

Israel, Jews and Peace in the New PA Textbooks Used in UNRWA Schools Today – Final Study

By
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Introduction

This paper is the final update of two former studies. The first one, titled "[UNRWA's Problematic Educational Role in the Middle East Conflict](#)", was issued in September 2017. It 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 study covered the latest years of UNRWA activity and relied on some 150 textbooks in various school subjects mostly published by the Palestinian Authority (PA) between the years 2013 and 2017. In the meantime, the PA started in 2016 a new project of textbook publishing (and most of the 2016 books were republished – some with certain changes – in 2017), which necessitated an update. That was partially done by another study, issued in early December 2017 under the title "[Israel, Jews and Peace in Textbooks Now Used in UNRWA Schools](#)". It was based on 102 books, mostly published in 2016 and 2017, with some 20 books having been published earlier, and reflected the situation in UNRWA schools during the first semester of 2017/18. With the accomplishment of the PA schoolbook republishing operation for grades 1-10 that same month, another update research was done, of which the result is the present study. It includes 118 books the vast majority of which were published in 2017 and replaced most books of 2016 (see the full list at the end of the study). As far as UNRWA is concerned, the present study is the last update. Further new books are expected to appear in the course of the 2018 school year but they are intended for grades 11 and 12 which are not included in UNRWA's school system. All the books cited in this study are currently studied in UNRWA schools in the West Bank and Gaza.

UNRWA – the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for the refugees of the 1948 Palestine war – began its operations in 1950. 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 three 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 ancestors' 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% of a total USD 735,748,000 in 2017).¹ 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,² and 96 schools in the West Bank with some 50,000 students,³ thus being responsible for about a quarter of the PA school student body. UNRWA runs schools for Palestinians in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon too and uses textbooks issued by the local governments.

To the PA-issued textbooks used by UNRWA in the West Bank and Gaza, the agency adds books of its own that teach human rights, tolerance and other social values. A systematic review of these books revealed, however, that they restricted 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 and dealt with in this study are the only ones that refer to the rival "other" and to the possibility of having peace with it.

As already stated, a thorough examination of the PA schoolbooks revealed that they followed three main fundamentals in these particular fields: **De-legitimization** of Israel's existence and of the very presence of Jews in the country, **demonization** of Israel and the Jews and **war indoctrination**, instead of peace education.

De-legitimization

According to the PA textbooks used in UNRWA schools, Jews have no rights whatsoever or legitimate status in the country. They are referred to as occupiers there: "An issue for discussion: I will talk about the Palestinian woman's role in [the context of] sacrifice and steadfastness within the confrontation with the Jewish-Zionist occupier" (*Islamic Education*, Grade 5, Part 2 (2017) p. 77). The Jews' 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 is expected "to connect [Western] Imperialism [*Isti'mar*] with Zionism" (*ibid.* p. 66). Another piece in the same book talks of the Zionist movement's "greedy ambitions [*atmaa*] in Palestine" (*ibid.* p. 74).

The new schoolbooks continue their predecessors' line that systematically denies the existence of any Jewish holy place in the country. The Jewish holy place of the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem, for example, is presented as an exclusively Muslim holy place under the name Al-Buraq Wall that appears below the photograph of the Wailing Wall:

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

¹ http://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/2016_2017_programme_budget_blue_book.pdf

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

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



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, from which the student may assume that the establishment of the sanctity of the Wall to the Jews was done after 1967 only:

"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 are striving 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:

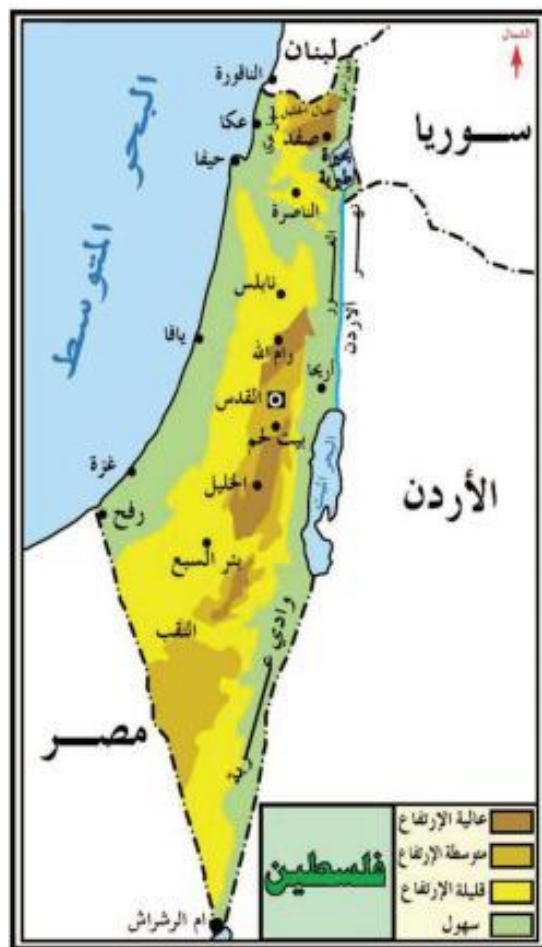
"The Zionist occupation authorities partitioned the Abrahamic Sanctuary [the Cave of the Patriarchs], prevented the [Muslim] call for prayer [there] and permitted the settlers to hold therein their religious ceremonies."

