



## **Israel, Jews and Peace in PA Textbooks Now Used in UNRWA Schools**

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### **Introduction**

This paper updates a report titled "UNRWA's Problematic Educational Role in the Middle East Conflict". The said report, issued in September 2017, reviewed UNRWA's role in perpetuating the Middle East conflict, having used for decades textbooks that delegitimize the State of Israel and the very presence of its Jewish citizens in the country, demonize both Israel and Jews in various contexts and advocate a violent struggle against it instead of peace and coexistence. The said report covered the last four years of UNRWA activity and relied on some 150 textbooks published between 2013 and 2017. In the meantime, the PA has started in 2016 a new project of textbook publishing (and some of the 2016 books were republished with some changes in 2017). UNRWA spokespersons then claimed that the said report was "inaccurate and misleading", having included old books that were not in use in UNRWA schools at the time of its appearance. The problem with this claim is that it ignores UNRWA's active cooperation with the PA's war indoctrination throughout the years before the latter's initiation of the current textbook publishing operation. Nevertheless, just to meet the challenge, this updated paper includes only textbooks currently in use in UNRWA schools. Some of these books are scheduled to be replaced in January 2018, which will necessitate further updating of this paper in due course.

UNRWA - the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for the refugees of the 1948 Palestine war - began its operations in 1950 and since then it has been present in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and the territories of the West Bank (including Israeli East Jerusalem) and the Gaza Strip. Unlike its parallel UNHCR organization that aims at resettling all other world refugees, UNRWA has extended the refugee status of the original refugees to include their descendants of four generations so far, while keeping them in makeshift camps under poor conditions and nourishing within them the false hope of their eventual return to their former places of residence in pre-1967 Israel. Thus, from a 700 thousand-strong population in 1948, the number of these so-called Palestinian refugees has by now exceeded 5 million.

About half of UNRWA's total regular budget is dedicated to education (USD 363,076,000 - 49.35% out of a total of USD 735,748,000 in 2017).<sup>1</sup> The agency offers also health and social services. In the school year of 2017/18 it has run 276 schools in the Gaza Strip with 271,216 students,<sup>2</sup> and 96 schools in the West Bank with some

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/2016\\_2017\\_programme\\_budget\\_blue\\_book.pdf](http://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/2016_2017_programme_budget_blue_book.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/emergency-reports/gaza-situation-report-205>

50,000 students,<sup>3</sup> thus being responsible for about a quarter of the PA school student body in grades 1-10 (UNRWA does not teach high school students in the PA territories).

The agency uses the PA-issued textbooks and adds books of its own that teach human rights, tolerance and other social values. A systematic review of these books revealed, however, that they restrict the discussion of such issues to Palestinian society alone with no reference to the Israeli-Jewish "other". In other words, the PA-issued schoolbooks used in UNRWA schools are the only ones that refer to the rival "other" and to the possibility of having peace with it. For the purpose of this updated paper, 102 schoolbooks of various school subjects have been reviewed (see the full list at the end of this paper) - all of them being currently in use in UNRWA schools. Since the PA new publishing project has not ended yet, as second-semester textbooks are still not in, some older books for that semester have been included too. A final version of this paper will be issued following the completion of the PA new project of schoolbook publishing.

It should be emphasized that the newer books, that have been introduced by the PA since 2016 and accepted for teaching by UNRWA, are generally more radical than their predecessors. One prominent feature is their systematic avoidance of the use of Israel's name, even in its demonizing descriptions - contrary to what used to be done in the past. Now, Israel is referred to in the vast majority of cases as "the Zionist occupation", and the "the Arab-Israeli conflict" has been renamed "the Arab-Zionist conflict". This change seems to express intensification on the part of Palestinian educators of their non-recognition of the State of Israel to the point of omitting its name from the books. The new books also omit the few references that existed in the older ones to the Jewish presence in the country in antiquity, thus further strengthening the general line of denying the Jews any status in the country's history. In addition, the newer books add alarming hints as to what should be done with the 6 million Jews living in the country today after its supposed liberation, alongside a more explicit support of Palestinians who committed acts of terror against Israeli civilians.

Following are representative examples of the attitude to Israel, Jews and peace in the PA textbooks currently in use in UNRWA schools.

## **Delegitimization**

According to the PA textbooks used in UNRWA schools Jews have no rights whatsoever in the country. They are referred to as occupiers there: "The Jews have occupied our country for quite a time" (*Reading and Texts*, Grade 8, Part 2 (2015) p. 25). Their national movement in modern times - Zionism - is presented as a "political-colonialist movement" (*Geography and Modern and Contemporary History of Palestine*, Grade 10, Part 1 (2017) p. 79) and the student should be able "to connect [Western] Imperialism [*Isti'mar*] with Zionism" (*ibid.* p. 66). Another piece in the same book talks of the Zionist movement's support of the [Western] Imperialist states' interference in Ottoman affairs "in order to realize its greedy ambitions [*atmaa*'] in Palestine" (*ibid.* p. 74).

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.unrwa.org/tags/west-bank>

As already said, and contrary to the few references in the older books to the Jews' historical presence in the country in antiquity, the new textbooks do not mention that fact at all. This new approach seems to be given an ideological reasoning in one of the books as follows: "The Zionist occupation aims at our history and existence. It turns the facts and the historical events upside down, falsifies and distorts them, and weaves a false history that corresponds to its goals. Therefore, we must be aware of our history and be acquainted with the real events that took place on our soil, so that we would differentiate between what is true and what is false and learn the lessons that will enable us to build our future and establish our independent state with Jerusalem as its capital" (*Social Studies, Grade 6, Part 1 (2017) p. 18*).

On the other hand, the new schoolbooks continue their predecessors' line that systematically denies the existence of any Jewish holy places in the country. The Jewish holy place of the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem is presented as an exclusively Muslim holy place:

"Illumination: The Al-Buraq Wall [the Wailing Wall] was thus named after [the divine beast] Al-Buraq that carried the Messenger [of God, i.e., Muhammad] during the Nocturnal Journey [*Israa'* -from Mecca to Jerusalem] and the Ascension to Heaven [*Mi'raj*, according to Muslim belief]. The Al-Buraq Wall is part of the western wall of Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Muslims alone have an absolute right to it."



