

UNRWA Textbooks Report

**Meetings held in NYC with David Bedein and Dr. Arnon Groiss
April 15 and April 16, 2018**

Executive Summary

PA textbooks are used by UNRWA in all its schools in the Middle East including Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon and refugee camps in Israel. These books indoctrinate children to vilify Jews and claim all of Israel as theirs – this indoctrination permeates all school subjects including history, math, chemistry...in grades 1 through 10.

Some examples:

- Israeli cities are not on maps; Israel does not appear on regional maps.
- What are we going to do with the Jews after the liberation? – Answer: exterminate the remnants who survive the battle for liberation.
- The Levant consists only of Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan. Jerusalem is an Arab city; not to be divided.
- UNRWA teaches terrorism to students; films depicted children becoming martyrs, fighters and pledging to be suicide bombers.

US gives UNRWA \$400 million; over a third of the total budget. Over 50% goes to education. **All of this is being largely ignored by major Jewish organizations and by the government of the USA. The question is WHY?**

Meeting Report

There was a prior meeting on Sunday, April 15 but much of the material was also covered on the 16th. The afternoon meeting on April 16, the April meeting of the Informal Caucus of JNGOs with many other guests, was held at Or Olam Synagogue on East 55th Street. **David Bedein**, American MSW turned Jerusalem investigative journalist discussed the state of UNRWA education as well as presenting other issues concerning this organization. David was joined by Dr. Arnon Groiss, who has worked since 2000 to translate all the school books used by UNRWA.

David Bedein of the Center for Near East Policy Research in Jerusalem introduced the program by enumerating areas which need to be addressed to reform the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). The focus is on the education currently being provided to Palestinian children in refugee camps and other sites in Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon and Jordan.

1. Cancel the UNRWA war curriculum, based on Jihad, martyrdom and the “right of return by force of arms”.
2. Cease paramilitary training in all UNRWA schools. It is an absurdity that

UNRWA, a UN agency with a purported commitment to “peace education”, allows such arms training on its premises.

3. Insist that UNRWA dismiss employees affiliated with Hamas in accordance with laws on the books in western nations that forbid aid to any agency that employs members of a terrorist organization.

4. Introduce UNHCR standards to UNRWA to advance the resettlement of fourth and fifth generation refugees from the 1948 war. These people have spent some seven decades relegated to refugee status. Current UNRWA policy is that any refugee resettlement would interfere with the “right of return” to pre-1948 Arab localities. By adopting the political stance of Palestinian maximalists, UNRWA flouts its own commitment to the welfare and future of Palestinian refugees.

5. Demand an audit of donor funds which emanate from 68 nations. This would address widespread documented reports of wasted resources, duplication of services and an undesired flow of cash to the Gaza-based terror groups that have controlled UNRWA operations there for the past 18 years.

6. The youth idol described here has since been fired. Since UNRWA recently hired a “youth idol,” Muhammad Assaf, to travel the world to encourage insurrection and violence. Clearly, there should be no such role in UN education, whose theme is “Peace Begins Here”. (this happened thanks to UK B’nai Brith and the Swedish and German Parliaments)

UNRWA is an established UN agency with a vast bureaucracy and is responsible for the social welfare and education of all Palestinian refugees. Since UNRWA, unique among all other refugee organizations, defines all descendants of refugees as refugees, there are now almost six million Palestinian refugees from 1948 and 1967. Many of these now live in and even have become citizens of other nations. But those who live in the middle East are educated solely by UNRWA.

Dr. Arnon Groiss former journalist in Arabic (though Hebrew is his mother tongue). He has a Ph.D. in Islamic Studies from Princeton. He has been working on the attitude to the “other” in schoolbooks in the Middle East since 2000. The purpose of this meeting was to report on over twenty years of work on the textbooks used by UNRWA.

Dr. Arnon Groiss spoke on the subject of the quality and content of UNRWA materials used to educate Palestinian children in grades 1-10. He has studied and translated books from 2017 and several earlier editions. He began by telling us that the 2016/17 books are the worst –these books declare the illegitimacy of all of Israel including the state defined by 1948 borders. They differ from earlier books in that they indoctrinate the students with an entire structure of beliefs including the necessity of armed resistance, the right to all the land from the Jordan to the sea and the rewards to be found by becoming suicide bombers:

- The extermination of Israel and all the Jews is the goal.