(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).

Thus, cities built by Jews in the country in the modern era, such as Tel Aviv, Nahariyyah, Petah Tiqvah, Rishon Letzion, Netanyah, Dimona, etc., are not shown on the map. For example, the following map, titled "Palestine", shows the cities of Acre, Haifa, Safed, Nazareth, Nablus, Jaffa, Ramallah, Jericho, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Hebron, Gaza, Rafah and Beer Sheba. In some cases, like the one here, modern Jewish cities are given the Arabic name of the places where they were built. In the case below, the modern city of Eilat is given the Arabic name of the desolate site where it was later built – Umm al-Rashrash:



(*Social Studies*, Grade 5, Part 2 (2017) p. 40)

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 on the map next to the country in its entirety, including Israel within 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 خَرِيطَةَ وَطَنِي بِأَلْوَانِ 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 (١-أ): نلاحظ الخريطة الآتية، ونستنتج، ثم نُجيب:



خريطة فلسطين

- نُميِّزُ بين المدن الفلسطينية التي احتلتها الصَّهيونية عام ١٩٤٨م، وتلك التي احتلتها عام ١٩٦٧م.
- نستنتجُ كثرة المدن في وسط فلسطين وشمالها وقتلها 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 Earth's northern hemisphere, 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 – by Jordan, on the west – by the Mediterranean, and on the south – by Egypt and the Gulf of Aqaba..."

تقع فلسطين في النصف الشمالي من الكرة الأرضية، في الجزء الغربي
من قارة آسيا، وهي إحدى دول بلاد الشام (فلسطين، وسوريا، والأردن،
ولبنان)، يحدها من الشمال لبنان وسوريا، ومن الشرق الأردن، ومن الغرب
البحر المتوسط، ومن الجنوب مصر، وخليج العقبة، ويعد موقع فلسطين حلقة

(*Social Studies*, Grade 5, Part 1 (2017) p. 23)

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 of the 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 coast of the Mediterranean Sea..."
(*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 that presents the Israeli city of Tiberias as Palestinian:

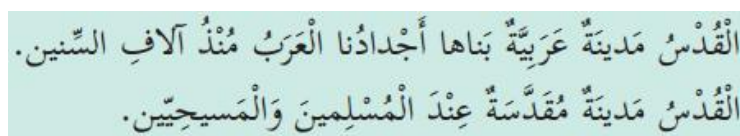
"Tiberias is a Palestinian city."
(*Mathematics*, Grade 4, Part 2 (2017) p. 7)

In PA parlance, these Palestinian cities are under occupation, much the same as cities of the West Bank and Gaza. 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 and as a holy city for Muslims and Christians alone:

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



(*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 very day, still pour on it their malice 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 – even though tyranny's meanness might stick to it more, as well as the malice harbored by the forgers who infringe on its Muslim and Christian holy places and on its history and archaeological sites that attest its genuine Arab origin since thousands of years..."

(*Arabic Language*, Grade 10, Part 1 (2017) pp. 18-20. This very text presents the Hebrew letter as threatening Jerusalem's Arab character and refers to the Jews there as foreigners and imposters – p. 17.)

De-legitimization of Israel and of the Jewish presence in the country in the older books included one case of sheer forgery: A Hebrew inscription was erased from a British Mandatory stamp. In the new books the situation is a bit more complex. On the one hand, a piece in a mathematics textbook reads: "The Palestinian Pound is the legal official currency of the Palestine government during the British Mandate over Palestine and the Emirate of Trans-Jordan between the years 1927-1948", and pictures of a two-sided coin of that period is given with the Hebrew inscription on it:



نشاط (١): الجنيه الفلسطيني هو العملة الرسمية الشرعية لحكومة فلسطين في عهد الانتداب البريطاني على فلسطين، وإمارة شرق الأردن ما بين عامي ١٩٢٧-١٩٤٨م.



(*Mathematics*, Grade 9, Part 2 (2017) p. 86)

In another mathematics textbook for a lower grade, on the other hand, a Mandate-period coin is reproduced with the Hebrew inscription eliminated (and compare to the following picture of the original coin):



نشاط (١):

أمرز قلمي على الدائرة فيما يأتي:

أناقش: كيف يُمكنني قياس محيط قطعة النقد، باستخدام المسطرة فقط؟
وباستخدام خيط ومسطرة؟



(*Mathematics*, Grade 6, Part 2 (2017) p. 63. The student is requested to follow with his pen the circles' contours. The caption says: "I will discuss: How could I measure the coin's circumference...?")