### حائط البراق

إضاءة: سُمِّي حائطُ البراق بهذا الاسم؛ نسبةً إلى البراق الذي حملَ الرسول ﷺ في رحلة الإسراء والمعراج، وحائط البراق جزء من السور الغربي للمسجد الأقصى وهو حق خالص للمسلمين وحدهم.



(*Islamic Education, Grade 5, Part 1 (2017) p. 54*)

Another book makes a specific accusation against the "Zionists" in this context:

"They annexed the Islamic features [of Jerusalem] to the list of Zionist heritage [as] they transformed the Al-Buraq Wall into the Wailing Wall... they removed some of the stones from Jerusalem's city wall and replaced them with other ones carrying Zionist decorations and forms; they opened Jewish synagogues in the Old City of Jerusalem, and they strive vigorously these days to take control of the Noble Shrine

[*Al-Haram al-Sharif* – the Temple Mount] by allowing the Zionist settlers to enter it daily in preparation for taking full control over it and preventing any Muslim connection to this place that is holy to Muslims."

(*Social Studies*, Grade 7, Part 1 (2017) p. 62, and see the exercise on p. 63 with the following sentence: "The Zionist occupation changed the name 'Al-Buraq Wall' into 'the Wailing Wall [*Hait al-Mabka* in Arabic - the place of mourning]' and the assignment: "I will specify some of the Zionist measures aimed at erasing the Arab and Islamic features in the city of Jerusalem.")

As regards the Jewish holy place of the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron:

"The Zionist occupation authorities partitioned the Abrahamic Sanctuary [the Cave of the Patriarchs], prevented the [Muslim] call for prayer [there] and permitted the settlers to hold therein their religious ceremonies."

(*Geography and Modern and Contemporary History of Palestine*, Grade 10, Part 1 (2017) p. 52)

Israel's six million Jewish citizens, who were never considered in the older books as legitimate inhabitants of the country, continue to be disregarded. They are referred to as "foreigners" (*Our Beautiful Language*, Grade 3, Part 2 (2017) p. 64) or "infiltrators" (*Our Beautiful Language*, Grade 4, Part 1 (2017) p. 52).

The trend of not showing on the map cities built by Jews in the country in the modern era, such as Tel Aviv, continues in the new schoolbooks as well. In one case, like the one below, the modern city of Eilat is given the Arabic name of the desolate site where it was later built - Umm al-Rashrash:



(*Geography and Modern and Contemporary History of Palestine*, Grade 10, Part 1 (2017) p. 4)

In continuation of the older books' line, Israel is never presented as a sovereign state, neither on maps nor in texts, even within its pre-1967 boundaries. In many cases the whole country is described as Palestine. That Palestine, of which the territory encompasses the whole of Israel, is presented as the sovereign state in the region, instead of Israel.

Following is a map titled "Political Map of the Arab Homeland" featuring the whole country as one unit next to the name "Palestine":



خريطة الوطن العربي السياسية

(Social Studies, Grade 5, Part 1 (2017) p. 22)

Lesson 2 in the following example is titled "Palestine is Arab [and] Muslim":



A map titled "States of the Arab Homeland" follows that title and some additional statements. The name "Palestine" appears in the map next to the whole country in its entirety, including Israel in its pre-1967 borders, with the Palestinian flag flying over it:

## دول الوطن العربي

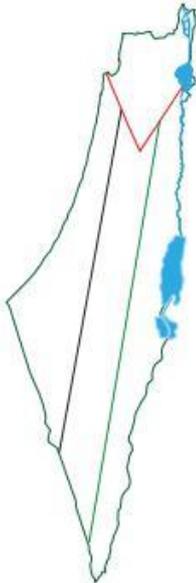
ج.



(National and Social Upbringing, Grade 4, Part 1 (2017) p. 7)

The assignment in the following example reads: "A. I will color the map of my homeland with the colors of the Palestinian flag", and the map itself is contoured according to the flag's lines and colors:

أ- أُلَوِّنُ خَرِيْطَةَ وَطَنِي بِالْوَانِ الْعَلَمِ الْفِلَسْطِينِيِّ.



(National and Life Education, Grade 2, Part 1 (2017) p. 8)

The whole country covered by the Palestinian flag appears elsewhere as well, with an unequivocal English message: "Free Palestine", namely, that the liberation of Palestine from occupation should include the disappearance of the State of Israel:



(*Sciences and Life*, Grade 3, Part 1 (2017) p. 65)

The emphasis put on Israel's pre-1967 area as an occupied territory is made clearer in the following piece:

"Activity 1-A: We will observe the following map, draw conclusions and then answer:" The map, titled "Map of Palestine", is devoid, as usual, of cities established by Jews in modern times. The first assignment on the right reads: "We will distinguish between the Palestinian cities occupied by the Zionists in 1948 and the ones that they occupied in 1967."

نشاط (1-أ): نلاحظ الخريطة الآتية، ونستنتج، ثم نُجيب:



خريطة فلسطين

- نميِّز بين المدن الفلسطينية التي احتلتها الصَّهاينة عام ١٩٤٨م، وتلك التي احتلتها عام ١٩٦٧م.
- نستنتج كثرة المدن في وسط فلسطين وشمالها وقتلتها في جنوبها.

(*Social Studies*, Grade 7, Part 1 (2017) p. 56)

Textual material as well emphasizes this phenomenon of Palestine replacing Israel as the sovereign state in the region:

"Palestine is located within the Asian wing of the Arab homeland, in an area known as the Levant [*Bilad al-Sham* in Arabic] that comprises the states of Palestine, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon."  
(*Geography and Modern and Contemporary History of Palestine*, Grade 10, Part 1 (2017) p. 7)

"Palestine is located in the northern half of Earth, in the western part of the Asian continent. It is one of the states of the Levant [*Bilad al-Sham*] (**Palestine, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon**). On the north it is bordered by Lebanon and Syria, on the east – Jordan, on the west – the Mediterranean, and on the south – Egypt and the Gulf of Aqaba..."