- Older books mentioned the word “Israel” (with many accusations) but current books refer only to the Zionist Occupation.
- The students are told they are fighting world Zionism.
- The new books ignore any Jewish past whereas older books said that Jews lived in the land in ancient times.
- The conflict is incorporated into the study of all subjects – math, physics, ancient history. He provided examples from many subjects. One is: “the Romans destroyed Carthage and the Zionists destroyed our cities”.
- The Western Wall is defined as an Arab shrine and there are no Jewish cities on any maps.
- Israel is not on any regional maps.
- Blatantly anti-Semitic texts vilify all Jews, not just Israelis.
- A grade 2 exercise consists of coloring a map of the state of Israel as if it were a Palestinian flag.
- The higher grades are taught to demand “return” to all the land from the Jordan to the sea.
- A barbeque party is defined as throwing Molotov cocktails onto an Israeli bus.

This goes on and on and clearly is not an education so much as an exercise in child abuse by indoctrination and lies. In any context this is horrible but what is truly reprehensible is that this education is being performed by a UN agency funded largely by the west with the US as the biggest contributor. We pay not just for the books but also for 30,000 teachers who deliver these materials to over half a million Palestinian children from age five to 15. As long as this “education” continues, there can be no peace, no two-state solution, no meaningful negotiations.

David Bedein discussed his efforts to influence the US Congress. Thirty-six members of the Foreign Relations Committee saw the books. After seeing reports on the books, Idaho Senator James Risch, Chair of the Near East Subcommittee launched a study by the General Accounting Office (GAO) to determine just where US money is going and what is being done with it. (Note that the US [donates](#) 30% of the \$1.2 billion UNRWA budget. 54% of that UNRWA budget is allocated to UNRWA education.)

The report by the GAO is expected out by the end of April and is probably going to be very negative about the use of US funds for these books BUT the State Department has asked the GAO not to publish the study and possibly to classify it for security reasons. This is the current status; we must do what we can to avoid the classification. All are requested to write to Near East subcommittees of Foreign Relations Committees in both houses of Congress.

Dr. Debra Soffen, a pediatrician, stated that what the children are learning now amounts to child abuse. In addition, the UN (via UNRWA), is giving the children military training. The most horrifying film we saw at the meeting shows children who appear to be about seven or eight training with rifles and wearing camouflage gear. Other, even smaller children are being taught the proper stance and motion to stab. Apparently, this training is effective; 41 children educated in UNRWA schools have been suicide bombers.

During the Q and A, an audience member raised the issue of what would replace these texts if they were taken out of the system. There is a possible alternative curriculum developed by the Peres Center for Peace. BUT its use was vetoed by the PA.

Evening meeting at Lincoln Square Synagogue – 16 April, 2018 UNRWA: Breeding Ground for Terror

Much of the content was similar but there was more historical perspective on just how this situation has arisen. As far back as 1988, UNRWA fired many of the social workers hired to help Palestinians living in refugee camps and replaced them with hired terrorists planning the intifada. The Palestinians deserve a better life. They are being kept in misery in refugee camps (and little attempt is made to resettle them in other countries) for political reasons.

Dr. Groiss provided a useful comparison between the texts used between 2000 and 2006 and those in use now to demonstrate how the situation has deteriorated. The older books referred to Israel doing bad things (like stealing water or land) but the new ones are much worse. There is no discussion of a dispute with Israel but rather with a Zionist Occupier. In the 2017 “right of return” there is no Israel; all of the country will be captured by the Palestinians. The remnants (Jews) who survive the liberation of Palestine will be exterminated.

The US State Department says the books are fine and no Jewish organization has stepped forward to refute this. WHY??

In Gaza, the teacher’s union and other workers used by UNRWA have been taken over by Hamas. In May last year, UNRWA workers union denied Israel’s right to exist. Under the UN Charter this is illegal but nothing was done.

In the Shuafat Refugee Camp in Jerusalem, small children were interviewed; their replies are a telling message of just how effective this indoctrination is:

- Children report they hate Jews and want them out of Israel.
- They will not talk to Jews.
- The children declare they are ready to die for Al Aqsa.

This went on and on in the film; this indoctrination is consistent with the WHO definition of child abuse and yet the UN continues to sponsor it.

Where is the outcry?? It is missing both here in the US (largest contributor to UNRWA) and in Israel, where the Ministry of Education apparently allows UNRWA to continue its education even in Shuafat refugee camp inside Israel.

Report by Joan Lurie (ICJW) and Ellen Fawer (Jewish Women International)

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