. A larger proportion, close to one third, describe Saudi Arabia as willing to support a solution that is in line in the US interests.

A May 1983 survey of 513 Palestinians focuses on relations with Jordan in the context of the then proposed Jordanian-Palestinian coordination committee.

Faced with three options regarding the future of the occupied territories, 55 percent choose an independent Palestinian state; 27 percent say they prefer a confederation with Jordan while keeping an independent status; and 11 percent agree to a confederation with Jordan based on one central government.

Only 12 percent think King Hussein is sincere about wanting a solution of the Palestine problem; 66 percent say that Hussein plots against the Palestinians.

Asked if the Palestinians should coordinate with Jordan or Syria in the future, 32 percent say Jordan, 18 percent favor coordinating with Syria, while 40 percent say the Palestinians should coordinate with neither.

The *TIME* survey of April 1982 reveals the following:

- * 86 percent want a Palestinian state led by the PLO; 50 percent say that Arafat should lead such a state.
- * 98 percent endorse the idea of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza.
- * Only one half of 1 percent think the US is helpful to the Palestinians.

* *AL-Bayader Assiyassi*, a West Bank political weekly magazine conducted 4 surveys between 1983 and 1985. The results confirm those obtained in earlier surveys.

Just how reliable are these surveys given the difficulty of conducting such studies in Third world contexts and given the special circumstances that govern people under a military occupation? The first surveys, conducted by Abdul-Sattar Kassem, a political scientist on the West Bank, and by *TIME* magazine seem reliable enough. Every effort was made to be candid about the problems encountered, and the methodology was clearly spelled out.

The Israeli military authorities confiscated 110 interviews, arrested the person in charge of the survey and held him for four days. An additional set of 60 interviews was confiscated. Furthermore, some interviewees thought the interviewers were agents of the occupation authorities. 400 refused to be interviewed - some insisted on burning the questionnaire so there would be no evidence against them. Some tore up the questionnaire, claiming that it was anti-Islamic.¹⁵

The sample was large enough and representative enough so that the high refusal rate as well as the confiscation of questionnaires did not significantly alter the results. Question wording appears neutral enough and question order is such that it does not build in any bias.

Methodological caution is absent from the most recent survey conducted by Professors Mohammed Shadid of AL. Najah University and Richard Seltzer of Howard University, and sponsored by *AL-Fajr* Newspaper, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and *Newsday*.¹⁶

The authors say that "detailed statistics were not kept on refusal rates. However, it is estimated that the refusal rate did not exceed 5-10%." Professor Shadid must certainly be aware of the problem of "refusal rates" since a colleague of his Murad A'si pointed it out in his study on *Israeli and Palestinian Public Opinion*. The earlier survey by Abdul-Sattar Kassem had a refusal rate of 13% out of a total sample of 3,000. Furthermore, a significant number of questionnaires was confiscated by the Israeli military authorities.

Given the sensitivity of the population to possible harassment by the authorities, a high refusal rate is likely to occur. In such a case, what did the interviewers do to calm the anxiety of respondents? Furthermore, given the special circumstances of the population, and assuming a lower refusal rate as the directors of the study maintain, why did the population agree to cooperate with the interviewers? What exactly did the interviewers say to the respondents to assuage their anxiety? Were they perceived as somehow representing the PLO? If so, the respondents must have told them what they thought they wanted them to hear? In this case, the study is worthless. The directors must clearly spell out for us exactly what they did in training interviewers, precisely what the interviewers said to respondents, and what was done to ensure compliance with these instructions. Otherwise, we are left to speculate, and the

State Department spokesman will be justified when he says that the study is biased.

The onus of responsibility is on the directors of the study whose job it is to make sure that the survey rigorously complies with every important criterion suggested by survey research methodology. Any loopholes, possible errors, or sloppiness may not be forgiven here as they would be if the study had been conducted by, say Louis Harris or Gallup.