تقع فلسطينُ في النّصفِ الشّماليِّ مِنَ الكُرّةِ الأَرْضِيَّةِ، في الجزءِ الغربيِّ  
من قارّةِ آسيا، وهي إحدى دُوَلِ بلادِ الشّامِ (فلسطين، وسوريا، والأردن،  
ولبنان)، يَحُدُّها مِنَ الشّماليِّ لُبْنانُ وسوريا، وَمِنَ الشّرقيِّ الأردن، وَمِنَ الغربِ  
البحرُ المُتوسّط، وَمِنَ الجنوبِ مِصرُ، وخليجُ العقبة، ويُعدُّ موقعُ فلسطينِ حلقَةً

(*Social Studies*, Grade 5, Part 1 (2017) p. 23. **Bold** letters are in the original.)

And this falsified information appears on the map as well. The following map, titled "The States of the Levant [*Bilad al-Sham*]" includes "Syria", "Lebanon", "Jordan" And "Palestine", with the latter encompassing the whole country:



(*Social Studies*, Grade 6, Part 1 (2017) p. 42)

Cities in pre-1967 Israel are described as exclusively Palestinian:

"[Assignment:] I will look in the Internet for the Palestinian city of Acre..."  
(*Technology*, Grade 5 (2016) p. 49)

"I am Jaffa... I am a Palestinian city built by your ancient Arab forefathers six thousand years ago on the Mediterranean shore..."  
(*Our Beautiful Language*, Grade 3, Part 1 (2017) p. 106)

In the following assignment the student is required to put the name of a city – the Israeli city of Haifa in this case – in a sentence:

"3. The city of ...[Haifa]... is one of the Palestinian coastal cities."  
(*National and Life Education*, Grade 2, Part 1 (2017) p. 81)

A question in a Mathematics textbook opens with the following sentence:

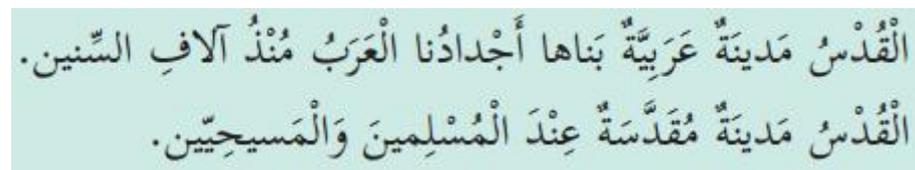
"[The Israeli city of] Tiberias is a Palestinian city."  
(*Mathematics*, Grade 4, Part 2 (2016) p. 7)

In PA parlance, these Palestinian cities are under occupation, much the same as West Bank and Gazan cities. This is the case, for example, with the Israeli city of Ramleh:

"The Zionist gangs occupied the city of Ramleh on 21.7.1948... and the city still succumbs to the yoke of Zionist occupation."  
(*Social Studies*, Grade 7, Part 1 (2017) p. 60)

As regards Jerusalem, the books in UNRWA use never mention that it has some historical connection to Jews, neither politically nor religiously. It is described as Arab from its very establishment:

"Jerusalem is an Arab city built by our Arab forefathers thousands of years ago. Jerusalem is a holy city for Muslims and Christians."



القدس مدينة عربية بناها أجدادنا العرب منذ آلاف السنين.  
القدس مدينة مقدسة عند المسلمين والمسيحيين.

(*National and Social Upbringing*, Grade 3, Part 1 (2017) p. 28)

"I will explain: Jerusalem is of enormous importance to Muslims and Christians."  
(*Geography and Modern and Contemporary History of Palestine*, Grade 10, Part 1 (2017) p. 49)

Moreover, a great effort is made in the books used by UNRWA to deny any connection the Jews might have to this city:

"...The transitory invaders and the usurping tyrants who took it alternately in the past, and to this day, still pour on it their malice bowls and their despicable licentiousness, thinking that they have taken control over it, attained superiority in its realm and

managed, due to oppressive power and by jumping over the centuries, to fold over its pure Arab cultural records page by page in order to connect a distorted and disconnected past to a present based on robbery, coercion, forgery and usurpation. They do not know that they delude themselves... Jerusalem has Arab roots... This is Jerusalem, and it will remain stubborn against the aggressors, the more the tyranny meanness sticks to it, as well as the malice harbored by the forgers who infringe on its Muslim and Christian holy places and on its history and its archaeological sites that attest its genuine Arab origin since thousands of years..."  
(*Arabic Language*, Grade 10, Part 1 (2017) pp. 18-20)

## **Demonization**

Demonization of the Jews is not restricted to the conflict. It starts in the religious context of the political rivalry between the Prophet of Islam and the Jews of Arabia. Demonization of Israel starts with its very establishment that is dubbed "occupation", as we have seen. What aggravates the demonization process in the books used by UNRWA is the total absence of any objective information about Jewish history and culture, or about Israel – its political structure, demography, economy and culture – that would balance its demonization as an enemy.

Another feature of the demonization picture is the complete avoidance of presenting the Jewish or Israeli individual as an ordinary human being - in stark contrast with the Israeli schoolbooks' attitude to the Palestinian individual. All the descriptions of the Jewish/Israeli "other" are that of a group only, with the accompanying connotations of alienation and alarm.

