I was gratified to have your statement in praise of freedom. But I must confess my inability to determine its relevance to our Newsletter report on last summer's Middle East Institute Conference. I hardly think that in the exercise of free speech in this country the supreme sacrifice is likely to be required from one or the other of us.

With your comments in mind, however, I have just reread our Summer Newsletter and, as I expected, found nothing in the text which even remotely questioned the right of the Institute membership or the Conference speakers to express their opinions freely. What Mrs. Mary Clawson, the report's author, did of course question was something much humbler and wholly appropriate, the quality of the Institute's performance of its own proclaimed function. I note that you do not contest her summary of the speeches presented or her account of the manner in which certain phases of the Conference were organized.

In one section of that Newsletter, Mrs. Clawson also noted the presence of a number of anti-Semites, including Harold Noel Arrowsmith, the one-time supporter of the American Nazi, George Lincoln Rockwell. She was a witness -- in some sense, too, a victim -- of their conduct and felt that Mr. Arrowsmith (but he alone) had so grossly violated the rules of hospitality as to offer just cause for his dismissal from an assembly that was designated to serve academic and social aims. Her report otherwise merely reflected a surely natural perturbation at the tendency of persons of this type to gravitate toward forums which promise gratification of their special prejudices. The confidence also expressed that the Institute's sponsors must share her concern now appears to have been premature, to say the least.

It is unfortunately true that no "Arab from an Arab state" has appeared before an ACPC audience. Although sympathetic to many aspirations of the peoples of the Arab world, the Committee has made no secret of its support of the existence and well-being of the people of the State of Israel. The fact is well known to Arab officialdom, who have made equally plain their hostility to the Committee and all its activities. Throughout the years we have made various and sincere efforts to establish friendly relations with individual Arabs in this country. Some day we trust that these initiatives will make it possible for Arab spokesmen to join with us on the ACPC platform of reconciliation and peace in the Holy Land.

But your "in passing" comment is also quite beside the point. Mrs. Clawson's criticisms were directed at the Institute's programmatic attention to Arabs as propagandists, not at Arabs as Arabs. The Newsletter makes that quite clear, as in the favorable reference to Dr. Ragaei el Mallakh, "the only Arab scholar to deliver an address during the three-day Conference."

Sincerely yours,

s/Karl Baehr
Executive Director

The second letter is from Professor George Kirk, who is with the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University and who attended the Middle East Institute Conference. The relevant portions of his letter, which was