Moreover, Mandatory money is used in another Mathematics textbook to support a false claim that there existed an independent Palestinian state before the Zionist occupation of 1948:

"Activity 2:

The Palestinian Pound is the currency of the State of Palestine [*Dawlat Filastin*] before the occupation. The metallic coins were of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100 mils."



(*Mathematics*, Grade 7, Part 2 (2017) p. 95. The photograph of the Mandatory note is partially given, showing the Arabic inscription only, probably to create the impression that there was an Arab state in Palestine before 1948. It reads: "1 Palestinian Pound".)

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. 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 systematic 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. In fact, the Jewish/Israeli "other" is mostly referred to as a group only, with the accompanying connotations of alienation and threat.

Following are several examples demonizing Jews. The first one 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)

And a further demonizing piece:

"Let us watch a video clip from the attached CD about the Jews' attempt to kill God's Messenger [Muhammad]."

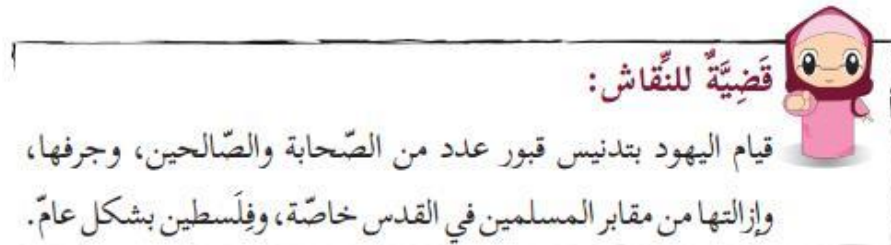
هيا بنا نشاهد مقطع فيديو من القرص المرفق، لمحاولة قتل اليهود رسول الله ﷺ.



(*Islamic Education*, Grade 5, Part 2 (2017) p. 65, and see on p. 66 the assignment: "An issue for discussion: the Jews' recurring attempts to kill the Messenger [Muhammad]").)

Another seriously demonizing accusation appears in the same book in a similar context:

"An issue for discussion: The Jews' activity [today] of desecrating the graves of some of the Prophet's Companions and the virtuous men, sweeping and removing them from the Muslim cemeteries in Jerusalem specifically and in Palestine in general."



(*Islamic Education*, Grade 5, Part 2 (2017) p. 71)

The 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)

"[Assignment:] 6. Let us mention the motives for the Zionist gangs' perpetration of collective extermination and forced migration [*Al-ibadah al-jamaiyyah wa al-tahjir al-qasri*] against the sons of our people in 1948."

نذكر الدوافع من ممارسة العصابات الصهيونية الإبادة الجماعية والتَّهجير القسري لأبناء شعبنا عام ١٩٤٨ م.

(*Arabic Language – Academic path*, Grade 10, Part 2 (2017) p. 26)

"1. The Zionists have based their entity on terrorism, extermination [*ibadah*] and colonialism [*isti'mar*]. Let us present that in detail."

(*Arabic Language – Academic Path*, Grade 10, Part 2 (2017) p. 27)

"We were told that the army of treason at that night
Cut off the people's organs professionally and attentively
They tortured them, cut their body parts into pieces
And then cast them into the claws of death."

(Poem about Deir Yassin by an Algerian poet, *Arabic Language – Academic Path*, Grade 10, Part 2 (2017) p. 30, and see the same piece as a language exercise on p. 69)

In the following piece taken from a poem, the Jews are dubbed "Devil's aides [*a'wan Shaytan*]":

"Where are the horsemen [who will ride] towards Al-Aqsa [Mosque] to liberate it
from the fist of unbelief, from the Devil's aides?"

أَيْنَ الْفُؤَارِسُ لِلْأَقْصَى تُحَرَّرُهُ مِنْ قَبْضَةِ الْكُفْرِ مِنْ أَغْوَانِ شَيْطَانٍ؟

(*Arabic Language*, Grade 7, Part 1 (2017) p. 66)

And there are as well more specific accusations. One, for example, is intentional killing of Palestinian children and youths. The following first example is taken from a poem:

"The child and the old man among us will die and will not surrender
The mother will fall on her killed sons and will not surrender."

(*Arabic Language*, Grade 7, Part 2 (2017) p. 65)

"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)

And a language exercise in this context:

"4. The soldiers attack the children out of fear of their dreams."

(*Arabic Language*, Grade 9, Part 2 (2017) p. 58)

And an assignment:

"We will write an article in which we will talk about the Israeli abuses against Palestinian children while following the rules of journalistic articles and focusing on:

1. Children falling as martyrs.
2. Demolition of their houses and deportation of their families.
3. Their arrest.
4. Preventing them from studying.
5. Preventing them from playing."

