

Germany Subsidizes the Spread of Antisemitism In UN Schools

by Hugh Fitzgerald



Ever since the U.S. ceased its support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in August 2018, Germany has been the major donor to the organization, which spreads antisemitism in its schoolbooks. The story is here: “Activists and experts demand German transparency on UNRWA support,” by Josh Hasten, [JNS](#), November 30, 2020:

The Jerusalem-based Center for Near East Policy Research held a Zoom seminar [in late November] in order to share research about the prevalence of anti-Israel hate education as an official part of the curriculum within Arab schools for children of all ages in the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria, and Jerusalem being run by the U.N. Relief and Works Agency’s (UNRWA).

The audience for the information session, delivered mainly in German, was journalists, influencers and policymakers throughout Germany, as that country is currently UNRWA's top donor nation, contributing nearly \$170 million in 2019.

Germany stepped into that role following the Trump administration's decision that the United States would stop funding UNRWA after a \$60 million pledge was fulfilled in January 2018. A U.S. State Department press statement in August of 2018 indicated that "the United States was no longer willing to shoulder the very disproportionate share of the burden of UNRWA's costs that we had assumed for many years."

The statement cited UNRWA's "business model and fiscal practices that have marked UNRWA for years" as being "unsustainable" while taking UNRWA to task for its "endlessly and exponentially expanding community of entitled beneficiaries."

The decision by Washington to end its support for UNRWA was based on several considerations. First, it did not think the U.S. should be bearing so much of the cost, the American contribution being almost three times that of the second largest donor, Germany.

Second, the Trump administration was aware that UNRWA continued to use schoolbooks full of antisemitic passages, anti-Israel hate speech, and glorification of terrorists. This was not an organization the American government wanted to continue to support, since after many complaints, no changes had been made to the schoolbooks in question.

Third, the Trump Administration was fed up with UNRWA's practice of counting as "Palestinian refugees" not just those who left Mandatory Palestine and Israel from 1947 to 1949 (and who now number not more than 30,000), but all of their descendants, so that UNRWA now claims there are five million

such refugees, with more being born every day. Of the tens of millions of refugees since World War II, only one group – the Palestinians – are allowed to hand down their refugee status to their children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and so on, world without end; this “exponentially expanding community” makes ever-increasing demands on UNRWA’s resources. The Americans wanted no more of this farce.

Author, journalist and publicist Alex Feuerherdt, co-author of Vereinte Nationen gegen Israel. Wie die UNO den jüdischen Staat delegitimiert (“United Nations against Israel: How the U.N. Delegitimizes the Jewish State”), told JNS that his aim was to find ways “to pressure the German government, which just hands money to UNRWA” without demanding transparency. “There are no conditions connected to this funding!” he said emphatically.

Feuerherdt said that “in Germany a lot of people say ‘never again’ [because of the Holocaust], but if Germany votes against Israel at the United Nations General Assembly and funds UNRWA which incites young people towards anti-Semitism, how is that taking responsibility for the past?”

Yes, German behavior at the U.N. is a scandal. Germany too frequently supports, and too seldom opposes, anti-Israel resolutions at the General Assembly’s kangaroo court, with Israel perennially in the dock; nor does it stand with Israel when it serves on the Security Council, or the UNHRC (the Human Rights Council), which has permanently on its agenda Item #7, about Israel’s supposed mistreatment of the Palestinians, that is taken up at every session.

He [Alex Feuerherdt] shared that a visit alongside Israeli exchange students who lost family in the Holocaust to the Bergen-Belsen death camp in 1987 had a major impact on his views about Israel. “I come from the German left-wing, and there is hatred of Israel on the German left. It is our duty

as leftists to support the Jewish state. I'm motivated to convince other leftists to think this way as well."

David Bedein, who runs the Center for Near East Policy Research and who has been documenting anti-Israel hate education spewed in UNRWA-run schools for years, told JNS that over the past several years, the focus of textbooks in the Palestinian Authority and Hamas schools run by UNRWA has been on the so-called "right of return."...

If the so-called "right of return" of millions of "Palestinian refugees" to Israel were to become a reality, the "refugees" would swamp the Jewish population, and Israel as a Jewish state would cease to exist. And that's exactly the point. "Right of return" sounds plausible to many unwary souls – a seemingly reasonable request to return to one's home – and it might even be doable if only the 30,000 real refugees were involved, but with five million people illegitimately described as "Palestinian refugees," Israel cannot be expected to commit demographic suicide. "Right of return" is – as far as Israel is concerned – off the table. But it's now the focus of the UNRWA schoolbooks.

Dalal Mughrabi, a participant in one of the worst terrorist acts – the Coastal Road bus massacre – in Israeli history, is now held up for admiration and emulation in the new UNRWA schoolbooks. This is after years of UNRWA being asked to take out those passages of hate speech against Israelis and Jews, and the glorification of those who murder Israelis. UNRWA always offers its deeply sincere promise to look into the matter and to change the offending texts, and then – nothing happens. Indeed, things may be getting worse, as the appearance in a new UNRWA schoolbook of the terrorist Dalal Mughrabi, a particularly horrific figure, suggests.