The first example is taken from a piece describing the Jews' behavior vis-à-vis Muhammad in the city of Medina, according to Muslim historiography:

"...But the Jews did not respect the treaty [they had signed with Muhammad] and went in for all kinds of treachery, betrayal and hostility, which made it necessary for the Muslims to fight them."  
(*Islamic Education*, Grade 7, Part 1 (2017) p. 50)

Demonizing pieces increase in the context of the present conflict:

"... Savage Zionist gangs that came from a foreign world full of hostility and hatred to Arabs and Palestinians invaded it [the land] without permission..."  
(*Arabic Language*, Grade 9, Part 1 (2017) p. 23)

"Where are the horsemen [who will ride] towards Al-Aqsa [Mosque] to liberate it from the fist of unbelief, from the Devil's aides."  
(*Arabic Language*, Grade 7, Part 1 (2017) p. 66)

"The occupiers continue their crimes against our people."  
(*Linguistic Sciences*, Grade 10 (2015) p. 45)

"O my brother, we have a sister in Jerusalem for whom the slaughterers have prepared the knives."  
(Language exercise, *Linguistic Sciences*, Grade 8, Part 2 (2014) p. 14)

And there are as well more specific accusations. For example, intentional killing of Palestinian children and youths:

"[Language exercise:] The Palestinian child stood facing the enemy's bullets like a brave soldier."

٢-وقف الطفل الفلسطيني أمام رصاص العدو وقوف الجندي الباسل.

(*Reading and Texts*, Grade 8, Part 2 (2015) p. 28)

"During the First Palestinian *Intifadah* the Palestinian youths were utilizing the sling to stand against the Zionist occupation's soldiers and defend themselves against their treacherous bullets."



(*Sciences and Life*, Grade 7, Part 1 (2017) p. 77)

"When the Palestinian mothers differ from the rest of the mothers in the world and continue for the sixth decade successively to bury their children accompanied by trilling cries of joy! When the Palestinian fathers continue to entomb their sons calmly and promise to complete [their share] with the rest [of their sons]! When the Palestinian [individual] with no difference of age, religion, sex, and affiliation becomes a martyrdom project! When orphanage becomes an ordinary matter and widowhood is prevalent, and marriage by correspondence [from jail] becomes a characteristic of the Palestinian family! When all this happens, then the call for the elevation of the level of public performance to that of the current flow of blood becomes a sacred national right that is difficult to renounce or treat lightly..."  
(*Our Beautiful Language*, Grade 7, Part 2 (2014) p. 58. Exclamation marks are in the original.)

Other accusations include: preventing Muslim worshippers from coming to Jerusalem from the West Bank to pray at Al-Aqsa Mosque, cutting down trees, arresting school children and setting loose wild boars into Palestinians' fields:

"[Question:] ...In the first week of Ramadan the occupation forces prevented 192 people from the city of Tulkarm from arriving at Al-Aqsa Mosque. They also prevented 95 people from the city of Hebron [from doing that] on that same day. I will find the [total] number of people from the two cities whom the checkpoints prevented from arriving at Al-Aqsa Mosque on that day."

(*Mathematics*, Grade 2, Part 2 (2016) p. 8)

"Why does the occupation cut down deliberately fig and olive trees in our country?"  
(*Arabic Language*, Grade 10, Part 1 (2017) p. 72)

"[Assignment:] We will prepare a play on the arrest of school students and their interrogation in the Zionist interrogation departments."  
(*Social Studies*, Grade 9, Part 1 (2017) p. 45)

"It [the occupation] set loose herds of boars that caused damage to the inhabitants and their crops."  
(*Social Studies*, Grade 9, Part 1 (2017) p. 21)

Israel is also accused of carrying out excavations under the Temple Mount in order to cause the collapse of the mosques situated there. The caption under the following caricature reads:

"We will think and observe the caricature and write a paragraph about the message the cartoonist wanted to give."



(*Social Studies*, Grade 7, Part 1 (2017) p. 64)

Following are excerpts taken from a poem titled "The Horizon Dons Fire" by the Egyptian poet Abd al-Sattar Salim. The poem describes an occupier in general, and not necessarily Israel, but its inclusion in a PA textbook inevitably makes it a demonization tool against Israel, particularly in light of the mentioning within the poem of the orange grove, which is a repeating motif in Palestinian poems that deal with the yearning to Palestine:

"How will you respond  
If your family members are attacked by  
A foreign person  
Tempted by his being a weapon holder  
And he bared a wolf's fang

...

How will you respond if  
Your roots within yourself are provoked, while the adversary plants  
In the heart of your land his spear  
And opens fire on the field  
That burns  
Its wheat  
And perseveres with his stubbornness  
And ravages  
Destroys, kills, hides  
Your sun from you, and stifles  
Your time's freshness  
Undermines in all times upon you  
Your house's flanks  
And colors with blood the burnished  
Daylight,

How will you respond?  
How will you respond if he claims  
That the date palm grove  
And the orange grove  
And your Arab olives  
And yourself  
And your wife Salma  
And your decent sons  
[Are] war spoils  
And a seized property  
[It is] either survival without any right  
For you in life  
Or perdition for the one who does not obey  
Orders  
How will you respond?"

الدرس ١٢

الأفق مُتَشِحٌ بِاللَّهَيْبِ

(عبد الستار سليم / مصر)

بماذا تُجيب  
إذا ما تعدى على أهل بيتك  
شخصٌ غريبٌ  
وقد غره أنه ذو سلاح  
فكشّر عن ناب ذيبٌ

بماذا تُجيب  
إذا ما تعدى على أهل بيتك  
شخصٌ غريبٌ  
وقد غره أنه ذو سلاح  
فكشّر عن ناب ذيبٌ

بماذا تجيب إذا ما استُفِرَّتْ

جذورك فيك . . وقد غرسَ الخصمُ

في صدرِ أرضِك رُمحَه

وأطلقَ ناراً على الحقلِ

تحرقُ قَمَحَه

ولجَّ عناداً

وعاثَ فساداً

يدمِّرُ، يقتلُ، يحجبُ

شَمْسَكَ عَنْكَ . . ويخنقُ

خُضْرَةَ وَقْتِكَ

يُزَلْزَلُ - في كلِّ آن - عليك

جوانبَ بيتك

ويصبغُ بالدم وجهَ النهارِ

القشيبُ

بماذا تجيب؟! \*

\*\*\*

بماذا تجيبُ إذا ما ادَّعى

أنَّ كَرَمَ النخيلِ،

وبيارةَ البرتقالِ،

وزيتونكَ العرييِّ،

وأنتِ .