(*Arabic Language*, Grade 9, Part 1 (2017) p. 135)

The security fence stretching along the West Bank and turning into a concrete wall in urban areas, which was built to stop Palestinian terrorist attacks against Israeli citizens in the early 2000s, is thus described:

"This monster that winds around the lands of the occupied West Bank constitutes a crime against humanity because of its daily disastrous impacts on the inhabitants' lives. The wall, judging by its course, is like a symbol of the Zionist project as a whole that constantly swallows up more Palestinian land."

(*Arabic Language – Academic Path*, Grade 10, Part 2 (2017) p. 116)

Other accusations include: house demolition, cutting down trees, arrests of school children, torture, and even setting loose wild boars into Palestinians' fields:



(*Our Beautiful Language*, Grade 2, Part 2 (2017) p. 24)

"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 about the arrest of school students and their interrogation at the Zionist interrogation departments."

(*Social Studies*, Grade 9, Part 1 (2017) p. 45)

"2. The Zionist occupation uses [various] kinds of torture against male and female prisoners-of-war in its jails. Let us clarify that."

(*Arabic Language*, Grade 7, Part 2 (2017) p. 41)

"It [the occupation] set loose herds of boars that caused damage to the [Palestinian] 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 pass through."



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

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

The PA schoolbooks taught in UNRWA schools are not utterly devoid of peace advocacy. There is one piece dedicated to that:

"Activity 3: Let us read the conversation, discuss and draw conclusions:

While the Abu Ali family was watching the news, Abir said: 'What are these painful scenes, O father?'

Sa'id: 'Can't these wars ever stop? Can't the [world] states do something to stop them?'

Father: 'The ones who suffer from these wars are the peoples. Therefore the states should act to stop them.'

Abir: 'But how? O father?'

Father: 'The states should solve the problems between themselves through dialogue and peaceful means. They should propagate love and peace among the peoples. The world should direct [its] scientific progress and inventions towards the people's benefit. The states should commit themselves to preventing the propagation of weapons and help each other in solving [their] conflicts'

Sa'id: 'Islam has created human morals [to be applied] during wars. What approves that most is [Caliph] Abu Bakr's instruction to the army of Usamah bin Zayd: 'Do not kill a small child, nor an old man, or a woman; do not uproot a date palm tree, nor burn it, or cut down a fruitful tree.'

Implementation:

- We will split into groups.
- We will read the conversation and discuss it.
- How can we solve the problems between people?
- What are the measures taken by the states in order to put an end to wars and bring about peace?
- How would we direct [the world's] technological development in the service of states and peoples, away from wars?

I have learned:

Wars cause destruction, kill a large number of people, destroy the environment and pollute it. Therefore, the states of the world should prevent wars and propagate peace. That [could be done] by solving the problems between the [various] states through dialogue and peaceful means, propagating the culture of tolerance and love among the peoples, increasing awareness among the citizens of the wars' danger and their destructive impact on man and the environment, creating organizations for the supervision of the propagation of deadly weapons and the prevention of their selling and trade, utilizing [the world's] scientific progress in the service of mankind and not for its destruction and the ruin of the environment, implementing the international agreements that advocate peace and the prevention of wars, and especially [safeguarding] the rights of citizens and civilians during wars and armed conflicts."



بينما كانت أسرة أبي عليّ تشاهد نشرة الأخبار، قالت عبير: ما هذه المناظر المؤلمة يا والدي؟

سعيد: ألا يمكن لهذه الحروب أن تنتهي؟ أليس بإمكان الدول عمل أي شيء لوقفها؟

الأب: من يعاني من هذه الحروب هم الشعوب؛ لذا على الدول العمل على وقفها.

عبير: وكيف ذلك يا أبي؟

الأب: على الدول أن تحلّ المشكلات بينها بالحوار والطرق السلمية، وعليها نشر المحبة والسلام بين الشعوب، وعلى العالم أن يوجّه التقدم العلمي والاختراعات لما فيه مصلحة الناس، وعلى الدول أن تتعهد بمنع انتشار الأسلحة، وأن تساعد بعضها في حل الصراعات.

سعيد: لقد وضع الإسلام أخلاقيات إنسانية خلال الحروب، ولا أدلّ على ذلك من وصيّة أبي بكر الصديق لجيش أسامة بن زيد (... لا تقتلوا طفلاً صغيراً، أو شيخاً كبيراً، ولا امرأة، ولا تعقروا نخلاً، ولا تحرقوه، ولا تقطعوا شجرة مثمرة،.....).