Other problems with the study include the nature of the sample and question wording. Nearly 57 percent of the sample consists of people between 15 and 30 years of age. Just how many of them, for instance, are between 15 and 18 years of age? This question is important, especially when one sees that nearly 55 percent of the sample have junior high and high school education. Is this a survey of junior high and high school students on the West Bank and Gaza, who happen to be the majority of the population? Roughly the same percentage (60.5%) claim that their income is below 100 Jordanian Dinars (\$250.00). If this is indeed the case, the survey directors should say so. Such a study would be valuable indeed in and of itself.

Again, if the majority of the respondents are between 15 and 18 years of age, with a junior high or high school education, are they sophisticated enough to respond to seemingly complicated questions about various scenarios?

Question wording and question order are rather loose throughout the survey. The first question asks "How well acquainted are you with the UN Security Council Resolution 242?" The following question gives some of the basic provisions of Resolution 242 and asks respondents if they approve resolving the Palestine problem on the basis of the resolution. It is unclear whether this question was asked of those who said they were familiar with the provisions of 242 or of the entire sample. It does not appear that the first question was used as a filter question. Furthermore, asking respondents with limited educational backgrounds whether they think Resolution 242 should be the basis for resolving the Palestine problem is a way of avoiding to ask them directly if the PLO should declare publicly its acceptance of Resolutions 242, 338 and recognize Israel. The answers to the latter question would be more informative. A neutrally worded questionnaire must present pro and con arguments as faithfully and as clearly as possible.

Question 10 asks respondents who answered NO to the previous question what their primary reason is. It is not clear whether the options were provided to the respondents or whether this was an open-ended question where responses were volunteered by the interviewers. Under normal circumstances, such a question should be open-ended; otherwise, the interviewer is forcing answers by delimiting choices whose wording is suspect.

Questions such as: "The preferred political position in the Palestinian area, under prevailing circumstances, is reflected by the stance of:", are useless because they are too vague, too general, and leave a lot to the subjective feelings of the respondent. The results of such a question cannot tell us much

of anything about the feelings of the public. Similarly, a question like: "Do you consider that acts of force are justified in pursuit of the Palestinian cause?" is rather useless--force by whom, against whom, what kind of force, how about other options such as civil disobedience etc... The study asks respondents "which of the following do you consider to be justified acts:" it then offers a list of horrors such as: "Palestinian commandos hijacking of an Israeli bus on the Haifa-Tel Aviv highway in 1978, placing a bomb in a civilian airliner, the attack against the US marine compound in Lebanon, placing a bomb on an Israeli EL AL plane, etc...". The results show that 87.6% think the hijacking of an Israeli bus (1978) is justified, 81.2% think the attack on the U. S. marines in Beirut was justified, and 60.5% favor putting a bomb on an Israeli EL AL plane. If Meir Kahane wanted to produce a survey that would damage the Palestinian case, he couldn't have come up with a better question.

This question is immediately preceded by at least two questions that set a hostile tone. Number 26 asks: "The primary cause of acts of violence by Palestinians is:

1. a reaction to subjection of the Palestinians to bad conditions and harsh measures
2. part of their struggle for the right to self-determination
3. to achieve personal or factional objectives
4. none of the above
5. no opinion

Respondents are here cued that acts of violence in pursuit of the struggle for self-determination are justified. This question was preceded by another one that reminds people of the horrors of their daily existence under occupation:

#26 Circle the items that you or any members of your immediate family have experienced.

- a. political arrest
- b. beatings, physical abuse, or threats
- c. harassment or direct insults
- d. property or land confiscation
- e. ban on travel abroad
- f. curfew
- g. demolition or sealing of homes
- h. deportation or town arrest
- i. fines by military courts
- j. none of the above

It is inconceivable that a question about what kinds of violent acts are deemed justified, placed as it is in the questionnaire, and phrased in this manner, could elicit any valid information about the Palestinians and their universe. If

anything, such a study is further illustration of the age-old adage that, because of incompetence, the Palestinians are their own worst enemies.