وزوجك (سلمى)

وأبناءك الطيبين،

مكاسبُ حربٍ،

ومُلْكُ يمينٍ .

وإمَّا البقاءُ بلا أيِّ حقٍّ

لكم في الحياةِ،

وإمَّا الفناءُ لِمَن للأوامرِ لا

يستجيبُ

بماذا تجيب؟! \*



(Reading and Texts, Grade 9, Part 2 (2014) pp. 51-53, and see the question on p. 55: "Who is meant by the foreign person in the text?" and also the exercise on p. 56 in

which the student is supposed to explain certain expressions, including the following one: "the orange grove = the usurped land.")

This poem should be viewed as an extremely demonizing piece, since it raises the rivalry with Israel and the Jews in the student's eyes to a level of existential threat to the Palestinian individual, with grave implications as far as the possibility to solve the conflict peacefully is concerned.

Demonization is given a vivid dimension in a piece featuring extreme manifestations of victimization, which inevitably demonize the perceived victimizer. It is a lesson titled "A Letter from a Palestinian Little Girl to Children of the World", in which "She describes the suffering caused to her and to children of her age..." Excerpts:

"Since I was born they have assassinated my childhood. They tore my doll apart and I hid it in my heart. Since I was born the bullets' whistle has pierced my ears and blackness has covered everything around me. I see crying eyes: This is a martyr's mother, this is a prisoner-of-war's daughter and this is a missing person's sister. And this is a child whom a bomb has maimed: It killed his doll and, with it, it took away his eye, his heart and his joy. Sadness has found into his heart the way that joy will never know. And this is a young woman who has lost her husband, and sorrow has dug in her cheeks the furrows of despair..."

Since I was born I have seen our fields subjected to appropriation and our alleys closed. Death and soldiers march there. I see the ruins of demolished houses whose stones have been dispersed in all directions and underneath them the children's memories and the birds' dreams still sigh...

I dreamed that we had a school where I would not be afraid to be trodden by a boot of a usurping soldier... Why did they slaughter my childhood in front of my eyes and kill the rose in the fields? Why did they kill the butterflies in our gardens and frighten the birds? Why did they veil the sunlight, spread darkness and block the roads?"  
(*Arabic Language*, Grade 8, Part 1 (2017) pp. 59-61)

## **War Indoctrination**

None of the textbooks used in UNRWA schools advocates peace and coexistence with Israel, or hints at the possibility of solving the conflict peacefully. Indeed, Israel, as depicted in the foregoing material, is delegitimized and demonized to a point one cannot perceive it as a partner for peaceful coexistence. Consequently, there is only one solution to the conflict dealt with in the books used by all Palestinian schools, including UNRWA's: Violent struggle for the liberation of the whole of Palestine, which means total destruction of Israel. Thus, Palestinian education propagates war indoctrination, instead of peace, in which UNRWA is a full partner.

This war indoctrination is well presented in the PA national anthem that is taught to students in the low grades. It is titled "*Fidai*" – a traditional term meaning "self-sacrificer" and used in the Palestinian scene nowadays as a title for members of the Palestinian armed organizations. Following is the full piece preceded by the sentence "Let us know our national anthem":

*Fidai, fidai, fidai*, O my land, O land of the forefathers  
*Fidai, fidai, fidai*, O my people, O people of eternity  
 With my determination, my fire and the volcano of my revenge [tha'r]  
 And my blood's yearning to my land and my home  
 I have climbed mountains and went into struggle  
 I defeated the impossible and shattered the shackles  
*Fidai, Fidai, Fidai*, O my land, O land of the forefathers  
*Fidai, fidai, fidai*, O my people, O people of eternity  
 In the winds' storm and the weapon's fire  
 And my people's determination to carry on the struggle  
 Palestine is my home and the road to my victory  
 Palestine is my revenge [tha'ri] and the land of steadfastness  
*Fidai, Fidai, Fidai*, O my land, O land of the forefathers  
*Fidai, Fidai, Fidai*, O my people, O people of eternity  
 By the oath under the flag's shadow  
 By my people's determination, and by the pain's fire  
 I shall live as a *Fidai* and I shall continue as a *Fidai*  
 And I shall die as a *Fidai* until I return  
*Fidai, fidai, fidai*, O my land, O land of the forefathers  
*Fidai, fidai, fidai*, O my people, O people of eternity"

نَعْرِفُ نَشِيدَنَا الْوَطَنِيَّ



**نشاط (١): نَسْتَمِعُ، وَنُرَدِّدُ:**

فِدَائِي فِدَائِي فِدَائِي \*\*\*\* يا أَرْضِي يا أَرْضَ الْجُدودِ  
 فِدَائِي فِدَائِي فِدَائِي \*\*\*\* يا شَعْبِي يا شَعْبَ الْخُلودِ  
 بَعَزْمِي وَنَارِي وَبُرْكَانِ ثَارِي  
 وَأَشْوَاقِ دَمِّي لِأَرْضِي وَدَارِي  
 صَعَدْتُ الْجِبَالَ وَخُضْتُ النَّضَالَ  
 قَهَرْتُ الْمُحَالَ حَطَّمْتُ الْقُيُودَ  
 فِدَائِي فِدَائِي فِدَائِي \*\*\*\* يا أَرْضِي يا أَرْضَ الْجُدودِ  
 فِدَائِي فِدَائِي فِدَائِي \*\*\*\* يا شَعْبِي يا شَعْبَ الْخُلودِ



(National and Social Upbringing, Grade 3, Part 1 (2017) pp. 15-16)

It is clear from the text, especially the expression "until I return" that refers to the perceived violent return of the 1948 Palestinian refugees' descendants into Israel's pre-1967 territory, that the said struggle is by no means restricted to the territories of the West bank and Gaza alone. To make this point clearer, the following poem, titled "Children of Palestine", is given, with specific references to the Israeli cities of Haifa and Jaffa:

"Let us sing:

I am a lion cub;<sup>4</sup> I am a flower;<sup>5</sup> we gave the soul to the revolution<sup>6</sup>  
Our forefathers built for us houses in our [formerly] free country  
I am a lion cub; I am a flower; we carried the revolution's ember  
To Haifa, to Jaffa, to Al-Aqsa [Mosque], to the [Dome of the] Rock"

<sup>4</sup> *Shibl* in Arabic - a term denoting male members of the al-Fatah youth movement.