التنفيذ:



- نَنقَسِمُ في مجموعات.
- نَقْرَأُ الحوار ونناقشه.
- كيف نستطيع حلّ المشاكل بين الناس؟
- ما الطرق التي تلجأ إليها الدول لإنهاء الحروب وإحلال السلام؟
- كيف نوجّه التطور التكنولوجي في خدمة الدول والشعوب بعيداً عن الحروب؟



تؤدّي الحروب إلى الخراب والدمار، وقتل أعداد كبيرة من الناس، وتدمّر البيئة وتلوّثها؛ لذا على دول العالم أن تمنع الحروب، وتنشر السلام وذلك عن طريق:

حلّ المشاكل بين الدول بالحوار والطرق السلمية، ونشر ثقافة التسامح والمحبة بين الشعوب، وزيادة الوعي بين المواطنين لمخاطر الحروب وآثارها المدمرة على الإنسان والبيئة، وإيجاد مؤسسات لمراقبة انتشار الأسلحة الفتاكة ومنع بيعها والاتجار بها، واستخدام التقدّم العلمي لخدمة البشرية وليس لدمارها وخراب البيئة، وتطبيق الاتفاقيات الدوليّة التي تدعو إلى السلام ومنع الحروب، وخاصّة حقوق المواطنين والمدنيّين في الحروب والنزاعات المسلحة.

(*Social Studies*, Grade 5, Part 2 (2017) pp. 83-84)

But this is a sole case of peace advocacy and peace is referred to here as a universal ideal, with no mentioning whatsoever of the current Palestinian-Israeli conflict in this context.

On the other hand, when the Oslo process is described in detail in one of the books (*Geography and Modern and Contemporary History of Palestine*, Grade 10, Part 2 (2017) pp. 75-78) – including Yasser Arafat's official recognition of Israel's right to exist in peace and security, as stated in a letter he sent to Israel's Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in September 1993, which is quoted in full (p. 76) – it is done in a neutral language without the slightest effort to convince the student that a peaceful resolution of the conflict is necessary, contrary to what is done in Israeli schoolbooks in this context.

Thus, none of the PA textbooks, including those ones 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 such a degree that 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. In other words, the Palestinian curriculum features war indoctrination – instead of peace education – 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-sacrificing person" and used 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 ***** يَا أَرْضِي يَا أَرْضَ الْجُدُودِ
 فِدَائِي فِدَائِي فِدَائِي ***** يَا شَعْبِي يَا شَعْبَ الْخُلُودِ
 بَعَزَمِي وَنَارِي وَبُرْكَانِ ثَارِي
 وَأَشْوَاقِ دَمِّي لِأَرْضِي وَدَارِي
 صَعَدْتُ الْجِبَالَ وَخُضْتُ النَّضَالَ
 قَهَرْتُ الْمُحَالَ حَطَّمْتُ الْقُيُودَ
 فِدَائِي فِدَائِي فِدَائِي ***** يَا أَرْضِي يَا أَرْضَ الْجُدُودِ
 فِدَائِي فِدَائِي فِدَائِي ***** يَا شَعْبِي يَا شَعْبَ الْخُلُودِ





(*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 presented, with specific references to the Israeli cities of Haifa and Jaffa:

"Let us sing:

I am a lion cub;⁴ I am a flower;⁵ we gave the soul to the revolution⁶
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"

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

⁵ *Zahrah* - a term denoting a female member of that movement.

⁶ *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.



أطفالُ فلسطين

إبراهيم التلي

| | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| وَهَبْنَا الرُّوحَ لِلثَّوْرَةِ | أَنَا شَيْبِلُ أَنَا زَهْرَةٌ |
| لَنَا فِي أَرْضِنَا الْحُرَّةِ | بَنَى أَجْدَادُنَا دَوْرًا |
| حَمَلْنَا جَمْرَةَ الثَّوْرَةِ | أَنَا شَيْبِلُ أَنَا زَهْرَةٌ |
| إِلَى الْأَقْصَى إِلَى الصَّخْرَةِ | إِلَى حَيْفَا إِلَى يَافَا |

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

And a language exercise says:

"It would be appropriate that Jaffa will return to us."

(Arabic Language, Grade 8, Part 2 (2017) p. 101)

And regarding the Israeli city of Safed:

"Safed is one of the most beautiful Palestinian cities in Galilee. It boasts of its noble Canaanite descent in spite of the fog of occupation that some day will dissolve."

(Arabic Language, Grade 9, Part 2 (2017) p. 21)

The violent struggle illustrated for first-grade students:

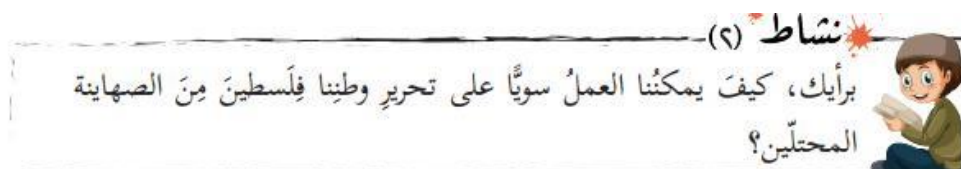


(Our Beautiful Language, Grade 1, Part 2 (2017) p. 81)

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

"Activity 2:

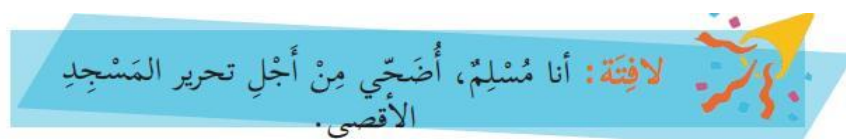
In your opinion, how can we work together for the liberation of our homeland Palestine from the occupying Zionists?"