It is a waste of time to repeat the same criticisms of the questionnaire, question by question. Further analysis of the questionnaire would reveal the same problems. But the study does tell us something, nonetheless, that the Palestinians under occupation are a very frustrated bunch of people living under intolerable conditions of occupation and quite disillusioned about the prospects of a peaceful settlement. They appear to support Arafat and the PLO and are suspicious of Arab governments, as of the U. S., and above all of the state of Israel.

Polling is hazardous business that requires expertise and tremendous care. By now, however, there is enough research, and enough expertise to permit any one to avoid the usual pitfalls. What could have been done to make this study more credible?

In the first place, pretesting is absolutely crucial. A pretest could have alerted the researchers to a variety of problems that derive from question order, question wording, and similar contingencies. There is no indication that pretesting had occurred.

In the second place, given the hazards of polling in a controversial Third World environment, the researchers should be careful about sampling, methodology, and the standard prerequisites of scientific polling. What exactly did they do to eliminate possibilities of error or bias?

In the third place, survey research should not be viewed as a political instrument, in spite of the fact that the results are usually highly political in their meaning or implication. It is preferable to try to find out attitudes, perceptions, and intensity of feelings.

Unfortunately, the researchers missed a golden opportunity to produce an original study, that may be of value to the Palestinians and to the cause of peace in the region.

There is a lesson in all of this. The Palestinian case has suffered for far too long from lies and distortions, ineptness and sloppiness by many of the practitioners on its behalf. Add this to the lies and sophisticated distortions by the Israelis themselves, and one has a colossal mess. The Palestinians have a solid and convincing case which need not be sullied by lies and distortions. Every effort must therefore be made to adhere to the rigorous standards of professionalism, logic, and evidence. Otherwise, the case will not be made, and not having been made, it will simply die.

By the late 1970's a fairly stable consensus seems to have emerged at the level of world public opinion, despite major events that may have caused some shifts. This consensus includes a recognition that the problem is no longer an Arab-Israeli one but a Palestinian-Israeli conflict where the Palestinian side is perceived as the aggrieved party-homeless and in need of a state of their own. It also includes a recognition of the need for a peaceful settlement based on an international conference where all the parties, including the PLO, meet to

discuss the conflict. An independent Palestinian state is not perceived as a threat to the security of Israel. Although the PLO is perceived negatively, it is seen nonetheless as a crucial party to a settlement.

Notes

1. Fouad Moughrabi, *American Public Opinion and the Palestine Question* (Washington D.C.: International Center for Research and Public Policy, 1986), p. 2.
2. John Reilly, ed., *American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy, 1983*. (Chicago, Illinois, The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, 1983), p. 21.
3. For a complete text of the questionnaire and the results, see *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 4(4) 1982, pp. 358-374.
4. Copies are available from the author; the data are available for public use at the SRC, Ann Arbor, Michigan.
5. Moughrabi (1986), p. 4.
6. Jack Zubrzycki, *Canadian Public Opinion and Government Policy Toward the Middle East* (Washington, D.C.: International Center for Research and Public Policy, 1986).
7. Zubrzycki, p. 17.
8. Connié de Boer, *West European Public Opinion and the Palestine Question* (Washington D.C.: International Center for Research and Public Policy, 1986).
9. de Boer, p.23.
10. Murad A'si, *Israeli and Palestinian Public Opinion* (Washington D.C.: International Center for Research and Public Policy, 1986), p. 25.
11. A'si, p. 12.
12. Gloria Falk, "Israel Public Opinion: Looking Toward a Palestinian Solution," *Middle East Journal*, 39 (3), 1985, pp. 247-269.
13. A'si, p. 21.
14. A'si, p. 21-22.
15. A'si, p.20.
16. Text of questionnaire available from *Al-Fajr* newspaper, Jerusalem; see also *Palestine Perspectives*, September/October 1986 (Washington D.C.), pp. 7-8.