<sup>5</sup> *Zahrah* - a term denoting a female member of that movement.

<sup>6</sup> *Thawrah* – a term denoting the activity of the Palestinian al-Fatah organization that started in January 1965, that is, before the occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip by Israel in 1967.



## أطفال فلسطين

إبراهيم التلي

أنا شِبْلٌ أنا زَهْرَةٌ      وَهَبْنَا الرُّوحَ لِلثَّوْرَةِ  
بَنَى أَجْدَادُنَا دَوْرًا      لَنَا فِي أَرْضِنَا الحُرَّةِ  
أنا شِبْلٌ أنا زَهْرَةٌ      حَمَلْنَا جَمْرَةَ الثَّوْرَةِ  
إلى حَيْفَا إلى يافَا      إلى الأَقْصَى إلى الصَّخْرَةِ

(Our Beautiful Language, Grade 2, Part 1 (2017) p. 42)

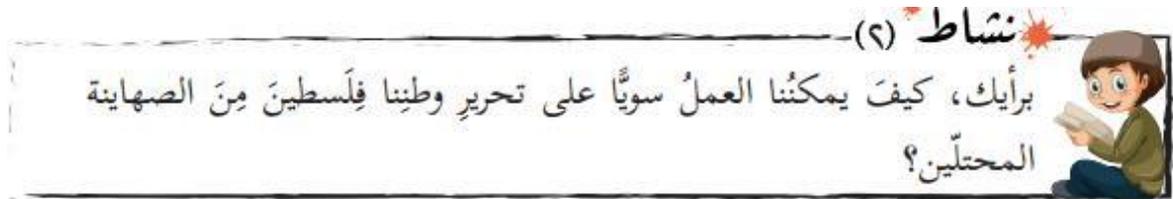
To these examples, all taught at UNRWA schools, one should add the following excerpts taken from the Palestinian poetess Fadwa Tuqan's poem titled "My Liberty" that hints at the need for a violent struggle until the whole of Palestine's soil is liberated:

"...My liberty! My liberty! My liberty!  
I will continue engraving its name while still struggling...  
I will continue engraving its name until I see it  
Expanding in my homeland and growing  
And continues growing  
And continues growing  
Until it covers every inch of its soil [i.e., present-day Israel as well]  
Until I see [blood-] red liberty opening every door [of the refugees' former houses]..."  
(Our Beautiful Language, Grade 7, Part 2 (2014) p. 79, and see the question on p. 80:  
"Explain the poetess' words 'Until I see red liberty opening every door'.")

Having absorbed this atmosphere of a violent struggle created by the textbooks, the students are asked:

"Activity 2:

In your opinion, how can we work together for the liberation of our homeland Palestine from the occupying Zionists?"



(Islamic Education, Grade 5, Part 1 (2017) p. 93)

This national struggle for the liberation of the entire Palestinian homeland from the Zionists is further intensified in the schoolbooks by the addition of the religious element into it:

"Focus: I am a Muslim; I will make a sacrifice for the liberation of Al-Aqsa Mosque."



(Islamic Education, Grade 5, Part 1 (2017) p. 56)

Within this approach, traditional Islamic concepts, such as Jihad and martyrdom, are used to strengthen among the students – who mostly come from a socially traditional environment – their personal commitment to the violent struggle.

Jihad is exalted both in general and in the Palestinian context:

"Jihad in God's cause has a superb rank in God's view... Jihad in God's cause is better in God's view than any other good and pious deed."

(Islamic Education, Grade 10, Part 1 (2017) p. 20)

The first verse of a poem titled "Palestine", given in the following example as a language exercise, says:

"O my brother, the oppressors have exceeded the bound  
And, therefore, Jihad and sacrifice are necessary"

(Linguistic Sciences, Grade 8, Part 2 (2014) p. 14)

And in another language exercise:

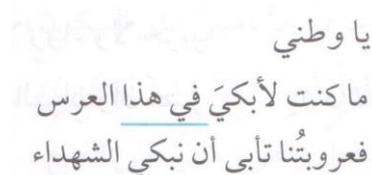
"The two Jihad fighters who raised the flag were happy."

(Our Beautiful Language, Grade 4, Part 2 (2016) p. 8)

Martyrdom is also exalted in the following language exercises, both in general and in the Palestinian context, and there are cases in which it is depicted as a wedding party:

"The martyr has a rank above all ranks."  
(*Linguistic Sciences*, Grade 10 (2015) p. 108)

"O my homeland,  
I shall not cry in this wedding party [*urs*]  
Because our Arab character [*urubah*] refuses that we cry over the martyrs."