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

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

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



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

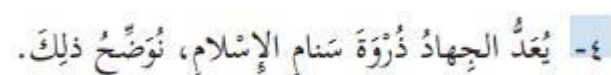
Within this approach, traditional Islamic concepts, such as Jihad and martyrdom, are used to strengthen among the students – who mostly come from a socially traditional environment – their personal commitment to the violent struggle. It should be stressed, however, that the new textbooks use these concepts to a lesser extent than their predecessors. For example, three poems exalting Jihad and martyrdom have been omitted, as well as an excerpt from another poem that served as a language exercise.

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)

"[Assignment:] 4. Jihad is considered the peak of Islam. Let us clarify that."



(Arabic Language, Grade 7, Part 2 (2017) p. 5)

"Jihad is one of Paradise's gates."

(Language exercise, Arabic Language, Grade 7, Part 2 (2017) p. 92)

And in the Palestinian context:

"O Jihad, to which glory has clapped... an honor boasted by Palestine."
(*Arabic Language – Academic Path*, Grade 10, Part 2 (2017) p. 122)

Martyrdom is also exalted. Following are language exercises and an assignment featuring that:

"3. The martyrs are more honorable than us all."
(*Arabic Language*, Grade 6, Part 2 (2017) p. 34)

"6. The martyrs enjoy a superb status in the Palestinians' souls which is manifested in many phenomena. Let us write down some of them."

٦- لِلشُّهَدَاءِ مَكَانَةٌ عَظِيمَةٌ فِي نُفُوسِ الْفِلَسْطِينِيِّينَ تَتَجَلَّى فِي مَظَاهِرٍ مُتَعَدِّدَةٍ، نَكْتُبُ بَعْضاً مِنْهَا.

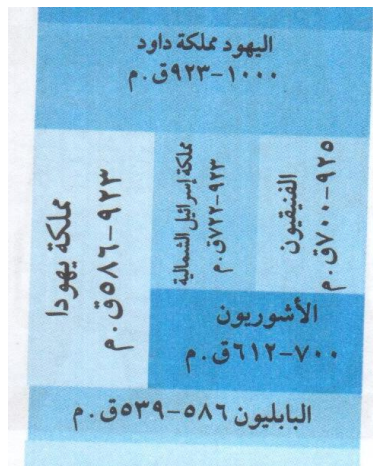
(*Arabic Language*, Grade 9, Part 2 (2017) p. 79)

"2. The students went to visit the martyrs' graves."
(*Our Beautiful Language*, Grade 3, Part 2 (2017) p. 100)

The Radicalized Attitude of the 2016-2017 Textbooks

It should be emphasized that the new books, which have been published 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 numerous demonizing descriptions – contrary to what used to be done before 2016. 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". Even Israel's membership in the UN organization is referred to by a similar epithet: "The representative of the Occupation State at the UN" (*Geography and Modern and Contemporary History of Palestine*, Grade 10, Part 2 (2017) p. 41). Another phenomenon in this context is putting the name "Israel" in parentheses which are often used in Arabic as quotation marks. 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. It may also indicate a higher level of demonization: Instead of a conflict between two concrete entities, Israel and the Palestinians, the latter are now stuck in an existential struggle against an all-evil mythical power – world Zionism.

Another feature of the new PA schoolbooks in UNRWA use is the total elimination of any former reference to the Jews' presence in the country in antiquity. In pre-2016 PA schoolbooks such presence was mentioned several times. One of these cases is the following historical time table that no longer exists in the current books. The inscriptions read (from top to bottom and from right to left): "The Jews David's Kingdom 1000-923 BC; The Phoenicians 925-700 BC; The Northern Kingdom of Israel 923-722 BC; The Kingdom of Judea 923-586 BC; The Assyrians 700-612 BC; The Babylonians 586-539 BC."



(*History of the Middle Ages*, Grade 7 (2014) p. 74)

This new approach of eliminating any reference to the Jews' presence in the country in antiquity seems to have been given an ideological reasoning in the new books, namely, denying the rival party's historical "narrative" as a means to strengthening one's own one: "The Zionist occupation targets 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).