While no country should be subsidizing antisemitism – and that is what financial support of UNRWA, and therefore of its

schools and schoolbooks, does – for obvious reasons, Germany should be especially vigilant about any inadvertent support it may give to the spread of antisemitism. The UNRWA schoolbooks preach hatred of Jews, and glorify terrorists who murder Jews. The German government gives UNRWA \$170 million a year; According to Alex Feuerherdt, it “just hands the money over.” No questions asked. Germany is now UNRWA’s biggest financial supporter; apparently it has not even tried to persuade UNRWA to excise the murderous antisemitic passages in its schoolbooks. That task has been left to such groups as UN Watch and UNRWA-Monitor.com. Germany should suspend all of its funding for UNRWA, until such time as the UNRWA schoolbooks have expunged every last bit of hate speech against Jews and Israelis, and there should no longer be any glorification of terrorists. That is not asking too much.

He said that in one particular text, schoolchildren in third grade are taught that “after the liberation of Palestine, it will be time to exterminate the foreigners,” in reference to the Jews still living in Israel...

The P.A. textbooks used in UNRWA schools need to be revised more extensively than removing their hate speech against Jews. Erasure of Jewish history is also a problem. All of what is now “Israel” has disappeared in the maps contained in UNRWA textbooks. The territory is labelled “the Zionist occupation.” Israel needs to be shown on those schoolbook maps, if these Palestinian children are ever to be reconciled to the existence of the Jewish state. And remarks such as “after the liberation of Palestine, it will be time to exterminate the foreigners,” go beyond hate speech. They are calls to genocide. They must go.

During a virtual meeting held by UNRWA on Nov. 10, the organization’s commissioner general, Philippe Lazzarini, warned that “external highly organized individuals and organizations constantly allege and depict UNRWA as an agency

that incites violence and promotes anti-Semitism in its schools” are causing “significant reputation damage” with financial implications.

Philippe Lazzarini, the commissioner general of UNRWA, took office only on April 1 2020; he was an outside hire, and had nothing to do with UNRWA’s recent scandals – sexual, financial – that led to six top officials resigning. Nor did he have anything to do with the current choice of schoolbooks. Yet he does not express his regret and sorrow over the hate-filled contents of the schoolbooks that UNRWA uses. He is exercised, rather, by those conspiring against UNRWA – “external highly organized individuals and organizations” – oh, dear, a conspiracy of the “highly organized” who are out to get UNRWA, which they “constantly allege and depict as an agency that incites violence and promotes antisemitism.” So what? Aren’t their allegations correct? Lazzarini clearly wants to depict those monitoring UNRWA’s schoolbooks as unfair, even more dangerous for being “highly organized” – possibly hovering over his words, though unspoken, is the notion that there might be Jewish backers supporting this attempt to malign and undermine UNRWA. And why do these people “constantly” attack UNRWA as an agency that “incites violence and promotes antisemitism”? Could it be because UNRWA in its schools does exactly that, and since it has failed so singularly to change, the attacks are “constant” and will continue until UNRWA takes these charges seriously, investigates them, and acts to remedy this intolerable situation? What also worries Lazzarini is not so much the deeply offensive use by UNRWA of hate-filled schoolbooks, but the “reputational damage” that charges of antisemitism do to UNRWA’s finances. For him, it’s all about the money.

This is what Philippe Lazzarini should have said during his virtual meeting with UNRWA staff:

“When I joined UNRWA on April 1, 2020, I was dimly aware of

the complaints that have been made over the years about textbooks in the UNRWA schools that contain antisemitic and anti-Israel content. Requests to have the texts revised or replaced have been going on for many years, and it is my sad duty to report that the recommendations for such changes were almost never implemented. I was shocked to learn this. We at UNRWA have not only failed to address these serious complaints, and to acknowledge the evidence that supports them, found in so many of our schoolbooks, but we have also allowed the glorification of terrorists to continue, and even expanded it. I recently learned that Dalal Mughrabi, the mastermind of the Coastal Road bus massacre in Israel, the deadliest terror attack in Israel's history, in which 38 people were murdered, 13 of them children, has now been included, as an example of someone to emulate, in a schoolbook introduced in UNRWA schools this year. This is unacceptable. Not only has our staff not taken seriously the objections to antisemitism and anti-Israel hate speech in our schoolbooks, but some on UNRWA's staff have clearly chosen, with this inclusion of Dalal Moghrabi in a new schoolbook, to provide still more grist for our critics' mill.

"I have decided to appoint a committee of outsiders – no members of our staff – who will examine UNRWA schoolbooks and decide what texts must be revised, or replaced entirely, and not in a few years time, but beginning with the next school year. I am appointing David Bedein to head of this committee. Mr. Bedein, who founded the website UNRWA-Monitor.com, has unearthed some devastating examples of antisemitism in our schoolbooks. He will bring an investigator's thoroughness, and moral zeal, to his task.

"The German government has pledged to support the work of this committee, and also to ensure that its recommendations are followed by UNRWA. In case those recommendations are not immediately followed, German officials have pledged to end all of their funding of UNRWA. I think we all know what that would

mean. Any member of the UNRWA staff who objects to this new policy is of course free to leave, and indeed, is encouraged to do so.”

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