يا وطني  
ما كنت لأبكي في هذا العرس  
فعروبتنا تأبى أن نبكي الشهداء

(*Linguistic Sciences*, Grade 8, Part 2 (2014) p. 60)

"The martyrs in the Negev prison vie with one another  
They are planted as trees on the path of martyrdom  
The martyrs vie with one another  
They converge with the ancient sand, traveling to their wedding party."  
(*Linguistic Sciences*, Grade 10 (2015) p. 29)

In the following exercise, martyrdom becomes a personal obligation of tenth-grade students:

"I swear: I shall continue working in the martyrs' path."  
(*Linguistic Sciences*, Grade 10 (2015) p. 93)

And on the same page, the last verse of a famous poem titled "the Martyr" says:

"By your life, this is the death of men, and whoever wishes a noble death - this is it"  
(*Linguistic Sciences*, Grade 10 (2015) p. 93)

Part and parcel of the liberation struggle is the perceived "Right of Return" by which the descendants of the Palestinian refugees of 1948 are entitled to return to their ancestors' former houses and reclaim their property in full. Their return is given a violent character in the PA books used in UNRWA schools and there are references indicating that the areas within pre-1967 Israel to which they will return should be under Palestinian sovereignty. In other, clearer, words, Israel itself should disappear:

"We shall return; we shall return with the soaring vultures; we shall return with the strongly blowing wind; we shall return to the vineyard and the olive trees; we shall return to raise the flag of Palestine... on our green hills."

سَنَعُودُ، سَنَعُودُ مَعَ النُّسُورِ الْمُحَلَّقَةِ، سَنَعُودُ مَعَ الرِّيحِ الْعَائِيَةِ، سَنَعُودُ  
إِلَى الْكَرَمِ وَالزَّيْتُونِ، سَنَعُودُ؛ لِنَرْفَعَ عَلَمَ فَلَسْطِينِ، إِلَى جَانِبِ زَهْرَةِ  
الْحَنُونِ عَلَى رَوَائِنِ الْخَضْرَاءِ.

(Arabic Language, Grade 5, Part 1 (2017) p. 82)

"I am the owner of the great right, from which I create the morrow  
I shall reclaim it; I shall reclaim it as a precious and sovereign homeland  
I shall shake the world tomorrow and march as a consolidated army  
I have an appointment with my homeland and it is impossible that I forget that  
appointment"

**صَرَخَةُ لاجِي**

هارون هاشم رشيد

أَنَا لَنْ أَظَلُّ مُقَيِّدًا	أَنَا لَنْ أَعِيشَ مُشَرَّدًا
حَفُّ نَائِرٍ مُتَمَرَّدًا	أَنَا لِي غَدٌ وَغَدًا سَأَزُ
صِيفٍ وَهِيَ تَجْتَاحُ الْمَدَى	أَنَا لَنْ أَخَافُ مِنَ الْعَوَا
تَرْمِي دَمَارًا أَسْوَدًا	وَمِنْ الْأَعَاصِيرِ الَّتِي
رِ وَصَانِعٍ مِنْهُ الْغَدَا	أَنَا صَاحِبُ الْحَقِّ الْكَبِيرِ
وَوَطْنًا عَزِيزًا سَيِّدًا	سَأُعِيدُهُ .. وَأُعِيدُهُ
وَأَسِيرُ جَيْشًا أَوْحَدًا	سَأُزَلِّزُ الدُّنْيَا غَدًا
هَيْهَاتَ أَنْسَى الْمَوْعِدَا	لِي مَوْعِدٌ فِي مَوْطِنِي

(Excerpts from the poem "A Refugee's Cry" by Harun Hashem Rashid, *Arabic Language, Grade 5, Part 1 (2017) p. 85*, and see among the accompanying questions the following one: "The poet has determined the way of the return. We will clarify it as it appears in the poem.")

Moreover, there is clear rejection of a return under occupation:

"Is he not crazy, the one who is driven out of his homeland and then is ready to return to it as a guest with the robbers who had seized it?"

(*Arabic Language, Grade 10, Part 1 (2017) p. 57*)

Terrorist activities against Israeli civilians are also part of the struggle against the Zionist occupation of Palestine. That is not explicitly said, but the books exalt Palestinian terrorists who participated in such actions. Dalal al-Mughrabi, for example, who was killed in a terrorist attack she had led against a civilian bus on the Coastal Highway in 1978 in which more than 30 men, women and children were killed, is mentioned in two books, both studied in UNRWA schools. In one of them she is described as the martyr of Arab and Islamic history in the country (*Arabic*

*Language, Grade 5, Part 1 (2017) p. 14*), while the other says: "...Dalal al-Mughrabi who commanded the *Fidai* 'Deir Yassin' operation on the Palestinian coast in 1978 in which over thirty soldiers were killed..." (*Social Studies, Grade 9, Part 1 (2017) p. 74*).

The new PA schoolbooks of 2016-2017 now taught in UNRWA schools are characterized by the intensified description of the violent struggle against Israel, including some incriminating items involving incitement to the perpetration of war crimes. For the first time in the history of the PA curriculum a reference is made to the fate of the 6 million Jews living in the country after its supposed liberation: expulsion of the usurper (code name for Israel) and extermination of the foreigners' defeated and scattered remnants. This new element in the PA schoolbooks sounds the alarm with all its might and UNRWA should listen too:

"Let us sing and learn by heart: The Nobles' Land [*Ard al-Kurama*]  
 [Photograph of the Old City of Jerusalem with the Dome of the Rock]  
 I have sworn! I shall sacrifice my blood  
 To water the nobles' land  
 And I shall remove the usurper [*ghaseb*] from my country  
 And shall exterminate [*ubid*] the foreigners' scattered remnants [*fulul al-ghuraba*]  
 O land of Al-Aqsa [Mosque] and the sacred place [*haram*],  
 O cradle of pride and nobility  
 Patience, patience, for victory is ours  
 And dawn will peep out from darkness"

أَرْضُ الْكُرْمَاءِ      نُغْنِي وَنَحْفَظُ:



قَسَمًا سَأُضَحِّي بِدِمَائِي      لِأُرْوِي أَرْضَ الْكُرْمَاءِ  
 وَأَزِيلُ الْغَاصِبَ مِنْ بَلَدِي      وَأُبِيدُ فُلُولَ الْغُرَبَاءِ  
 يَا بَلَدَ الْأَقْصَى وَالْحَرَمِ      يَا مَهْدَ النَّخْوَةِ وَالْكَرَمِ  
 صَبْرًا صَبْرًا فَالْتَصِرْ لَنَا      وَالْفَجْرُ يُطِلُّ مِنَ الظُّلَمِ