And again:

"As for the Palestinian people, [the present struggle] is a central chapter of the battle for its existence and staying in its homeland. It is fought against those who occupied its land, drove its sons away and robbed its resources. They still work diligently to undermine the foundations of its identity and root out its heritage by way of robbery, erasure, forgery and destruction, in order to create a cracked narrative based on legends, baseless rumors and false arguments... They have constructed for themselves an artificial entity that derives its identity and the legitimacy of its existence from tales, legends and fantasies and have tried in various ways and methods to create material evidence for those legends, or archaeological and architectural proofs that would attest to their reality, but in vain."

(*Arabic Language – Academic Path*, Grade 10, part 2 (2017) pp. 70-71)

The 2017 PA textbooks further intensify their role as tools of indoctrination, comparing to their pre-2016 counterparts. That new trait of theirs finds its expression in the systematic insertion of various aspects of the conflict into seemingly unrelated school subjects such as physics, chemistry, biology, and even vocational education. Thus, for example, in a cooking class, the students are asked to prepare, with the help of the elderly members of their families, a dish typical of their "original" place of dwelling, that is, before 1948 (*Vocational Studies – Practice*, Grade 10 (2017) p. 103). In physics, a remark is made, within the discussion of sound waves, that the Zionist occupation forces prohibit the call for prayer from the minarets of Al-Aqsa Mosque (*Sciences and Life*, Grade 8, Part 2 (2017) p. 53). In biology, the importance of the human spine is made more palpable by presenting a case of a boy who was

severely injured by an object left in the field following "the Zionist aggression against Gaza" (*Sciences and Life*, Grade 7, Part 2 (2017) p. 64). In chemistry, the following illustration is given:



(*Sciences and Life*, Grade 7, Part 2 (2017) p. 34. The caption says: "Observe and think: Water and salt keep the Palestinian prisoners-of-war alive while conducting the empty-guts battle [i.e., hunger strike]").)

And demonizing items phrased as a question in mathematics:

"1. The number of martyrs during the first *Intifadah* (the Stone *Intifadah*) reached 2,026. The number of martyrs during the Al-Aqsa *Intifadah* reached 5,050. The number of martyrs during the two *Intifadahs* is"



١ بلغ عدد شهداء الانتفاضة الأولى (انتفاضة الحجارة) ٢٠٢٦ شهيداً، وبلغ عدد شهداء انتفاضة الأقصى ٥٠٥٠ شهيداً.

عدد الشهداء في الانتفاضتين = _____ شهيداً

(*Mathematics*, Grade 4, Part 1 (2017) p. 25)

And in geometry:

"Activity 1: Palm tree growing is prevalent in the Palestinian lands in the regions of Jericho, the Jordan Valley and Gaza. As a result of the Israeli abuses of plantation sweeping, some of them become broken. If a palm tree is broken like [the one] in the adjacent picture, and the length of the broken part is 13 meters, while the tree's full length, before it was broken, had been 20 meters, how would we know the angle's measure?"



(Mathematics, Grade 9, Part 2 (2017) p. 8. No signs of plantation sweeping – meant to eliminate hiding places for potential attackers alongside strategic roads – are seen here).

Aspects of the conflict are also mentioned within unrelated historical events such as the destruction of Carthage by the Romans in the 2nd century BC (*Social Studies*, Grade 6, Part 1 (2017) p. 80), Prophet Muhammad's persecution by the inhabitants of Mecca in the 7th century AD (*Social Studies*, Grade 6, Part 2 (2017) p. 36), The Spanish Reconquista in the 15th century (*Social Studies*, Grade 7, Part 2 (2017) p. 28), the tragedy of the native Americans caused by the European settlers there on the one hand: "I will compare the tragedy of the Indians, America's original inhabitants, to the tragedy of the Palestinian people" (*Social Studies*, Grade 8, Part 2 (2017) p. 33) and the struggle of America's European settlers against Britain, on the other hand – the Boston Tea Party (*ibid.*, p. 36), the attack on the Bastille during the French Revolution in 1789 and Napoleon's military expedition to Egypt in 1799 and beyond (*ibid.*, pp. 42, 63, respectively).

One important development in the 2017 schoolbooks is the new message added to 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 has always been given a violent character in the PA books used in UNRWA schools and seen as part of the violent liberation struggle. Now, the new textbooks add explicit references indicating that the areas within pre-1967 Israel to which these people 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 الثُّسُورِ الْمُحَلَّقَةِ، سَنَعُودُ مَعَ الرِّيحِ الْعَاتِيَةِ، سَنَعُودُ
إِلَى الْكَرْمِ وَالزَّيْتُونِ، سَنَعُودُ؛ لِنَرْفَعَ عَلَمَ فَلَسْطِينِ، إِلَى جَانِبِ زَهْرَةِ
الْحَنُونِ عَلَى رَوَابِينِ الْخَضِرَاءِ.

(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"

صَرْخَةُ لاجِي

هارون هاشم رشيد

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| أَنَا لَنْ أَظَلَّ مُقَيِّدًا | أَنَا لَنْ أَعِيشَ مُقَرَّدًا |
| خَفْتُ نَائِرًا مُتَمَرِّدًا | أَنَا لِي غَدٌ وَغَدًا سَأَزْ |
| صَيْفٌ وَهْيَ تَجْتَاحُ الْمَدَى | أَنَا لَنْ أَخَافَ مِنَ الْعَوَا |
| تَرْمِي دَمَارًا أَسْوَدًا | وَمِنْ الْأَعَاصِيرِ الَّتِي |
| رَوْصَانِعٌ مِنْهُ الْغَدَا | أَنَا صَاحِبُ الْحَقِّ الْكَبِيرِ |
| وَطَنًا عَزِيزًا سَيِّدَا | سَأُعِيدُهُ .. وَأُعِيدُهُ |
| وَأَسِيرُ جَيْشًا أَوْحَدَا | 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. Thus, the new 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 murdered, is mentioned in four

books, all studied in UNRWA schools at present. In all of them she is described as a heroine and martyr of Palestine. Following is the first page of a 4-page item dedicated to her:

"Dalal al-Mughrabi

([By] the authors [of the textbook])

In front of the text:

Our Palestinian history is full of many names of martyrs who presented their souls as a sacrifice for the homeland. Among them is the martyr Dalal al-Mughrabi who painted with her struggle a picture of challenge and heroism that have made her memory eternal in our hearts and minds. The text in front of us provides a glance on the path of her struggle."



Civil aircraft hijacking, which was part and parcel of the Palestinian armed organizations' terrorist activities, is mentioned as well, without the slightest sign of self-criticism:

"The Palestinian organizations reacted [to Israeli attacks against them in Lebanon] by attacking Zionist targets, including aircraft hijacking."

(*Geography and Modern and Contemporary History of Palestine*, Grade 10, Part 2 (2017) p. 60)

The new PA schoolbooks of 2016-2017 now taught in UNRWA schools are also 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 now 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-Kuramaa*]
[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 Sanctuary [*haram*],
O cradle of pride and nobility
Patience, patience, for victory is ours
And dawn will peep out from darkness"

نُغَنِّي وَنَحْفَظُ: أَرْضُ الْكُرَمَاءِ



قَسَمًا سَأُضَحِّي بِدِمَائِي لِأُرْوِي أَرْضَ الْكُرَمَاءِ
وَأُزِيلَ الْغَاصِبَ مِنْ بَلَدِي وَأُبِيدَ فُلُولَ الْغُرَبَاءِ
يَا مَهْدَ النُّخْوَةِ وَالْكَرَمِ يَا بَلَدَ الْأَقْصَى وَالْحَرَمِ
صَبْرًا صَبْرًا فَالنَّصْرُ لَنَا وَالْفَجْرُ يُطِلُّ مِنَ الظُّلَمِ

قَسَمًا سَأُضَحِّي بِدِمَائِي لِأُرْوِي أَرْضَ الْكُرَمَاءِ
وَأُزِيلَ الْغَاصِبَ مِنْ بَلَدِي وَأُبِيدَ فُلُولَ الْغُرَبَاءِ
يَا مَهْدَ النُّخْوَةِ وَالْكَرَمِ يَا بَلَدَ الْأَقْصَى وَالْحَرَمِ
صَبْرًا صَبْرًا فَالنَّصْرُ 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 in the West Bank 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 shiwa*] there with Molotov cocktails on one of the buses of the Psagot colony [*musta'marah* - Jewish settlement] on Mount Al-Tawil"

الجار: حَظَرُ التَّجَوُّلِ لَا يَشْمَلُنَا فِي (الشَّرَفَةِ) مَفْرُوضٍ عَلَى
(النَّاتَرِيشِ) عَلَى مَا يَبْدُو هُنَاكَ حَفْلَةٌ شَوَاءٍ بِالْقَنَابِلِ الْحَارِقَةِ لِإِحْدَى
حَافِلَاتٍ مُسْتَعْمَرَةٍ (بِسَاغُوتٍ) عَلَى الْجَبَلِ الطَّوِيلِ.

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

Conclusion

The examination of the textbooks 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. Indeed, Israel's very name is rarely found in the books taught at UNRWA schools, and it is often referred to as "the Zionist occupation". Israeli cities, such as Haifa, Jaffa, Acre and Ramleh, are described as Palestinian cities 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, the Jews' 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 damage 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 and even the sole piece appearing in one of the books and talking of peace's importance in general.

Islamic traditional concepts, such as Jihad and martyrdom, are used by the Palestinian educators in order to make that violent 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 incitement to committing war crimes.

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 against Israel, this UN agency breaks all UN principles of world peace and peaceful coexistence. In fact, the huge accumulated number of UNRWA's indoctrinated graduates throughout its almost seven decades of operation in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and the West Bank and Gaza – 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 its 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 stop its educational work altogether.

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