(*Our Beautiful Language, Grade 3, Part 2 (2017) p. 64*)

Equally alarming is the first reference by the PA schoolbooks to the party targeted by the Palestinian liberation struggle, namely, the Jewish/Israeli "other". A story in one of the 2017 books mentions the imposition of a curfew in parts of the city of Al-Birah following a terrorist attack on the neighboring Jewish settlement of Psagot. The reference to the victims of that attack is shocking:

"The neighbor: 'The curfew does not include us in Al-Sharafah [neighborhood]. It is imposed on Al-Natarish [neighborhood]. It seems that there is a barbecue party [*haflat shiwaa*] there with Molotov cocktails on one of the buses of the Psagot colony [*musta'marah* - Jewish settlement] on Mount Al-Tawil"

الجارُّ: حَظَرُ التَّجَوُّلِ لَا يَشْمَلُنَا فِي (الشَّرْفَةِ) مَفْرُوضٌ عَلَيَّ  
(النَّاتَرِيشِ) عَلَيَّ مَا يَبْدُو هُنَاكَ حَفْلَةٌ شِوَاءٍ بِالْقَنَابِلِ الْحَارِقَةِ لِإِحْدَى  
حَافِلَاتِ مُسْتَعْمَرَةٍ (بِساغوت) عَلَيَّ الْجَبَلِ الطَّوِيلِ.

(*Arabic Language*, Grade 9, Part 1 (2017) p. 61. The "barbecue party" expression is underlined in red.)

## Conclusion

The examination of the schoolbooks used by UNRWA in its schools reveals a very disturbing picture:

Israel – a UN member state – is denied legitimacy. Its very establishment in 1948 by virtue of a UN resolution in 1947 is described as occupation. Its name does not appear on any map, and in many cases Palestine appears in its stead as a sovereign state whose territory covers that of Israel itself. The same is found in textual material as well. Even Israel's name is rarely found in the books taught at UNRWA schools, as it is often referred to as "the Zionist occupation". Israeli cities are described as exclusively Palestinian and, in one case, an Israeli city is portrayed as being under Zionist occupation.

Jewish presence in the country is denied historically, geographically and religiously, as no reference is made in the books to Jewish history in the country in antiquity, no Jewish-established cities are shown on the map and Jewish holy places are presented as Muslim ones usurped by the Zionists. Jews are denied any connection to their ancient capital Jerusalem which is presented as an Arab city since its establishment thousands of years ago. Moreover, their very presence in Jerusalem today is presented as an aggression against the city's Arab character.

Both Jews and Israel are severely demonized. Jews are even demonized outside of the context of the conflict on the grounds of their political rivalry with the Prophet of Islam. Abusive expressions are used in the description of both Israel and the Jews within the conflict and the Jewish/Israeli "other" is presented as a group only – with the accompanying connotations of alienation and threat – rather than ordinary human

beings. In addition, no objective information is provided in the books about Israel or the Jews that would counterbalance their heavy demonized picture.

Beyond specific accusations against the Jewish/Israeli "other", including the use of wild boars to harm Palestinians' crops, it is portrayed as an existential threat to the Palestinian individual who is heavily victimized, in his turn.

Within this gloomy picture presented by the books in UNRWA use peace and coexistence with Israel is not an option. Instead, a violent struggle for the liberation of Palestine in its entirety is propagated, for, if the real occupation of Palestine took place in 1948 and not in 1967, then, the act of its liberation should include the disappearance of the delegitimized and demonized State of Israel. This is what the students in UNRWA schools are being taught, which totally contradicts all UN resolutions regarding the peaceful resolution of the Middle East conflict.

Islamic traditional concepts, such as Jihad and martyrdom, play an important role in order to make that struggle more binding among the students who mostly come from a relatively traditional society. Another concept, that of the Right of Return, is also made part and parcel of the said violent struggle for the liberation of the whole of Palestine.

Still more horrible are the texts in the new PA schoolbooks adopted by UNRWA that talk about the extermination of Israel's surviving Jews after Palestine's supposed liberation, describe the burning of Jews in a civilian bus attacked by Molotov cocktails as a "barbecue party" and revere a terrorist who murdered over thirty Israeli civilians in another bus. Teaching such items by UNRWA undoubtedly borders on the realm of war crimes instigation.

This list of items taught in UNRWA schools is incriminating. Beyond UNRWA's obvious betrayal of its moral obligation toward the Palestinian children and youths' human rights and well-being, by letting the PA preparing them for a future war with Israel, this UN agency breaks all UN principles of world peace and equal coexistence. In fact, the huge accumulated number of UNRWA's indoctrinated graduates throughout its almost seven decades of operation – over 2,000,000 altogether – is the Agency's contribution to the perpetuation of the conflict.

It is now high time that UNRWA change its ways. There are things it must not teach! It is expected from its democratic donor states to take immediate action to see to it that UNRWA complies with UN principles regarding peace and coexistence in the Middle East. In view of UNRWA's relatively large share of Palestinian educational activity, UNRWA should no more submit to the political, ideological and propagandist lines of the PA regarding their attitude to Israel and to the issue of peace, or else quit its educational work and hand over its schools and teaching staff to the PA.

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### **The Author**



Dr. Arnon Groiss is a scholar of Middle Eastern studies holding a Ph.D. degree in this field from Princeton University, as well as an MPA degree from Harvard University. Dr. Groiss is a retired journalist from Israel's Arabic Radio where, over 40 years, he followed Middle Eastern and Arab affairs daily. For the last 17 years he has been researching the attitude to the "other" and to peace in various Middle Eastern curricula, having examined over thousand schoolbooks of Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Tunisia and the Palestinian Authority and authored numerous reports on this issue. Dr. Groiss presented his findings to policy makers in the US Congress, the European Parliament, the British House of Commons, the French Assemblée nationale, the Canadian Parliament and the Israeli Knesset, as well as to think tanks and the press in Israel and abroad.